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# SPLC REPORT



PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
MONITORING HATE • TEACHING TOLERANCE • SEEKING JUSTICE

SEPTEMBER 2005  
VOLUME 35, NUMBER 3

## Center team crushes border vigilantes 70-acre paramilitary compound goes to Center clients

Ranch Rescue, a vigilante "border-patrol" that terrorized Latinos trying to enter the U.S., was shattered and one of its leaders sent to prison after a prolonged legal battle by Center attorneys and law enforcement officials in Texas and Arizona.



A Ranch Rescue member trains a dog to attack immigrants.

The case sent a chill through an increasingly violent paramilitary movement on the Mexico-U.S. border. Center attorneys said decisive rulings from state courts demonstrated that American law protects even non-citizens from lawless homegrown gunmen claiming to be "defending" the United States.

Officials praised the Center's work as they struggled with the nearly impossible job of safeguarding the 2,000-mile open border, long known as a land bridge to jobs and opportunity for Latin Americans. Vigilantes, they said,

made their jobs more difficult and actually endangered public safety. The Center's success drew new venom from right-wing commentators who have fanned fears of post-9/11 terrorist infiltration from the south. When a 70-acre Ranch Rescue compound was decided to two Salvadorans to satisfy a court judgment, some

thought the law had been turned on its head.

In fact, the case proved that no one — least of all self-styled paramilitary groups with automatic weapons, attack dogs, night-vision goggles and a penchant for violence — is above the rule of law.

The case began on a chilly March night in 2003 when a man and woman from El Salvador, trying to join relatives in the U.S., paid for a ride from the border to Hebbbronville, Texas. Left by the road to walk cross-country around a Border Patrol checkpoint, the unarmed pair was spotted on a 5,000-acre game ranch owned by Joe Sutton.

Found in the brush, they were surrounded by men shooting bullets into the air, cursing in Spanish and shouting they would kill them. The couple was shoved around and blinded by flashlights and flashes from cameras.

The man, Edwin Mancía, 26, was attacked by a 120-pound rottweiler and struck on the head with a gun. A Texas Ranger later saw a knot half the size of his fist on Mancía's skull.

The woman, Fatima Leiva, 30, testified that she thought they would be killed. They were released after 1½ hours and later found by the road.

The vigilantes were members of Ranch Rescue, the most militant of several groups — groups



Fatima Leiva and Edwin Mancía kneel on the ground while held captive at gunpoint by Ranch Rescue members in March 2003. Mancía was pistol-whipped, and a rottweiler attacked him during their ordeal.

with names like American Border Patrol and Civil Homeland Defense — that have sprung up along the border to target undocumented workers.

Ranch Rescue's founder, Jack Foote, has described Latinos as "dog turds . . . ignorant, uneducated and desperate." His men bragged of brutalizing Mexicans and making them walk barefoot through the desert.

Ranch Rescue was authorized to "patrol" by rancher Sutton, who

said he was fed up with *mojados*, the Spanish slang he used for Latinos who cross the Rio Grande. He said they stole chickens and water, damaged fences and left a mess. Yet, according to court testimony, Sutton rarely gave U.S. Border Patrol agents permission to enter his property.

The day after the nighttime assault, officials arrested Casey Nethercott, 35, a convicted felon and California bounty hunter fond of camouflage (continued on page 3)

## Hurricane takes toll on Center projects

MONTGOMERY, ALA. — The Center's office here escaped significant damage when Hurricane Katrina blew through on August 29, but several of its legal initiatives and clients in other areas were profoundly affected.

The New Orleans office of the Center-funded Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL) is intact and dry, but its 17-member staff was traumatized and initially scattered across the country. Half lived in areas of the city known to be flooded. And the fate of their juvenile clients, largely from poor areas that have been totally devastated, weighs heavily on them.

Because it is clear that no significant work can take place in New Orleans any time in the near

future, the displaced JJPL staff have established offices in Lake Charles, in the southwestern corner of Louisiana, and in the northwestern city of Shreveport, La.

"Everybody wants to get back to New Orleans," JJPL director David Utter said, "But for the next three to six months, we'll focus on places not affected by Katrina." JJPL will work with parish officials, lawyers, judges and the community to assess and reform the local systems, he said.

In the days immediately following Katrina, some JJPL staff who had evacuated to Lake Charles and Houston went shelter to shelter, trying to locate parents with whom they worked on juvenile justice (continued on page 5)

## Racists spew hatred in Katrina's wake

by Mark Potok  
The winds of Hurricane Katrina blew away the flimsy veil that long has shielded most Americans from the ugly reality of our nation's continuing problems with race, class and poverty. But the massive storm even more decisively blasted away the claims of most on the racist right to be merely proud white people, hating no one and pursuing a peaceful struggle for dignity.

Across the radical right, the hurricane and its aftermath were

used to depict blacks as savages, people who immediately turned to looting and worse the moment that the power of the state collapsed. Ignoring the fact that the violence came from a tiny minority of New Orleans residents, white supremacists and their fellow travelers reveled in the misery of black victims in ways that were sometimes astounding.

Jared Taylor, editor of *American Renaissance* magazine and a relatively cosmopolitan purveyor of race hate, described New Or-

leans as "Africa in our midst, that utterly alien Africa of roadside corpses, cruelty, and anarchy." Ultimately, Taylor concluded, "Blacks and whites are different. When blacks are left entirely to their own devices, Western Civilization — any kind of civilization — disappears."

From there, it went downhill. The comments oozing from the racist right gave one the unmistakable feeling of wading through sewage on flooded streets.

Blacks were (continued on page 8)

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance, and discrimination through education and litigation. Its programs include Teaching Tolerance, Tolerance.org and the Intelligence Project. The Center also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which celebrates the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement.

