

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Sen. Barack Obama

America is Changing

When Barack Obama first announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United States, people, and particularly black people, wondered if he stood a ghost of a chance. After all, he would be doing battle against, among others, the mighty Clintons, whom many blacks feel totally indebted to. Why? We're still trying to figure that one out.

We remember vividly the esoteric elucidation of the question, "Is Obama black enough?" At the time the question didn't quite resonate because we were somewhat perplexed by the thought that the question was really back-handed, implying that Obama was too white. Could he relate to issues that are dear to black Americans?

We are pleased to announce that not only is Obama black enough but white enough, blue enough, brown enough and yellow enough to win this election. Obama understands that there is only one America and that people of all colors and religions have similar problems and face the same challenges in trying to provide for their families in all areas, including healthcare and jobs, all the while struggling against foreclosures and a war that seems to be going nowhere.

Obama is fresh. He absolutely represents change for America. Don't forget that he is also quite intelligent; in fact, one might say that he is brilliant, given his academic credentials and the manner in which he has fended off numerous personal and political attacks from his opponents.

Obama himself has said that this presidential race is not about race or gender. It isn't and it shouldn't be. Ask any black person in a position of authority and they will tell you that they resent being pigeon-holed in a position that was given to them because they are black. Ask the CEO of American Express or the former CEO of Time Warner or the dean of Wake's Law School. They and all of the rest were chosen because they were the best fit for the position. That is why we believe, as we indicated last week, that "a change for the better is occurring right before our eyes."

This change is positive; it is long overdue, but it is here. If you want to take advantage of whatever opportunities exist in America today, all you need do is be willing to do whatever it takes to get it — pure and simple. No one is holding anybody back ... not the Klan, not the supremacists — no one.

Now don't get us wrong. The world is not perfect. Never has been ... never will be. All of us are creatures of imperfection and we all do things that are hurtful to one another. That we certainly need to continue to work on. However, we believe that there are enough people, both black and white, that have seen enough discrimination, bigotry and racism to want to change America into a country that all of us can be proud of. We certainly are.

Obama, no matter what happens, has proven that America is changing.

Submit letters and columns to:
 Chronicle Mailbag,
 P.O. Box 1636,
 Winston-Salem, NC 27102



Please print clearly. Typed letters and columns are preferred. If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself. We reserve the right to edit any item submitted for clarity or brevity. You also can e-mail us your letters or columns at: news@wschronicle.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A thank-you to the community

To the Editor:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and help in the distribution of the Christmas trees to many families in Winston-Salem and surrounding areas during the Christmas holidays 2007.

We could not have accomplished such a task without your help. Whether you loaded the trees on the truck or made the deliveries to the homes of the awaiting families, you made a great contribution in spreading goodwill to others.

A special thank you is extended to the Winston-Salem Housing Authority for supplying the list and addresses of the recipients of the Christmas trees. Thank you for such an outpouring of community support.

It is with great apprecia-



tion and a sincere thank you that this note of gratitude is being sent. If I can be of any

assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,
 State Rep. Larry Womble

Good lessons should include good health



Eddie Davis
 Guest Columnist

The NC Association of Educators (NCAE), a statewide organization of public school educators, is concerned about the health of our state's youth, particularly minority youth.

Black, Hispanic and Native American children suffer disproportionately from poor health and are at greater risk for illnesses such as diabetes and heart diseases. A report, from a conference held by the National Medical Association, noted that in every age group, African Americans in general have one of the highest incidences of diabetes in the United States.

As we celebrate Black History Month, NCAE wants to encourage parents to help their children celebrate a healthy lifestyle! As educators, we offer our students many lessons, but this month, we hope to inform parents as well on important lessons that may save their child's life. Our ads focus on four main themes: increasing physical activity, eating fruits and vegetables, healthy beverage choices and developing an overall family plan for health and fitness.

With informational support from the North Carolina Division of Health's Eat Smart, Move More campaign, we offer these tips on healthy habits to help our students come to school ready to learn. Good health improves a child's chances at success in school and in life. And we all, parents, educators, can make history by improving the health of our children.

Eddie Davis, a Durham teacher, is the president of NCAE. Davis is also a Democratic candidate for NC Superintendent of Public Instruction.



