

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 43

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

February 21, 2008

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

ANALYSIS:

Clinton on the ropes

By TOM RAUM

Associated Press Writer

She's still fighting, but it's awfully hard to find encouraging news for Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Democratic homestretch.

She's behind in money, delegates and momentum. She's selling experience when everyone seems to want change. And all the cheering for the man who could be the first Black president is drowning out any excitement for the first female.

Once deemed the nearly inevitable Democratic nominee, Clinton has now lost 10 presidential contests in a row, as the battle heads for a March 4 showdown in Texas and Ohio — states she must win. By most measures, the combative New York senator is on the ropes.

"If she wins in Texas and

Ohio, I think she'll be the nominee," former President Clinton said Wednesday during a speech to his wife's supporters in Beaumont, Texas.

"If you don't deliver for her, I don't think she can be."

Those are big "ifs."

Rival Democrat Barack Obama won Hawaii caucuses and Wisconsin's primary on Tuesday, extending his winning streak and making him difficult to overtake in the remaining 16 races. Clinton hasn't won a contest since Super Tuesday on Feb. 5.

Helping keep her afloat is her thin lead among nearly 800 super delegates, made up largely of party and elected Democratic officials — but some of those who once backed her have recently switched to Obama. Others seem rattled.

Of course, few political veterans are prepared to dismiss a Clinton candidacy before all the votes are in. There have been gravity-defying comebacks before in the family. And Obama is still short of the 2,025 delegates needed to clinch the nomination.

Clinton clearly is capable of dragging the race out for weeks even if the turnaround she is seeking doesn't materialize on March 4.

"It's fair to say the race isn't over yet, but I think Sen. Clinton must win Ohio, Texas and Pennsylvania to have any shot at getting the nomination," said Democratic strategist and pollster Mark Mellman, who is not affiliated with either candidate. "Obama could lose all three and still get the nomination. So at this point, he's got more ways to win than

she does." Pennsylvania votes on April 22.

One by one, Clinton's original strengths have taken hits as the first-term Illinois senator's vital signs have improved.

— Raising a million dollars a day for most of this year, Obama has outpaced Clinton in fundraising and spending. "Anybody who won't tell you it's disheartening is lying to you," said one of Clinton's New York fundraisers, John Catsimatidis. "The old adage is don't count the Clintons out yet. I still stick by that. We wait and see what happens."

— She's behind in delegates, and the gap has been growing. She must win 57 percent of the remaining primary and caucus delegates to
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Cleveland Cavaliers basketball star LeBron James scrapes paint from a window in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans on Friday. NBA players in town for the All Star game took a day to work on community service projects to help with the recovery from Hurricane Katrina. The 2005 hurricane devastated the Gulf Coast.

Top NBA talent aid in La. relief

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - As the charter bus turned right on to Lizardi Street and descended into this city's crippled Lower 9th Ward, the lighthearted mood on board turned serious and sobering.

Through the windows on both sides, LeBron James, Steve Nash, Jason Kidd and other NBA All-Stars viewed unimaginable devastation. Suddenly, those horrific TV images and photographs burst to life.

Quaint, two-story homes once submerged in 25 feet of water still sit abandoned or boarded shut. Other houses bear the spray-painted Xs and numbers signifying rescues that were sometimes too late.

This is where Hurricane Katrina first left her mark in 2005 and where she endures 2-1/2 years later.

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Election, crime few of topics at summit

