



# Elders and Traditionalist Corner

## Wizdom from the Country

by W. D. "Wiz" Locklear

Dear Miss Connee,  
They're saying out in the community that LRDA just ain't wanting the people to have any say-so in their constitution. Course, you know, it don't matter too much what the LRDA is a wanting cause the people will be voting on the constitution and not the LRDA. The reason for that is cause we live here in the United States of America where people have the right to vote and not these here corporations.  
Now, them boys over at the LRDA are mighty scared of the people having any say so in their constitution. They got this notion in their head that they are set above the people and the people can't do but what they tell them they can do. It wouldn't be so bad, Miss Connee, except they're feeding at the public trough. This is our tax money they're spending and I don't believe Uncle Sam has given them any money to be carrying on like this.  
But, I heard me a funny story the other day, Miss Connee. And it's the truth. My cousin went to a meeting over in the Rennert section the other night. According to him, they

had about 100 people there to hear our delegates speak on our constitution. Well, one of them LRDA board men was there and he got to speaking against everything the people had come up with. My cousin said the people took them a vote right there on the spot. Well, the board man was on one side and the people were on the other side. Toward the end of their meeting, this here LRDA board man got up before the people and got to talking about how our recognition bill ought to be killed cause of the people being divided. That's the truth, Miss Connee, according to my cousin who was there. My cousin up there at Rennert said the people were altogether on this thing. It was just the LRDA man opposing the people. Reckon why, Miss Connee? It gits a person to wondering what in the world the LRDA people are up to. Anytime a corporation decides they can make government decisions for the people, we are all in danger. Why, Miss Connee, LRDA being the tribal council for us would be the same thing as IBM serving in Congress. You know that

body's got all the power in America it's enough to scare a poor ol' fella like me half to death.

I got me a feeling that we better be a watching that crowd at the LRDA real hard. Something seems to be rotten in Denmark, as my Pa used to say.

Now, Miss Connee, I'm figuring the LRDA needs to take a look around and jump over there on the side of the people. They can raise all them turkeys and build a whole warehouse of boxes, but it won't do them no good if they're

standing on one side and the people are standing somewhere else. As for Ol' Wiz, Miss Connee, he'll be standing amongst the people where he belongs. Wouldn't have it no other way.

Them boys at the LRDA sure don't seem to know much about people, Miss Connee. You know raising turkeys is one thing, but serving as the tribal government is something else. You can't let people just be the government without letting the people vote for 'em. If them boys at LRDA gits by with what they seem to have planned for us, we'll have us a kingship and Ol' Wiz, Miss Connee, just ain't gonna be bowing down to no lump of dirt. You know, that's all man is, if you read the Bible. It's enough to scare the bejebbers out of you to think that we got us some people that can run a corporation, private and non-profit like the LRDA, and they get to taking for granted that they ought to be the government for us. Maybe we all need to pray more, Miss Connee, for that crowd at the LRDA, 'cause

you know some things only the good Lord can handle. But He told us to watch as well as pray, so Ol' Wiz is gonna do just that. I'm gonna pray for 'em, but I'm gonna watch 'em like a Hawk a watching a chicken (or maybe a turkey). When people git to taking power and making them selves god-like, it's time to watch and pray.



Following is a listing of the concerns of those in attendance at Rennert: (1) What effect will the recognition bill have if passed on the social services that they are presently receiving? (2) What are the procedures to be followed for inclusion by Native Americans enrolled in other tribes upon passage of the Lumbee-Cheraw Bill. (3) How specifically will health benefits be affected by the passage of the Lumbee-Cheraw Bill. and (4) Will this new tribal government be responsive to the Native American community or be unresponsive like other agencies have been in the past.

Additionally, other questions were raised by a board member of LRDA, that created heated discussions. I am not sure if this board member was expressing the position of LRDA on the issues or his own. There were three issues that were discussed and in the following paragraph these issues will be identified. The first issue discussed was the right of the people to recall an elected official based on cause. As I understood the board member's concern, he felt that the criteria for allowing a recall vote should be defined up front. He was concerned that there might be numerous and trivial recall votes and therefore making the Tribal Council ineffective. It was pointed out to this LRDA board member that defining

the reasons for recall votes might limit the ability of the Native American people to rid themselves of a bad Tribal Council member. If there is specific criteria, there is always the chance that a bad council member could avoid the recall vote. We have to rely on the collective wisdom of the Lumbee-Cheraw people to use this important tool in a wise manner. The second issue discussed by this board member was term limitations. This board member felt that it would not be necessary to have term limitations. He stated, that if we had a super Tribal Council member, the Tribal Council member should not have his term limited. It was pointed out that power sometimes corrupts leaders when they have the opportunity to build a power base beyond two continuous terms. Additionally, the current constitution allows a Tribal Council member to serve two terms and to run again after sitting out a term if they so choose. The third issue discussed was the restriction on a Tribal Council member serving as an elected official for two governments. An example would be that a current County Commissioner could not be elected to the Tribal Council. The LRDA board member felt that we should miss the opportunity to use the expertise of an individual who holds an elected governmental office. The Constitutional Committee agrees and it was pointed out that an elected official can run for Tribal Council office if that person resigns from the other position. At the end of the meeting this LRDA board member stated that we should be unified in our efforts to attain federal recognition, because a few could be negative and help defeat the bill. He was referring to the past when Native American groups (based in Robeson County) have lobbied to defeat bills concerning the Lumbee-Cheraw people. I am not sure what he meant by this statement, but I hope LRDA is solidly behind the recognition bill and the Constitutional Committee. As far as I can tell the Lumbee-Cheraw people are solidly behind the bill and the committee. So I agree with the board member's call for a unified front.