SPLC REPORT EDITOR  
Penny Weaver

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## Hundreds expected at dedication ceremony

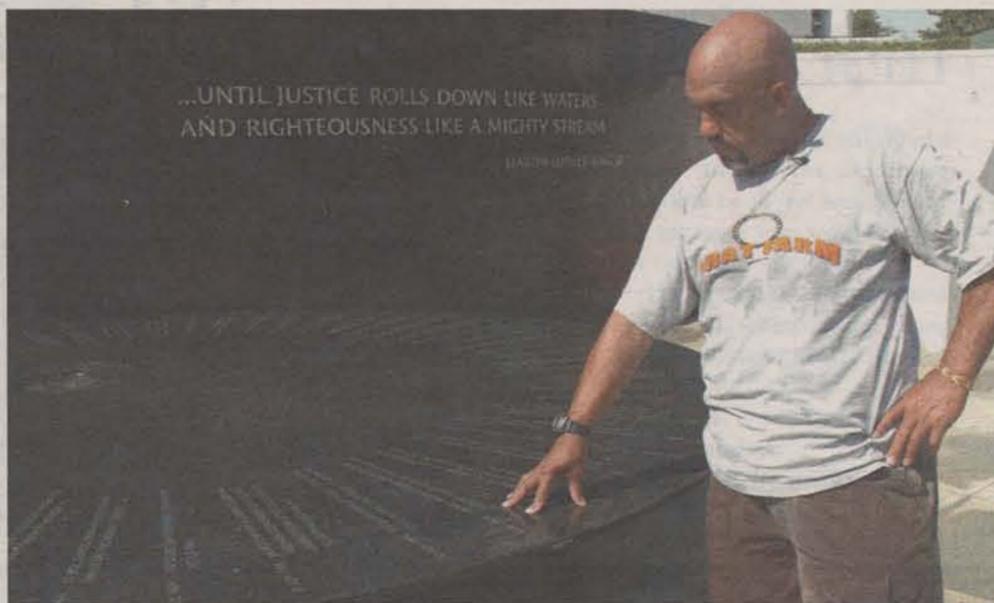
MONTGOMERY, ALA. — Hundreds of Center friends and supporters from around the country are expected to be here October 23 for the dedication of the new Civil Rights Memorial Center and the Wall of Tolerance.

The event is scheduled for 2 p.m. that Sunday in an outdoor space adjacent to the Civil Rights Memorial and the new visitors center, located at the intersection of Hull and Washington streets.

The ceremony will be a highlight of the National Campaign for Tolerance, an initiative begun by the Center five years ago that serves as a vehicle to mobilize Center supporters and others into a community of activists. More than a quarter-million people have enlisted in the Campaign, and their names will be a part of the Wall of Tolerance, the centerpiece of the new Civil Rights Memorial Center.

"We're looking forward to seeing many of our supporters at this exciting event," said Center founder and chief trial counsel Morris Dees. "They have given us invaluable moral and financial support over the years, and together we have accomplished much to make our nation a better place."

NAACP chairman Julian Bond, the Center's first president and a member of its board



Thomas Moore, brother of Civil Rights Movement martyr Charles Eddie Moore, gazes at his brother's inscription on the Civil Rights Memorial. He came south in July in an effort to have his brother's case reopened and ended his trek at the Memorial. Since its dedication in 1989, authorities in Mississippi and six other states have re-examined 29 killings from the civil rights era, leading to 27 arrests and 22 convictions.

of directors, will host the dedication. Other notable guests include several martyr family members. U. S. Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala.), who was a Center legal intern early in his career, will deliver a keynote address.

More than 2,000 Center supporters have said they will be at the dedication.

While in Montgomery, visitors are encouraged to see the city's many historic sites associated with both the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil War.

The new Center will provide visitors with in-depth information about the people and events the Memorial honors. It contains a 56-seat auditorium where an original 20-minute film, *Faces in the Water*, will be shown. The Center also provides a display of contemporary social justice movements and an educational classroom.

A visitor's experience will close at the Wall

of Tolerance, bearing the names of those who have made a commitment to work in their daily lives for justice, equality and human rights — the ideals for which the civil rights martyrs died.

The names are digitally projected onto a curved 20-by-40-foot surface and "rain" down like the water that sheets over the Civil Rights Memorial's black granite wall.

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped," said Robert Kennedy in 1965. "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope." These words are displayed next to the Wall.

The purpose of the Civil Rights Memorial Center and the Wall of Tolerance is to inspire others to take a public stand for justice.

## MAILBOX

I am so impressed with *Teaching Tolerance* and eagerly await each issue. I just toured your website for the first time and am so excited! I teach in a suburban alternative high school with a small staff and a student enrollment of about 90. Our staff has committed a full week this year dedicated to promoting tolerance, peace and diversity where every class, from math and science to history and art, will incorporate lessons focused on these areas. Your website and teaching kits will be of tremendous value to us as educators in celebrating this week! My hat's off to you and your staff for helping those of us in the trenches!

W. S.  
Liberty, Missouri

Many thanks for providing the *Starting Small* materials that help our pre-service teachers of young children become exposed to the importance of tolerance in our classroom and giving them methods they can use. The university students enter my classroom with very confused understandings of the term "tolerance." My course if the last course the pre-service teachers take before their student teaching semester, so I feel it is very important that my students

learn as much as possible about the concept of a caring community of learners. Your tolerance program is an excellent way to teach them.

D. H.  
Round Rock, Texas

Just wanted to let you know that I have been showing the film *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* to all of my community college students. Many are too young to remember the Civil Rights Movement, so when they see this film, they are amazed how a simple act of courage can accomplish a lot. Thanks for making this film!

K. H.  
Northridge, California

I am a first year law students at the University of Alabama and recently heard [Center chief trial counsel] Mr. Dees speak during orientation. His words motivated me deeply and renewed some of my ideals about civic pride. More importantly, he inspired me to seek avenues of putting these feelings into tangible avenues of civic duty. I am eager to find out exactly what I can do now as a student and beyond.

R. R.  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

That the subject [George Wallace Jr.] spoke to the Council of Conservative Citizens was an Intelligence Brief of particular interest [June 2005 *SPLC Report*]. It was the hope of many that the awakening of his father would be his legacy to his son. Of course, that he spoke to this extremist group is in itself not inconclusively incriminating. It would be interesting to know the content of his message, however.

I appreciate, need and support your efforts wholeheartedly. I read in your publications information found in no others, information that is both comforting and scary. Keep tracking!

E. B.  
Lillian, Alabama

I just read about Thunderbird Ranch [see story on page 1]. Good work! I remember the case in Portland, Oregon. You folks served justice there, too. Thank you.

