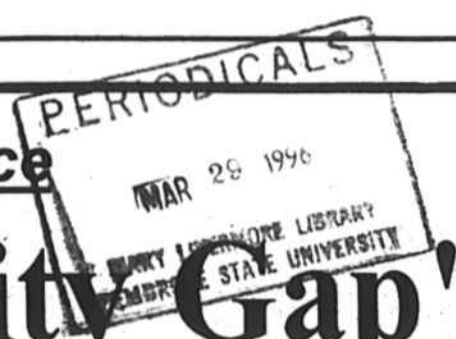


A Front Page Editorial of the Carolina Indian Voice

O.H. Lewis and the real 'Reality Gap'



This is the fourth in a series of front page editorials appearing, in part, an answer to some of the, as we see it, cockeyed and right wing rhetoric of the *Robesonian's* Lewis Boys (O.H. and Bill) that have appeared in that so-called newspaper over the last few months and even years now.

Sometimes Indian people have to answer wrong headed information that is being force fed to our people via the so-called daily. This so-called newspaper has long emanated an 1860s Democratic Party mentality which threatens to lead us into a race war. They have been bringing out the worst in us, and it is time for somebody to say so. It seems to have fallen to the task of *The Carolina Indian Voice*—to combat some of the nonsense put forth by the Lewis boys, and their minions. We are not especially happy about having to do it, but we are not afraid either. It would be wonderful if everybody loved one another, but they don't and race continues to define us as a tri-racial county. The Lewis boys seem to revel in race baiting the rest of us. Enough, we say! It seems a shame that no one else will say anything publicly, especially the religious community that seems, in large part, to reflect the political mind set of its mostly segregated congregations.

Robeson County is one of the most interesting places to live in America, or even in the whole world. The 105,610 population (according to the 1990 Census) is made up of approximately 40% Indians, 35% Whites and 25% Blacks. These racial figures make for some very interesting dynamics when something is going on, say like a sheriff's race. On the face of it, it is hard to believe that a White person could ever win a political race of any kind in Robeson County, but it is never like it seems at the second look. There are many Indians and Blacks who like to team up with Whites against their own people. It is the vestige of a one-dimensional society we used to know even as late as the early 1970s when Whites dominated the political life of our county. It comes out in strange ways, psychologically. Psychically, we don't always think well of ourselves in Robeson County, all of us, and Indians and Blacks sometimes express their feelings of inadequacy politically. We remember well that former Sheriff Hubert Stone had many, many Indian and Black supporters. He would often be found at fifty year wedding anniversaries, and at birthday parties of Indian and Black elders. Not mention, all those funerals he served on as honorary pall bearer. It was a badge of honor to have the sheriff at a fete of any kind, and Sheriff Stone seldom missed a family gathering of any importance. Sheriff Stone was a good politician, but it had little to do with him and more to do with the history of a county that, until very recently, denied Indians and Blacks the opportunity to participate in the political arena. Politicians like former Sheriff Stone were masters, too, at fostering ill will between Indians and Blacks. For instance, in the last political season, some of the talk floating around the Black communities was that "the Indians are greedy and taking everything." Ahem. Recently we have heard this same kind of talk in the Indian community, especially on the heel of Indian Sheriff Glenn Maynor making a Black (Major Willie Watson) second in command at the sheriff's department, and the naming of Willie Best, a Black, as county manager. There seems little credence in either

perception because Indians and Blacks both are still under represented politically, especially at Southeastern Regional Medical Center, Robeson Community College, Pembroke State University and the Robeson County Department of Social Services; just to name a few agencies not reflective of the county in the make up of their staffs and boards of directors. We expect to see some political hardball played at these important Robeson landmarks in the very near future. Given the opportunity, Indians can and have stepped up to the plate and hit a home run, and in many instances, a grand slam. We have seen this demonstrated in such important businesses and agencies as Robeson Health Care Corporation, Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation, Lumbee Regional Development Association, the Board of Education, the Town of Pembroke, etc.

We were glad to see redistricting in the county, especially at the school board and county commissioner level. It is nice to report that the school board and county commissioners closely reflect the racial makeup of the county with 3 Indian commissioners, 2 Black commissioners, and 3 White ones. The school board also reflect this racial mix with 4 Whites, 4 Indians and 3 Blacks. The local legislative delegation also reflects one Indian (Ron Sutton), one Black (Frances Cummings) and one White (Doug Yongue). The state senator continues to be White, and will be that same race this coming political season because no Indian or Black offered themselves as a candidate in this race. This will probably be the last senatorial race that will not be contested by either (or both) an Indian or Black.

