

The CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

"Building Communicative Bridges In A Tri-Racial Setting"

VOLUME 28 NUMBER 19

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2001

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Local Gospel Music Artist Releases First Christmas Special

by Yvonne Barnes Dial

It seems incredulous that a great artist, whether in the business of music or art, would ever struggle with the fact that she or he ever possessed artist talent. For gospel singer, Charles Bell, the uncertainty and dubious feelings of his profound talent in music kept him in a world of hesitation and doubt for years. Receiving praise and affirmation of his talent from so many people locally and nationally, his confidence grew and Mr. Bell worked diligently to sing and produce gospel music as a ministry.

Recently, Mr. Bell released his first Christmas special through encouragement of others. "I had been thinking a few years of doing the tape and had the desire, yet it wasn't my religious conviction," stated Mr. Bell, "different people encouraged me and I felt overjoyed and enjoyed doing it."

Realizing the beauty of Christmas and experiencing the joy it brings, he finds "Christmas as a wonderful time of the year with family, fellowship, and joy in Christ." Just as he sings of the love of God in his ministry, Mr. Bell feels "the true meaning Christmas is a time to acknowledge Christ's birth, the warmth and the loving and giving spirit God has to offer."

With his confidence growth and considering Christmas as one of the most celebrated and glorious holidays of the year, his decision to create a Christmas CD special came to fruition. "I could sing and feel a connection to the words," he states, "and I am pleased with the songs." The CD depicts a Christmas scene with his grandson celebrating the Christmas spirit. "My grandson is my only grandchild and he's special to me and everything ties in with Christmas and family," the excited musician remarks.

The Christmas CD selections include: "Silent Night," "Silver Bells," "O Holy Night," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "If Everyday were Like Christmas," "Joy to the World," "Christmas Song," "White Christmas," "Away in a Manger" and "Winter Wonderland."

For years, Mr. Bell shared his music talent as he performed and sang with various groups. Feeling God dealing with him for twelve years to go solo, he felt that he "couldn't get away from that inner thought" as God gave him time and patience to deal with the situation. "Sharing his struggle with a Creek Indian lady, she requested him to 'be still and you will know.'" Wrestling with the conflict, he later made a decision and felt a rebirth and a new beginning in his life. "I could see shortly afterwards God's ministry in my life," he responds.

Receiving an appointment to sing in a large church in Michigan in his earlier solo music ministry, fear and anxiety overcame the artist to sing before approximately 1200 people. He felt the Lord reminding him that he had sung before small churches. He found the people receptive and felt overwhelmed and blessed. "God gave me a jumpstart that week and He started revealing things to me," Mr. Bell states with a reflective surprise.

As his confidence began to build, plans were underway to make a gospel tape. When his first tape was released, the response and compliments from the people and the community were overwhelming. "I was so glad I was able to take a good compliment; the more compliments I received, the more humble I became," responds the modest artist.

From his first tape, his major hit "How Great Thou Art," climbed to number 10 nationally in gospel music and reached number one locally as well as in other radio stations in Florida and Ohio. "I've been warmly received basically everywhere I've gone to sing," he states, and he feels that "it's and honor and humble feeling that God's anointing has been placed in my life." "Someone once asked," shares Mr. Bell, "when is Charles the happiest?" The response that was declared, "He's happiest when he's singing before a congregation with God's anointing and connecting to the audience." Yet, Mr. Bell informs that some of his best singing has been spontaneous.

With the Lord opening doors for him, he began traveling across the United States and Canada with different groups and churches while groups asked him to sing nationally.

For six years Mr. Bell has bought a thirty minutes time period where he serves as an announcer and entertainer for the gospel station WTSB at 100.9 in Fairmont on Saturday at 6:30 P.M. He finds the experience an honor to play much local talent. Pembroke businessman Juddie Revels approached Mr. Bell and informed him that he would love to sponsor him for a fifteen minute period. Somewhat reluctant to take the offer, Mr. Bell decided to. He learned quickly that "we have a lot of good local talent. It gives me great pleasure to play local groups and push their talent." He realized that for approximately twenty five years local groups did not realize their talents. Mr. Bell feels that some of the artists may have felt left out. More and more, he has been started to see more breakthroughs and that the groups are displaying their talents regionally and nationally.

At first Mr. Bell considered that he took the situation lightly when he handed his last program after three months of his service to the main music director of the radio station.

