

22 July 71

JUSTICE FOR INDIANS

Dear Editor: *Penobscot Times*

In the past few years a new picture of the Indian has been projected, in newspapers, magazines, books, etc. This new image has shown the American Indian as being equal with non-Indians, if not economically then intellectually. In short, people are realizing the actual worth of Indian Culture and of the Indian as an individual.

The events of the past few months, however, make one wonder if the people of Maine view the Maine Indians as peers or as beings much inferior to the non-Indians. On one hand they pat the Indian on the back, tell him he's doing fine and should be proud, etc., and ask when the next Pageant is. On the other hand, when he gets into trouble with the law it's another story.

I am referring to the murder trial of a young Indian boy just recently ended. The young man, just 24 years of age, was on trial for murder. The trial lasted a very short time, mainly because there was not enough evidence against him to make it last any length of time. Yet, the members of the jury (who did not seem to be interested, one way or the other) returned a verdict of "Manslaughter"!

They were all very anxious to return home for the weekend. All in all, members of the jury remained in good humor throughout. One could hear their laughter all the way in the hall. I would like to have heard some of their jokes, they were probably as colored as the verdict!

The Maine Indian living on or off the Reservation can no longer hide his head in the sand. The Indian has always gotten stabbed in the back by his so-called "White Brothers." History does have a habit of repeating itself.

I would venture to say, had it been a non-Indian on trial for that crime, under the same circumstances, the case would have been thrown out of court!!

I am writing this as one Maine Indian to other Maine Indians. Isn't it about time we stopped playing dead? If we allow this incident and others like it to go by unchallenged, then we are indeed as ignorant as the non-Indian would like to think we are!

Donna M. Loring

Thursday, July 8, 1971

Feedback . . .

the readers speak

Red awareness

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Indian Island
Old Town, Me.

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I am referring to the murder trial of a young Indian boy just recently ended. The young man just 24 yrs of age was on trial for Murder. The trial lasted a very short time, mainly because there was not enough evidence against him to make it last any length of time. What evidence against him they did have was purely circumstantial. Yet, the members of the jury (who did not seem to be interested, one way or the other.) returned a verdict of "Manslaughter"!

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D.M.LORING

Maine Times
13 Main Street
Topsham Me 04086

Printed whole articles!

Eastern Maine
Sunday Reporter
44 Central St.
Bangor Me. 04401

Portland Sunday Telegram
Portland Me.

✓ yes -

Bangor Dailey News
491 So. Main St.
Bangor Me. 04401

✓ No -

Penobscot Times
119 So. Main St.
Old Town Me.

✓ yes - whole articles.

✓ half teemed it, printed I still not right!

~~Summerset Reporter
Skowhegan Me.~~

Portland Press Herald
Portland Me.

✓ ?

THE BAR HARBOR TIMES
66 Main St.
Bar Harbor Me. 04609

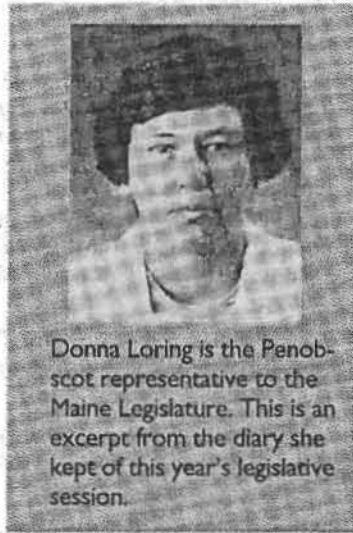
Yet another Indian massacre in Senate

By REP. DONNA M. LORING

COMMENTARY

In 1992 the Passamaquoddy Tribe proposed an amendment to the Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act. The amendment added eight acres of land in Albany Township to the list of land that could be acquired by the tribe and placed into territory status. Since this was a treaty amendment, the only way it could be made part of the settlement was if the state Legislature, the governor and the Passamaquoddy Tribe agreed. All parties agreed to this amendment in 1992. The Passamaquoddy Tribe decided to build a super bingo hall on that land after the state refused to allow the tribe to build a bingo hall close to its reservation in Calais.

Albany Township challenged the Indian Territory status of the township land in Maine courts. The Maine Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 7 of this year that even though the Legislature may have intended to place this land into territory status, it had not completed the intended action because the date by which the land was to be purchased and placed into trust status - Jan. 31,



Donna Loring is the Penobscot representative to the Maine Legislature. This is an excerpt from the diary she kept of this year's legislative session.

1991 - was not changed.