## RICK'S PLACE



### LRDA, the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

With all the hoopla surrounding the actions of some of the board members of Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA), I thought it might be a good idea to take a closer look at this agency. After doing a little digging, I was amazed at some of the things I discovered.

Since its inception in 1968 LRDA has been in the middle of the affairs and issues that effect the Indian population of this area. It is a non-profit organization and was organized to raise the social, economic and educational level of the Lumbee region. LRDA continues today with many programs that are designed to improve the quality of life in the great state of Robeson. Since it was founded, LRDA has employed more than 10,000 people, with 99% being Indian and has pumped over \$100 million into the local economy.

LRDA is governed by a 17 member board of directors, fourteen of whom are elected by members of the Lumbee tribe. The fourteen board members are elected from electoral districts and serve staggered three year terms. The fourteen elected members in turn appoint three members to serve at large. The board is responsible for setting the policy of the agency. The daily operations is left to the Executive Director, James Hardin.

### The Lumbee Tribal Enrollment Office

The tribal enrollment office provides enrollment services and maintains the tribal membership records for the tribe. The office provides certification of tribal membership as well as providing information to local, state and federal agencies related to members of the tribe and federal recognition efforts of the tribe.

### Jobs Training & Partnership Act Project

This project is designed to provide job training and assistance to unemployed, underemployed or economically disadvantaged Indians in the area.

### Food Pantry/Book Room

The food pantry provides emergency food to low income families or individuals in a crisis situation. The book room distributes surplus books for a nominal fee.

### Educational Talent Search

The project assists Indian students in Robeson County high schools to prevent drop outs, to help direct students into educational fields after high school. It also assists students in the selection of and application to a post secondary school.

### Indian Adult Education

Provides educational classes for Indian adults in four parts of the county to help them obtain a high school equivalency diploma.

### Head Start

This program provides comprehensive child development services to approximately 100 children of all races between the ages of three and five.

### Day Care Services

LRDA operates six full time state licensed day care centers throughout the county. Approximately 350 children between the ages of one to twelve are served daily at these centers.

### Energy Assistance Services

Provides financial assistance to eligible Indian households during the winter or summer with heating or cooling related costs.

### Economic Development Assistance

LRDA uses funds from the Administration for Native Americans to pursue business ventures that will create jobs and generate revenues for the tribe. These include a community swimming pool, a model turkey farm, AM and FM radio station, and Lumbee Industries Box Manufacturing Plant. Almost one third of the \$3.2 million budget has been internally generated from these programs. The majority of the money used to help bring about federal recognition comes from these programs.

It seems to me that the idea of a LRDA and the actual day to day operations of the agency are great. For

the most part the agency is staffed with local folks who want to do a good job for the community. To that end, we have agreed to begin a new column next week entitled "LRDA In Action." This will give the folks who are on the front lines, doing the actual work, the opportunity to let the public know what they are doing.

The public perception of LRDA however is totally different. LRDA is perceived as being a cliquish, self perpetuating, Pembroke oriented outfit that looks out for itself. With the public actions of some of the board members, it is easy to see why the average folks think that way.

With all that being said, let's now take a look at the board of directors. There are a few board members who are constantly in the news. That is not always a bad thing. People in the news usually are doing something that needs to be reported. The problem some of the board members seem to have is that they are saying things and doing things that reflect badly on the rest of the board, LRDA and the community. Months of selfishness and inappropriate behavior in the public light by certain board members has cast a dim light on the many accomplishments of the agency. Many of the board members have publicly stated that LRDA represents the Lumbee tribe. If they truly believe that, they should let their actions speak for them. Do what is right for the tribe. Do the right thing for the community. Put the needs of the tribe first.

What does all this mean? On one hand, LRDA has served the community for many years and has much to offer in the future. On the other hand, like any machine, mechanical or political, preventive maintenance and a regular tune up will keep things running smoothly. Let's change the bad spark plugs and try to get better service from what we have.

Let LRDA as having a place in the new tribal government. Perhaps in the role as administrator of programs, or many economic development. But those are decisions the tribe will make. Like Wiz Locklear told me one day, "It don't make sense for a man building a new house to burn down his old trailer before the new house is built." Let's use the resources we have to build a better place to live, not only for us, but for the future, the children.

