

Black Business News

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The Official Business Journal of the Black Business Association

U.S. Small Business Administration 2007 Award Winner "Journalist of the Year"

November 2008

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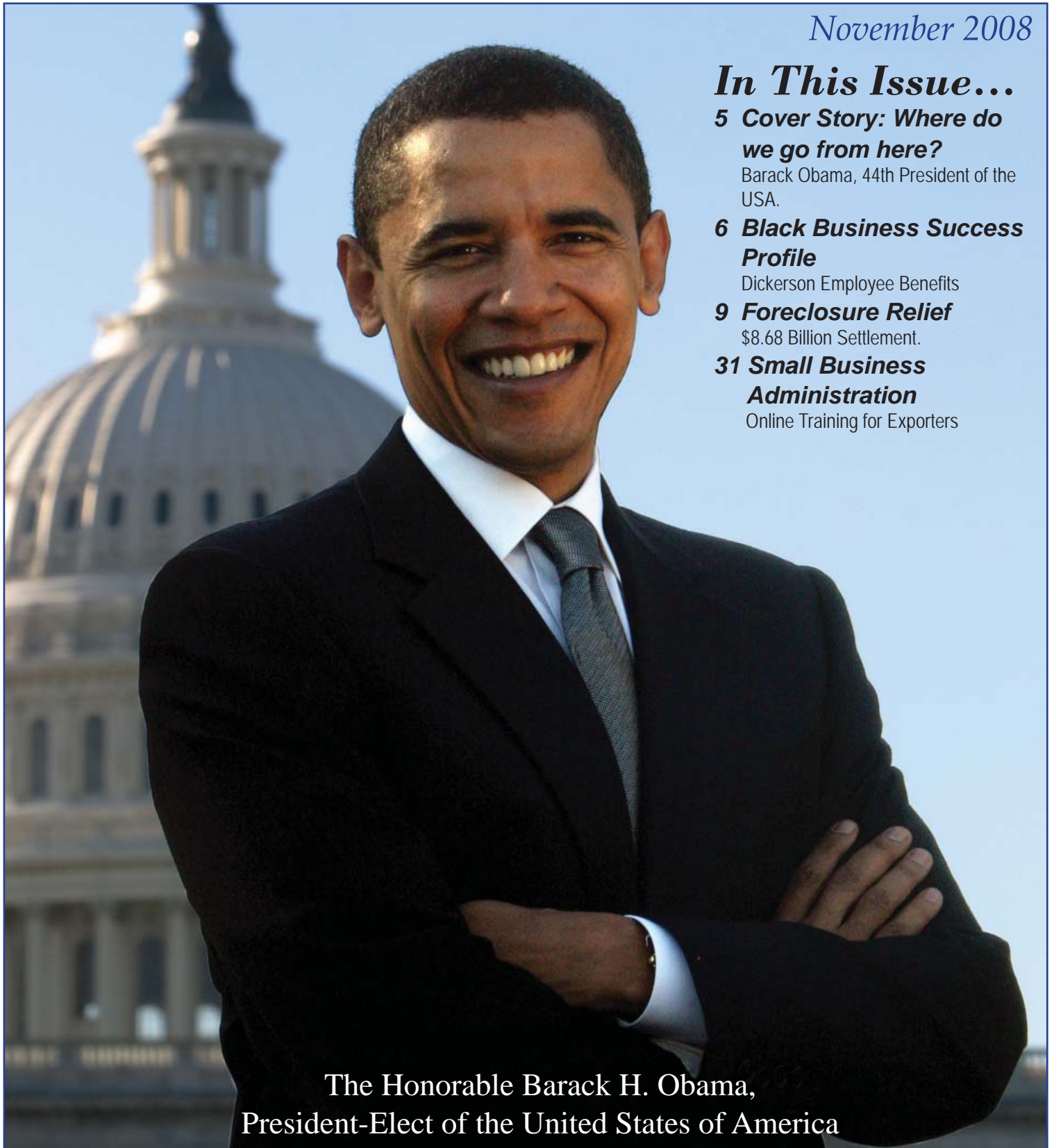
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The Honorable Barack H. Obama,
President-Elect of the United States of America

