

# Editorial and Opinion Page

## Sovereign Nations Must be Independent Nations demonstrated by thinking for themselves

Dear Editor,  
Thought I would check in with you to let you know I am still around. As always I hope I can give you some things to think about along the way. Well, I guess the place to start is at the beginning. If we start anywhere else we might confuse or loose people. It's great when the smoke clears and things start to become a little clearer and less confusing. The Lumbee and Tuscarora people of Robeson County, have a great deal to be thankful for. Both groups have some issues they need to settle before they can obtain what they want. I feel we have come a long way, and things are becoming clearer to everyone.

I want to begin by saying my heart goes out to the Lumbee people. You are going through what we, the Tuscaroras, have been through in the forming of a government. Never is this an easy thing to do, to break away from one system to create your own. I have listened to your words and heard you saying that you want to become the Lumbee Nation, no longer a tribe. A nation that is sufficient with its own government and leaders, accountable to the people. You now know there are many who will stand in the way of this happening. The most surprising thing you have learned is it can be your own people standing in the way, but let us look at why and gather understanding. Maybe they feel they will lose something that they have under the existing system. Some may want the power to be put in their hands totally. What they fail to understand is we are not talking about a Hollywood John Wayne Movie

Indian Government. In traditional Governments leaders are the servants of the people, not Kings who do as they wish. The last thing the American Government wants is Native people governing Native people. This is because in Native Governments there are no kings, no emperors where all the decisions are made. Everything is done in the open. Can you imagine what would happen if people started thinking for themselves? Politicians would have to get honest jobs. Maybe this is the reason so many people are against a Lumbee Nation Sovereign Government.

When Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin and the rest of the people who borrowed this nation from our ancestors wanted to form a government they also borrowed our form of government. I know some of you will have a hard time dealing with what I just said because you have been taught that Washington was the Father of this nation. We must wake up to the fact that certain information is left out in United States history classes. We must wake up to the fact certain information is left out in United States history classes. We have only been taught from one perspective, their story, not ours. This was not a virgin land waiting to be settled. Ask yourself were not our ancestors here first? So how could this have been virgin land? My question is what do you call someone who takes something that belongs to someone else? What father would steal from his child just to obtain what he wants? It is a known fact

Washington sold Indian land that he did not hold title for. Richard Nixon nor Bill Clinton are the first presidents to lie to this nation and if we do not wake up they will not be the last. In spite of all the evil of mankind the Almighty still has his hand on the wheel and is directing our future.

The Tuscaroras are a part of the Six Nations and we have a form of government we call The Great Law, which is based on power to the people. If you think about it, isn't this what democracy is, a government by the people and for the people? Next time you have a dollar look at the back on the right side (no pun intended). Note the thirteen arrows in the eagle's talons. This is a teaching directly from The Great Law. Benjamin Franklin was taught that a single arrow can be snapped in two, but when the arrow becomes part of a bundle its strength is increased. The people of Six Nations told the colonist to be like them, independent but to form themselves into a confederacy in the time of need.

For my people, the Tuscaroras there are areas we still need to work on, our language, songs and traditions because ours is a spiritual path. My dream is that we build a Long House where all the different bands can come together. A place where we can come to learn our language and bring back traditions. Our main focus of coming together should never be to form a business or political system because we must first come together as the people. We must come together as people who have the same language, songs and traditions, then we can truly become as

one. There are those among us who will tell you that nothing is happening, but they fail to notice the greatest change. The greatest changes in life do not come over night they are subtle as the wind changing directions, hard to notice at first. We must be who we say we are and not who others say we are. In other words we must do our own thinking and not be told what to think. This will take time because we have been taught to think that it is better to rely on someone else than ourselves. So, to my Tuscarora brothers and sisters, take heart we are on our way. Let us not change directions if we do we will lose heart.

To become sovereign one must be independent. It has been said, "If we free our minds to think the way the Spirit would have us to think, then we will become just what he will have us to be." If we want to become the Lumbee Nation or the Tuscarora Nation as we are destined to be, we must begin today. We cannot sit back and hope someone else will make it happen. All great movements must start inside each one of us. I leave you this: dare to be who you really are so you will be a strong asset to your nation. Stop being the weakest link. Learn all that you can. Read all that you can. And start thinking for yourselves.