O.H. Lewis writes a column "Reality Check" in the *Robesonian*, and it is many times hateful and strangely out of touch with the majority of the people who live in Robeson County. For instance, election officials say Lewis is a Republican, more than 90% of Robeson County's population is registered Democratic. Lewis is very conservative, while the majority of the county (40% Indian, 25% Black) is very liberal. This "Reality check", or gap, seems not to daunt Mr. Lewis at all. *The Robesonian* can, of course dispute this statement by publishing the percentages by race of their subscribers; but our informal polling indicates that more than 75% of the subscribers to *the Robesonian* are either Indian or Black. What kind of message are they receiving from Mr. Lewis and *the Robesonian* that continues to support and champion his right wing babblings? How long will Indians and Blacks continue to support a newspaper (sic) that is editorially contrary to how they feel about things politically? AND HOW LONG WILL THEY (Indians and Blacks) SUPPORT AN ORGAN (*The Robesonian*) THAT BRINGS OUT THE WORST IN THEM?

O.H. Lewis has written a diatribe against LRDA (Lumbee Regional Development Association and headquartered in Pembroke) in a five part series entitled "People of the River Swamp, Lumbee Tribe of the Cheraw Indians." Lewis' articles are chock full of misrepresentations, maybe even out right lies. The articles are one dimensional, and do not acknowledge another side to the issue that he is belaboring; namely when he intimates that LRDA is crooked and bound for bureaucratic hell

LRDA, like all organizations, has made mistakes in the past, but they have provided jobs to many Robesonians, and have led the fight for Lumbee federal recognition. To say less than this is to tell a lie. LRDA has also helped many Indian youth find scholarship help, especially through the Indian Health Fellowships that have noticeably increased the Indian cadre of doctors and nurses, and other professionals. LRDA has done much good, and raised the banner of the Lumbee high throughout the land. Alas, we also believe LRDA lagged behind in the struggle to write a tribal constitution, and to establish a tribal council. We also disagreed with LRDA when they suspended elections, for what ever reason. The agency has recently stated that it plans to hold elections soon, possibly even this year. We hope they will do so; to do less will be to acquiesce to oligarchical madness. But to throw the baby (LRDA) out with the muckraking wash is more than we can countenance. LRDA is an Indian agency, and we should correct any problems that need correcting in house, away from the hateful eyes of the O.H. Lewises. People like Lewis mean us no good, and should not be coddled by Indian people; and our Indian business, even secrets, should not be whispered into Mr. Lewis' ear. In our editorial opinion, Lewis does not have our best interest at heart, nor does *the Robesonian*!—Lewis says, in his so-called expose of LRDA that "Members of the Lumbee contributed substantially to this article and these contents were taken from file records and other documents." The truth of the matter is that O.H. Lewis was led, like a horse, to the trough, by certain members and administrators of the Lumbee Cheraw Tribal Council who were trying to supplant LRDA in the minds and hearts of the Indian people. The tribal council has sued LRDA in Robeson County Superior court, and the case will be heard by long time Indian nemesis, Superior Court Judge Joe Freeman Britt. This ironic twist is almost amusing, but it is too important to laugh for too long. If the tribal council wins the case, they expect to be given the mandate to lead the Indian people, at least in Robeson County. It's almost as if some of us have lost our senses, and don't know what to do except flail away at one another. It is the old psychic trick of divide and conquer, and explains why unity is hard to come by in the Indian camp. The Tribal Council has hurt its cause considerably by coddling O.H. Lewis and giving him editorial bullets to shoot at the rest of us. We contend, if the truth be known, that the majority of the Lumbee Cheraw Tribal Council, and those who support them, did not agree with the O.H. Lewis debacle. Those who gave O.H. Lewis information about LRDA were few in number, and were decidedly a minority of Lumbee Tribal Council adherents. We challenge Mr. Lewis to publish the names of those who helped him; more than a dozen will be significant. A hundred names, a thousand, now that would be traumatic and disturbing to say the least. Our guess is that less than half a dozen Indians (out of some 40,000) helped Lewis. He should not try to fool the rest of us by implying anything other than the truth.

Our last article in this series will conclude in next week's issue of the Carolina Indian Voice, — unless the Lewis boys, or some of their minions, say more. In that case, we reserve the right to unsheathe the pen and respond in kind. Amen!!!



Mrs. Ethel Locklear Honored for Community Services

Recently Mrs. Ethel Locklear was honored at the county Cooperative Extension service's annual awards banquet. She was presented the Mollye Briley award. The honor recognizes someone for exhibiting care, concern and leadership in the community. Locklear of Pembroke is president of the Robeson County extension homemakers organization. She is active in her church, is a retired school teachers and volunteers at rest homes. Locklear is also a volunteer at Pembroke Elementary School.

Project Graduation Planned for 1996

Many graduating high school seniors of Robeson County will celebrate their graduation on June 7, 1996 on the Pembroke State University campus at Project Graduation!

