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Report to the People From Rep. Ron Sutton

"Now that the General Assembly has finally adjourned, members are glad to get back home to their districts," said Rep. Ron Sutton, Democrat of Pembroke.

Everyone knew the 2001 session of the General Assembly would be long and tough. Adoption of a new budget in a declining economy and always-contentious redistricting were on the agenda, and the House was closely divided between Democrats and Republicans.

Few expected that a Christmas tree decorated with a patriotic theme would welcome visitors to the Legislative Building as the session drew to a close.

The record-shattering length will be one of the hallmarks of the 2001 session. But the length should not overshadow the accomplishments.

Lawmakers adopted a \$14.5 billion budget that avoided painful cuts in education and human services that are being considered in other states. Those two areas were the only two that received more money in this fiscal year than last.

The budget included several targeted initiatives aimed at maintaining North Carolina's gains in education. Legislators reduced kindergarten class size and allocated an additional \$128.8 million for public schools.

The spending plan also pumped \$181 million into the state's "rainy day fund" and created a \$45.7 million trust fund for mental health.

To balance the budget, legislators cut \$700 million from the proposed budget submitted by Gov. Mike Easley, closed tax loopholes and adopted several temporary tax increases that will cost the average family one dollar a week.

Bond rating agencies, which had been threatening to lower the state's coveted AAA bond rating, praised the budget.

The budget put North Carolina in a better position than most states to deal with the economic aftershocks of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Several states are either holding or considering special sessions to revise their budgets.

"One of the most difficult issues this year, second only to the budget in intensity, was redistricting. Redistricting is always a difficult, but necessary process required every ten years and the closeness of the Democrat/Republican ratio in the House further complicated those efforts," said Rep. Sutton. Many citizens did not realize that redistricting consists of redrawing State House and Senate district lines as well as U. S. Congressional lines.

The lengthy session also gave North Carolina a jump on other states in dealing with the terrorist attacks. Lawmakers approved three bills to better prepare North Carolina for potential terrorism.

One of the bills authorized Gov. Mike Easley to spend up to \$30 million from the state's reserves for anti-terrorism measures.

Another bill requested by the governor and approved by the Legislature toughened criminal penalties for creating or using weapons of mass destruction, including biological, nuclear or chemical weapons.

Lawmakers also approved a bill requested by Attorney General Roy Cooper that created a registry of labs that keep chemical or biological agents such as anthrax or smallpox.

Legislatures in other states are expected to consider similar bills next year.

Another hallmark of the 2001 session was adoption of one of the strongest laws in the country to give patients in managed care plans and their doctors a larger voice in medical care decisions.

The Managed Care Patients' Bill of Rights provides a binding, independent review of HMO decisions and the right to take HMOs to court.

Consumers also have more freedom in selecting a primary care physician. Parents can select a pediatrician as their child's primary care doctor and patients with a prolonged medical condition can select a specialist.

Another important health care bill laid the groundwork for a prescription drug plan for seniors. The House and Senate passed legislation that instructs the Health and Wellness Trust Fund commission to include criteria for grants that would help pay for prescription drugs. The commission will distribute \$1.15 billion from the state's share of the national tobacco settlement.

Those were just a few of the significant bills passed this year. They should not be forgotten in all the talk about the length of the session.

Erica Nicole Dellinger "Teen Miss Lumbee 2001-2002" "Keeping My Heritage Alive"



Since becoming Teen Miss Lumbee 2001-2002 in July, I have been blessed with many wonderful experiences of meeting people from "all walks of life". The crown awarded me on July 6, 2001 has given me the opportunity to share and educate others about Lumbee history and culture.

I have traveled extensively throughout Robeson County and the state entertaining and speaking to groups, both young and old, about the traditions, heritage, and culture of my people, the Lumbee Tribe. I have also spoken to Elementary, Middle, and High school students about the importance of education, setting goals for yourself, and striving to fulfill your goals.

My most "challenging" experience was to speak to and entertain an entire group of 6th and 7th graders at Pembroke Middle School, alone. They were great!! It was a very rewarding experience; one that helped me to further develop my public speaking skills. A special "thank you" to those students, teachers, and administrators for being so attentive!

My most "heartwarming" experience was to talk with and entertain the TMH (Trainable Mentally Handicapped) students at Purnell Sweet High School. They are truly special! Thank you Mrs. Lachelle Ransom for inviting me to your classes!

My most "meaningful" experience was at South Robeson High School's Cultural Festival. It was there that my Aunt Mary taught me the art of "basket-making". I actually made my "first" basket! Aunt Mary has given me a part of my family's history that I can, in turn, pass on to future generations.

A special "thank you" to all the schools, churches, and communities that have invited me to entertain and speak. Each has been a learning and growing experience that I will always cherish! I hope I have touched your hearts and minds in some way!

I look forward to entertaining and speaking throughout the remainder of my reign. It is a great honor to serve as a spokesperson for my people!