When AIDS hits home



E. Lynn Harris
 Guest Columnist

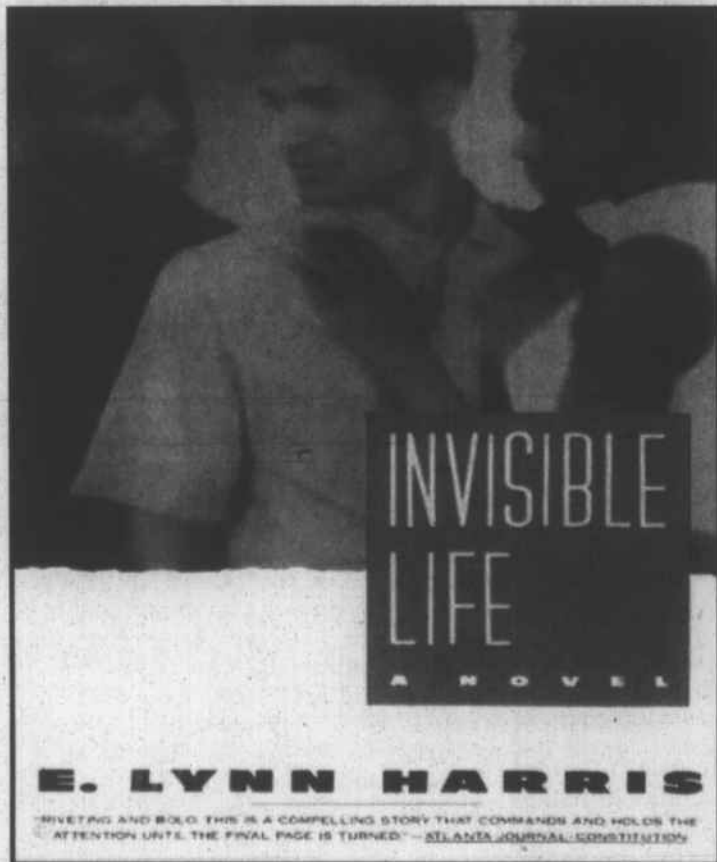
In the late 1980s, while I was living in New York, there were rumors about people being ill, people saying they were not ill, people dying suddenly. AIDS was considered the "gay disease." Then we heard other people had it, then we would hear the terrible stories about what [sicknesses] people got who had it.

It really hit home in the early 1990s when I began to lose some close friends. It spurred me to write, not knowing what else to do.

I admit I'm a very squeamish person, and I didn't like being around illness. I didn't feel like I could be around someone who was very sick. It scared me, and I didn't know what to do. So, I would write letters to my friends who were ill. Still, I couldn't let them pass away without them knowing how I felt about them. So I wrote. That's what I could do.

One of those friends told me I had a gift and made me look at what I could do with my writing.

I eventually went to see



service organization asked, I would appear, and not charge a fee or charge a reduced fee. I do that kind of thing less now, though, because I don't want to appear as an expert or present myself as an expert.

I meet young guys who have been affected, but they don't seem to realize the severity of being infected or living with the disease...or how easy it would have been to prevent it. Because treatment does make it more like other less serious chronic diseases, they think having AIDS is like having diabetes or something...and it's not that way. I remember how hard it hit me when I read in a national newspaper for the first time that one of the fastest growing groups of people with HIV are urban Black youth. Somehow we're not getting the message to young people.

I hope through my writing I can help make people more sympathetic, more aware. They can see examples — good and bad — that my characters set. I hope they can especially learn from the good examples of my characters, when they help each other. Maybe people will read about them and do some of those 'giving things.'

E. Lynn Harris is a best-selling author. His books include "I Say a Little Prayer," "Abide With Me" and "Invisible Life."

the friend and the whole experience made me grow up. I saw illness and dying — and actually life itself — wasn't like I thought it was. Spending time with him — and with other friends — took the focus off me.

When I was writing my early novels, I hoped that I would live to write when there was no longer something called AIDS. It soon became

apparent that that wasn't going to happen. In my novels, it is very important to carry the message. I don't want AIDS to become something people are tired of talking about. It is very, very personal and we must all take responsibility. We do it in different ways at different times, but we must all do our parts.

Early on in my writing career, if a charity or AIDS