

Not at a distance

Oprah Winfrey visits Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. (AP) — Oprah Winfrey visited the Navajo Nation this week to gather footage for an upcoming episode of her show, tribal officials said.



Winfrey

Winfrey toured the Navajo capitol of Window Rock and watched children perform a powwow dance, according to a statement released by the tribe.

"It was a real honor to have such a celebrity grace us with her presence, especially on sacred ground right under the Window Rock," Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. said in the statement. "She's a very likable person, of course, very honorable."

The Window Rock is a geographic feature that gave the community its name.

Priscella Littlefoot, the To'Nanees' Dizi Chapter coordinator who organized the event, said in the statement that "Oprah is our key to let the world in."

"Hopefully, Oprah's visit will portray that while we do have social problems, we're still rich in our heritage, our culture, and language," she said.

Ex-Player revises lawsuit against Portland

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — A former Penn State basketball player in the midst of a discrimination lawsuit against coach Rene Portland said Portland made "defamatory statements" against her, the latest chapter in the months-long verbal and legal battle.

Jennifer Harris amended her lawsuit initially filed last December in response to comments Portland made in a statement on May 18. Harris contends in the suit that Portland discriminated against her because the longtime coach perceived her to be a lesbian.

Lawyers for Harris, who has said that she is not gay, accused Portland of "humiliating, berating and ostracizing" the former player. Harris was the third-leading scorer with a 10.4 average before transferring to James Madison following the 2004-05 season.

Portland has firmly denied the accusations, and said in the statement that Harris' departure was related only to basketball issues. "The sexual orientation or race of any player or person is irrelevant to me," the coach said.

In court documents filed last week, Harris' lawyers said Portland's comments were false.

"We're not saying Rene does not have a right to defend herself. Of course she does," said Harris' attorney, Karen Doering, of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "But the law does not permit her to make defamatory statements, which is what she has done by claiming that Jennifer was unable to make contributions to the team."

Commission: North Carolina should pay compensation for 1898 racial riot

RALEIGH (AP) — A state-appointed commission is urging North Carolina to provide reparations for the 1898 racial violence that sparked an exodus of more than 2,000 black residents from Wilmington.

The 500-page report that was produced after six years of study also said the violence, which killed as many as 60 people, was not a spontaneous riot but rather the nation's only recorded coup d'etat.

"There is no amount of money that can repair what happened years ago and compensate for the loss of lives and the loss of property," said vice chairman Irving Joyner, a professor at N.C. Central School of Law.

The commission did not provide any cost estimates, although compensation advocate Larry Thomas of Chapel Hill estimated that the economic losses calculated today are "probably in the billions of dollars."

Along with compensation to victims' descendants, the commission also recommended incentives for minority small businesses and help for minority home ownership. It also recommended that the history of the incident be taught in public schools.

State Rep. Thomas Wright, a Democrat who helped establish and chair the panel, said the next step is to file a bill in the Legislature with the recommendations. That won't happen before 2007 because the filing deadline for this session has passed.

The 1898 violence began when white vigilantes, resentful after years of black and Republican political rule during Reconstruction, burned the printing press of a black newspaper publisher, Alexander Manly.



Wright

Governor draws protests over bill

COLCHESTER, Vt. (AP) — A group of 25 protesters stood last week and turned their backs on Gov. James Douglas as he addressed a conference "Creating a Welcoming Community" at St. Michael's College.

The protesters objected to Douglas' veto last week of a bill barring discrimination against people based on their gender identity. They rose silently as the governor began his 15-minute address, turned to face the rear of the auditorium and remained standing until he finished.

Another group of 15 activists stood outside the building holding signs that read, "1st Governor to Decrease Human Rights," and "Douglas the Discriminator." The protest didn't seem to faze Douglas, who merely noted in his speech that dissent is "part of the constitutional process."

Douglas was delivering the closing remarks at the daylong event, which drew 250 social workers, educators and community activists from around Vermont. They gathered to celebrate Vermont's increasingly diverse population, and to strategize how to make newcomers — particularly refugees and immigrants — feel at home.

Douglas spoke about valuing diversity, and noted that Vermont was the first state in the nation to reject slavery. "Ending discrimination," he said, "reflects the state's core values."

But transgender activists and their allies said the governor's appearance at the event was ironic and insulting. "He just rejected civil rights legislation that would have ended discrimination," said Jes Kraus, a Burlington transgender man who took part in the protest.

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Church may apologize for slavery

BY ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Episcopal Church is poised to apologize for failing to oppose slavery, but making up for its 19th century inaction won't come without 21st century controversy.

At its national convention beginning June 13, the church is expected to approve a resolution expressing regret for supporting slavery and segregation. But the debate will likely get more heated when a second resolution comes up, calling for a study of possible reparations for black Episcopalians.



Thornell

The church, already divided over the separate issue of gays' role in the church, is struggling over whether reparations would be a meaningful gesture 141 years after the Civil War ended.

"A lot of times you say, 'I'm not a racist. I didn't have slaves, no one in my family had slaves, I could not possibly be complicit in this,'" said Sharon Denton, a member of the church's National Concerns committee that deals with domestic ministry and mission issues.



"But if you start digging back in the history of things, you find out there were a lot of things that came to you that were built on slave-holding and the slave trade," said Denton, a member of a small, all-white parish in Salina, Kan.

The Rev. Harold Lewis, a black priest and rector at Calvary Episcopal in Pittsburgh, called the idea of reparations outrageous and impractical.

"The better thing to do is to talk about how we can work to

eradicate racism and how we can fight to eliminate economic disparities regardless of racism," said Lewis, the denomination's former longtime staff officer for black ministries.

The church declined to embrace a resolution three years ago backing federal legislation to create a national reparations task force. This year's resolution is more focused on the church, calling for a study of how the denomination benefited economically from slavery and how

that benefit could be shared with black Episcopalians, about 5 percent of the denomination's 2.2 million members.

But it doesn't give specifics, and both supporters and detractors say reparations could mean anything from cash payments to college scholarships.

Previous attempts to deal with the issue have proven difficult. In 1969, the church's General Convention — or legislative body — approved a \$200,000

See Wichita on A5

Wichita may have had sit-in before Greensboro

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WICHITA, Kan. — Nearly 50 years after a sit-in at a North Carolina lunch counter to protest segregation gained nationwide attention, the NAACP has recognized that a protest at a Wichita lunch counter may actually have been the first to eventually create policy changes.

The protest at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C.,

happened in February 1960, inspiring sit-ins across the country and the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a prominent civil rights organization.

But a sit-in at a lunch counter at Wichita's Dockum Drug Store gained far less notoriety about two years earlier, when a group of black youths began frequenting the business twice a week for about three weeks.

"It didn't register as a monumental thing," said Prentice Lewis, one of the protesters, who was 21 at the time.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People did not endorse sit-ins or other forms of direct action at the time, according to historians. And Curtis McClinton, a former speaker for the Kansas House of



McClinton

See Wichita on A5



File Photo

The site of the famous Greensboro sit-in is now being transformed into a museum.



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