Project Graduation is an all-night alcohol and chemical-free party which brings seniors from across the county together to celebrate their accomplishments of completing high school. The celebration, open for graduating seniors only, will begin at 9 p.m. and end at 3:00 a.m. A variety of activities are planned which include live remote with Foxy 99, micro-reality cars, interactive videos, bungee run, photo buttons, bowling, pool, ping pong, video games, music by the DARE band, DJ featuring "A Sound Business" and a special entertainment show at the end of the evening, food, entertainment, and music will be abundant. The cost for students is a \$1.00 registration fee.

The TEAM Council met on January 12 to begin planning and to elect officers for project Graduation 1996. Those officers are: Dr. Diane Jones, Chairperson; Pearlene Revels, Vice Chairperson; Vicky Locklear, Registration and Chaperon Chairperson; Bill James Brevington, Clean-up Committee Chairperson; Nila Chamberlain, Decoration Committee Chairperson; Abdul Ghaffar and Raymond Cummings, Entertainment Committee Chairpersons; Erle B. Smith, Jimmie Lou Hayes and Audrey Harris, Food Committee Chairpersons; Lavern Oxendine, Fund Raising Committee Chairperson; Lavern Oxendine and Kathy Locklear, Prize Committee Chairpersons; Al Kahn and Ronnie Chavis, Publicity Committee Chairpersons; Capt. Larry McNeill, Security Committee Chairperson; and Kathy Locklear, T-shirt Committee Chairperson. Volunteers are encouraged to contact the respective Chairperson for volunteer assignments.

Dr. Diane Jones stated that she is delighted to chair this year's project—one of the most memorable nights for hundreds of graduating seniors! The TEAM Council and other volunteers are committed to making this year's project a safe, entertaining and special night to remember.

Project Graduation is sponsored by the Public Schools of Robeson County and the TEAM Council (Drug and Alcohol Advisory Council). Anyone wishing to make a donation to Project Graduation may send checks payable to the Public Schools of Robeson, Project Graduation 1996, % Kathy Locklear, P.O. Drawer 2909, Lumberton, NC 28359 or call (910) 671-6000, etc. 284.

Interesting people at Unity Conference



Ray "Spotted Turtle" Clark, Sr. (also fondly known as "Mr. Pete") takes a short break during the Unity Conference with Chief Tom Carter of the Coharie Tribe (shown right). (Photo contributed by John "Tall Bird" Marshall)



Hal Ammons mans the Four Feathers Booth of the Cumberland County Association for Indian People at the 21st Annual North Carolina Indian Unity Conference held recently in Raleigh, North Carolina. (Photo contributed by John "Tall Bird" Marshall)

Statement from Chairman of Board of Education

Paul Brooks, Chairman of the Board of Education for the Public Schools of Robeson County, has issued a statement concerning a report published in the *Robesonian* that suggested Superintendent Purnell Sweet has prohibited school employee Richard Monroe from addressing a group of county citizens upset with the recent property reevaluation in the county. Mr. Brooks' statements says that, after checking all the facts in the matter and interviewing Mr. Monroe, the Board has come to the conclusion that Mr. Sweet had done nothing to justify the news story and that the matter is now considered closed.

Hearings planned on proposed school calendar

Parents are urged to attend one of the public hearings to be held on the proposed school calendar for the 1996-97 school year at each of the high schools in the county on Monday night, April 1st at 6 p.m. Members of the schools' calendar committee will be on hand to explain the calendar and answer any questions. The proposed calendar calls for an earlier beginning and an earlier ending of the school year. Hearings will be held at Purnell Sweet, South Robeson, Fairmont, Red Springs, St. Pauls and Lumberton Senior High School.



Bear Swamp Revival to be held Middle School to host picnic

Bear Swamp Baptist Church will host their Spring Revival beginning March 31- April 5. Rev. Ernest Best will be the guest evangelist. Sunday night services begin at 7 p.m. with services through the week at 7:30 p.m. The pastor of Bear Swamp, Rev. Anthony R. Locklear, and the congregation extend a cordial invitation to the public to attend.

Pembroke Middle School cordially invites parents and students to participate in a special picnic activity on April 2, 1996 from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Registration is from 5-5:30 in the school cafeteria. Parents and students will participate in two mini sessions and then enjoy a picnic meal.

Parkton teachers participate in Reading Workshop

Ms. Elizabeth Robinson, Ms. Barbara Thompson, and Ms. Elizabeth Shore were workshop presenters at the North Carolina Reading Association Conference in Raleigh, NC on March 14. Their presentation was entitled "Parents, School and Teachers Collaborating! Closing the Gap: Improving Achievement Through Parental Involvement." The materials and activities presented provided the conferees with strategies and resources which showed that improved student achievement is a partnership between parent, child and teacher depending on each other to play the appropriate role and assume the appropriate responsibility. The theme of the state conference was "School, Home and Community collaborating to Crusade for Literacy."