P. H.  
Vancouver, Washington

Thank you for sending the spring issue of the *Intelligence Report*; I was extremely shocked and saddened when I read there were over 700 hate groups in the U.S. and the "religious right" is

spewing hate rather than Christian compassion. I have suspected this and now I know it is fact. The two articles "Holy War: The Religious Right's Crusade Against Gays Heats Up" and "Tempest in Texas" almost made me sick to my stomach. This is the country I love? How can this be? What can we do?

H. V.  
Muscatine, Iowa

I saw *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* on HBO Family. I wept. It was truly an inspirational story that makes me proud to me an American. It also made me ashamed of the way that I have thought about and judged some of my fellow Americans.

Keep up the great work. Your message is getting out.

T. H.  
Watauga, Texas

Thank you for researching, writing and publishing "Arizona Showdown" by David Holthouse [in the Summer 2005 *Intelligence Report*]. The Minuteman Project is a frightening example of just how far we have NOT overcome hate, fear, bigotry, racism and xenophobia in this country.

M. E.  
Tucson, Arizona

# Decade of domestic terror documented by Center

In July, the Center's Intelligence Project issued a report documenting almost 60 right-wing terrorist plots uncovered in the United States in the 10 years since the April 19, 1995, bombing in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people, including 19 children.

The plots included plans to bomb or burn government buildings, banks, refineries, utilities, clinics, synagogues, mosques, memorials and bridges; to assassinate police officers, judges, politicians, civil rights figures and others; to rob banks, armored cars and other criminals; and to amass illegal machine guns, missiles, explosives, and biological and chemical weapons.

Most of the plots were foiled by law enforcement officials before they could happen. But that is not true of all of them. Abortion extremist and white supremacist Eric Robert Rudolph bombed the Atlanta Olympics, two abortion clinics and a gay bar. In three of his attacks, Rudolph left secondary bombs, specifically set up to

explode when law enforcement and other first responders arrived at the scene. Rudolph was finally caught in 2003 after evading the FBI for five years. He was sentenced earlier this year to life in prison after negotiating a plea agreement.

The *Intelligence Report's* terror list challenges the position of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that only radical left-wing animal rights and environmentalist groups pose a serious domestic terrorist threat.

## Domestic terrorism omitted in federal report

This April, *Congressional Quarterly* obtained a draft DHS document that listed groups like the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front as the only significant sources of domestic terrorism. The document made no mention of violent right-wing hate groups and individuals. But for all the property damage they have wreaked, eco-radicals have killed no one — something that

cannot be said of the white supremacists and others who people the American radical right.

A pre-publication copy of the *Intelligence Report's* list was provided to the office of Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), who is the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Homeland Security. Thompson included many of the incidents compiled in the *Intelligence Report* into his staff's report, *10 Years After the Oklahoma City Bombing, the Department of Homeland Security Must Do More To Fight Right-Wing Domestic Terrorists*, which he released on the 10th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing. Signed by all of the Democratic members of the committee, Thompson's report credited the Southern Poverty Law Center for its expertise in monitoring right wing domestic terrorist groups. Thompson's report also called on the Department of Homeland Security to establish an advisory council that would include the Center.

# Center's work crushes vigilantes

(continued from page 1) clothing, war paint, attack dogs, walkie talkies, machine guns and high-speed chases on four-wheelers of unarmed border crossers.

A jury convicted Nethercott of a weapons violation in connection with the assault, and he was sentenced to five years in prison. Before turning himself in, Nethercott got into a fracas with the Border Patrol and a shootout with the FBI.

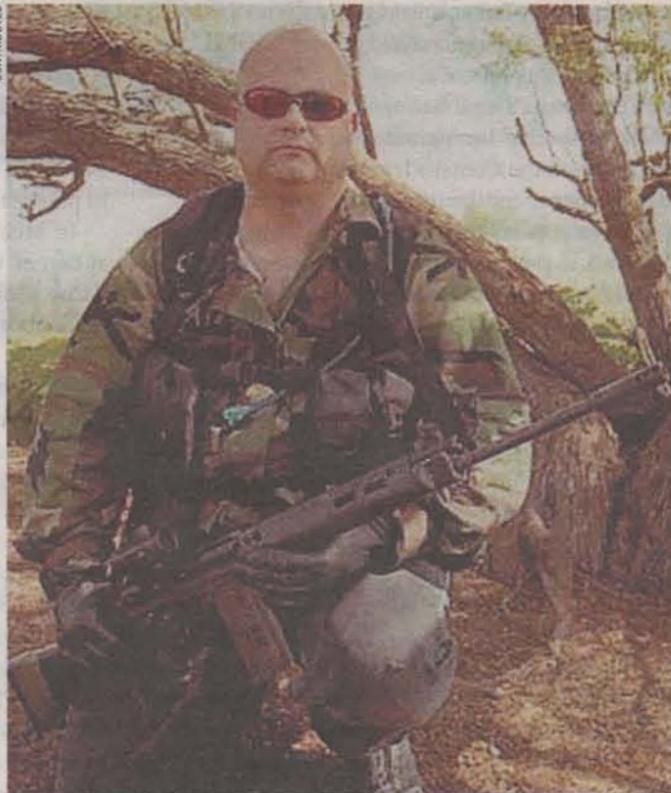
He earlier established a new group, the Arizona Guard, on his 70-acre "ranch" near Douglas, Ariz. There, he set up bunkers, watch towers, and a shooting range, and advertised his training ground as Camp Thunderbird. He vowed that he and his men would "close the border with machine guns."

Among the people drawn to the camp was Kalen "Tiny" Riddle, a neo-Nazi whose Yahoo profile described his pastimes as, "ethnic cleansing and weapon making." He was critically wounded by FBI agents when they tried to serve a warrant on Nethercott.

Three months after the assault on the Texas ranch, the Center, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and Laredo lawyer Ricardo de Anda sued Sutton, Ranch Rescue and the men involved in the assault. Similar cases by the Center over the last 20 years have bankrupted Ku Klux Klan groups, the Aryan Nations and other white supremacist outfits.

Rancher Sutton settled out of court for \$100,000. Nethercott and Foote did not defend themselves, and the Texas judge issued \$850,000 and \$500,000 judgments against them.

