

OUR VIEW

Time to Work

America turned a significant page in its storied history on Tuesday with the election of Illinois Senator Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States. On Tuesday, Obama became the first African-American to be elected president of the United States. He also became the first Democrat in 32 years to win election with a popular vote majority since Jimmy Carter in 1976. Obama got 52.3 percent to 46.5 percent with 94 percent of all U.S. precincts tallied. And he dominated his opponent, Republican Arizona Sen. John McCain, in Electoral College votes as well: 349 to 174 (Votes totals in North Carolina remained in doubt as of the *Sentinel-Voice's* press time).

True to his steady persona, President-Elect Obama delivered a poignant but pragmatic victory speech at Grant Park in Chicago. The introduction was classic Obama oratory: soaring and poignant:

"If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.

"It's the answer told by lines that stretched around schools and churches in numbers this nation has never seen; by people who waited three hours and four hours, many for the very first time in their lives, because they believed that this time must be different; that their voice could be that difference.

"It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled — Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of red states and blue states: we are, and always will be, the United States of America."

Cameras panned jubilant and tearful faces among the 200,000-plus gathered in Grant Park. Across the country, in downtowns, community centers, churches and homes, the glee was evident and ebullient. Obama's win was our win: a victory for American ideals, proof positive that this is a country of boundless opportunity, verification for generations of African-Americans that this land is our land, too.

Celebrate we must, for we've been privileged to watch history unfold. But we who supported Obama, and those who didn't, must not get lost in the euphoria. Ours is a nation and a world in peril. Obama, ever studious, made sure to highlight the problems we must face:

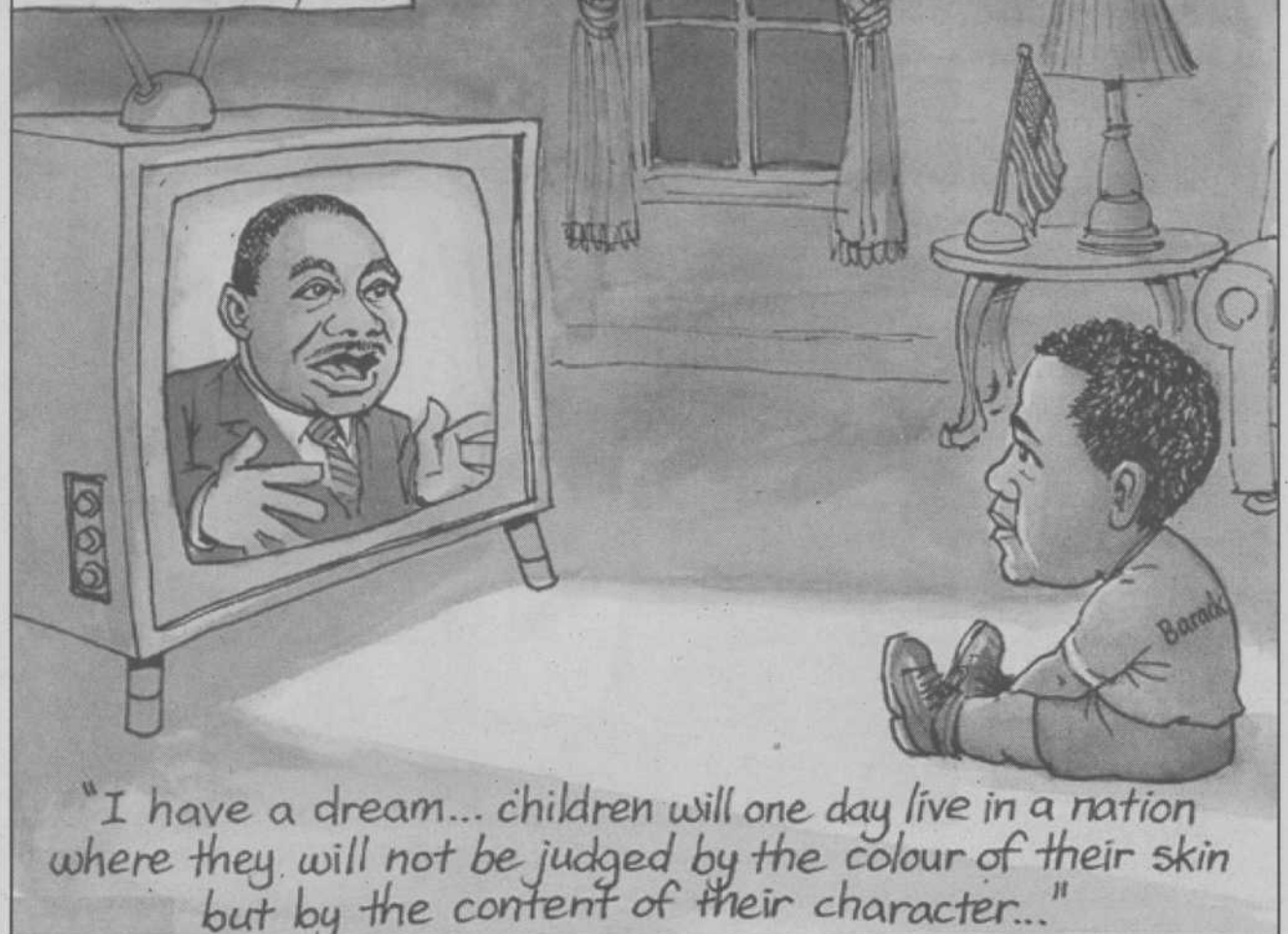
"For even as we celebrate tonight, we know the challenges that tomorrow will bring are the greatest of our lifetime — two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century. Even as we stand here tonight, we know there are brave Americans waking up in the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan to risk their lives for us. There are mothers and fathers who will lie awake after their children fall asleep and wonder how they'll make the mortgage, or pay their doctors' bills, or save enough for college. There is new energy to harness and new jobs to be created; new schools to build and threats to meet and alliances to repair.

