

Reno church displays Black culture

RENO (AP) — A church has announced plans to convert its new Reno building into Nevada's first Black cultural center.

A grand opening is expected in the fall for Reno's African-American Cultural Center in the new Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church building on Bell Street.

The plans were announced during the unveiling

of the new building recently.

"I hope this center educates the community," the Rev. George Mayes, assistant pastor at Bethel A.M.E., told the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.

"This has been a place of refuge for all people."

The 3,000-square-foot building also will be used for community meetings, plays, readings and recitals. The new building replaces the old church, which was destroyed

by fire in 2004 after it had been placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2001.

Rev. Terry McCray-Hill, pastor at Bethel A.M.E. and executive director of the cultural center, said the church now is focusing on interior design. Church member Shirley Trowell said she was impressed after touring the new building.

Bethel A.M.E. opened at

the Reno site in 1910, but the congregation moved to Sparks in 1993. The older church was sold to a non-profit group and served as a shelter for homeless veterans. The church later bought the building back, and it was boarded shut in 2003 before the fire. Rebuilding costs were estimated at \$1.2 million. Fundraising efforts continue on behalf of the cultural center.

Black Buddhists celebrate history

By Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice

Local African-American Buddhists, regional members of SGI, Soka Gakkai International, host a Black History month event, "Embracing the Contributions and Humanity of African-Americans." It will be held Fri., Feb. 29, 6:30 p.m. at the SGI USA Community Center at 1201 S. Jones Blvd near W. Charleston. The free family event is open to the public.

Prior to the 90-minute program, speakers will display and discuss historic artifacts, including an exhibit by guest presenter Simeon Holloway of the B1 Band, the first Black U.S. Navy musicians in World War II.

SGI members, the Harvest of Humanity, present the tribute as part of their cultural outreach efforts. A multi-racial cast will perform vignettes via monologues, songs and dance to celebrate, commemorate and depict characteristics of great African-American heroes' contributions to peace, culture and education. Featured greats include Rosa Parks, Gregory Hines, Nelson Mandela, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holliday, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Harriet Tubman and the abolitionists of the Underground Railroad.

"[We honor these] men and women who risked and, oftentimes, gave their lives for freedom, justice and equality," said Dr. Shelia Thompson, who is a co-coordinator, along with Debbie Williams.

The program includes an explanation of SGI and Gongyo, the practice of seeking permission from an elder to begin the program; a libation ceremony; interpretive dance; African drumming, and words of encouragement, according to Thompson. Door prizes will be given in conjunction with a Black History trivia competition. (See SGI, Page 3)

Blacks, Latinos lack bank accounts

By Jesse Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice

"When times got hard, I started having too many overdrafts, and, eventually, the accounts I had were closed," said Tory Watterson, a single mother of two children in Northeast Houston.

"Instead of dealing with the stress of that, it's much easier to just cash my check at a check cashing center and pay my bills all at the same time. A lot of times our people just don't want to deal with or know how to handle debit cards, online payment

centers or credit cards."

Watterson recognizes the downside to not having a stable banking relationship with a financial institution. "Not having a bank account adversely affects your future ability to secure financing for large purchases, such as

homes and business loans. It proves responsibility to the financial institution, so years later you can get approved for loans and credit. But that takes discipline," she said.

Over 25 million households in America do not have (See Accounts, Page 3)

Clinton

(Continued from Page 1)

erase Obama's lead, a daunting task requiring landslide victories. Obama has 1,178 pledged delegates won in primaries and caucuses in The Associated Press' count. Clinton has 1,024. An additional 1,025 remain to be awarded; it takes 2,025 to win the nomination.

— Momentum? That clearly goes to Obama, who has been building support among women and White working class voters who have long formed the core of Clinton's candidacy.

On Wednesday, he picked up the support of the 1.4 million-member Teamsters, his fourth labor endorsement in a week. Union support is expected to be key in the upcoming Ohio and Pennsylvania races.

Furthermore, in a strategy that must rankle the Clinton team, all-but-sure GOP nominee John McCain is

now speaking as if it were a foregone conclusion that he will be running against Obama in the fall. In a victory speech in Wisconsin Tuesday night, McCain contrasted his own national security experience with "an eloquent but empty call for change," a reference to Obama.

The Clinton campaign has built a large operation in Texas, opening 20 offices around the state and counting 100,000 volunteers, and she has deep ties to the state.

"She has some longstanding advantages. But it's two weeks to go, and Obama can really do well when he gets in the face of audiences that may have been skeptical about him before," said University of Texas political scientist Bruce Buchanan. "She has to do more than just win. She has to win by 60-40 — not only in Texas but in Ohio — to maintain real credibil-

ity going beyond March 4."

The selection system in Texas — made up of a primary followed immediately by caucuses — appears to favor Obama. Big cities, with heavy Black populations, such as Dallas and Houston, get more delegates than rural and heavily Hispanic districts. Clinton was counting on a heavy Hispanic vote.

Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist, said the campaign has strong organizations and substantial resources in both Texas and Ohio. "We expect to be in a very good position coming out of those states," he said. He dismissed Obama's rise in various polls as just a reflection of his recent string of victories, not his underlying strength versus Clinton.

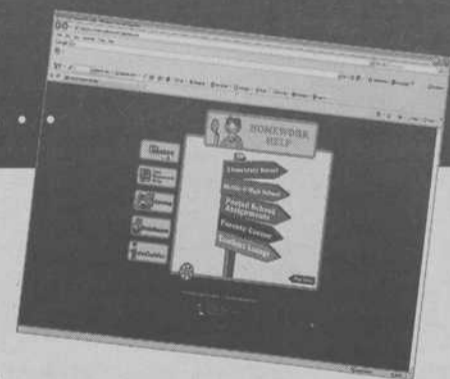
But unaligned Democratic pollster Geoffrey Garin said failure of the former first lady to win in both Texas and Ohio on March 4 could in-

crease pressure among super delegates and other party officials "to start rallying around someone and not have this big brawl at the convention."

The stakes are even higher because the Clinton campaign itself "established the two states as its firewall," Garin said.

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OVER THE RAINBOW

Students in Carolyn Clarks's class at the Rainbow Dreams Academy settle into their new digs. The school, located on West Lake Mead Boulevard, just west of "H" Street, moved from temporary facilities at Nevada Partners to their own campus nearby.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Marty Frierson