After Nethercott secretly transferred the deed to his \$120,000 compound to his sister to hide his assets from the Center, Center attorneys asked an Arizona court to declare the conveyance fraudulent and void the transfer. But before the court took action, Nethercott's sister agreed to deed the property to the Center's clients.



Vigilante leader Casey Nethercott trained with other Ranch Rescue members on his 70-acre Arizona paramilitary compound. Because of a Center lawsuit, the property is now owned by two Salvadorans who were assaulted by Ranch Rescue.

The Salvadorans, now living in other cities and seeking visas, will likely sell the compound, said Center attorney Kelley Bruner, who headed the legal team with Center chief trial counsel Morris Dees.

Ranch Rescue collapsed during the trials and its members scattered. The case, said Mark Potok, director of the Center's Intelligence Project, "has the potential of ending vigilantism on the border."

One measure of the Center's success was this warning, posted by a hate-website columnist: "The misadventures of Foote and Nethercott illustrate what NOT to do in running a private border watch...Don't let yahoos on your land. Don't touch the aliens...tell previously convicted felons to take a hike. It's just not worth the risk."

# Intelligence Briefs

tracking extremist activity

## Man who firebombed temple is sentenced

OKLAHOMA CITY — On August 29, a federal judge sentenced a man to 39 years for firebombing a Jewish temple here. The defendant raised his hand in a stiff-armed Nazi salute as the judge turned her back and left the court.

Sean Gillespie, 21, of Spokane, Wash., was found guilty in April of three bombing-related charges for hurling a Molotov cocktail at Temple B'Nai Israel on April 1, 2004. The act was captured on a security videotape.

Gillespie, who once belonged to the white supremacist group Aryan Nations, was convicted of carrying a firearm during a crime of violence, of damaging a building used in interstate commerce and of having an unregistered destructive device.

His sentence was enhanced because of a letter he attempted to send to the temple after his conviction that was filled with racist comments. The letter, which was read in court, expressed his hatred toward the Jewish people and his desire to spark a racial holy war.

## Klansman's plot to bomb Hispanics foiled

CHATTANOOGA, TENN. — Klansman Daniel Schertz, 27, was arrested in May for selling five pipe bombs to an informant and an undercover ATF agent. Schertz hoped the men would use the bombs to "take care of" a group of Hispanic immigrants.

Schertz is now facing federal prison after pleading guilty in August to various weapons charges stemming from the pipe bomb sales. He faces a prison sentence ranging from 10 to 60 years. Schertz will be sentenced in November in the U.S. District Court here.

Prior to his May arrest, the former member of the White Knights of the KKK was at a Klan event in Dunlap, Tenn., when he began talking to the informant, according to court records. Schertz told the informant that he knew how to make pipe bombs and could teach him how to make them as well.

Schertz, according to the records, showed the informant how to attach the bombs to cars. The bombs were made out of lead pipes and were filled with nails and screws for shrapnel.

## Citing racism, Texas Minuteman leader quits

GOLIAD, EX. — In late July, the head of the Texas Minuteman Civil Defense Corps quit, citing racism among members here. Bill Parmley, a petroleum geologist and landowner in Goliad County,

had bought in June plane tickets to fly in national Minuteman leaders from Arizona to begin organizing efforts in Texas.

Parmley said he became concerned that some of the Minuteman activists in his region had a vendetta against the Goliad County sheriff, who is Hispanic. Parmley also said Texas Minuteman members made comments about shooting illegal immigrants or letting them die from dehydration.

## Racist political party forms in Nevada

LAS VEGAS, NEV. — A new "White Peoples Party" sprang up in Las Vegas in late July when its chairman, Michael O'Sullivan, a Las Vegas real estate broker, filed paperwork with the secretary of state's office in Carson City. According to its constitution, the party caters to the "white race" and all of its policies will be decided based on whether they are "good" for "non-Jewish people of wholly European descent." O'Sullivan is also the state leader for the neo-Nazi hate group National Vanguard.

The nation's only racist party intends to run candidates in 2006 on a platform that rejects affirmative action and government programs that help minorities. To qualify for the ballot, the party must only collect 7,914 signatures by August 2006.

## Neo-Nazi gives up Charlotte council run

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Republican candidate Doug Hanks gave up on his race for the Charlotte City Council on August 4 after *The Rhinoceros Times*, a local alternative publication, discovered the approximately 4,000 posts Hanks had put up on the neo-Nazi hate site Stormfront.org. In his postings, Hanks uploaded an instruction book on building a homemade rifle, recruited people to rally against Charlotte's decision to remove the Confederate flag from Elmwood Cemetery and compared blacks to "rabid beasts."

Hanks first garnered public attention in January, when he climbed up a flagpole in Elmwood Cemetery and reattached a confederate flag that had been taken down. In March, Hanks called for "SFers" [stormfronters] to come to the cemetery for a protest.

Hanks told *The Charlotte Observer* that he was not racist, but he just "played one on the Internet." Hanks claimed he was using his posts as research for a novel modeled on the race war fantasy *The Turner Diaries*, which inspired Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. "I'm an author," Hanks told the *Observer*, "and an author is nothing but an actor that acts through the pen."

## Mix grant builds bridges at New York school

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Shira Beery, a high school student here, isn't sure what causes prejudice among her classmates, but she knows how it makes her feel.

"It's a very uncomfortable atmosphere to be in," the 18-year-old said. "I wouldn't say [my school is] more prejudiced than any other school, but there is segregation, and the school doesn't work to integrate people."

Beery says her school, Stuyvesant High, is relatively diverse, with a predominately Asian population. Stereotypes and cliques abound, with students self-segregating in the lunchroom and hallways.

Inspired by her social studies class, Beery wanted to do something to raise cultural awareness. She also was moved to act because of the disturbing trend of hate groups recruiting more kids than ever before — as reported in recent issues of the Center's *Intelligence Report*.

Beery applied for and received a \$500 Mix It Up grant. Mix It Up grants help students challenge

social boundaries and build bridges.

Beery used the money to fund Diversity Week 2005, a week in February set aside to "celebrate diversity at Stuyvesant as a bridge to the world and a tool for expanding one's horizons."

Resistance to the idea of diversity was apparent when the signs advertising Diversity Week were vandalized with racist remarks.

"It was very difficult to actually get it going," Beery said, noting conflicts with administrators and students. "They thought it was pointless."

