

Editorial and Opinion Page



Red Earth, Inc., State Arts Council of Oklahoma announce call for American Indian film and video competition

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Oklahoma City, OK—Entries are now being accepted through December 31, 1995 for the 1996 American Indian Film & Video Competition sponsored by Red Earth, Inc. and the State Arts Council of Oklahoma. The competition is designed to recognize film and video productions which preserve and portray the Native American way of life - past, present and future.

"The American Indian Film & Video Competition attracts entries from both Indian and non-Indian film producers," said Christy Alcox, Red Earth Executive Director, "and has gained a national reputation for honoring entries that focus on Native American issues."

Competition guidelines require entries to focus on American Indian history, arts, culture, myths, social

issues or evolving visions. Awards are presented in 10 categories including feature film/drama; documentary - art/artist profile; documentary - short; documentary - long; experimental/music video; animation; promotional; broadcast journalism; student/amateur; and children (14 and under).

All winners and special merit recipients will be featured during the ninth annual Red Earth Winter Expo scheduled February 2-4, 1996 at the Red Earth Indian Center, 2100 NE 52nd Street in Oklahoma City. An awards ceremony and film festival will be conducted during the 1996 Red Earth Festival scheduled for June 7-9, 1996 in downtown Oklahoma City.

"Each entry will be viewed and awarded by judges of regional and national reputation," said Patrick Whelan, competition chairman. "Winners and top finalists will receive special awards created with Oklahoma's official Allan Houser Medallion."

Awards will be presented for Best Direction by an American Indian, Best Made in Oklahoma Production, Best Environmental Production, and Best Childrens Program. The Will Sampson Award is awarded to the entry deemed "Best Show."

Entries must be submitted on one-half inch VHS tape, and must not have been previously entered into the competition. All entries will become part of the permanent collection in the Red Earth Indian Center Library.

Entries should be mailed to the 1996 American Indian Film & Video Competition, Red Earth, Inc., 2100 NE 52nd Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111. Brochures detailing all entry requirements can be obtained by calling (405) 427-5228, or (405) 521-2931.

The Carolina Indian Voice

Community Meeting

November 28 1995

6:30 P.M. Until

Pinney Grove School

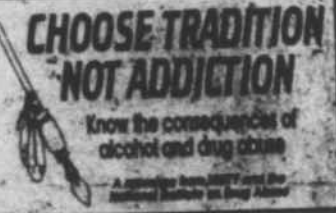
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(Author's Note: This comment was sent to the Wall Street Journal.)

I expected more. It was not the first time a reporter from an out-of-town newspaper has discovered Lumbee Indians, come to town for twenty-four hours, and gone away to write a story purporting to summarize the state of Lumbee affairs. Inevitably those other reporters have left Robeson County with a superficial view of the subtleties of Lumbee history and culture. But this was the Wall Street Journal, arguably one of the best newspapers in the world.

In Dana Milbank's article on the front page of the Journal (13 November 1995), I find that I expected too much. The article is a shallow and almost entirely negative treatment of a complex and beautiful matter. From the caption to the closing, the article handles the Lumbee as though they just decided in the past few months to start being Indian. As I explained to Mr. Milbank during his short visit, such a notion is remote from the truth. The Lumbee have always been concerned with their Native American heritage, for as long as there has been recorded history in this part of North Carolina.

Mr. Milbank says the Lumbee "are having an identity crisis." From more than a decade of experience with the Lumbee it is clear to me that, Milbank notwithstanding, the Lumbee seem to have a sound grasp of who they are. Their present and temporary debate on how best to shape their future is no different than political debates which occur in all human communities from time to time. A debate does not an "identity crisis" make.

Throughout the article Milbank reduces the Lumbee struggle for federal acknowledgment to a quest for money. This misses the point entirely. The two main concerns of most modern Lumbees with respect to federal recognition relate to: 1) their desire to take their rightful place at the table of national Indian affairs; and 2) their willingness to carry on the struggle begun by their ancestors and continued by their parents to keep alive the remaining elements of their traditional Native American culture. It is a matter of cultural survival much more than of money.

This doesn't mean that new funding for improvements in education, health and housing wouldn't be welcome. They certainly are needed. But most Lumbee adults would not reap the benefits of that new funding. The real benefits would accrue to the children and future generations of the Lumbee community. This is a rather more noble reality than the avaricious picture given by Milbank.