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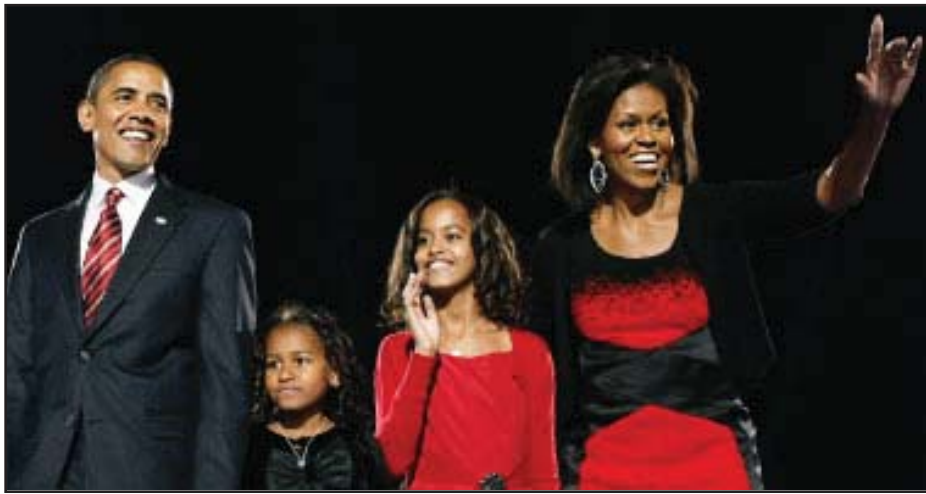
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Barack Obama Has Been Elected President of The United States: Where Do We Go From Here?

By Anthony Asadullah Samad, Ph.D., Nationally Syndicated Columnist



Barack Obama has done what nobody thought could be done. He was elected President of the United States at a time, in the midst of a conservative shakedown, when NOBODY believed it could happen. The blind now see and the deaf finally heard. What we've been telling our children, and what was told to us, that "even YOU" can become President of the United States, is now a reality. So, where does Black America go from here? Certainly President Obama has done his part, in making it understood that America may not be what it should be, but it damn sure ain't what it was. Now, what do we do with the progress that has been made? How does Black America challenge "the man" now that the man is us. Do we place a host of expectations upon him at a time when America is already on the floor, in terms of going as low as it can go? Or do we place greater expectations on ourselves to work with President Obama (doesn't that have a great sound) to improve the quality of life for black people in urban and

rural communities.

Like most African Americans who succeed in the mainstream, President Obama will be under extreme scrutiny. He will be watched by Whites to make sure he's not being "too racial" toward Blacks and other minorities. He will be watched by African Americans to make sure he remains true to the game in addressing issues that most adversely impact black communities, namely poverty (which Barack rarely spoke to in the campaign), joblessness, economic subjugation and educational disparities. The expectations of Blacks and Whites are divergent and in some instances, opposing. The whole debate around wealth redistribution have deep racial roots.

President Obama can stick his toe in that water, and maybe his foot, but certainly not his leg, meaning he can help the middle class get out of their economic quandary but reaching too far toward helping the poor and impoverished could be problematic. Capital reinvestment in Wall Street will be an expectation to revive the economy,

but capital access for Main Street, or the "Average Joe (or Jane)" that he and McCain so frequently referenced during the campaign, is an expectation that many are waiting to see if an Obama administration can fulfill. Then there are the wars that continue, and the ones yet to come, that President Obama will be expected to exit with dignity that no other President had exit strategies for—certainly the most unreasonable expectation that President Obama will face. The expectations won't stop on their part, nor on our part.

But what's the expectation on us to make this new reality a benefit beyond individual achievement? Do we sit down and talk with our children and grand-children about the significance of the moment? Do we re-evaluate the state of our lives and our communities and determine just how we can make a difference collectively and as individuals. We can't lay 300 years of problems at Obama's feet to correct in four or eight years. The world has changed before our eyes and we have to change with it. Barack Obama showed what the power of one can produce. Now, it is up to the rest of us to help make the power of 40 million a different reality than that which we now know. 🐾

Anthony Asadullah Samad, Ph.D., is a national columnist, managing director of the Urban Issues Forum (www.urbanissuesforum.com) and author of the new book, *Saving The Race: Empowerment Through Wisdom*. He can be reached at www.AnthonySamad.com

