

# Along the Robeson Trail

by Dr. Stan Knick, Director, UNCP Native American Resource Center

Old Grandmother and Old Grandfather understand more than anyone. Even though some of the younger people may believe that their own youthful knowledge is greater and more important, no one understands more than Old Grandmother and Old Grandfather. That is just the way it is with the human beings.

As little children grow, they spend much of their time learning new things. At first the knowledge they gather has to do with their immediate needs -- simple things, like which one of the big people is Momma, where the food comes from, which things can be eaten and which can not. Then they turn to exploring other things -- what else is in the room, in the next room, in the outside world. Their growing up is a process of gathering knowledge, the bits of information that will help them deal with their world.

As time passes, and more and more knowledge is gained, eventually most people start to see patterns in the bits of knowledge. They begin to see that there are relationships among the bits of information. They get to the place where they see, for example, that the material which went into making the chair they have been using every day is the same material that grows outside in those tall brown things with the green leaves on them.

This seeing the patterns among the bits of knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. Now

the world becomes one made up not just of singular bits of matter (like chairs and trees), but one which contains definable relationships -- recognizable patterns.

Most people spend the greatest portion of their lives in these two levels of thought -- the gathering of information (knowledge), and the recognition of patterns (wisdom). Ordinarily as more knowledge is gained, and more time passes, additional patterns are recognized until a person gets to the place where everyday life is full of knowledge and wisdom -- information and patterns. Some humans, especially in modern society, never seem to go very far past this point.

But there is a third and higher level of human thought -- understanding. It is much more common in traditional Native culture than it is in modern American culture. It begins when people have had enough experience and maturation to realize that not only are there bits of information (knowledge) and patterns of relationships (wisdom), but there are also more profound patterns made by the patterns themselves.

It is rather like looking at some Navajo weavings -- the brain instantly picks up on the bits of information (threads, colors, etc.) and the patterns made by the threads and colors, but then realizes that there is a more complex overall pattern

which bonds together the individual patterns made by the threads and colors.

So it is with understanding. Now comes the profound realization that not only are chairs and trees made from the same material, but also that there is an implied balance in the relationship between chairs and trees: the more chairs we make, the fewer trees there will be (unless we plant more trees).

This realization leads to the understanding that not only are the chair and the tree connected to each other in a relationship which implies the need for balance, but that all things are connected to each other in a complex universal relationship which must be kept in balance.

This leads to an understanding of the balance and harmony of the universe.

Old Grandmother and Old Grandfather understand this balance and harmony. They understand that knowledge and wisdom are good, but that without understanding there can be no harmony. It is the traditional way.

It is the way The People of Native America lived here for thousands of years without doing any serious harm to their environment.

For more information about Old Grandmother, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (our Internet address is [www.uncp.edu/nativemuseum](http://www.uncp.edu/nativemuseum)).

## Elders Spiritual Gathering

Many are unaware of the importance of our relations in nature. Nature can and does communicate with humans. If we have the knowledge to understand the signs and omens, the meanings can be similar or very different from one culture to another. Not all Native Americans are aware of their special connection to nature.

Many believe that the woodpeckers are symbols of good luck, happiness and healing. The bear is looked upon with great respect and is a sign of great power, representing wisdom, protection and healing. The fox is a messenger of danger or possible death, but can also serve as a guardian. The Otter is a good sign meaning wealth, health and good behavior. His fur is highly prized for ceremonial regalia as high status for both men and women. The buzzard predicts the forthcoming of problems. The egret and cranes are known as the peacemaker representing good luck and harmony. Their feathers are used in healing ceremonies. The eagle represents strength, wisdom, courage, wealth and spirituality. To be presented an eagle feather by another Native American is considered as one of the highest honors one may have bestowed upon them.

It doesn't matter what your religious background is. All that is required to gain knowledge and meaning from nature is an open mind and a willingness to learn from nature. In doing so, one may establish a special connection to Mother Earth as did our ancestors in camps gone by.

Aside from the cultural traditionist, other people such as farmers have learned much from

observing nature and have benefited from that special bond to our mother, the earth.

When they would see a cloud ring around the moon at night, they would expect some form of participation within three days. Sailors quickly learned that red skies in the morning means a forthcoming stormy day and red skies in the evening means a good clear day tomorrow.

Many of us have heard from our elders that a bird flying into a house can mean a sudden illness or death. This is even believed by non-Indians. And the presence of an owl can also mean an upcoming sickness or death.

When the first Europeans came to this country, they observed our ancestors praying to a great Spirit or Creator, to the Sun, Moon, Trees, Plants, Rivers, stars, wind, thunder, lightning, animals, and even the rivers. They could not understand. Even today some of our own people do not understand the prayers of our ancestors. In fact, the Native Americans worship God with respect in communicating with all that God has created for man. Our ancestors understand that all things in nature are spiritual and have purpose and meaning as they are the Great Creators creation. Take a rock, for example. It was created by the Supreme God, the Creator. The Creator being spiritual; would this not mean that the rock he created is also spiritual. Think about it.