Milbank states that Lumbees "intermarried with Europeans early and often." There is evidence that some Lumbee people intermarried with persons of European or mixed Indian-and-European descent from the time of early incursions by outsiders into Native America. Some Lumbee people marry non-Lumbees in modern times. However, the vast majority of Lumbee people marry other Lumbees, and have done so historically. Milbank's reference to the 18th century assertion that Indians encountered in this area were a "mixed crew" overlooks the fact that Native people, amalgamated from various tribes in the wake of epidemic decimation of their former groups, were the principal contributors to that appearance of mixture. These Native people combined from three separate linguistic and genetic stocks — mainly Siouan, with some Algonkian and Iroquoian people. Had Milbank looked only slightly into the historical record of the region and its cultures, he would have realized this.

Although I do not say that it was Mr. Milbank's intention, there are many other misleading elements in the article. Almost every paragraph carries that most dangerous of usages — the half-truth. Perhaps the most egregious of these is his statement that: "Whatever they are, the Lumbees, inspired by the national revival of Indian culture, desperately want to reclaim their lost Lumbeeness." This statement is especially deserving of examination.

"Whatever they are..." suggests at least that Milbank couldn't figure it out in his brief visit, and possibly that Lumbees themselves might not really know. While the former is apparently true, the latter is certainly not.

"Inspired by the national revival of Indian culture..." implies that Lumbees recently acquired the idea from outside their own community.

For a long time there have been documented, repeated and consistent efforts to assert and maintain the Native American heritage of this community. Elders of advanced age in the Lumbee community tell of "Indian meetings" which happened when they were little children. Cultural revivals of one kind or another occurred during virtually every decade from the 1860s to the 1950s, before any "national revival of Indian culture" could reasonably be considered to have happened. Since the 1960s, with the sweep of the Civil Rights- and Pan-Indian movements across America, Lumbees have merely continued what was for them a centuries-long struggle.

Use of the word "desperately" in Milbank's sentence connotes a hopeless, frantic and extreme desire. This simply is not supported by the reality of everyday life in the Lumbee community. Lumbee people have been and continue to be carrying on with their lives — raising children and crops and songs; going to offices and factories and churches; sharing in politics and economics and culture. Yes, most Lumbees think federal recognition would be a good idea; but many say frankly that they don't need the government's stamp of approval to know who they are.

There are other parts of this excerpt and the entire article which should be reconsidered in the light of real life in the land of the Lumbee. To treat each in turn would require a great deal more space than most newspapers are willing to devote to such a subject, and would elevate some plainly dumb statements to a level higher than warranted.

I am left with two questions. First, what precipitated Mr. Milbank's sudden discovery of Lumbees and the Wall Street Journal's desire to publicize his discovery? And second, when will people realize that a short walk at the edge of a deep wood cannot yield a useful map of the forest beyond?

Mr. Milbank presented himself in Pembroke as an intelligent and thoughtful man. It is unfortunate that his article about the Lumbee didn't turn out that way.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.



Deep Branch Volunteer Fire Department continues to inform the students of Deep Branch Elementary Montessori School and the community as well, about the dangers of fire. Fire Prevention Week was held October 9-14, 1995.

Mr. Ronnie Williamson, a member of Deep Branch Volunteer Fire Department, conducted classes at Deep Branch Elementary School to continue informing students in ways of fire prevention and what to do should a fire occur. Mr. Williamson stated that since the program began, fires in the Deep Branch district have decreased by approximately one half.

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Celebrate Indian Heritage Month
"Give the Gift of Life"

LRDA will sponsor a blood drive on
Monday, November 27, 1995
from 1:20 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.
Burnt Swamp Baptist Building

For appointment, please call Patricia Brayboy at 738-5057
"Free T-shirts to the first 30 donors"

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Close out sale on all 1995 homes. New vinyl siding, shingle roof homes. 3 bedroom 2 bath only \$15995. All homes in stock reduced. Monthly payments as low as \$99. No down payment to qualified buyers.

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Myra Deese Hall, M.D.

A Pembroke native, she will join the Family Care Center in Raeford beginning November 8. To make an appointment with Dr. Deese Hall, Dr. Jordan or Buck Schrum call (910) 875-3606.

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