

## OUR VIEW Obama time

If we're talking politics, then it's obvious the *he* is Ill. Sen. Barack Obama. The Harvard-educated son of a Kenyan father and Kansan mother has been a political media darling since his rousing keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

"Tonight is a particular honor for me," he said two years ago, on the biggest political stage of his fledgling political career, "because, let's face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely. My father was a foreign student, born and raised in a small village in Kenya. He grew up herding goats, went to school in a tin-roof shack. His father—my grandfather—was a cook, a domestic servant to the British. But my grandfather had larger dreams for his son. Through hard work and perseverance my father got a scholarship to study in a magical place, America, that shone as a beacon of freedom and opportunity to so many who had come before."

"While studying here," Obama continued, "my father met my mother. She was born in a town on the other side of the world, in Kansas. Her father worked on oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression. The day after Pearl Harbor, my grandfather signed up for duty; joined Patton's army, marched across Europe. Back home, my grandmother raised a baby and went to work on a bomber assembly line. After the war, they studied on the G.I. Bill, bought a house through FHA, and later moved west all the way to Hawaii in search of opportunity. And they, too, had big dreams for their daughter. A common dream, born of two continents. My parents shared not only an improbable love, they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or 'blessed,' believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success. They imagined—they imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential."

Such a diverse background, combined as it is with a graceful intelligence, easy eloquence, abiding faith and intrinsic desire to do what's best for people, make Obama an easy choice for the Democratic presidential nominee. He lacks the political baggage of the Clinton name, the journeyman status of John Kerry, the too-polished sheen of John Edwards. A sentimental favorite — if not the frontrunner — if he chose to run (because of the reasons mentioned). Obama is the kind of politician people are pinning for: tough, bipartisan and compassionate. Obama is also electable because he can raise money like a Clinton: some \$14 million for his 2004 Senate race.

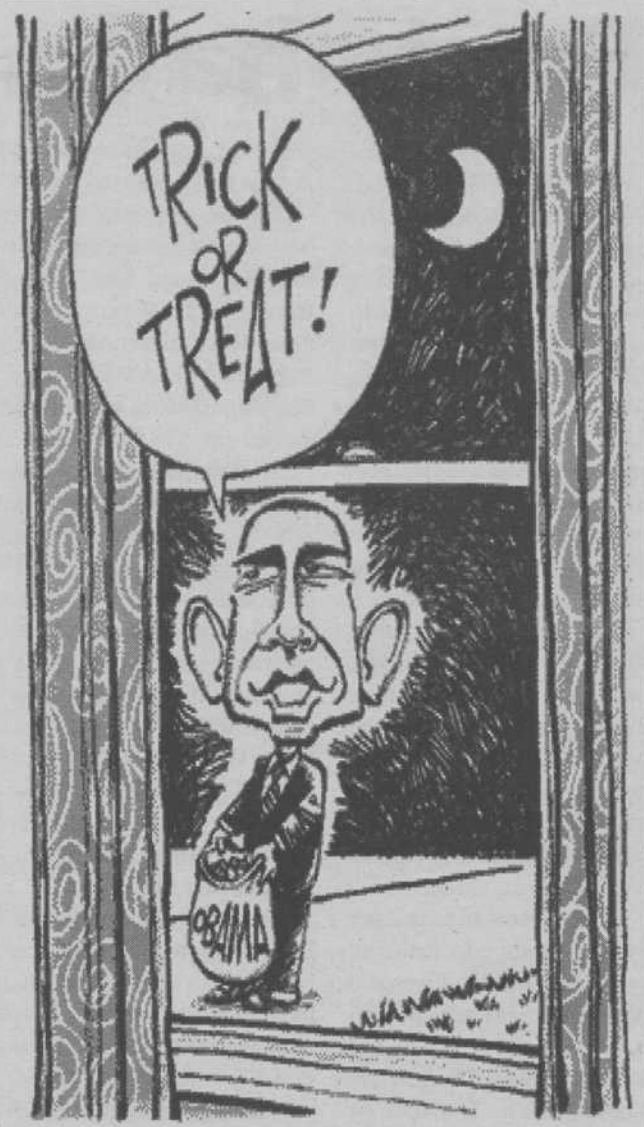
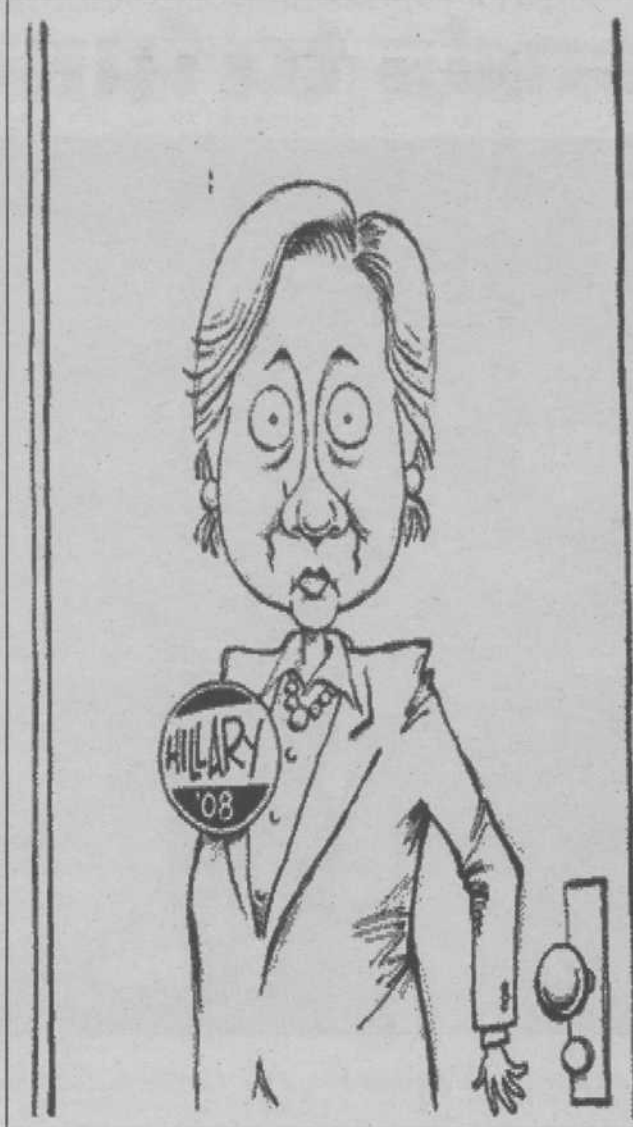
In asking whether Obama is ready, we should also look at our local political landscape and ask who, in the minority communities, is ready for the political primetime. Where is our Obama? Where is our Deval Patrick? (He's poised to be Massachusetts' next governor.) When will we start developing candidates with Obama's preternatural qualities and raise enough money to win a state of-

