

# CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

Robeson County

"Building communicative bridges in a tri-racial setting"

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THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 1992

## Life among Native Americans influences artisan's work

by Barbara Braveboy-Locklear  
Special to the Carolina Indian Voice  
Sitting at a custom-made work table in his art studio, Dr. Stanley Knick clasps a knife and gingerly whittles on a block of bass wood. He brushes shavings onto the floor and is reminded of something a former college professor once told him. "There are two types of people in this world—those who say 'Yum' and those who say 'Yuk.'" The words stay with Knick as he stares at the two emerging faces on the piece of wood before him.

"Here we have Yum and Yuk and there's only on letter difference between them," Knick says pointing at the carving before him. "The raw material is exactly the same, but there's a slight difference that happens between them...makes them Yum and Yuk...the wood grain is the same."

"Metaphysically I think of them as primary happy and unhappy voices in the human culture. There are Yums and Yuks in every culture and tribe," the woodcarver explains. The artisan will name the piece *Ancient Voices*.

When not teaching American Indian Studies at Pembroke State University, or administering over the school's Native American Resource Center, Knick escapes to his studio where, for the past two years, he carves art from various kinds of wood. The 43-year-old Virginia native says his adventure in wood carving began when his wife, Susan, gave him a Christmas gift of knives and a small block of wood. With little experience other than clay sculpturing in the late 70's, he began playing with the tools and discovered he really enjoyed whittling.

"It's very therapeutic in that it allows me to take everything else out of my mind. It renews and cleanses my mind." Thus began an adventure that won't end for the museum director and curator.

The Pembroke resident says the results of living and working in a Native American community and the study of Native American art and culture have done much to shape the subjects of his wood carvings. "There's a greater force in traditional art, that we also see in traditional Native American art, and that is a force of basic feelings. It looks to very basic emotion and to things in nature."

In creating art from wood, the artisan sees the process as being

non-mechanical despite the fact he uses metal tools. "The manual operation lets the wood grain speak for itself...letting the wood be the deciding factor in the shape of things is in part," he says.

He continues, "All these things speak to traditional culture wherever you find it in whatever continent. It takes the natural materials and makes the best it can without having to go too far in left field to find something artistic."



Blind Warrior Dancing

Knick says he has the notion on all the eight pieces of art he's done over the past two years that it's not really him doing all the work. "I see my hands moving, but there is a spirit in the wood that expresses itself. The Great Spirit is guiding me and the wood both, because we are both a part of it."

This notion transcends into most all the pieces Knick has created from both wood and stone. Of *Lumberjack Nightmare*, carved from a cherry log, he says, "The log had a

look of anger. I started on the piece of wood thinking it'd had a tough life. Once part of the outer layer was removed, and I got into it, the wood took over and defined where the shape and design would be."

The fruit-bearing tree spoke of the abuse suffered at the hands of the

lumberjack's chain-saw. The artisan says he tried to convey the tree's message of anger and sadness by creating a face with unpleasant expression. "As I saw the face emerge, I saw the tree staring at the lumberjack; as to be conveying a nightmare to him," Knick smiles.

An anthropologist and archaeologist by training, Knick admits that in some of his pieces he has intentional desires to take things that he feels and bring them out in wood. *The Prophet*, a piece carved from Robeson County walnut, reflects such desire. "I searched my mind and spirit to find what the Prophet would see and tried to create a face in which it would be possible to see what the prophet saw." The woodcarver says it's impossible to separate the artist from the art. "A definite tactile communication goes on between them," he adds.

In working with logs, as with *The Prophet*, Knick leaves part of the wood's external surface. This, he says, is done in order to show what the tree was really like as seen in the forest. "The tree with its bark has its own natural beauty, therefore, it doesn't have to be tampered with by me. I leave the bark as a concession to the tree."

The influence of Native American culture and tradition on Knick is most visible in his *Blind Warrior Dancing*. Seemingly to digress from his normal approach, the artisan goes into the piece with a design in mind instead of letting the wood speak for itself. The result from the block of bass wood is that of a blind man in ecstatic dance. "Dancing in many cultures is very mystic and metaphoric. Spiritual dance symbolizes a power force in the universe which can make even a blind person dance," he explains of the carved dancer with gourd rattle in hand.