Black Union set for Louisiana

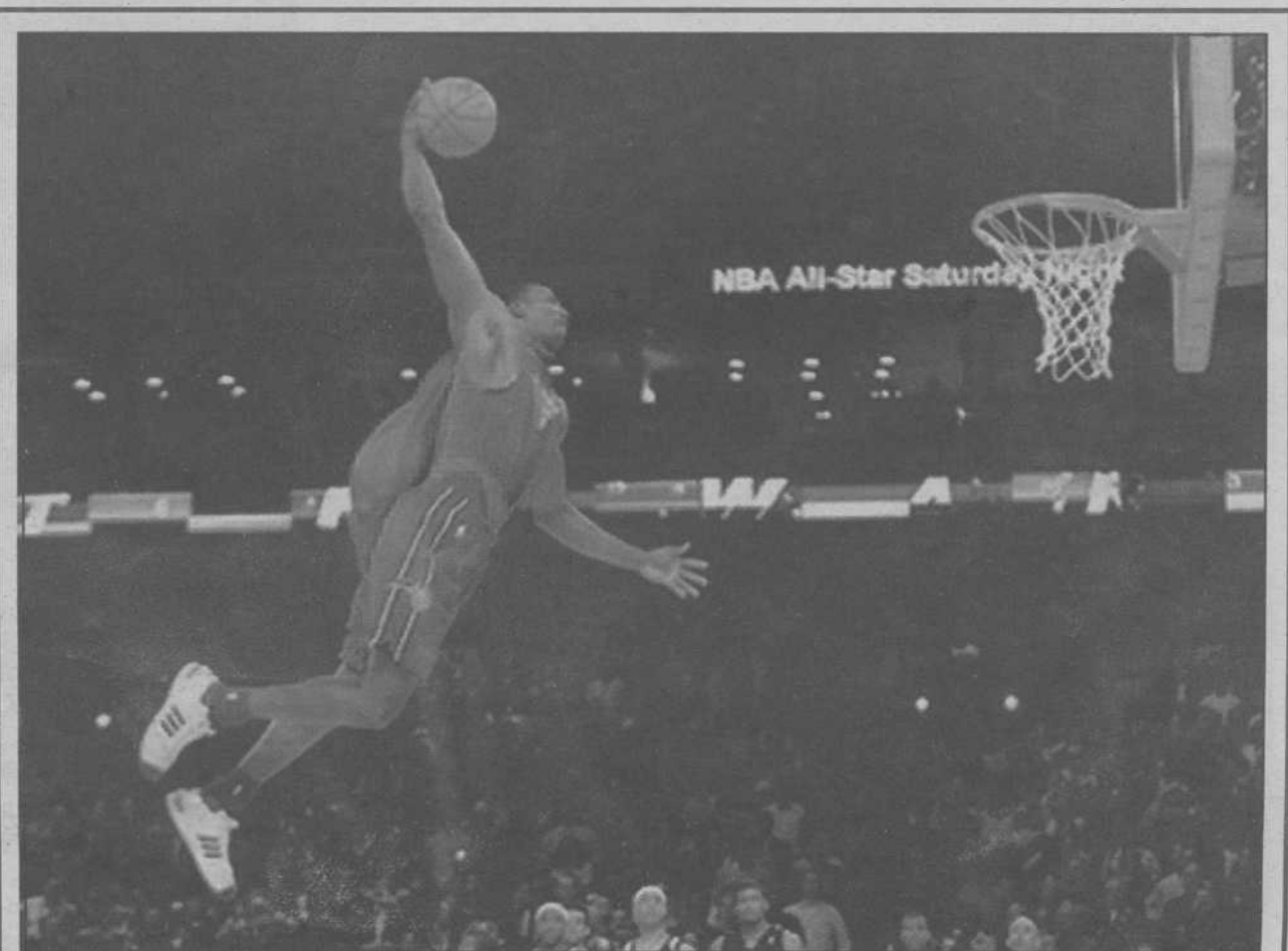
Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW ORLEANS (NNPA) - The 2008 State of the Black Union weekend will commence in New Orleans February 22 and 23 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. SOBU weekend is the brainchild of author/journalist Tavis Smiley.

With the theme "Reclaiming Our Democracy, Deciding Our Future," this year's symposium will provide a national forum for leading African-American educators, social scientists, business leaders and clergy to discuss economic empowerment, the development and rebuilding of communities, as well as

continued support of communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina. In addition to focusing on the role African-Americans will play in the national elections, SOBU 2008 hopes to mobilize 1,000 volunteers to rebuild some of the poorest areas of New Orleans more than two years after more than 80 percent of the city was inundated with floodwaters.

Friday, Feb. 22, has been designated SOBU BUILDS 2008 Day of Service. Volunteers will work at six simultaneous community service projects in the Upper Ninth Ward, the Lower Ninth Ward,
(See SOBU, Page 10)



UP, UP AND AWAY

Wearing a Superman costume, Orlando Magic forward Dwight Howard soars toward the basket in the basketball slam dunk contest on Saturday at the NBA All Star Weekend in New Orleans. Howard was declared the winner of the competition. Howard is among a crop of young NBA superstars on whom the league is touting as its future.