Nature is rapidly becoming foreign to our people. In our modern day life, teaching children the meaningful Indian stories is seldom or rarely done in our homes and schools.

I have shared a little of what I have learned from the Elders to give you an idea of the connection to nature that you may discover by attending the Lumbee Tribal Elders Council Spiritual Gathering.

Come visit with us June 20-22 at the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center and share in a spiritual connection to nature and our Great Creator.

by John Marshall

## Happenings at Swett High

Autumn Locklear was selected as Student of Excellence for the freshmen class.

Teachers enjoyed a week of gifts, food and praises, and appreciation during teacher appreciation week, which was held May 5-9.

Fallon Carter and Montreal Brown were selected as athletes of the year at the athletic awards banquet on May 8.

The Academic Awards Banquet was held on May 12 for those who received straight A's all year. Dane Clothier was there to provide entertainment.


79 students attended the North Carolina Scholars Luncheon May 9.

The music department held its spring concert May 6.

Awards night for underclassmen was held May 15 and senior awards night was May 16.

Varsity baseball players are participating in the playoffs.

The Carolina Indian Voice



**Editorial & Opinion Page**

Send letters to the editor to:  
P.O. Box 1075, Pembroke, NC 28372

*The editor reserves the right to edit libelous and/or lengthy letters*

## Summer Food Service Program

The Upward Bound Program at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke announces the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Agriculture funded Summer Food Service Program. The program is available to all Upward Bound participants 14-16 years old. Children who are members of households receiving food stamps, or FDPIR, or TANF benefits are automatically eligible to receive free meal benefits at eligible program sites. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agricultural policy, this sponsor is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9401 or call (202) 750-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

- Meals will be provided at the following location beginning June 2-August 8, 2003:

**UNC Pembroke Breakfast: 7:00-8:00 am**  
**One University Drive Lunch: 12:00-1:00 pm**  
**Pembroke, N.C. Dinner: 5:00-6:00 pm**

THE FOLLOWING HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME STANDARDS ARE USED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY:

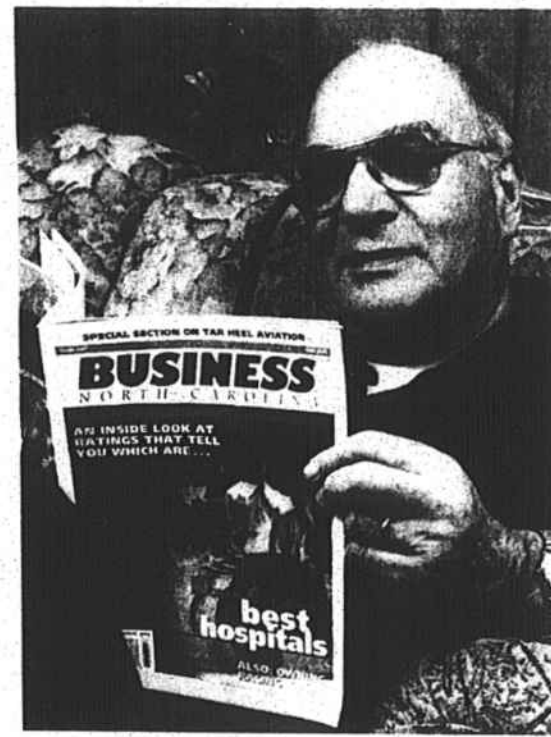
**EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2002 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003**

**SFSP Income Eligibility Standards**

Household Size	Yearly Reduced	Monthly Reduced	Weekly Reduced
1	16,391	1,366	316
2	22,089	1,841	425
3	27,787	2,316	535
4	32,485	2,791	644
5	39,183	3,266	754
6	44,881	3,741	864
7	50,579	4,215	973
8	56,277	4,690	1,083

For each additional household member add: +5,698  
+475 +110

For further information, please contact Larry L. McCallum, Director, TRIO Programs, UNC Pembroke at 910-521-6276.



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**JAMSHED K. KHAN, MD**



Jamshed K. Khan, MD, has joined the medical staff of Southeastern Regional Medical Center. A native of Pakistan, Dr. Khan earned his medical degree from King Edward Medical College in Lahore, Pakistan, and completed his residency in internal medicine at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, a geriatrics fellowship at Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals, and an internal medicine fellowship at the University of Iowa.

Board certified in internal medicine and geriatrics by the American Board of Internal Medicine, Dr. Khan practices with the Lumberton Medical Clinic. His interests include promoting healthy lifestyles, awareness of risk factors, and self-assessments—a good practice of preventive medicine. Dr. Khan and his family make their home in Lumberton.

Welcome, Dr. Khan, to our community and to SRMC.

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