

# Readers Believe Racism Motivates Terry Smith, Member of the Board of Education: Does He Hate All Indians, They Ask, Or Only Those in Leadership Positions

Dear Editor:  
After the media attention over the audit report from the Public Schools of Robeson County and the subsequent retirement of Superintendent Purnell Swett, we felt the need to write and let Mr. Swett and the public in general know that we are among the many people who support Purnell Swett and do not for one minute believe that he is guilty of illegal or unethical conduct.  
We are familiar with the Audit report and what it says. We also want certain people to know, especially Board Member Terry Smith that we are not fooled by his loud and unusually noisy fuss over Supt. Swett. We believe that Terry Smith is a racist and a bigot and his concern has nothing to do with anything other than the color of Mr. Swett's skin. How can he make the contradictory statements that he made over the situation at Lumberton High School's principalship and then expect us to believe that he is concerned over anything other than race. If Terry Smith is indeed concerned over the education of boys and girls in Robeson County we suggest that he resign forthwith as a public statement to the betterment of education.

He was against merger in 1989 and led the fight to keep five schools systems in this county simply because it resulted in the separation of students by race. We lay this accusation to his charge and suggest that he provide us proof to the contrary. When he realized that the school systems would be merged, in spite of his vigorous opposition, he then decided to run for a seat on the school board. We assume that his reason was that he would be in a position to give "them Indians heck." Why? For the same reason he stated when he heard that Dale Maynor would become principal at Lumberton High School. He said, we understand, that Lumberton was a white school and should have a white principal. Well, he certainly is not a closet racist. But, if he felt that way, he certainly demonstrates to us that his concern is not for the students of this school system, but rather for what day by day becomes the minority population in the

county—the whites. He seems to be an advocate for "white supremacy." This is an archaic notion and will no longer work. We will not return to the days of the whites owning the land and Indians doing the share cropping. Those days are behind us and we continue to progress, in spite of the Terry Smiths in our midst. We suggest that he cannot provide leadership or direction to our educational system unless the superintendent is white, and the central office staff are white. He would have us believe that there is no other race to be considered in the educational system. He would have us believe this by his actions although the majority of the student population is Indian.

We are also watching and listening to our bigoted (in our opinion) board member. It is simply amazing to us that Terry Smith thinks we are all non comprehending. There seems to be a push on now to bring in applicants for the job of superintendent from outside the state. That is as flimsy as toilet tissue. What they are actually saying is "this is one way to ensure that we don't have another Indian superintendent." We hear you talking, Mr. Smith, and we are not convinced that you are anything less than racist. You all brought Johnson, a white in here, and if you will check the audit reports, he was not innocent or blameless in the loss of millions of dollars. How soon some of you all seem to forget. Or did the fact that he was white make his actions excusable. Again, Mr. Smith, stop behaving as a racist and consider what is best for the children of this county. Do not continue to denigrate a nation of people just because we were not born white. Maybe some of us Indians can move into your district and run successfully for the seat you are now occupying. We assure you we would be far kinder to you and your race than you have been to us.

If Mr. Smith would be honest, he would admit that he has never liked Purnell Swett and neither does he like the children of the public schools unless they are white.

While this letter may sound mean and ugly, it is not our intention. Our intention is simply to let Terry Smith and others who feel as he does know that

we are not fooled by rhetoric or games. We understand the game plan by people of Terry Smith's attitude is to rid this county of all Indians in position of leadership. We write this letter so that Mr. Smith and others understand that we recognize the plan and we are going to be honest about it and tell it like it is. We wish that Mr. Smith would be as honest. By the way, we have heard that targeting Indians in position of authority is one of the goals of a certain group who are supposedly watch dogging local boards. Does Smith belong to this organization?

As taxpaying citizens of this county we cannot afford to let Terry Smith and others who display racist attitudes think that we are fooled by what they say. It would be interesting to check his voting record and see how many positive votes he has cast that were beneficial to Indians. Our guess is that anything that Supt. Swett recommended, he opposed. We hope that he will treat Dr. Harding in a kinder manner. We hope to see that he will resign so that Dr. Harding and those members of the central staff, teachers and members of the board of education who are serious about education can get on with the business of educating children.

We hate to leave Terry Smith with this startling fact, but the shock might do him some good. Indians are not going any place. We will continue to hold positions of leadership in this county and we will not be thrown off our path of taking rightful positions by racists like him. We have been here a long time and are the majority population. That means, Mr. Smith, that we are entitled to our share of all positions in the county. And progress has come in spite of the racists like Terry Smith. Get use to our faces, we predict that you will see more and more Indians in positions of authority. And you will survive!!! I'll be here, we have survived for more than five hundred years in spite of people like you.

McKeithan Jones  
Alfred Dial  
Carnell Locklear



## Letters to the Editor Consent Of The Government

John Locke one of England's greatest philosophers, wrote what is known as his "most important political work in his 'Two Treatises Concerning Government' (1689). In these treatises Locke challenged the idea of the divine right of kings and said that government should exist only with the consent of the governed. Locke believed that a ruler who loses the confidence of the people has lost the right to govern them". The New Book of Knowledge, pg. 321.