But Beery prevailed. At least 500 students participated in the event, and nearly 300 students filled out questionnaires on ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. Juniors at Stuyvesant are planning Diversity Week for February 2006.

As a result of Diversity Week, Beery, a Stanford-bound senior, was able to meet more students. "I definitely felt more comfortable in the school because I'd done something I felt was meaningful," she said.

## Mix It Up at Lunch Day

The Center's fourth annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day is set for Tuesday, November 15. Millions of students will challenge social boundaries at their schools by finding new friends to mingle with at lunch.

Mix It Up encourages students, working with teachers and other adult allies, to organize school-based events that address social ostracism, cliques and segregation.

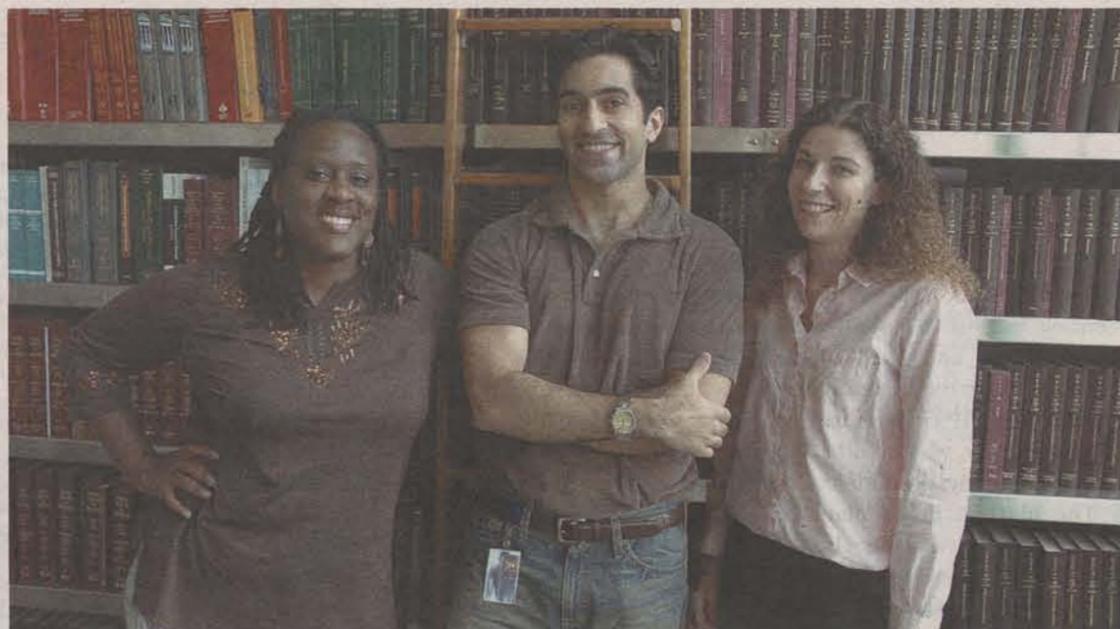
And the lunchroom is a great place to start. Seventy percent of students polled named the

cafeteria as the school setting where social boundaries are most clearly drawn.

On Mix It Up at Lunch Day, instead of sitting at their regular tables, participants are grouped in creative ways: by the first letter of their first name, by their favorite color or by their birth month. The goal is to make new friendships that last longer than one day.

Last year more than 4 million students at more than 9,000 schools took part.

To find out more, visit [www.mixitup.org](http://www.mixitup.org).



Priscilla Ocen (from left), Ashkan Mojdehi and Meliah Thomas worked on important legal issues at the Center this summer.

## Center's work 'a calling,' say legal interns

In her previous career, summer legal intern Meliah Thomas spent a lot of time writing about what other people were doing.

"When I was a reporter, there were a lot of things going on that I had the chance to cover — wildfires, anthrax scares and September 11," said Thomas, a third-year law student at the University of California, Berkeley. "There were a lot of stories, but I was always on the sidelines, not doing any major advocacy work."

The desire to get involved led Thomas, a *summa cum laude* graduate of Gonzaga University, to law school.

"I've always been interested in public interest work and civil rights law," said Thomas, who applied to work at the Center because of its work in those areas.

"The work the Center is doing is groundbreaking and pioneering. Last summer I did disability rights work in housing and did more of that this summer. I was pleased the Center is working in the areas of juvenile justice and institutionalized persons," said Thomas.

Thomas was one of six summer interns working with the Center's legal staff this summer. Two worked solely with the Immigrant Justice Project, three worked with the Center's legal staff in Montgomery and another spent the summer in Mississippi.

The interns say their experience changed the way they look at poverty in the United States.

"This type of work is a calling, and this summer helped confirm that," said Priscilla Ocen, a second-year law student at UCLA.

Ocen, a Phi Beta Kappa scholar who graduated *magna cum laude* from San Diego State University, said she felt closer to the clients she was working with through the Center, compared with clients she

might have had at a large law firm.

"Talking to the kids in juvenile detention centers, whose parents died and they weren't taken care of, you care about them. You care about their issues and you want to help them," said Ocen.

In addition to talking with incarcerated children, Ocen spent her summer researching a brief for a death penalty appeal and studying access-to-court issues.

### Center's work offers exposure to important issues

"It's been good to get a broad exposure to a lot of different issues," said Ocen. "It's been valuable to see how a lot of these issues we deal with are connected to poverty and basic needs not being met."

Ashkan Mojdehi, a dean's scholar at Boston University School of Law, also researched poverty issues, but from a different angle. Mojdehi spent much of his time studying Alabama consumer protection laws that allow title pawn companies to have interest rates as high as 25 percent. In addition, Mojdehi researched disability education issues.

"The experience here has been a hands-on education," said Mojdehi. "It has matched my interest both in policy and progressive politics."

In Mississippi, Kristen Levins met with juveniles at two of the state's training schools and at Walnut Grove Correctional Facility, an adult facility that holds youth adjudicated as adults.

Levins, a graduate of the Dedman School of Law at Southern Methodist University, worked with Center staff attorney Sheila Bedi, conducting legal research and an assessment of indigent juvenile defense in Mississippi.

## Educators turn to Teaching Tolerance as new school year begins

As students headed back to class at Immanuel Lutheran School in Seymour, Ind., this year, teachers there noticed an increase in racially charged language.