## Excellent Work

Hats off to the 100 Black Men of Las Vegas for the opening of the 100 Academy of Excellence. In less than a decade, the local chapter of the respected Atlanta-based organization has shown what's possible when talent, dedication and resources are married to know-how.

The academy is the first charter school in North Las Vegas, something long overdue for a community whose students deserve access to the highest quality education. The academy is certainly positioned to make a difference. There are 22 students in each classroom, compared to between 32 and 35 in regular classrooms. The academy offers full-day kindergarten and an afterschool program for pupils whose parents work late. Plans call for a middle school in the future.

Judging by parental interest—hundreds of pupils voluntarily pulled out of other schools and enrolled in the academy—the 100 Academy of Excellence has the solid footing it needs to ensure that no child is left behind. Keep up the good work, gentlemen.



# China slices Black finance

By Harry C. Alford  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

"Oh, the wolves are of another mind." It is very strange and downright sad how some of the best pieces of good legislation can be hijacked and used against the very people it is supposed to be benefiting. Not only that, those who think they are representing a certain group of people are the ones who actually pull the "trigger" or drop the "lever" upside their head.

Such is the case with the so-called Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. It could have been such a beautiful event, but it went the way of greed and advantage for China and those who do business with China.

There was a loophole in this legislation that allow "third countries" to be used as substitutes for African countries when it came to textile production. China and sometimes India jumped right in with their processed cotton. As a result, you may buy clothes that say "Made in Kenya" or "Made in Nigeria," but the reality is, the cotton is grown and processed in China.

The textile industry in nations such as Nigeria and the cotton farmers from Kenya and other nations have been devastated. This nation



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through its so-called conscience, in effect, has laid the environment to bring economic devastation to villages and towns throughout Africa.

This third-party exemption was supposed to stop at the end of 2006. But you know what? The same people who caused it to be, some members of the Congressional Black Caucus included, have surfaced again in an attempt to extend it. Why? As rap mogul P Diddy once proclaimed, "It's all about the Benjamins."

Lobbyists representing China and companies that do business with China are slinging cash up on Capitol Hill, causing certain Congressmen to do the craziest things.

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, or the AGOA, is supposed to be about Africa doing business with the United States and no third country interference or exploitation. Sadly, that

hasn't happened.

In addition to doing the whammy on Africa again, the greedy have enlarged its appetite for Haiti. CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, like AGOA, was to open the doors for economic development between the United States and Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. This time they got it right in that no third country substitutions can be allowed. But the wolves thought hard and came up with an even sinister scheme.

They are proposing to extend the exemption clause in AGOA but also make it applicable to Haiti.

Why Haiti? It's simple: They can cram China cotton into Haiti and block any textile business in the CAFTA

nations. Keep in mind that millions of people of African descent live and work in CAFTA nations.

The Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti, is 60 percent Black. It is quickly developing textiles under CAFTA via business with the United States. It also employs many Haitians. When China gets its hooks into Haiti, there won't be anymore textile activity in the Dominican Republic or anywhere else in CAFTA.

Like AGOA and Africa, they are going to devastate people of color. Meanwhile, Haiti will get some menial jobs but no business ownership or wealth creation. The clients of the lobbyists will continue to make big-time profits at the expense of Americans and workers in

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