In the dispute between the Lumbee/Cheraw Tribal Government and Lumbee Regional Development, Inc. (a state chartered, non-profit corporation), we should all consider the words of John Locke and ask a few questions. Number one, should a state chartered non-profit corporation be allowed to disregard the Lumbee Peoples consent for representation through their ratified constitution empower the Lumbee/Cheraw Tribal Council to act for

the Lumbee People? Number four, does the Lumbee/Cheraw Tribal Council need permission from any entity (federal, state, local, or organizational) to assert its leadership? Number five, can the Federal, State, or Local governments dictate who shall govern the Lumbee? Number six, can any person or organization be given veto power over the constitutionally established Lumbee/Cheraw Tribal Council? And number seven, does LRDA have the confidence of the Lumbee People (80/40) for the constitution to 223 against the constitution)?

I feel that these are questions that deserve careful thought. We can continue to be apathetic or become actively involved in asserting the consent of the Lumbee Peoples expressed through their ratified constitution.

Samuel Kerns  
Lumbee/Cheraw Council  
Member District 9

## Purnell Swett explains his retirement as Superintendent of Public Schools

To the Editor:

Last week I informed the Robeson County Board of Education of my decision to retire as Superintendent, effective December 31, 1997. Given the misleading nature of recent publicity, I feel an explanation of my retirement is not the public interest.

My decision to retire was completely voluntary. I was not asked or forced to resign. My contract as Superintendent runs through June 30, 1999, and I could have insisted that my contract be honored. That would have been my preferred approach if I were acting from a personal financial perspective.

The overriding consideration in my decision to retire was the best interest of the Public Schools of Robeson County. The recent special audit report was being used in a political manner by the people who had differences on my leadership in matters. The students deserve the undivided focus by school leaders on education rather than on side issues. Given all the publicity and controversy, I felt that my retirement could help that process. My decision to retire also was influenced by personal and health reasons. The last few months have been very difficult for me, due to the unsubstantiated attacks on my personal integrity. At this point in my life, my family and my health do not need a long bitter public dispute.

The publicity regarding the audit

was misleading in the extreme. I assure the citizens and taxpayers of Robeson County that I have never misused public funds for my personal benefit. For that reason, it is important to clarify some aspects of the audit. The fact that a preliminary draft audit was improperly released to the media indicates the political motivation of this whole process.

The draft audit slurred innocent persons' reputations including mine. I was accused of receiving three supposedly improper payments. The first item involved supplemental salary payments in 1993. There was absolutely nothing to that accusation, as acknowledged by the final audit which completely omits that item. However, the damage was already done because of the draft audit's improper release.

The second item was a bonus paid in 1993. I had met (and exceeded) the performance goal of reducing the dropout rate, enabling the school system to avoid State takeover. Angus Thompson, II the Board of Education Chairman at the time, has confirmed in writing that the Board of Education agreed that Superintendent Swett was entitled to his full performance bonus. In fairness to me, I request that Mr. Thompson's letter (enclosed) be published. The only problem with the bonus was that the Board of Education minutes were incomplete, yet the audit unfairly questioned my

integrity rather than the Board of Education's lack of own documentation.

The third item concerns year's salary adjustments paid to me in 1997. The public must understand that the audit contains absolutely no finding that I was paid more than I was entitled to under my employment contracts. I have been assured that I was entitled to salary adjustments under the State salary schedules, because I was entitled to additional credit for prior federal government service. The State has indicated that no State salary rules were violated. This item was discussed in detail with the Board of Education in closed session on August 25, 1997, after which the Board of Education publicly stated that "there is no issue of intentional wrongdoing." The audit says nothing to the contrary.

The people of Robeson County should know that my administration and I have dedicated ourselves to bettering education in the county and have been committed to spending taxpayer dollars efficiently. The auditor himself noted the sound financial condition of the Public Schools of Robeson County and the great improvements in that area since I returned as Superintendent.

Respectfully,  
Purnell Swett  
Superintendent  
Public Schools of Robeson County

## Mother Teresa: Saint of the Gutter

Hailed as a living saint, Mother Teresa dedicated her life to caring for the dying, the outcast and the abandoned. When she recently passed away—just days after her eighty-seventh birthday—the world lost one of the most revered and admired figures of the Twentieth Century, a charismatic leader respected by people of all religions and nationalities.

From her earliest childhood dreams of helping the poor to her tireless work as the leader of the Mission of Charity, Mother Teresa's life was dedicated solely to helping those in need. With a steely resolve, and the backing of religious, international and political leaders, she eventually created the Missionary Sisters of Charity, an order of over 4,500 sari-clad sisters, who extend themselves to everyone from huddled, starving masses around the world to the victims of AIDS. And from her charitable work came inescapable fame, along with the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, the Congressional Gold Medal and the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, among others.

Her inspirational story took her from the convent years in Calcutta to her meetings with presidents, prime ministers and royalty. To make a donation or offer services to the Missionaries of Charity call (718) 292-0019.

**Cookie's**

**Corner**

Vinita Maynor Clark

**FOR SALE**

Used Homes Blowout!