Season's Greetings

As the holidays approach, I want to wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas! Let us join in prayer that the New Year will bring peace and harmony in the world! As you gather together with your family during the holiday season, remember those who are separated from theirs, serving and protecting our right to freedom! May god bless and keep you during the holiday season!

Benefit Singing

On November 24, over 120 people gathered at the Prospect United Methodist Church to support the LRDA sponsored benefit singing for the creation of an emergency fund for our local fire departments.

Mr. Odell Lowery, organizer of the event, stated, "The Lumbee Regional Development Association would like to bestow heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed in supporting the LRDA sponsored Benefit Singing for the creation of an Emergency Fund for our local fire departments."

Mr. Lowery added, "The Association would like to extend special thanks to the following: Carla and Redemption, Prospect Men's Choir, The Tyler's, Sycamore Hill Singers, Reverend Montana Locklear, Reverend Kenny Mitchell, Reverend Billy Clark, and special guest Audrianna Nichole Chavis."

Mr. Dewey Locklear, Executive Director of LRDA stated, "We would like to thank everyone for coming out and supporting this cause. The incident in New York has helped us all to realize the importance of our local police and fire departments."

Mr. Locklear continued by saying, "It is through this type of outreach effort that we can make a difference. Thanks to the uplifting performances we will be able to make a contribution to our community."

If you would like more information or to make a contribution to this effort, please contact Mr. Odell Lowery at (910) 843-3173.

Blood Drive For Special Cause

Matthew Blue, of Mt. Airy Boy Scout Troop 326, will be sponsoring a blood drive to earn his Eagle Scout badge. The blood drive will be held at Bear Swamp Baptist Church in Pembroke, N.C. on Saturday, December 22, 2001 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Stella Godwin Oxendine Honored on 84th Birthday



On Saturday, October 27, 2001, Stella Godwin Oxendine was honored at First Baptist Church in Pembroke, N.C. celebrating her 84th birthday.

Born on October 29, 1917 to parents William Henry and Florence Amelia Ransom Godwin. Mrs. Oxendine was the youngest child of five brothers and two sisters. Her siblings are now deceased.

Stella attended school in the Pembroke area. She was married to Marvin Oxendine who is deceased. She is the mother of Donald Godwin, Maudie Summerville, Kitty Oxendine, and Mary Bare. Her children and their families hosted the celebration.

After retiring, Stella moved to Landis, N.C. to live with her daughter Mary. She is a member of First Baptist Church in Pembroke, N.C. and attends Blackwelder Park Baptist Church in Landis.

Over one hundred guests attended the celebration. Out of town guests came from across the state of North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky.

The family wishes to thank our family and friends, the musicians and others for helping us honor our Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother on her 84th Birthday.

Free Poetry Contest Open to Pembroke Residents

OWINGS MILLS, MD (USA)- The International Library of Poetry has announced that \$58,000.00 in prizes will be awarded this year in the International Open Poetry Contest. Poets from the Pembroke area, particularly beginners, are welcome to try to win their share of over 250 prizes. The deadline for the contest is February 28, 2002. The contest is open to everyone and entry is FREE. "Any poet, whether previously published or not, can be a winner," stated Christina Babylon, Contest Director. "When people learn about our free poetry contest, they suddenly realize that their own poetic works of art can win cash prizes, as well as gain national recognition," continued Babylon.

To enter, send ONE original poem, any subject and any style to: The International Library of Poetry, Suite 19913, 1 Poetry Plaza, Owings Mills, MD 21117. The poem should be 30 lines or less, and the poet's name and address should appear on the top of the page. Entries must be postmarked or sent via the Internet by February 28, 2002. You may also enter on-line at www.poetry.com.

The International Library of Poetry, founded in 1982, is the largest poetry organization in the world.

SRMC Foundation Volunteers Planning Tenth Gala Celebration



Volunteers for the 2002 SRMC Foundation Gala are kneeling, from left; Kim Cherichella, Marlene Evans, Jeannie Johnson, and Barbara Walters. Seated; Kristin Smith, Katie Butler, Lisa Rust, Earle Gasque and Fordham Britt. Standing; Pattie Ramsaur, Dianne Jones, Janice Helms, Mary Ann Rust, Teresa Cummings, Maureen Thompson, Jonnie Nance, Becky Thompson, Stephanie McLellan, Karen Granger and Bunny Barker.

Volunteers of the Southeastern Regional Medical Center Foundation are already hard at work preparing for their annual black-tie event set for Friday, February 22, 2002, at Pinecrest Country Club in Lumberton.

This year's gala will raise money to fund scholarship loans for local residents, who have chosen to study medicine, nursing or allied health and who plan to return to or remain in Robeson County to practice or work.

"Our theme this year will be *Gala in White*," said Gasque, cochair of the 10th annual event. We are fortunate to have a very dedicated and capable group of volunteers, who will work with our area florists to make the theme a most memorable one." Gasque also announced that the previous chairpersons for the first nine SRMC Foundation Galas will be honored at this event.