Suddenly feeling God's disappointment in his casual approach, he realized that he did not demonstrate his best. "I was starting to grow," he stated, "those were some of my growing pains." Afterwards, he received calls from the elderly that they were blessed and some were became Christians as a result of the program.

While working on a backhoe, the idea sprang quickly in his mind to build a music studio. Looking through others and witnessing great talents among so many people, Mr.

Bell decided to build the studio, not only to produce his own work, but also to grant other groups and individuals the opportunity to display and release their talents professionally. Amazed at the talent of a young artist, Chris Locklear, Mr. Bell had the desire to reach out to Chris and help him expand his gifts as he performed on the keyboard with the Scott Sisters. Presently, Chris serves as the manager for the studio. The Lord has really shown me that it is a ministry and many souls have been touched and blessed," responds Mr. Bell.

Various groups Mr. Bell has performed with include: J.D. Sumner and Stamps from Nashville, Tennessee, The Jordanaires from Nashville who also served as backup for Elvis Presley, Dottie Rambo, and The Happy Goodman Family. Developing an interest in music began at an early age for Mr. Bell while being



Charles Bell, local gospel music artist, releases his first Christmas Special. Seated with Mr. Bell is his grandson, Jake Garrison Locklear, age 2.

raised in the Saddletree area until he reached the age of nine. From a young age he sang continuously at the church he attended and other churches he visited. Yet, as most teenagers discouragement overshadowed his life and an elderly gentlemen approached him and lifted his spirits with, "Charles, you have a million dollar voice." Receiving such positive reinforcement provided a boost for him at that moment. "I had a few low points in my life. A lady once came to me and said, 'I enjoy your singing; God has given you a wonderful talent,'" stated Mr. Bell. Sharing the praise and acknowledgment of his talent which others revealed to him exhibited a sense of how blessed he felt and responded with, "It was the power of God." Realizing that "God has a person in everyone's life to inspire that person." He enjoyed playing the guitar by ear and later developed an interest in playing the piano, and at age twenty five he began to play and sing at his church.

As a businessman, Mr. Bell works with a commercial industrial businesses in concrete with partnership with Express Concrete Construction and Pine View Enterprise.

Mr. Bell attends Liberty Holiness Church and regularly provides music and displays his talent in the church.

He is married to Annette Bell and has a son, Ricardo, who is employed with the Robeson County Sheriff's department, a daughter, Tammy Bell Locklear who works with the County Youth Counselor Services, a son-in-law, Allen Locklear who teaches physical education at Prospect Middle School, and one grandchild, Jake Garrison Locklear, age two.

For more information about Mr. Bell's new release of his first Christmas tape and CD, you may contact him at 980 Philadelphus Road, Pembroke, N.C. 28372, phone number 910-521-4676. The purchase of the tape is \$10.00 and the CD sells for \$12.00.

Brewington Promoted to Major in Air Force



Eric Tsali Brewington has been promoted to the rank of Major, United States Air Force, effective 01 October 2001.

A native of Robeson County, North Carolina, the Major entered the U.S. Air Force as an AFROTC Distinguished Graduate in 1990 after graduating from Pembroke State University, Pembroke, N.C. His first assignment was as the Section Commander/Adjutant for the 95th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Wing, Tyndall AFB, Florida. In 1993, he transferred overseas to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Group (SOG) at Royal Air Force Alconbury, United Kingdom where he served as the Squadron's Chief of Current Operations. He later served as deputy chief for Group Current Operations, 352nd Special Operations Group, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom in 1996. His deployments include Operations Provide Promise in 1993, Deny Flight in 1994, and Joint Endeavor in 1996. He served as an Air Staff Officer of the Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC), San Vito Air Station, Italy. JSOAC's multi-national mission supported NATO air combat operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina which directly contributed to the Dayton Peace Accords and other operations in East-

ern Europe and Africa.

Before assuming his current position, the major was selected for the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Education With Industry (EWI) program, where he served with Lockheed Martin Astronautics in Denver, Colorado. His next assignment was to Hanscom Air Force Base (AFB) where he was selected as a Contracts manager for the Joint Surveillance Target Attack and Reconnaissance (JSTARs) program. While there he later chosen as the contracts lead for the Tactical Air Control Party Modernization (TACP-M) Program. From August 1998 to June 2001, he held the collateral position of the Native American Equality & Diversity Program Manager.