As always, I hope I have given you something to think about. But more importantly, I hope I have given you some things to act upon.

In the True Way,  
Derek Lowry

### Hug a senior citizen today, folk

## Ranting and Raving



Garry Lewis Barton

I have two acquaintances. Both are 8. But one is flagrantly discriminated against. And that bothers me. And it should bother you, too!

Since they are so similar in so many ways, I'll differentiate between the two by labeling them "Friend A" and "Friend B."

"Friend A" has trouble communicating his needs or much of anything else. But that's not unusual with someone his age. And family and friends are patient and kind, seemingly getting the biggest thrill when occasionally he manages to utter an intelligible or recognizable sound.

"Friend B" has trouble communicating his needs or much of anything else, too. And though it is not uncommon among those in his age bracket either, far too often his family, friends or caretakers become frustrated and aggravated by his frequent inability to articulate his wants or needs. Some to the point of being downright mean and/or abusive to him.

It is not unusual or uncommon for "Friend A" to have trouble controlling his kidneys or bowels, occasionally having an accident in his clothes. And almost always, his caretakers go about the business of washing and dressing him with a most times happy and joyful heart.

But, let the same thing happen to "Friend B" and more times than not his caretakers are disgusted and repulsed when having to clean and dress him, a lot of times not even bothering to try and conceal the disgust or repulsion.

Because of the clumsiness and lack of coordination which oftentimes affect those in his age bracket, "Friend A" is notorious for breaking "stuff" in the house. And many times his caretakers condone such behavior and attribute it to part of the natural process of growing. They may grin and write it off to his mischievous nature, and try to keep things out of his reach in the future to avert a repeat of such disruptive behavior.

But let "Friend B" break something because of his clumsiness, or lack of coordination and control of his movements, which can also be attributed to his age, and far too often his caretakers become angry and scold or reprimand him, sometimes to the point of being abusive.

It's one of the mysteries of the Universe. Although both are 8, similar or identical behavior on the part of each far too often will result in positive repercussions for "Friend A" and negative repercussions for "Friend B."

The caretakers claim to love "Friend A" and be concerned for his wellbeing. And the caretakers of "Friend B" claim to love him and be concerned about his wellbeing too. But obviously "Friend A" receives preferential treatment and "Friend B" far too often is discriminated against. And it's not right!

I won't keep you in suspense any longer, folk. "Friend A" is 8 (months old). And "Friend B" is 8 (decades old). "Friend A" is a baby. And "Friend B" is an old person, if I might be allowed to be politically incorrect. On the surface, the only difference which could account for "Friend B" so often being treated so differently is their age. Traditionally, a baby in this country is doted on. And an old person is far too often mistreated.

Far too often the caretakers of "Friend B" act like he and his oftentimes out-of-control behavior or conduct is a burden. And they far too often have no qualms about letting the senior citizen, "Friend B," know that he is a burden to them in particular and society in general. In short, far too often in this country, folk act like senior citizens such as "Friend B" have outlived their usefulness. That they can no longer make a worthwhile contribution to society. It's as if young folk in this country have a monopoly on living.

My mother raised nine of her own children and helped raise two more. And she watched helplessly as strangers threw dirt over the lifeless bodies of two of her children. "She's not the same," someone once told me. And she's not. How could she be when a part of her lay buried in the cold and clammy ground in Texas and another part near Burlington, NC?

Sadly, this country seems geared to cater to the needs and wants and likes of young folk. And that's not right or fair to those in our midst who have been privileged to grow old.

Folk, we in this country of plenty should be ashamed of the oftentimes flagrant lack of tolerance far too often shown for our seniors citizens who should instead be treated with respect and dignity.

Heck! It's well and good to hug a child today and say, "I love you." But it would be equally as good to hug a senior citizen and let them know we love and respect them too.

Indeed, all of us should make a vow to be kinder and more respectful of the senior citizens with which we interact every day. If so, we might be helping reverse the shameful trend in this country today of far too many of us being intolerant of old folk.