"The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even one term, but America, I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there. I promise you, we as a people will get there. There will be setbacks and false starts. There are many who won't agree with every decision or policy I make as president, and we know that government can't solve every problem. But I will always be honest with you about the challenges we face. I will listen to you, especially when we disagree. And above all, I will ask you to join in the work of remaking this nation the only way it's been done in America for two-hundred and twenty-one years — block by block, brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand."

Judging by his words, America can finally rejoice: We have the president we need for these times.

The skinny, studious community organizer from Illinois will never have to worry about his name being spell-checked again.

AUGUST 28TH, 1963



Obama can't trump economy

By James Clingman
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

No, this is not about Barack Obama. After November 4, 2008, there will be plenty of time to write about his ascension to the highest office in the land.

This is about the economy and how it will affect us individually and collectively. Since the tidal wave of Wall Street bailouts and bank failures began, we have seen our personal economic situations decline.

We have seen what little clout we even thought we had with banks slip further into the abyss of higher interest rates and ATM fees, outlandish credit card fees and assessments, tighter lending policies, and rip-off charges for insufficient fund checks that multiply on a daily basis. What shall we do?

I have said it many times before, via this column and in my speeches, so I guess one more time won't hurt. If ever there was a need for a Collective Banking Group (CBG) chapter in your city, it is right now.

The leverage that comes with collective and cooperative work cannot be overstated, and what better time to have leverage with the banks than in these dire economic circumstances.

We will surely see more of the same as the pain of the



JAMES CLINGMAN

recession, and maybe even a depression, moves up the ladder toward the affluent. We will see more usury interest rates, more restrictions on lending, especially for homes and businesses, and more backroom deals being cut between greedy corporate bigwigs and corrupt politicians. With all of that going on, Black people need all the leverage, influence, and power we can get, because you know we are always the ones who get the worst from hard times.

The CBG is not a panacea that will cure all of our ills, but it certainly will change the way banks do business with us, and it will change how we view and deal with banks. I have seen it with my own eyes in the Maryland/D.C. area, as well as in other cities where CBG chapters exist.

It only makes sense to be in a position to "deal" with banks on a serious level and obtain maximum reciprocity for the dollars they hold for

us, especially among our Black churches. Billions of dollars every year go from our pews to their vaults, and in many cases across this country all we do is complain about how we are mistreated by the banks.

It makes no sense at all to keep up the constant refrain of misery and woe, whining about what someone does to us, and waiting for them to change without any incentive to do so. And for those of you who are waiting for Barack Obama to solve this problem, I have a newsflash for you: it ain't gonna happen.

The CBG works on a local level, where you and I live; just like politics is local, so is economics. We had better get with the program and start responding appropriately to unfair treatment and abuse by any entity in our communities.

At such a time as this,

when the economy is in a tailspin; at such a time as this, when the "big boys" are wringing their hands and pondering a flying leap from the 44th floor; at such a time as this, when economic fear grips those whose greatest fear, prior to now, was a double bogey; and at such a time as this, when there is so much economic uncertainty yet the ever-present certainty that Black people will continue at the bottom of the economic spectrum; at such a time as this, we must act!

The tools we need are at our fingertips; all we need to do is use them. Our collective economic resources cannot be denied, but we cannot continue to allow those resources, the lifeblood of our households, our neighborhoods and our churches, to leave and never return. At such a time as this, we have

(See Clingman, Page 9)



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