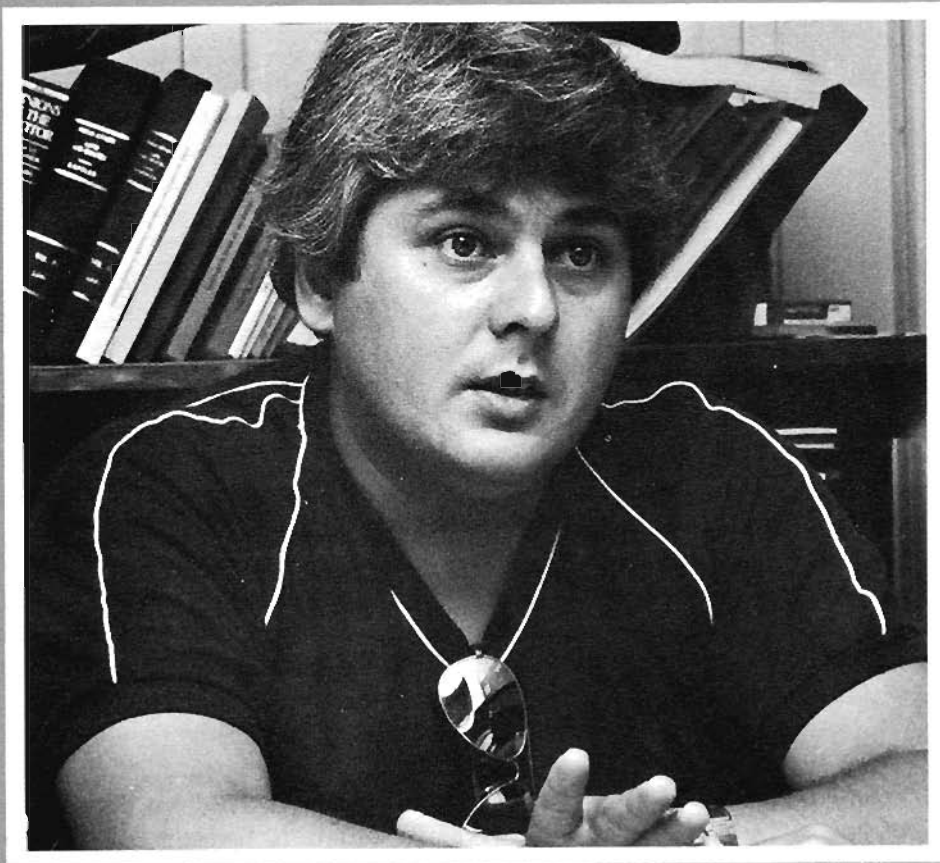


TIM LOVE

The Middle Generation



By Mark Emerson

It is perhaps stretching it to call the youthful 30-year-old governor of the Penobscot Indians a member of the middle generation. It is his position of leadership rather than his age which links him with the middle generation instead of with Indians a few years his junior.

The two term governor (each term is two years) has had experiences that are much dif-

ferent than those of men ten years his senior. School at Old Town was the same mixture of shame, poverty and social tension, but by the time he completed his schooling, the movement to return to the island had already begun.

Thus Tim Love never doubted that he would live his life on the island. He did not experience that period when others at-

tempted to make it in the outside world, but instead entered directly into a time when the Penobscot tribe was collectively turning its energy towards carving a place for its people in the modern world.

He grew up while the seeds of racial pride were being sowed: "I guess the credit should go to the black people for that, this whole basic pride in who you are." Because of this,

The sky's the limit!
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go to school anywhere
they want."

he brings to the office of governor a commitment to attaining both economic and cultural self determination for his people.

"It was difficult coming from Indian Island. There was a basic shame almost in being recognized as coming from here until we got older and realized what it was all about. We were pretty much left alone by the other kids in terms of race, because by then we had a reputation as being hard ass. If you said anything, you'd had it.

"But it was difficult, sure, even with the teachers. We had run-in after run-in with the teachers during high school.

"You paid more attention to that (standing up for your rights) than anything else. The school studies were secondary. Your priority was to make your point to those people.

"It cost me personally. I didn't follow up on my education. It was only about two months until I graduated and I quit. The reason I quit, and it was probably foolish, was that I wanted to be a failure in their system—a statistic. It may be somewhat backwards in thinking, but after I quit, I went and got my GED (graduate equivalency diploma).

"I always knew I would stay here. The

main reason is the orientation of the family I belong to in being involved in the tribe. Some people can't wait to get out of here, but 95 percent wind up back here eventually, because it's no better out there."