His current duty is the Chief of Specialized Contracts Flight, 3rd Contracting Squadron, 3rd Wing, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. He is responsible for all contracting actions supporting all forward operating bases in the Alaskan region to include the President's National Missile Defense Program, and remote radar sites throughout Alaska with the North American Defense (NORAD).

His awards and decorations include the Joint Commendation Medal, AF Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, AF Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award with one oak leaf cluster.

Outstanding Unit Award with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, AF Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, AF Longevity Ribbon with one oak leaf cluster, AF Training Ribbon, and the NATO Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

He is the son of Ted and Geraldine Brewington of Pembroke. The Major is married to Miss Mary Jane Brooks Brewington and have four daughters: Erika Ana'cia, Meagan Leigh, Kristin Arelia, and Laurel Tsali.

James Hardin Elected Vice Chairman of the Tribe by Acclamation



by Darlene Jacobs, Public Relations Chair Lumbee Tribal Council

At its regularly scheduled meeting, the Lumbee Tribal Council affirmed the Tribal Constitution referendum held on November 6th. Certifying the referendum was the Tribal Elections Board, Chaired by Rev. Larry Locklear.

Councilman Delton Oxendine (District 7) was elected Speaker as required by the newly adopted Tribal Constitution. The Speaker's role and responsibility is to set tribal meeting agendas and preside over the council meetings.

By acclamation James Hardin (District 13) was selected as Vice Chairman. The primary role of this position is to replace the Chairman if something happens and he cannot fulfill his obligation. He will also preside over the council meetings in the absence of the Speaker.

Under the Constitution, the role and power of the Tribal Chairman changes. All executive powers, including implementation and compliance with annual budgets resides with the Tribal Chairman. Additional functions include certification of referendums and

ordinance by the general voting membership that affect the fundamental rights or interests of the tribe. In addition, under the Constitution, the Chairman has the power to veto any ordinance enacted by the Tribal Council.

From Committee Reports, Rev. Jimmy Hunt, Chairman of the Housing Committee, announced that the deadline for housing applications is December 14; the tribal council reviewed a proposal for guidelines on the conduct of council members and conflict of interest present by Councilwoman Rosa Winfree (District 16), Chair of the Ethics Committee. In addition, Councilman Craig McMillan of the Economic Development Committee presented Bylaws for the Lumbee Tribal Development Corporation; Lonnie Revels (District 15) Chair of the Transition and Personnel Committee, provided a policy and procedures proposal; and Darlene Jacobs reported committee recommendations for the Tribal Seal.

In other action, the Tribal Council took great pride to honor and recognize the historical significance and accomplishments of the first Native American Sorority and Fraternity, Alpha Pi Omega Sorority and Phi Sigma Nu Fraternity. Chairman Milton Hunt presented both organizations with framed resolutions passed by the Tribal Council and signed by the Chairman and Secretary.

The Council heard public comments surrounding efforts to amend the Lumbee Constitution in defining the territory as Robeson and surrounding counties from the current identification of the State of North Carolina.

All Lumbee tribal members are encouraged to attend council meetings that are held the third Saturday of every month.

Kelvin Oxendine Makes Second Lieutenant

Kelvin Oxendine has been commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force after graduating from Officer Training School (OTS) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala.

During the demanding 12-week course, cadets are trained to be top quality Air Force officers through an extensive curriculum comprised of classroom work, lectures, and exercises to develop leadership, team building, and officer skills. They receive instruction in military training and application, professional knowledge, human behavior, defence studies, leadership studies and management, communication skills, and physical fitness, and a field training deployment.

Oxendine, a communications officer, is the son of Jerry and Elizabeth Oxendine of 8972 W. Highway 72 W., Pembroke, N.C.

He is a 1991 graduate of Purnell Swett Senior High School, Pembroke, and a 2001 graduate of Troy State University through the military extension program at Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Pembroke Twilight Christmas Parade sponsored by the Town of Pembroke, the Pembroke Chamber of Commerce, and the Pembroke Civic Club is planned for Thursday, December 13, 2001. Line up time at 3:30 p.m. and the parade will begin at 4:30 p.m. The parade line up area will be

at the UNCP Pembroke Performing Arts Center and end at the Pembroke Elementary School. Criteria for the parade includes Marching Units, Bands, Queens, Floats, and the special attraction will be the Robeson County Sudan Tomcats Funny Cars and the main attraction will be Santa

Our Tribal Constitution

by Cynthia L. Hunt

Last week we discussed the amendment process to change the Lumbee Tribal Constitution. This week it was my intention to continue our review of the document by completing our discussion of jurisdiction included in Article I. However, tribal members have raised additional questions regarding the amendment process. I feel it is very important for us to address these concerns as they arise.