Sissy Grantham, executive director of the SRMC Foundation, announced that in addition to cochairs Gasque and Rust, other members of the gala committee include: Bunny Barker, Cherry Beasley, Fordham Britt, Katie

Butler, Kim Cherichella, Meredith Clifton, Teresa Cummings, Billie Dail, Katie Davis, Cheryl Ermini, Marlene Evans, Jan Gane, Karen Granger, Janice Helms, Jeannie Johnson, Dianne Jones, Stephanie McLellan, Pattie Ramsaur, Mary Ann Rust, Kristin Smith, Becky Thompson, and Barbara Walters. Honorary cochairs are Jonnie Nance and Maureen Thompson who chaired the 2001 gala.

Floral designs for *Gala in White* will be created by: Billy Davis and Bud Pate of Flowers by Billy, Monika Kinlaw of Monika's Flowers, and Kandy Kinlaw of LeViner's Florists. For more information about the gala or to purchase tickets at \$125 per couple, call the SRMC Foundation at 671-5583.

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Our Tribal Constitution

by Cynthia L. Hunt

This week lets continue our discussion of Article I of the Lumbee Tribal Constitution by reviewing the section addressing jurisdiction. Article I Section 2 states, "The Tribe's jurisdiction shall extend to the fullest extent possible under Federal law to:

(a) all enrolled members of the Tribe, without regard to location or residence; and (b) all persons, property, and activities located or taking place upon the Tribe's territory." This section on jurisdiction has created much confusion among tribal members. It is important that we understand this term and its effect on tribal members.

What does jurisdiction mean in our tribal constitution? Jurisdiction means authority to govern an area, but the extent of that authority is established in the constitution. The limits of both the Tribal Council and the Tribal Chairman are outlined in the document. Our tribal government, the Council and Chairman, can have no more authority than what we the tribal members granted to them in the constitution. For example, the Tribal Council has the authority to pass ordinances, and the Tribal Chairman has all executive powers.

Confusion has surfaced in the Lumbee tribal community regarding the wording in Article I Section 2. Some tribal members have stated their concern about this language affecting their rights as US citizens. This language does not affect our rights as citizens of the US or the State of NC. Our tribal constitution does not limit or change the rights of tribal members as Americans or North Carolinians. Neither, does the tribal constitution establish a reservation or give the Bureau of Indian Affairs any power or authority over tribal members.

Tribal members have also stated how this section affects the property they own. The tribal government can never take any tribal member's private property. They have to obey federal law. Your property was not purchased by tribal money or in the name of the tribe. Article I Section 2 (b) states all persons, property, and activities located or taking place upon the Tribe's territory. This does not say members of the Lumbee tribe, nor does it say Lumbee. Thus, does this mean that the tribe shall have jurisdiction over ALL residents, property, and activities within the territory? The answer is NO. It is stating that when the tribe owns property of its own, any person, property, or activity that takes place upon the Tribe's territory will fall under the jurisdiction of the tribe.

Next week we will discuss Article II that addresses membership. Please attend the Tribal Council meeting Saturday, December 15, 2001 at 10:00 at the Tribal Office.

Update on Changes at LRDA

Pembroke, NC -- On Monday, December 3, 2001, the Lumbee Regional Development Association board of Directors adopted a change to the board structure. Originally comprised of 20 elected members, the LRDA Board of Directors has been redesigned with an 11-member board.

The board members established a new district system that is comprised of only 9 districts, with two of those districts having 2 community representatives. The following members will remain as community representatives: Leroy Freeman, William Lowery, Earl Cummings, Odell Lowery, Gerald Strickland, Harold Chavis, Rodney Hunt, Woodrow Dial, Bobby D. Locklear, Harold Hunt, and James Sampson.

Leroy Freeman, chairman of the LRDA Board, stated "I would like to extend my thanks to all the board members for their years of service and dedication to this agency. Without the experience and input of each member we would not be where we are now."

Mr. Freeman continued, "With our new position in the community, we needed to streamline our board. These changes will allow us the opportunity to continue to grow and to serve."

The LRDA Board of Directors will continue to function as a guide for the Lumbee Regional Development Association agency and staff.

Native American Dance Class

The NC Indian Cultural Center will sponsor a Native American Dance Class for anyone interested in learning to dance. Classes will be held Thursdays from 7:00 p.m. til 9:00

p.m. All ages are welcome, however, younger children must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information contact NCICC at (910) 521-2433.

Tribal Council to meet Saturday

The Tribal Council of the Lumbee Tribe will meet on Saturday, December 15, at 10 a.m. in the tribal office at the Dream Makers Mini Mall on the Union Chapel Road in Pembroke.

Tribal members are encouraged to attend.

GED Classes

Parents and individuals 18 years or older who are interested in receiving their Diploma or GED should call the Parent-Student Center with the Public Schools of Robeson County at 737-8615, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM weekdays for information. Contact person; Renee Hammonds.

Classes will begin in January of 2002