"This is a mostly white, middle-class community with a growing Hispanic population," said Charlie Smith, who teaches 7th- and 8th-grade social studies. "A lot of kids have already made racial comments about it. It's something we've already had to address, but I would like to continue addressing it throughout the year."

To help him do that, Smith plans to use *America's Civil Rights Movement*, a teaching kit and accompanying film produced by the Center's Teaching Tolerance program.

"It becomes harder to teach issues of diversity and cultural acceptance in a homogenous setting

because students don't have exposure to other cultures," Smith said. "The video and the lesson plans help students understand that the Civil Rights Movement was not just a historical event, but that there is still discrimination today and that they can overcome it."

As the new school year begins, Smith joins thousands of teachers across the country who plan to use Teaching Tolerance curriculum guides, films and other teaching materials.

Since 1991, Teaching Tolerance has provided these materials free of charge to educators in an effort to help teachers foster respect and understanding in the classroom, said Jeff Sapp, Teaching Tolerance curriculum specialist and writer.

Typically, Sapp said, the Center's several curriculum kits may be

used by as many as 100,000 schools in the course of their lifetime. In addition, the Center's *Teaching Tolerance* magazine — also free — reaches 600,000 educators nationwide twice each year.

### New teaching aides available

This year, Teaching Tolerance has released two new teaching aides to coincide with the beginning of the new school year:

• The "One World" poster set includes 10 full-color posters that combine visual images with powerful quotations from authors, activists and social justice leaders. The posters, and an accompanying teacher's guide, were designed to "help students think about the responsibilities they have toward one another in an increasingly interdependent world," Sapp said. This is

the second poster set produced by the Center; the first, issued in 1996, was used in nearly 100,000 classrooms across the country.

• *One Survivor Remembers*, a new teaching kit, uses the story of Holocaust survivor Gerda Weissmann Klein to help students "explore the dangers of hate and extremism and commit themselves to civic engagement and activism," Sapp said. The kit includes the Academy Award-winning film of the same name, as well as a teacher's guide, a resource booklet and a collection of primary documents, including photos, letters and other papers from Klein's personal files.

As students begin the new school year, anti-bias activities are more important than ever.

"Tolerance themes always play

an important role," Sapp said. "Teachers do, though, place an emphasis on community building during the first crucial weeks of school. They are co-creating with students the environment that they will live in for a year."

Smith, the social studies teacher at Immanuel, agrees. While he's used *America's Civil Rights Movement* during individual lessons in the past, he says this year he hopes to use the curriculum's activities throughout the year — beginning now.

"The importance of anti-bias education," he said, "is that it doesn't just teach them the facts, but it teaches them in a way they can grow with an open heart and an open mind."

Find out more about all of Teaching Tolerance's products and programs at [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org).

# Center's legal work aids struggling student

WESTWEGO, LA. — James Thomas was a struggling 8th grader when Center attorney Courtney Bowie took his case a year ago. Placed in special education classes since he was in the 2nd grade, his learning-disabled status was misdiagnosed as emotional disturbance. Although James got into a few fights, his real problem was his inability to read.

"James was on the fast track to more behavior problems, probably becoming a drop-out from school and ending up in juvenile prison," Bowie said.

The Center filed a complaint on his behalf last November, but things went from bad to worse at school. In January, Bowie again filed a complaint and this time obtained an agreement that included additional reading classes with a reading specialist.

Since these services were put in place in February, James has made significant progress. After only four months of tutoring, James' reading level rose from 2nd to 4th grade. The school district continued his reading tutoring over the summer.

"James' mother called me, crying in joy because James had volunteered to read aloud in his classroom," Bowie recalled. Prior to the Center's involvement, James had argued

with his teachers and was ejected from class when he was asked to read aloud because he was embarrassed at his inability.

James' disciplinary problems decreased dramatically as his reading ability increased. "He's made incredible progress," Bowie said. "If this pace continues, he may be able to get a GED or even go to community college."

James' case is part of the Center's special education initiative in Louisiana, work that reflects the reality that education and juvenile justice are closely connected.

### Settlement will help many students

In August, Center attorneys — working with lawyers at the Southern Disability Law Center — obtained a class-wide settlement that will affect all special education students in Jefferson Parish.

The agreement, benefiting as many as 1,000 children, requires major systemic changes, including improvements in the education provided to those with emotional disturbances, reform of the parish's overly harsh disciplinary procedures, counseling for emotionally disturbed children, and the provision of job training and other services to help high school students tran-

sition into jobs upon graduation.

James, his mother, Janice, and his sister, Roishinique, are among the thousands of Katrina evacuees dispersed from the New

Orleans area. The Red Cross is providing them housing in Houston where they expect to remain for the first semester of this school year.



Janice Thomas and her children, James Thomas, 15, and 3rd-grader Roishinique Johnson, pose outside their Westwego, La., home in August. James has made great progress in his reading skills since the Center got him tutoring services required by federal regulation.

# Center grant sparks change

MILFORD, PENN. — A Teaching Tolerance grant and a "teachable moment" brought real change to a changing American classroom here this past spring, a change that principal Sonya Cole said still is being felt at her school.

Delaware Valley Elementary School has 600 students. Nestled in this rural town, the school is just an hour-and-a-half from New York City. Demographics are changing, turning a predominantly white school and community into a more diverse one. With change sometimes come growing pains.

Delaware Valley was awarded a \$1,000 Teaching Tolerance grant which educators and students used to purchase 39 puppets that illustrate a wide range of

Cole knew the Teaching Tolerance puppets were sitting in the neighboring room.

"So I went and got one that looked like me, an old-grandma-type," she said, laughing, "and one that looked like the little girl." Cole took the puppets back to the classroom and started an impromptu puppet conversation, with several children watching.

"I knew the puppets would engage them, and they did," she said. "It was having the puppets there, available to us, that made this work."

The girl, speaking through her puppet, told Cole that the student was being picked on because of her skin color.

"I told her no one should be judged on the color of their skin," Cole said. "It's the color of your heart that matters. If you're putting someone down, or picking on someone, your heart isn't a good color. I told her we want all of our hearts to be healthy and pink."

Right there, in the space of a short conversation, Cole said she felt the room change.

