The Winds Of Change

November 25, 2008 By Kate Ferguson

Almost one month ago, Senator Barack Obama became the first African-American president of the United States. When the confirmation came, it was announced by the DJ at the roller skating rink where I go to exercise and de-stress. After coming home to see Senator John McCain leading Obama by five electoral votes, I had to get out of the house. My biggest fear was that there'd be a hijack attempt, another stick-up of democracy which just might give up the goods to a covert America out to keep the status quo in place at all costs.

Thank God it didn't happen. That night a DJ saved my life, not with a song, but with the announcement that Obama had won. For the first time since I became aware of the level of hypocrisy in this country, I felt that there was still hope for America. The United States had redeemed itself. It had lived up to its potential by showing it could stand for something instead of falling for anything.

At work, management ordered pizza and staffers talked about the possibilities brought by these winds of change. In the conference room that afternoon, people expressed hope and emotions too complex to put on paper.

For me, as the citizen of a country which is my adopted homeland, I was able to resurrect the enthusiasm I felt as a child coming to America. On election night this country proved that democracy can work. It proved that this is the place that my mother described when she talked about her reason for waiting 13 years for her number to come up so she could apply for a visa and book her passage to America. When she sent for me, my sister and brother a few years later, we were ecstatic.

Eventually, however, as we started getting to know the country, the place of opportunity she'd described and which we'd heard so much about became a source of disillusionment. Although there were opportunities to be had, being Black in America had its drawbacks, serious ones.

In the aftermath of the election, I realize that these drawbacks remain. For me the biggest difference is now I have realized a new feeling of hope.

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