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Sheff's Seafood & Co. is Pembroke Area Chamber's Business of the Year

PEMBROKE Sheff's Seafood and Co. will receive the Business of the Year Award Saturday, at the Pembroke Area Chamber of Commerce's Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony. The event is 6:30 pm at the James B. Chavis University Center at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Featured speaker is Pembroke native and successful Charlotte businessman Dennis Lowery. A new slate of officers for 2001 will be introduced.

Tickets are \$22.50 and reservations may be made by calling PACC President Don Gersh at 521-6249. Corporate tables are \$150 and seat six.

It's difficult to imagine Pembroke without Sheff's Seafood Restaurant. But it almost happened.

For 10 months after closing the doors at its old location, the town had to live without Sheff's. Tuesday nights were not the same without the weekly town meetings over a plate of spots.

When his 15 year lease ran out in August 1997, James Sheffield had to make a decision about the future of his business. Since it was founded, Sheff's had become a town landmark and a town tradition.

The fate of Sheff's Seafood was talked about more than the weather as townspeople watched and waited. Some speculated on a new site near the Food Lion Shopping Center. Others said Sheff's was

history. What Mr. Sheffield did was better than anyone expected.

"I had mentioned to my son two years before that this would make a beautiful restaurant," he said in a recent interview. "It was to be torn down."

Mr. Sheffield converted an abandoned lumber warehouse at the corner of Third and Union Chapel into a beautiful restaurant. In the process, he changed a blighted corner of Main Street Pembroke into a widely acclaimed architectural landmark.

"Everything is original, the floors and the outside walls," Mr. Sheffield said. "Everybody loves it, and they all say they are glad I did it."

From a business standpoint, the larger restaurant has been a success. It has a total of 265 seats, compared to 125 in the old location.

"You can move from one place to another, even in a small town, and lose all your business," Mr. Sheffield said. "We served 740 on opening night. So far, it's done well, with about 30-40 percent more volume."

For these reasons and more, Sheff's Seafood and Company is Pembroke Area Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year for 2001.

The restaurant opened its doors in 1982 at the site of a former res-

taurant across from the university. Mr. Sheffield trained himself in two other seafood restaurants in the region before making a go of his own restaurant.

"Bankers say the restaurant business is the toughest to make it in," Mr. Sheffield said. "The experts said that I would not do much volume here."

Sheff's proved them wrong with a reputation for consistent, high quality food and excellent service, day in day out, year in year out.

"I've had the same cook for 16 years and my 'plate fixers' for almost as long," he said. "These are two important areas in a seafood restaurant."

And, if it had not been for one of his 'fixers' there would be no Sheff's. That is Janice, also known as Mrs. Sheffield.

Mr. Sheffield came to Pembroke from Florida in 1963 to help a professor move his household. He had no intention of staying, but one thing led to another and the Sheffield's were married in 1968. They have two children, Kelli and Mark, and three grandchildren.

Marks works at the restaurant, giving hope that Sheff's may be serving seafood platters and spots on Tuesdays for many, many years to come. Mr. Sheffield said he has no immediate plan to retire.

"I worked with the state for seven years and hated six of them," he said. "I'd rather be doing something on my own."

And Pembroke is glad for it.



James and Janice Sheffield



LISA HUGGINS OXENDINE

New book provides spiritual help and encouragement to stop smoking

by Connee Brayboy

Each breath we breathe is a gift of God. That's the belief and practicing principle of Lisa Huggins Oxendine. Her belief in this principle has resulted in a spiritual endeavor for her. She has recently written and published a book entitled "God's Breath-Writing to God While Quitting Tobacco." Oxendine believes that smoking is detrimental to a person's health. And the nicotine is a very addictive drug. She does not, however, condemn smokers, but intends to encourage those who have decided to quit.

"I felt inspired to write this book," she said, "and believe I was guided in the work and am confident that the spiritual rewards will follow."

The book sells for \$8.00 per copy and was published by Christian Wellness Ministries of Lumberton, NC.

The book covers such topics as "Preparing to Quit Tobacco," "Temptations to Use Tobacco," "God's Promises to Those Who Love Him," "Witnessing Through Living Without Tobacco." Each section contains a place for journal writing as a person goes from being a smoker to a non-smoker.

"Quitting smoking," Oxendine said, "is not an easy task. My work looks at quitting smoking from a spiritual perspective. God says that the body is the temple of God, and it is simple then to understand that smoking defiles the temple."

She readily explains that she does not believe that a smoker cannot be Christian or do a work for the Lord, but she feels that there are smokers who desire to quit. And if they do, she offers encouragement and tips on how to quit. Using scriptural references Oxendine's book leads a person desiring not to smoke step by step into quitting.

The back cover of Oxendine's book states it this way: "The purpose of this journal is to provide additional support, as you stop using tobacco. It will not replace other support sources such as an organized program or prayer partner or medicines prescribed by your health care provider. Daily journal writing is intended to be a way of sharing with God those things which you might feel no other person will understand or hear with an open mind."

Oxendine describes herself as a Christian Lumbee. She is a member of Island Grove Baptist Church and resides in Lumberton with her husband, Terry, and their children.

Oxendine earned a BS in Mathematics with an emphasis in Computer Science and a MAEd in Mathematics Education at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. She is also a graduate of the Wake Forest School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program in Winston-Salem, NC.

She works as a Pediatric Physician Assistant and is in a position to address asthma in a rural, multi-racial population. She is an active member of numerous professional organization and varied national, state, regional and local initiatives.

She has taught on various levels including college level math, Sunday School and Smoking Cessation in a Christian setting. She is kept busy in her spare time with speaking engagements at local churches. Some topics she has spoken on include "Working as a Christian Professional," "Asthma and Allergies," and "Smoking Workshops."