Let's treat them better, folk, if we are guilty of being intolerant. They deserve no less treatment. We'll talk again, folk.

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## Obituary

Fairmont, N.C. Mrs Lessie Hammonds Bell, 79, a resident of 1685 Canal Rd. Pembroke, N.C. and formerly of Rt. 2, Atkinson Rd., Fairmont, NC died Monday morning, November 30, 1998 at Southeastern Regional Medical Center, Lumberton, NC.

She was born in Robeson County, North Carolina March 22, 1919; a daughter of the late John and Bertie Ransom Hammonds.

Mrs. Bell was a member of the New Point Baptist Church, Lumberton, NC where she was active in the Senior Adult Class of the church Sunday school and attended the Antioch Baptist Church in St Pauls, NC.

Funeral Services were conducted at 4pm, Thursday, December 3, 1998 from New Point Baptist Church with the Reverends Ronald Locklear, Sterling Chavis and Gary Chavis officiating. Interment will follow in the New Point Baptist Church Cemetery under the direction of Biggs Funeral Home of Lumberton, NC.

Surviving are a son, Bobby Ray Bell of Pembroke, Geraldine Bell of Gibson, NC and Nancy Dial of Lumberton, NC; one sister, Mrs. Anna Bell Morgan of Lake Waccamaw, NC; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

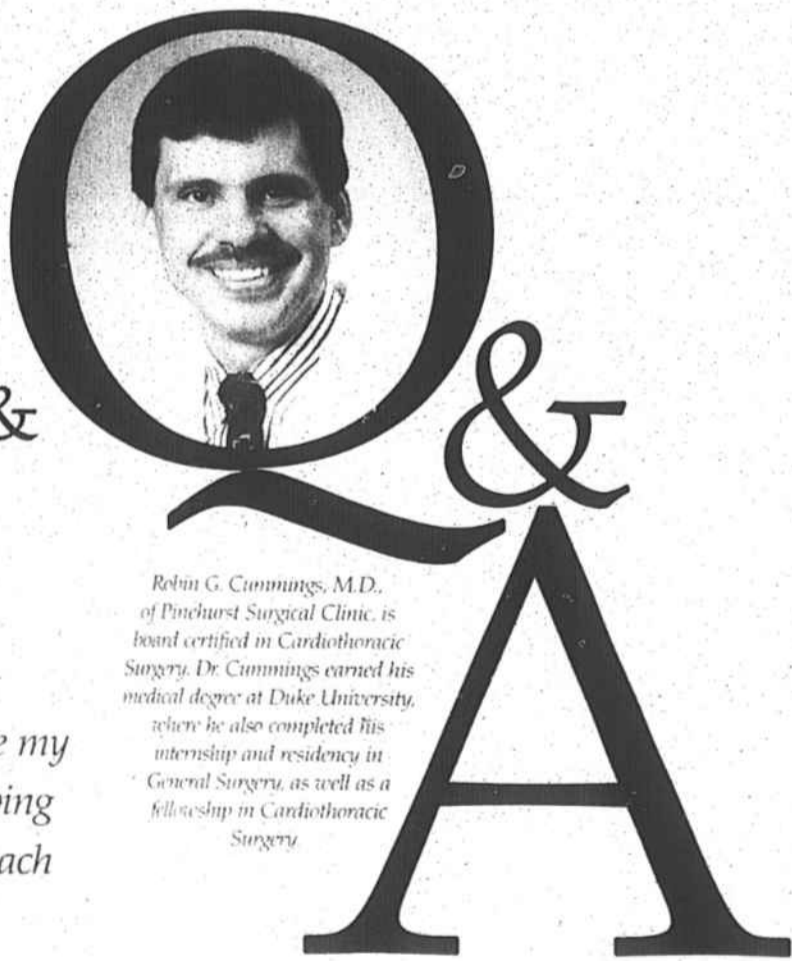
She was preceded in death by her husband, Hosa Bell, five brothers, Rufus "Bud" Hammonds, Benny Hammonds, James Hammonds, Clisby Hammonds, Norman Hammonds and Leonard Hammonds; and her children, Jackie Ray Bell, Stella May Bell, Betty Faye Bell.

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