Then he spoke of the bridge. "I was born in 1951 and they built that bridge the year before I was born. A lot of the older people curse that bridge today because it brought a lot of changes into the tribe.

"As a community and as a tribe, we were stagnating during this period. The people would grow up and most of them would leave, because there was no place to live over here. Finally in the mid 70s things started turning around and most people started thinking in terms of looking down the road a bit."

Tim feels that the newborn prosperity is having some negative effects on the tribe, as well as positive effects that relate to pride, better health and greater opportunity.

"I think that the sense of unity has deteriorated. We were a hell of a lot poorer than we are now, but at the same time there was a lot more feeling of closeness—and that's probably why.

"You were driven to unify, because if a situation occurred with the state, there was a fear that they would take the rest of our land. You were driven to unity. As the tribe progressed in terms of economics, I've seen a lot of people become greedy and self serving.

"These people before didn't seem to be like that. Maybe they were inside, but it took something to bring it out. But when we are threatened as a whole, we still bond together nicely."

Tim also acknowledged the very serious problem of having elements of the Penobscot culture slip away before they can be passed down or recorded. "There have been a lot of people in the last ten years who had a wealth of history and knowledge of this tribe, and they're gone. They took it with them.

"Culturally this tribe is, to me, at a crossroads in terms of maintaining its values.



Unfortunately, we've reached a point where it's going to take money to reestablish the practices that have been almost lost, or totally lost, such as the language. That is an effort that is almost insurmountable.

"I plan to put into the budget money to develop the Penobscot history curriculum in the school. It's something we have to pay attention to because it's easy for it to fall by the wayside.

"Let's face it, in just about any society, money talks. When you haven't had it for most of your life, when you have the chance to get it, it becomes your number one priority, and that's dangerous in terms of what it does to the culture.

"You leave things by the wayside. We're trying to fight that, but at the same time get a better standard of living for our people."

He spoke of the struggle to achieve job opportunities for the Penobscots. "At this

point it is two phased. The number one emphasis is on helping individuals who want to get into small business. To assist them, not to do it for them. The other part is to lure into the tribal land small industry." As an example of this, Tim cited the building of a small plant by Digital on Passamaquoddy land near Eastport.

"The ultimate goal is to put ourselves in a position where we are not 100 percent beholden to the state and federal governments, so if we ever do have serious differences with them—take Indian health services as an example—so members of the tribe who receive health services won't be cut off.

"It is also important that we get away from subsidized employment. Subsidized income, particularly with President Reagan, is extremely dangerous to the stability of the family and the individual.

"But to do this, we have to triple, quadru-



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ple our present income. We paid 28 million dollars for the land and this year it only generated one-half million dollars of income. The land claim settlement is mainly a long range benefit that we haven't seen yet.”

Tim described a variety of new programs that are aimed at creating Indian owned and run businesses. These include a policy for granting business loans to ambitious youths, a firewood cutting program on the island to increase short term employment, and a wood harvesting business (managed by Andrew Akins) on the newly acquired lands.

“The income that we have gotten from the land, from cutting the trees, has allowed us to set up an Office of Economic Development within the tribe,” the governor said.

“We keep trying to find new areas to open for young people. This wood harvesting, that is the first area I've seen where our hard core

unemployed young people, people in their 20's have said, 'Now there's something I want to try.' They've had apprenticeships before and they've fallen through.

“Now they're into something and it's hard work, going out there and cutting the trees and hauling them all around the woods with the horseflies chewing you up. And they're sticking with it. They've been out there for ten weeks and they're still with it.”

For the generation now coming out of high school, Tim sees the tribe's duty as twofold, both to provide educational opportunities for the talented and to help motivate those who have already fallen into a pattern of dependence on the tribal and federal governments.

“We've had people who have had golden opportunities, but they just didn't want to get themselves into a position where they didn't have to depend on the tribe anymore. It's a hard cycle to break. It's just ingrained in them, I guess, but we're making some progress on it.

“My generation was probably the last one to be in a situation of not having anything. Now they have everything and the appreciation doesn't seem to be there. How you beat that I don't know. I guess you have to take it away and say, 'You've got to work.' Motivation!

“As far as my kids are concerned, I hope they take advantage of the opportunity to get a decent education. That's one benefit they have. It won't cost them a penny. All they have to do is be determined that they're going to do it.

“Honestly, the sky's the limit! Our children will go to school on the island until the ninth grade and then they can go to any high school in the region. They don't have to go to Old Town. I know my children won't go to that place. The tribe will pay for their post secondary education. We've had people graduate from Harvard, Dartmouth, Stanford, all over.

“All they have to do is put their minds to it and do it.”