"And the little girl felt it, too. The puppets helped everyone understand that we should not pick on each other. The little girl told me, 'I want everyone's heart to be pink.'"

School officials say the puppets have proved to be critical teaching tools.

"The puppets are just awesome," said Sharon Siegel, the school's media director. "The children are completely fascinated as the 'little person' talks to them about the many way one needs to be kind in school."

"The puppet program will do much to help us make a safe and secure environment for our learners," said Siegel. "The grant is a great investment in the children, staff and community of our school."

Since its inception in 1997, the Teaching Tolerance grants program has awarded more than 1,000 grants, totaling more than \$1 million, to educators nationwide.



Pennsylvania students display puppets, purchased with a Center grant, that help teach tolerance in their classroom.

nationalities, ages and appearances.

The school uses them in a variety of short skits, with both live performances and televised performances on the school's closed-circuit news program. The overarching theme is "tolerance for all people."

Cole, though, became part of an unexpected and unrehearsed puppet show, one that touched on themes felt in schools across the country — bullying, ostracism and hurt feelings.

A 2nd-grade girl, after viewing a puppet show, stopped Cole as she passed through the classroom.

"I think we need to start a club [like one described in the puppet show] because a girl is getting picked on in our class," the student told Cole.



Supporters of juvenile justice reform demonstrate in New Orleans. Many of the Center's clients were displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

# Hurricane takes toll on Center projects

(continued from page 1) issues and connect them with their families.

"We're also concerned about some of our young clients who are due to be released from juvenile facilities in Baton Rouge, Monroe and Bridge City and now have no homes to go to," said Utter. JJPL staff are working to place these children with other families, he said. Otherwise, they will be forced to remain incarcerated, even though their disposition is completed.

In Mississippi, Jim Constock-Galagan, director of the Southern Disabilities Law Center — the Center's partner in its special education initiatives in both Mississippi and Louisiana — lost his home and office in Bay St. Louis.

The Center's satellite office in Jackson, which houses its Mississippi Youth Justice Project (MYJP), lost power for several days but suffered no damage, and its staff is safe. Many of its clients didn't fare as well.

"Some of the kids we've been

working with — more than 20 — couldn't locate their families in the days following the storm," said MYJP co-director Sheila Bedi. "The state couldn't do it, so our staff traveled to south Mississippi to find them."

The Center is reaching out to its colleagues in Mississippi and Louisiana to help them re-establish their offices and continue their important work. Center leaders are meeting with representatives of legal aid programs and bar association officials in all three states to explore a role the Center can play in assisting hurricane victims.

Some see the tragedy of Katrina as an opportunity to discuss race and poverty in a way to transform New Orleans. "The outrage to the slow response by the federal government to assist a mostly poor and black population is shared by many," Utter said. "We hope the reconstruction of New Orleans can serve as a model as we move to alleviate urban poverty throughout our country."

# TRIBUTE GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CENTER FROM JUNE 2005 THROUGH AUGUST 2005

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The Center accepts gifts in memory of someone who has died or in honor of a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary or graduation. Donors may also give a gift just to say "thank you." The Center will send a card to the person honored or the family of the deceased. Complete this form and mail it with your contribution.

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# Center receives bequest from Partner for the Future

A love of art led Marion Sanchez to her husband, while a love of philanthropy and a deep commitment to justice led her to the Center.

Sanchez, who died in August of last year at the age of 97, was born in New York in 1907. After attending private schools in the area through high school, she left for California to pursue a degree in library science at the University

Sanchez was the son of the man who invented Wesson Oil. When his father died, he inherited stock in Wesson Foods. The couple soon began their philanthropic efforts. Groups that worked on behalf of the blind and those that took care of animals benefited from the couple's generosity.

Gilbert Sanchez died on Easter Sunday in 1970. After his death, Marion continued to work toward the couple's shared goals, including their philanthropic work and reading for the blind.

Over the years, Marion learned of the Center's work and was especially interested in its early successes against the Klan. She established a gift annuity to take care of both her needs and the Center's goals. At the age of 95, she constructed a living trust to take care of her stepdaughter, her beloved cat, Skipi, and her charities. After her death, the Center received her generous bequest.



Portrait of Marion Sanchez painted by her husband, Gilbert

of Southern California.

It was in California that Marion met Gilbert Sanchez, a portrait artist from New Orleans who would later become her husband. Gilbert and Marion traveled throughout the country during their marriage before finally settling in California. Their experiences during those years led the pair to dedicate themselves to making the world a better place.

Marion detested both telephones and cameras so few photos of her and her husband exist. Often Gilbert presented portraits of the pair to friends.

"Despite their serious expressions in the paintings they were a lot of fun," said friend Florence Dunn. "Gilbert was big into puns and could reduce Marion to a fit of giggles. They were wonderful people."

## Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the Center in their Wills or other planned gifts. The Center gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from August 1, 2004, through August 31, 2005.

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## Leave a legacy through Partners for the Future

Partners for the Future is a special group of donors who include the Center in their estate plans. These supporters are helping ensure the Center's long-term success. You are urged to help.

There are several ways to join Partners for the Future. Many chose to do so by including a bequest to the Southern Poverty Law Center in their wills or living trusts. Others make provision

for the eventual distribution of assets held in retirement fund accounts, life insurance policies, and other assets that may provide tax or financial benefits.

After planning for the continued financial security of your family and loved ones, we hope you will consider joining Partners for the Future by making a planned gift to the Center.

For information about the many planned giving opportunities available at the Center — with no obligation — please contact our planned giving department by calling toll-free 1-888-414-7752 or by mailing the form below. You can also visit us online at [www.SPLCenter.org/donate](http://www.SPLCenter.org/donate) or e-mail us at [plannedgiving@splcenter.org](mailto:plannedgiving@splcenter.org).

If you have already included the Center in your will or estate plan, please contact us so we can update our records. We want to officially welcome you as a Partner for the Future!

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# Sharing her wisdom: an interview with Gerda Klein

Teaching Tolerance staff have spent the last year in an exciting collaboration with The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation to create a new teaching kit, *One Survivor Remembers*.

Centered around the Academy Award-winning documentary of the same name, the kit uses Gerda Weissmann Klein's powerful story of surviving the Nazi Holocaust to help students draw connections to modern-day examples of the dangers of hatred, extremism, prejudice and bigotry.