Rep. Donald Soctomah (the Passamaquoddy representative to the Maine Legislature) submitted an amendment to the Land Claims Settlement Act that would change the date, and added a retroactive clause that would complete what the Legislature, the governor and the tribe intended to do in 1992. The Judiciary Committee held a public hearing in

March, at which time residents of Albany Township came out in force against this amendment.

The committee voted 10-3 that the amendment should not pass. The three committee members in the minority voted to remove the retroactive clause, leaving the date change only. This version of the amendment still honored the intent and the government-to-government relationship. The House recognized the importance of the state's treaty obligations by passing the bill. It then went to the Senate for debate.

Saturday, April 8, 2000, was the day from hell. Not because we lost the Passamaquoddy bill in the state Senate but because we were treated so shabbily and degradingly. No citizen of this state should ever have to sit through such a verbally abusive attack as Rep. Soctomah and I did. It was the hardest thing I have ever done, to have to sit there helpless and listen to these self-righteous, pompous senators talk so degradingly about my people and gambling in the same breath.

Sen. (John) Benoit was the first

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LORING

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one to speak, and he went into detail about how Albany Township had been denied due process and stated "that was just plain unacceptable and shouldn't happen in this country!" He went on and on.

Then came Sen. (Norman) Ferguson with the "No casino in my town" argument. Sen. (Peter) Mills took the high, holler-than-thou road. He talked about how gambling was so terrible and that we shouldn't allow it into this state; he went on to say the tribes were being used by people out of New York, that these people were using the tribe to make a lot of money for themselves. He went on and on about how horrible gambling was, especially when Indians were involved. He cited Foxwood and the devastation it caused in that small town of Ledyard, Conn.

Sen. (Richard) Bennett, with great emotion and close to tears, begged other senators not to make his home into a casino. "Please don't take away my family's home," he pleaded. This was after he told all the other senators he loved them and said they were all honest and good people. Implying the opposite to those Indians who all wanted to destroy his home.

I was so mad I couldn't think or see straight. None of these pompous, self-righteous senators ever put a bill in to remove gambling from the state! Yet they had the audacity to stand and speak so outrageously against native people.

Albany Township people, most of whom were retired and well off, just sat there grinning from ear to ear and eating up the whole process. They knew they had enough votes to win. We knew they had the votes to win. Even though these senators knew they had the votes, they kept on rubbing salt into the wounds.

They appeared to enjoy it. When the smoke had settled it was yet another Indian massacre. White men win and Indians lose again, with no regard whatsoever for a government-to-government relationship and no effort at all to honor their treaty amendment from 1992. What a surprise! I say that sarcastically, of course. Someday they are going to know that they are dealing with governments. The purpose of the bill was to complete the legislative process that the Legislature, governor and the Passamaquoddy Tribe had intended. The senators chose to focus on the gambling issue, not the government-to-government relationship that is a higher legal priority. The obligation they have to a government-to-government relationship is far greater than to Albany Township. Since when did a disorganized town, or any town, have the power to turn a treaty agreement between governments around?

"I left the Senate chamber feeling personally attacked and wondering about the integrity of this process. Will the people of Maine ever get it? Will they ever open their ears, hearts and minds and decide to allow us to share some of the wealth?"

I'm sick and tired of gambling being an issue with Indian bills! We all know the state of Maine is not innocent when it comes to gambling. Clearly, different standards are being used for tribes than for the state.

Gambling in various forms has been debated in this session: expanding the lottery to include other New England states to make a super jackpot, the use of credit cards over the telephone to place bets, racetrack issues. Gambling is so prevalent in this state that you can go into any supermarket or mom-and-pop store and get a scratch card or a Megabucks ticket. You can't turn on the TV without seeing a Megabucks commercial! Yet when the Passamaquoddy Tribe plans a super bingo facility (which I might add is subject to being heavily regulated and monitored by the Maine State Police) on land it was led to believe was Indian territory, this becomes a horrible thing! This is hypocrisy at its zenith.

Sen. Bennett cried in the Senate; his show of emotion was worth more than all our generations of grief and mourning combined. They heard him, they honored him and we were left with nothing but another broken treaty.

What about all the years we cried and begged and pleaded in those very halls for our lands? We did not get the respect and honor due us as a people - a people who have been slandered, cheated, abused and murdered for our resources and our lands.

What about our lands that were

stolen from us? What about our way of life and the very resources we depended on to survive? Our pleas fell on deaf ears. I waited in vain for someone, anyone to stand up and speak from their soul and spirit for my people. Sens. (Susan) Longley and (Mary) Cathcart had spoken earlier. They had done the best they could. How could they argue as passionately as one of us would have argued? There was only a heavy silence and we knew the bill was lost.