Multi-talented, Knick says he works sporadically on his wood pieces and cannot totally submerge himself in any piece for long periods because of time given to professional duties at PSU. All pieces he has completed reflect time spent over a course of months. "I don't have a lot of time to spend on them and often go a week and never work on them," he laments. He was, however, able to complete his first stone carving in one day.

And the woodcarver concedes to having an ever-present sense of not ever having finished a piece of artwork. "Though I see something I like in the piece, the piece defines when I stop."

## LOCAL BOY NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST

Fork Union, Virginia—A local boy, Cadet Noah Ollin Woods, son of Mr. and Mrs. Noah Woods of Pembroke, has been listed on the Dean's List for Term IV at Fork Union Military Academy at Fork Union, Virginia. This is a recognition of high academic achievement.

Fork Union Military Academy has used its highly successful One-subject Plan in grades nine through twelve since 1950. In this system, a boy studies only one subject at a time for a period of seven and a half weeks, completing the year's work in the subject without interruption.

More than 500 boys attend the high school section, which includes one year of post secondary study. Approximately 100 boys attend the separate Junior School, which encompasses grades six through eight and uses the traditional teaching plan. The boys studying at Fork Union this year represent 35 states and 15 countries.

## Lowry re-elected NCAE President



Members of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) overwhelmingly re-elected sitting Association President Rose Marie Lowry to serve a second term. A popular Association president, Lowry won re-election hands down receiving 13,214 votes. Lowry's competition for the Association's highest

elected office proved slight. Her closest contender in the three-way race was Vilma Leaker of Charlotte.

year as vice president/ president elect in 1990-91 and as president in 1991-92. She will remain on leave during the next two years while she repeats service in both positions.

Mecklenburg, who trailed by more than 8,000 votes with a total of 4,622. Nancy Wilkinson of Burlington received 2,736 votes.

Lowry, currently serving a one year term that began July 1, 1991 and ends June 30 of this year, will again take the reign as NCAE president on July 1, 1993. She will serve from July 1, 1992 to June 30, 1993 as vice president/ president elect.

A Lumbee Indian, Lowry is the first Native American to hold the position of NCAE president. She has been on paid leave from her principalship of Union Elementary School in Robeson County for her

## Sen. Parnell honored by Small Business PAC

The North Carolina chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Political Action Committee recognized the 100 percent Small Business Voting Record of Senator David R. Parnell who is running for re-election for the North Carolina General Assembly, Senate District 30.

NFIB tracks key small business issues in the North Carolina General Assembly and produces the NFIB Voting record at the end of each

biennium. According to Lois Rasnake NFIB/NC PAC Chair, "Senator Parnell has voted in favor of small business 100 percent of the time during his late three terms in the Legislature."

"Small businesses are the major source of new jobs in North Carolina. By supporting small business, Senator Parnell has helped the economy of our state."

In the last session of the General Assembly, Senator Parnell supported

## CB CLUB SPONSORS FUNDRAISER

The Area C B Club will sponsor a fund raiser in the Pembroke Town Park on Saturday, May 2, from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. There will be chicken and barbecue plates for sale, as well as a cake sale. Plates are \$4.00. Proceeds will be used to defray financial expenses for Mr. Olife Patrick.

Mr. Patrick, age 58 of Bolton, NC was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis in 1974. Since October of 1991, Mr. Patrick has been confined to a bed. He also has other complications like heart failure, kidney failure and ulcers. He is unable to care for himself.

Due to his illness, Mr. Patrick's wife has given up her job to assist her husband at their home.

He is married to the former Ms. Shelby Jean Locklear of Pembroke. She is the daughter of the late Dewey and Mary Maynor Locklear of Pembroke.

## Water sampling program begins in July

The Robeson County Water Dept. is gearing up for a Water Sampling Program that will begin in July, 1992. This program will include testing the tap water from customer's homes in the water distribution system. The tap water sampling program is part of a larger sampling project that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requiring of all water suppliers in the United States through its Lead and Copper Rule, published in the Federal Register in June 1991.