## The Way I See It

by Dr. Dean Chavers, President  
Native American Scholarship Fund  
Albuquerque, NM



### Jap and Daddy

We were raised by parents, friends, neighbors, and busybodies. It seemed to me sometimes that I had too many parents. Every adult in the neighborhood took an interest in our upbringing.

The one who took the most interest in us six children, outside momma and daddy, was Jap Stewart. His real name was Jasper, but most people who knew him did not even know his real name. Everybody called him Jap.

Jap was middle-aged when I can remember him. He had two grown children, but he was divorced from their mother. After Uncle Wardell died, he came to live with Aunt Margarette, Uncle Wardell's sister.

Those two, Wardell and Margarette, had never married. When their parents died, they inherited the home place, just up the road from the Medical Clinic. Wardell was a farmer all his life, and kind of a curmudgeon. I barely remember him, coming to our house, smoking a cigar and using a walking stick.

Soon after he died in the late 1940's, Jap moved into his own room at the house, to take care of Aunt Margarette. She was already past 60 years old, and could not do the hard man's work. She had mules, hogs, a

cow, and a large garden. It took a man to do much of the work.

Jap took over these jobs. She gave him some land to farm, and a pasture. He started raising hogs. In a few years, he made enough money in hogs to buy a truck. Before that, he walked everywhere.

He was at our house almost every day. In the Spring and Summer, he and daddy would sit outside under the huge oak tree in the back yard and talk. This talk could and did go on for hours. We children sometimes wondered if Jap did much work. It turned out that he liked to get up early in the morning before the heat of the day set in, and get his work done.

When daddy was in the VA hospital in Fayetteville, which he was in and out of for ten years, Jap would still be around the house a lot of the time every day. It was as if he took daddy's place as the disciplinarian. He was much gentler, however. He never hit any of us once. Daddy would whack us in a minute.

Jap taught us a lot. From him we learned how to wring a chicken's neck, how to run a straight row, how to hill up sweet potatoes, how to swing a bush axe, and how to spilt cotton middles.

He was not impartial. He had a

favorite, my sister Gail. She was the apple of his eye. As far as he was concerned, she could do no wrong. Jap would chastise me, or Sally, or Mike, but seldom Gail. Gail lived up to his expectations, and maybe more. She is now a bank vice president in Richmond, and one day may be the president.

Jap had plenty of advice, all of it free. Most of it was good, but I still remember two pieces of bad advice he gave me. I had the cotton planter in the top hole where it attaches to the single tree, and he told me to put it in the middle hole. When it is in the top hole, the planter runs deep, and the seed get a hard cover over them. In the middle hole, it runs shallower, and the seed do not get a hard cover.

Our sandy soil needed the seed planted deep, because it will not hold much moisture. The several rows I planted deep had a high germination rate, and the rest did not do as well. Jap also told me I was putting too much side dressing on that cotton, and I cut back on the rest of the field. The rows with the heavy dressing naturally did better.

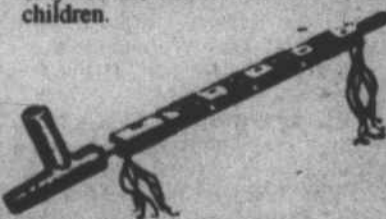
But other than that, Jap always had good advice. He was a sweet man.

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## Native American POWWOW

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Charles R. Eilber Physical Education Center  
Durham, North Carolina  
February 12, 1994

Intertribal Dancing 8-10 pm, 7-11 pm. Food for dancers and singers 5:30-6:30. Master of Ceremonies: Ray Littleburke (Lumbee-Cheraw)  
Head Lady Dancer: Pat Richardson (Cherokee) Head Man Dancer: Wayshah Richardson (Saponi-Catawba)  
No contests, just plenty of good singing & dancing. Traditional give-away for singers & dancers.  
Indian Arts and Crafts Trades by prior approval only.  
Information: Joe Liles 919-284-3366 (weekdays), 919-284-9201 (nights & weekends)  
Dana Long 919-286-3366 (weekdays), 919-723-0776 (weekends)

Admission \$1, Children 6 and younger free. (All proceeds go to support the powwow.)

This will be a traditional Indian gathering.

All participants who can contribute to a community feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood are welcome.  
Sponsored by Akweison, the Native American Club at NCSM

## Rebirth of the Traditional Spiritual GATHERINGS

A Tribute to the Great Spirit, Father of all Indian Nations

June 16, 17, 18, 19, 1994

(All day and all night Thursday; Friday, Saturday, Sunday until evening)

North Carolina Indian Cultural Center

- \*No Admission
- \*No Prizes
- \*No Competition

Sponsored in part by Title V, IEA Program, Intertribal Council of Elders and the Carolina Indian Voice.  
For more information, call Spotted Turtle (910) 521-4178, Painted Turtle (910) 521-0020 or Wild Turkey, % Carolian Indian Voice (910) 521-2826.