I am truly disgusted and discouraged. Please understand when I say I am not pro-gambling. It is mostly that I am for making native people economically self-sufficient. I certainly am not for making my people look like criminals just because we are desperate to find something that economically works for us.

Has Maine helped us to find other ways to survive economically? The answer is an emphatic NO! As a matter of fact, when the Penobscot Nation approached the Taxation Committee last year for a tax break on bingo to help us finance emergency services for our tribal government, the very same senators, Mills, Bennett, Benoit and Ferguson, refused to give us a tax break. Sen. Mills chaired the Taxation Committee. When we as Penobscot and Passamaquoddy representatives put in a bill that would allow us to be part of the Homestead Exemption Act, we were voted down.

Every attempt we have made toward economic self-sufficiency has been shot down with excuses and bogus reasoning. We need help in this area and no one is helping. It is easy to sit in judgment of "those Indians" when you are doing well yourself.

Who cares about what generations before you did to us? Who cares about what we have to do to survive as long as it does not bother you or yours or as long as you do not have to share the wealth? That's it, isn't it... share the wealth. Sorry if I sound like I'm ranting, but pompous, self-righteous senators have that effect on me. Their focus was killing the bill and not finding alternative ways to help us. Sen. Benoit once told me not to focus on one thing but to see the big picture. That was excellent advice. I ask the senators to take that same advice.

My last word on the subject is this: I heard a lot of mean-spirited, negative words during that Senate debate, and they were calculated to hurt and to criminalize native people. I left the Senate chamber feeling personally attacked and wondering about the integrity of this process. Will the people of Maine ever get it? Will they ever open their ears, hearts and minds and decide to allow us to share some of the wealth?

I ask only this: Don't criticize us. Don't criminalize us. We are just trying to survive.



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To the editor,

I am writing in response to your editorial cartoon on March 12, 2002. The cartoon was titled "Steve Meyers' View".

I am writing because there was something terribly wrong with the image and the very subtle message it sent.

No, I am not going to ask the paper to print an apology nor am I going to call for Mr. Meyer's resignation. (I know people who would). The reason I am not asking for his resignation or an apology is that Native people since Columbus have simply learned how to forgive.

There is a saying "a picture is worth a thousand words". In this case it's a cartoon. I would like to use some of those words to describe the picture I saw.

The picture was of Governor Angus King holding a can of poison marked VETO in big letters. (I wonder what that container with the skull and crossbones held? It was obviously something toxic like dioxin, mercury, and cadmium...)

There were small insect carcasses all around him. I think these were supposed to be roaches and they presumably depicted attempts at other gambling proposals. There were some images I did not see such as live roaches with the letters LOTTERY, HORSE RACING, OFF TRACK BETTING. I have never seen a cartoon with the Governor exterminating those depicted as insects!

I then saw a jumbo size insect perhaps eight to ten times the size of the others. The words CASINO PROPOSAL was written on its shell. The words YEWWHOoooo! With music symbols were depicted as coming from the insect. I cannot figure out what the meaning of this is except that when Native people are being made fun of they are mocked with similar words.

The good governor looks as though he was taken by surprise and getting ready to exterminate the jumbo insect with the poison canister marked VETO.

What possibly could be wrong with this picture! I will explain from my perspective as an Indian.

My point is Indian people are real people we are human beings with the same dreams and desires as anyone else and should never be dehumanized. This cartoon was dehumanizing. Ironically it was in the paper the day after the first ever "State of the Tribes Address". The Chiefs spoke to the entire Legislative body and to the entire State through the media. Maine Public Radio carried their speeches in their entirety.

They spoke to Maine people from their hearts and spoke the plain truth. They were genuine and honest, they offered their hands in friendship and spoke of partnerships and working together for the common good. They invited the people of Maine to a place they had never been before, into their hearts, their spirituality and their humanness.

There are people who will take advantage of our tribes casino proposal to make us look less than human. Some will even see a political advantage in using the Indian people of this state like a political football. I would like to think Maine people have progressed. I would like to think Maine people are smarter than that. I would like to think Maine people are fair.

The word casino has been synonymous with Indians ever since the success of the Pequot's casino in Connecticut. I know this is true in Maine because every time my colleague Donald Soctomah and I introduced a bill it was heavily scrutinized to make sure there was no casino involved. It has been this way ever since we were elected to represent our people in the State Legislature. The word Indian and casino are synonymous.

I wonder has anyone thought of equating words such as:

Indian and children, Indian and mother, Indian and father, Indian and family, Indian and home, Indian and partner, Indian and future, Indian and equality, Indian and dreams, Indian and human being?