Current analysis of the Robeson County Water Dept. Treated Water, has indicated the water is well below the USEPA limits for the Lead and

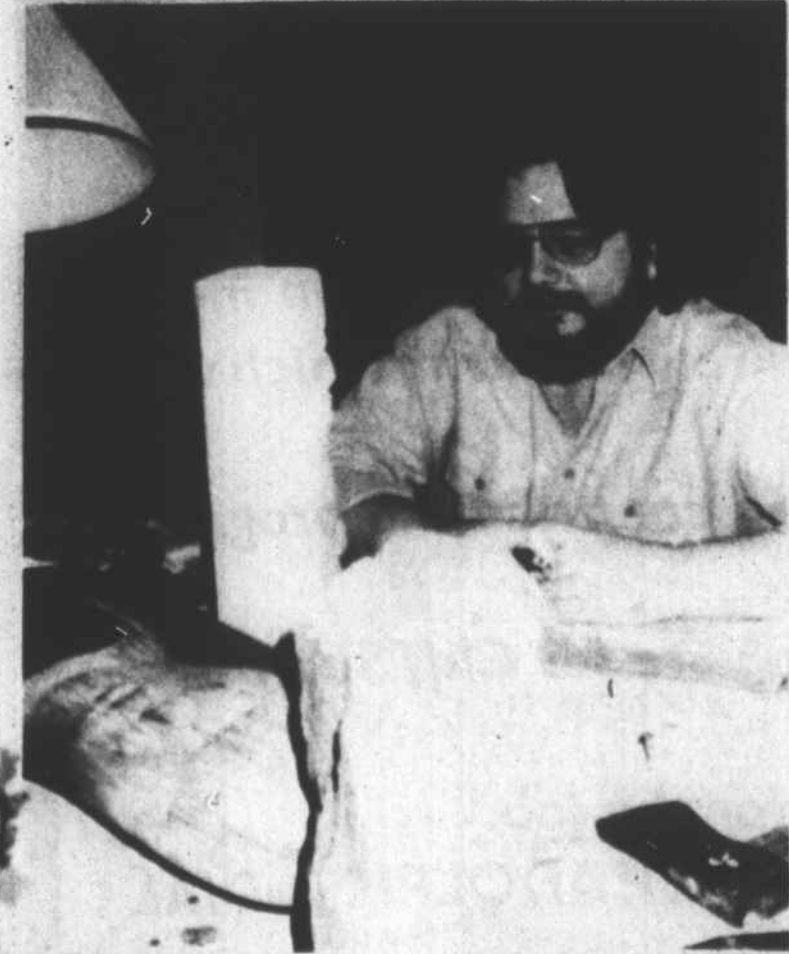
Copper. However, higher levels of these elements are present in samples taken from customers tap water, due to leaching from house hold plumbing. The EPA regulations are concerned with the quality of the water individuals consume. Therefore, the amount of Lead and Copper dissolving into customers drinking water from residential plumbing systems.

A representative group of Water Dept. customers will be contacted and asked to serve as volunteers for the Water Sampling Program. Once a customer has indicated a willingness to be involved, we will ask him/

her for additional information to help identify sites that meet EPA requirements. The sixty participants required for the monitoring program will have their water analyzed free of charge for Copper and Lead levels.

Those customers not chosen as initial test sites will be put on a reserve list for later involvement. On request the Water Dept. will provide names of Certified Laboratories to customers who wish to have their water tested.

For additional information contact Myron Neville or Katie Radford at 919-844-5611.



Dr. Stanley Knick is shown at his work table in his art studio. Knick is a woodcarver and director of the PSU Native American Resource Center.



Jeff Cushing, former PSU cross country and track All-American who now coaches those sports at Lumberport Senior High School, and his

daughter, Amanda Leigh Cushing, carry the torch around the PSU track to open the 18th annual Robeson County Special Olympics on Monday.

Amanda is a student at Tanglewood Elementary School. (PSU photo by Bobby Ayers)

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