## New kit is free to educators

The free kit, released in September, is designed for grades 8 through 12. It includes a teacher's guide, a resource booklet, the film (in VHS or DVD format) and a selection of primary documents — photos, letters, maps and other items — gathered from Klein's personal collection.

The Center recently asked Klein about her compelling story and her recent collaboration with the Center.

**You have said that your message is threefold: a message of survival, acceptance and hope. Why do you think today's children need these three messages?**

My message is not new, but children need it more than ever today. We have been witnesses to horrible events, and yet they still



Gerda Klein's powerful story of surviving the Nazi Holocaust is featured in the Center's newest teaching kit, *One Survivor Remembers*.

continue to happen. Genocide is still happening today. I will never understand how someone can kill from 9 to 5 and then go home and listen to Beethoven.

I get about a hundred letters a month from students. When things like the shootings at Columbine happen, they write to ask me, "Will I ever smile

again?" I tell them they will. There is a lot of fear in young people today.

**Your foundation has done work in aiding young people to work toward ending hunger in America. Some students today are not physically hungry but are spiritually hungry. How do you see this in children?**

Yes, they hunger for inner fulfillment. We had this kind of thing in the camps, as well. It makes me remember things like when someone gave me a bobby pin for my birthday in the camps. I think when you're poor and you feel like you have noth-

ing, that it is terribly important for someone to say "thank you" for something.

I find teenagers today so very caring. They are sensitive and understanding. If students hunger for anything, they hunger for something to do.

**You are fond of telling students, "You are the messengers to a time I will not see." What is the message you would give to the future?**

Do the works that we only dreamed of when we were young. Listen with your hearts. Remember the past.

**What is it you want to say to teachers today?**

Teachers are my greatest obligation! Teaching is first and foremost the most noble profession. When I was captive in the camps, there were no role models for me. Teachers are the lodestar. I believe they should be elevated above all others.

**What has it meant to you working with the Southern Poverty Law Center this past year?**

During the long, bitter years of slavery through the dark, lonely freezing nights and hungry days, we asked the question: Will anyone ever understand? Will anyone care? You at the Southern Poverty Law Center, who have dedicated your lives through tireless work and deep heartfelt concern to defend liberty and pursue justice for all, have given us the most eloquent answer. No words can ever convey my eternal gratitude to all who work at this incredible and honorable institution.

To find out more about *One Survivor Remembers*, including how teachers can order the free kit, visit [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org).

## Endowment supports Center's future work for tolerance, justice

Support for the Center's daily operations would not be possible without the loyal contributions of caring individuals across the nation. Because of their consistent generosity, the Center has enjoyed great success in funding Teaching Tolerance, the Intelligence Project and its legal work.

But the Center has long been convinced that the day will come when nonprofit groups will no longer be able to afford to solicit support through the mail because of rising postage and printing costs. That's why, in 1974, the Center began setting aside a certain amount each year to build an endowment. Today the endowment stands at \$150.9 million.

The Center was one of the first social action organizations to recognize the importance of saving for the future. While colleges have long understood the wisdom behind building endowments, most organizations

like the Center — groups that often touch many more lives than the typical college — have not. As a result, some groups have not been able to sustain themselves and continue their valuable work.

### Many nonprofits build endowments

Today, many nonprofit organizations — including the ACLU, the Anti-Defamation League and the Sierra Club — have come to recognize the critical nature of building endowments. They now understand that the programming commitments they make today will create future financial obligations.

In this new century, America remains a nation of great promise. In communities across the country, thousands of people are seeking to tear down social, economic and racial barriers that still sometimes separate us. But there are others who try to use those divisions to sow seeds

of hatred. And there are many more whose apathy in the face of intolerance allows this hatred to grow.

As the nation's diversity increases in the coming years, so will the challenges to promote tolerance and acceptance. To help ensure that the Center is ready to meet those challenges, its board of directors has restricted the principal and income from the Center's endowment to cover the costs of the Center's future programs and activities.

The caring individuals who help the Center continue its crucial daily work are helping to establish the Center as an organization poised to carry on the struggle for tolerance and justice — for as long as it is needed. The Center's educational and legal efforts have positively affected the lives of millions of people. With the help of the Center's endowment, millions more will benefit in the future.

## White supremacists spew hatred in Katrina's wake

(continued from page 1) described as "animalistic," "abominable savages," "Negro beasts" and worse. White supremacists posted hundreds of messages on the Internet expressing hopes that blacks in New Orleans would be wiped out, along with the "sodomites" who inhabit that "Southern Babylon." One suggested "they pile up all the niggers and use them as human sand bags against the rising storm surge."

Then there were the calls for fatal violence. An Arkansas-based neo-Nazi group called White Revolution boasted almost immediately of helping out by setting up a "whites-only" tent camp for refugees in Wiggins, Miss. (a claim that appears to be false). But the group, led by Billy Roper of Russellville, then went on to describe the second part of its so-called "White Kinsmen Rescue Project": "For those of you who stand your ground against the looters, White Revolution is offering our support through the 'Cartridges for Katrina' program. For every black looter you shoot, and provide proof of a clean kill, White Revolution will provide reimbursement of all expended ammunition, at no cost. That's our guarantee, to you."

Some of the more eyebrow-raising comments came from groups that claim not to be racist at all. The League of the South, a

neo-Confederate group that says it wants to see blacks and whites "work for authentic harmony," started up a relief project for its own members without mentioning race. But right under the blurb on its website announcing the "LS Katrina Relief Fund," the League carried ads from at least two members offering to share their homes — with whites only.

A particularly amazing statement came from Scott Morris, the Ohio leader of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), a Southern "heritage" group that claims not to be racist. In an e-mail that went to hundreds of SCV members, Morris said that black Katrina victims were "vile criminals" and "pestilent vermin," and warned that "these leeches will go on to pollute the communities [where] they're relocated."

Most Americans reacted with shock, horror and sympathy to the incredible devastation in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. But for the American radical right, it was just one more chance to unleash truly disgusting attacks on their fellow citizens. If nothing else, perhaps the winds of Katrina have served to remind the rest of us just how violently racist and bloody-minded white supremacists really are.

Mark Potok is director of the Center's Intelligence Project.