Before I begin, I would like to remind everyone that the transition into a constitutional form of government will take time and serious thought. It is not going to happen overnight. We must be patient in this endeavor. It is important for us as tribal members to educate ourselves on our official governing document, the Lumbee Tribal Constitution. This will allow for a smooth transition process and allow us as tribal members to make informed decisions regarding tribal matters. Further, a good understanding of our constitution will allow us to ensure that the Tribal Council is accountable to the tribal membership. Please remember, while the Lumbee tribe has always had an informal governmental process, this is the first time we have had a formal governmental structure. In addition, it is up to us as tribal members to make sure it is an effective government for all.

Last week someone raised concerns about the statement I made regarding the fact that all tribal members would be allowed to vote in tribal elections regardless of where they lived. The Lumbee Tribal Constitution guarantees EVERY tribal member the right to vote. Please note, Article II of the document addresses Membership and spells out who is entitled to vote in tribal elections. Section 4 of Article II specifically states, "the voting general membership shall consist of those enrolled members who are eighteen (18) years of age or older." There is no residency requirement for voting. The only residency requirement included in the constitution is for those persons serving on the Tribal Council. Tribal Council representatives must reside in the district they were elected to represent. This language is included in Article VII Section 3. Also, please note that the Tribal Chairman is required to reside in the tribal territory.

Some may ask how tribal members who live outside the tribal territory will vote for a Tribal Council representative if there is not a separate district provided for them. First, the Lumbee Tribal Constitution requires the Tribal Elections Board to adopt regulations governing voter registration. They will be required to adopt rules and regulations governing this procedure. All tribal members will be required to register with a district. For example, I live in South Pembroke; therefore, I would register in the district that includes South Pembroke.

Tribal members living outside the tribal territory, currently defined as the state of NC, would register with their HOME community. To illustrate this point, please allow me to use a personal situation of which I am familiar. I have a co-worker who resides in District six (6) or other words North Pembroke. My co-worker has numerous relatives, enrolled in the tribe, living in New York, Virginia and New Jersey. Both she and her relatives consider their HOME community as North Pembroke. Therefore, when they register to vote in tribal elections, they would all register in District six (6) because that is their HOME district. That is the area they identify with to maintain tribal relations.

Maintaining tribal relations and contact with the tribe is very important. It is a requirement to be enrolled with the Lumbee tribe. A person applying for enrollment in the Lumbee tribe must be able to demonstrate that they have maintained contact with the tribe. Failure to maintain contact with the tribe can result in disenrollment. This language has always been part of the Lumbee Tribal Enrollment Criteria, and it is included in the Lumbee Tribal Constitution under Article II Section 2. The requirement of maintaining tribal relations is important because it protects the tribe from individuals having remote tribal ancestry who themselves, in every sense of the word, belong to other ethnic groups and who may be more numerous than the entire legitimate tribal membership.

Lastly, again I would like to ask all tribal members to contact their Tribal Council representative and ask them to appoint the Lumbee Tribal Elections Board as required by the Constitution. Next week we will take a look at the numbers needed for a petition to amend our tribal constitution.

N.C. Indian Cultural Center Presents: Winter Festival - "New Beginning"

Welcome to a New Beginning of the North Carolina Indian Culture Center at Pembroke, North Carolina, off I-74.

There are new committees with a new beginning at the Center, and we are asking all that can join us in our adventures of new programs, starting with "Winter Festival- New Beginning".

Top name personnel have been invited to share in an open house fund raiser for the Center. Come and meet them and us on December 8th, starting at 9:30 a.m. until night fall. On December 7th at 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. we are hosting on All School Day.

December 8th is the Grand Finale, Parade of VIP's, Indian Dancers and Drummers and Gospel Singing of Local artists.

Come be with us. There will also be food and games.

Thank You
Public Relation Chairman; NCICC
Martin A. Lacy