Oxendine is available for Smoking Cessation classes and can be reached for workshops scheduling at: 2007 Huggins Road, Lumberton, NC 28360 or by e-mail at LHOXENDINE@Prodigy.net. Her book can also be ordered at these addresses.

Editorially speaking ...

Lumbee Tribe swearing in ceremony is historically right but culturally at the wrong place

LUMBERTON-Historically it was a great event, and well received by the more than 800 Lumbee faithful who showed up Saturday night to take part in the festivities and the passing of the guard from the Lumbee Self Determination Commission to the new Lumbee Tribal Council and Chairman Milton Hunt.

LSDC Chairman Jim Lowry praised the work of the commission and noted that out going LSDC member, and incoming tribal council woman, Dr. Linda Hammonds probably should receive the lion's share of the credit for the ceremony and arrangements. The ceremony was moving, and appropriate for the occasion.

Our only complaint is the location. We, of course, hoped that the event would be staged at an "Indian" site. In editorial fairness though, one newly elected council member did remind this editorialist that "my taxes helped pay for this Southeastern Regional Agricultural Center/Farmer's Market (where the event was held) too, and a lot of us (Indians) live in and near Lumberton." Some anti-Pembroke sentiment was also in the air Saturday night. Even so, after acknowledging these reasonable statements, a Lumbee River setting, maybe on the steps of Old Main or any traditional "Indian" school, or on the grounds of the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center, or in any "Indian" church in Robeson or adjoining counties, would have been more culturally and historically relevant.

Lumbee Tribal Government Swearing In Ceremony Scenes



This photo shows some of the more than 800 people, mostly Lumbee, who showed up for the historic swearing in ceremony of the Lumbee Tribal Government Saturday night (Jan. 13, 2001) at the Southeastern Regional Agricultural Center/Farmer's Market on Highway 74 near Lumberton.

The festivities began with a posting of the Colors by the Robeson County Honor Guard, and welcome and invocation by, respectively, Ms. Linda Hammonds and Rev. Kent Chavis. Another highlight, historically, was remarks by Dr. Helen Maynor Schierbeck, as she reviewed Lumbee history, essentially recounting how we arrived at the momentous event in time. She brought some lovely Lumbee children on stage and gave her remarks in the guise of Indian storytelling.

There were also in spiring remarks by Jim Lowry, outgoing chairman of the LSDC, Rep. Ron Sutton & Rev. Earney Hammonds who shared some "Indian" words from the late Rev. Dawlie Maynor as he shared "the passing from one to another," in a moving sermonette. Closing prayer was by Rev. Larry Bocklear, Pastor of Island Grove Baptist church & LSDC member.

A joyous moment was Willie Lowery singing his popular "Proud to be a Lumbee" song as the festive crowd joined in.



The 23 member Tribal Council was sworn in by Chief District Court Lumbee Judge Gary Locklear. Resident Superior Court Judge Dexter Brooks had the honor of swearing in Tribal chairman Milton Hunt. In his remarks, Judge Brooks said, "I got up out of a sick bed for this historic occasion." And he also extolled "my friend, Milt", who he referred to as "Little Big Man", using Thomas Berger's book title to note that Hunt is short in stature, but big in accomplishments. He is presently chairman of the Robeson County Democratic Party and Mayor of Pembroke.

Shown (left to right), on the front row, are Ms. Hammonds, Judge Brooks and Judge Locklear. Also shown on the front row are Rev. Kent Chavis, Ms. Rhonda Locklear, and Rev. Larry Locklear. The representatives will serve three year terms, and will be charged with writing a constitution and submitting it to the Lumbee people for ratification within a year.

In remarks, Chairman Milton Hunt said the council will also pursue federal recognition. He noted, "there is a lot of work to be done, but I have faith that this tribal council is up to the task."

The cultural highlight of the evening was a traditional blessing of the Lumbee Tribal Government by Elder Earl Carter, ably assisted by Ray Littleturtle, and Tony Clark. The blessing gave clarity and historical coherence to a wonderful evening.

(Bruce Barton photos)



Bruce Jenner

Jenner takes audience on Olympic Journey

PEMBROKE - 1976 Olympic decathlon champion Bruce Jenner told an appreciative audience at UNC Pembroke's Givens Performing Arts Center that they too could "find the champion within."

An older but very fit looking Bruce Jenner told a gathering of about 600 that the true character of a champion "is not measured by the heights attained but the obstacles overcome."

"Sports is a good place to learn about hard work, setting goals and winning and losing," Mr. Jenner said. "I found my arena to play in, and it was sports."

Before finding athletics Jenner said he suffered from a learning disability, which caused him to have "extremely" low self-esteem and to fail the second grade.

"Through sports, I learned the power of the individual and what we can do in life," he advised young people. "Don't just dream about the future, make decisions about your future. Raise your level of commitment and believe in the power of you."

The story of how a dyslexic second grader became "the world's greatest athlete" and reading from a teleprompter on national television is one of the most compelling stories in sports.

Mr. Jenner delivered his story in an energetic 90-minute speech as part of the university's Distinguished Speaker Series. Then, he answered questions and patiently posed for every photograph and signed every request for autographs, including signing a 1974 copy of Track and Field magazine.

Mr. Jenner recounted the story of his life as a decathlete from 1968 to 1976 when he set the world record and won the gold medal in one of the most celebrated moments in US Olympic history.

"You've got to make decisions about what you want out of life and what risks you're willing to take to go out after your dream," he said. "I spent every minute of four years to achieve my dream."

Today, Mr. Jenner is a successful businessman with a number of ventures in fitness, entertainment, software, aviation and motivational speaking. He has 10 children and a wife, who he says is his agent, accountant, business manager and "the greatest thing ever to happen in my life."