Over 40 to Choose From

On the Lot Financing

No Reasonable Offer Refused

Prices as Low as \$499.00

Bank Repo's Available

Harry Reed Homes

3601 Elizabethtown Road

Lumberton, NC 28358

(910) 739-9531

## In Memory of Clinton Clark

Dec. 23, 1948- Dec. 1, 1992

I wish that there was a telephone in heaven to talk to you today. It's been five years since you went away.

I remember the night that we met. You kept on asking me to dance. You asked about 15 times and on the 16th you were mine. "Islands in the Streams" was the song of our first dance for the rest of our lives. Everytime I hear that song "I always thank God for you".

I remember the night before you left, you gave the preacher a can of Coke and you told him to tell me "that you would love me forever and everytime you drink a can of Coke...always remember how very much I love you" Well, I still love my Coke! The memories of our love, devotion and laughter will always be with me. Because memories are the one thing that no one can take away.

Well, hunny, I hope that you, my father and my brother are truly in a better place. I'll love you forever, after that you are on your own.

And when you have had T-Bone steak you don't want bologna. You know what I mean?

Your wife and still carrying your name proudly.

Vinita

Has anyone told you that they love you today? Well, I do.

Carolina Indian Voice  
521-2826

**Say You Read It In The**  
**Carolina Indian Voice. To**  
**Subscribe Call 521-2826**



## Mt. Bethel Indian Baptist Church Burns

By: John "Tall Bird" Marshall, Lumbee

On Friday night, November 14, 1997, around midnight, firemen responded to a call reporting Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church being on fire. Approximately 6,000 square feet of Sanctuary and Sunday School Facilities were burned to the ground. Investigators have indicated the cause of the fire to be related to an electrical shortage.

Unbeknownst about the fire, I had driven up from Rocky Mount that Sunday Morning to attend Sunday School and Church Services as a visitor. But, upon arriving at the Church, what my eyes beheld was disbelief. Smoke was still spiraling upwards from the charred and blackened rubble and ashes. It was a terrible, heart-breaking site.

Mt Bethel was founded in 1957 by the Reverend C.H. Richardson who, at the age of 97, still resides in Hollister, North Carolina.

The Church has some 900 members, with a weekly average attendance of 300.

Spared by the fire was the Fellowship Building which is located to the rear of the destroyed structures.

Pastor of Mt. Bethel is the Reverend Timmy Chavis, Lumbee of Robeson County. Reverend Chavis is married to the former Kim Barton of Pembroke, North Carolina.

Reverend Chavis has been pastor at Mt. Bethel for two years. Even though Reverend Chavis and his congregation are heart-broken over their loss, their faith and spirit has not been broken. Reverend Chavis preached to the people that we, as Native Americans, have suffered many trials and tribulations throughout history; yet, we remain a proud People, and continue to survive and overcome our setbacks. He added, "Adversity Brings Out The Best In God's People".

That morning's service was held in the Haliwa-Sapponi Tribal Multi-Purpose Building. The remaining services will be held in the Haliwa Indian School until demolition and new construction of facilities can be completed.

It is hopeful that construction of the new facilities will be completed within 12 to 18 months, or sooner if possible.

Church officials have already begun to contact architects and consultants in regards to the design of the new facilities. The Church was insured, however, as the Church was already filled to maximum capacity. Church Officials wish to increase the size of the structure to better accommodate current membership and new members.

Donations and gifts have been

received from many sources of which a few are: \$2,000.00 from the Baptist State Convention. Eight podiums made and donated by the Berea Baptist Church of Pembroke, and Trinity Baptist Church made available their Sanctuary, as well as, Walnut Grove Baptist Church.

In visiting Mt. Bethel's Church Services the following week, it was clear to me that the Congregation were all in one positive accord. It seems the most single word being used among its members is "Togetherness".

As they study how Nehemiah strategized to re-build the walls of Jerusalem, they also worship and praise God for His blessings, asking for His presence and guidance in the re-building of the walls of their own beloved Sanctuary. "So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the People had a mind to work". Nehemiah 4:6 Without doubt, God has already sent His message to this Congregation through means of their Sunday School lessons.

Truly, the Haliwa-Sapponi have a mind to work, and are anxious to rebuild. As one member stated, "We are together and together we stand, but divided we fall". Yes, it is obvious that the members of Mt. Bethel Indian Baptist Church are "together" in their togetherness!!



Anita L. Jackson, M.D., an otolaryngologist, has joined the medical staff of SRMC. Her private practice is Greater Carolina Ear, Nose and Throat located in the Southeastern Medical Park. A native of Georgia, Dr. Jackson earned an undergraduate degree from Princeton, a master's degree in biology from Stanford and a medical degree from the University of Illinois. She completed her surgical training at Howard University Hospital and earned a master's degree from the Harvard School of Public Health. She completed her residency training at the University of Tennessee.

Anita L. Jackson, M.D.

We can all feel good about each new addition to the medical staff at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. Every physician brings years of education, specialized training and personal expertise to our highly diversified health care team—and to our community.

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest doctor. With your arrival, there is a significant improvement in the general health of this community.



300 West 27th Street, Lumberton, NC • (910) 671-5000