

WORLD SCOPE

TWO FLORIDA STUDENTS TO BE AIDS REPORTERS IN AFRICA

(GIN) — Tiffany Parkes and Jillian Simms, two African-American students at Florida International University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication, have been chosen for all-expense-paid trips to Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa. Selected by local television and newspaper editors, the two will spend 10 days interviewing, recording video and writing articles on the AIDS pandemic. Simms, 21, from Connecticut is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists. Parkes, 23, has interned at the *St. Petersburg Times*, *Tampa Tribune*, and *Closer* magazine. She was editor in chief of *The Voice*, the magazine of the Black Student Union.

LIBERIAN CONTRACTORS PROTEST LAYOFFS BY UN STAFF

(GIN) — Over a dozen Liberian workers rampaged against a UN mission after almost 100 jobs were eliminated by a new contract. The United Nations Mission in Liberia condemned the early morning attack by the workers on its personnel and vehicles close to its logistics headquarters in the capital, Monrovia. Two jeeps were burned, one vehicle was damaged and three staff members had to seek medical attention. Under the new contract between the UN mission and a private Liberian company, 88 maintenance workers received pink slips, sparking the protest. Unemployment in this West African country is about 85 percent. Although it is ranked as the ninth most fragile country in the world in a 2008 survey, many of the international aid agencies which were providing basic services have closed operations or are scaling back because of reduced funding.

SOUL SINGER JILL SCOTT TO BE SEEN IN AFRICAN FILM

(GIN) — Three time Grammy Award winner Jill Scott will star as Precious Ramotswe in the television version of the runaway bestseller, *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*. Author Alexander McCall Smith's book tells the story of Precious Ramotswe — a thirty-something Motswana woman with a quick wit, sharp intellect, and keen powers of observation. She runs a detective agency located in modern-day Gaborone, capital of Botswana.

"It was the happiest set I've ever worked on," said Amy J. Moore, producer of the upcoming TV serial. "It was the first film set where no one was on a diet! There were many women on the set and there was just something about Botswana that gave a relaxed, happy feel to the whole production. Akika Noni Rose plays Precious's fussy, hilarious secretary, Grace Makutsi, while London actor, Lucian Msamati, is Ramotswe's shy suitor. TV network HBO is partnering with the BBC to make the 13-part series and filming will begin this summer in Botswana, where the novel is set.

CHAD'S 'STOLEN CHILDREN' ARE GOING HOME

(GIN) — After some bureaucratic delays, permission has been granted for the 103 children caught up in a trafficking scandal to be reunited with their families. A French charity that claimed the children were Darfur orphans was convicted in a Chadian court and six aid workers are serving eight years in prison in France. Their return home was delayed to allow Chadian officials to identify the correct guardians, according to Unicef. The scandal emerged when it was revealed that most of the 21 girls and 82 boys were from Chad, and had relatives who were still alive. Chadian President Idriss Deby says he will consider pardoning the aid workers on condition the children's families receive compensation.

Hate crimes, immigration tied

NEW YORK (AP) — Anti-immigrant sentiment is fueling nationwide increases in the number of hate groups and the number of hate crimes targeting Latinos, a watchdog group said.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, in a report titled "The Year in Hate," said it counted 888 hate groups in its latest tally, up from 844 in 2006 and 602 in 2000.

The most prominent of the organizations newly added to the list, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR, vehemently rejected the "hate group" label, and questioned the law center's motives. FAIR said the center was using smear tactics to boost donations and stifle legitimate debate on immigration.

"Their banner may be 'Stop the hate' but it's really 'Stop the debate,'" said FAIR's president, Dan Stein. "Apparently you can't even articulate an argument for immigration reform without being smeared."

The law center's report contends there is a link between anti-immigrant activism and the significant rise in hate crimes against Latinos in recent years.

According to the latest FBI statistics, 819 people were victimized by anti-Latino hate crimes in 2006, compared with 595 in 2003.

"The immigration debate has turned ugly, and the result has been a growth in White supremacist hate groups and anti-Latino hate crime," said Mark Potok, director of the law center's Intelligence Project.

"The majority of anti-Latino hate crimes are carried out by people who think

Felony

(Continued from Page 4)

Leventhal added that cops allegedly told Rayshawn: "You and all your little nigger friends don't like us, we don't like you either."

"Donovan gave these two officers preferential treatment, this is a complete Black-wash," said Leventhal. When asked by reporters if there would be a civil suit, Leventhal said it hadn't been discussed.

He did say that he wanted to contact the governor, the state attorney general and the feds. The DA is not returning phone calls.

Marq Claxton of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care says the indictment is "a positive thing."



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— Mark Potok
Director of law center's Intelligence Project

they're attacking immigrants, and very likely undocumented immigrants."

Potok said hate groups were proliferating because a growing number of Americans were agitated by the immigration debate.

He said many new groups had appeared in the border states of California, Texas and Arizona where illegal immigration has been a particularly volatile issue.

Critics of the law center, including FAIR, contend that the periodic reports on hate groups exaggerate the threat to public safety and inflate the total by including entities that are little more than websites or online chatrooms.

Potok acknowledged that some of the groups may be small and said it is impossible for outsiders to gauge the membership of most of the groups.

Among the largest categories of hate groups, Potok said, are neo-Nazi, White nationalist, racist skinhead and those with links to the Ku Klux Klan.

FAIR, which is frequently quoted by the media and whose officials often have testified before Congress, advocates an end to illegal immigration and tighter con-

trols on legal immigration.

In pursuing these goals, it says, "there should be no favoritism toward or discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, or creed."

The law center said its decision to designate FAIR a hate group was based in part on the ideology of various people who established it, worked for it or donated to it over its nearly 30-year history.

The center has issued a detailed report outlining its allegations, although little of that report deals with FAIR's recent activities.

The center's critique of FAIR was endorsed by a major Latino group, the National Council of La Raza. The council's vice president for advocacy and legislation, Cecilia Munoz, said FAIR's leaders were polished in public forums, but represented "a very unsavory set of views."

Stein described the assertions of bigotry as "a total fantasy."

Both FAIR and law center are relatively well known

in the ranks of advocacy groups. The law center, which started as a small civil rights group in 1971, has amassed an endowment fund totaling \$200 million as of October and it received nearly \$29 million in grants and contributions in fiscal 2007.

FAIR claims more than 250,000 members and reported more than \$4 million in contributions in 2006.

Stein, in addition to rejecting the "hate group" label, questioned the law center's linking of anti-immigrant sentiment to the recent increase in anti-Latino hate crimes. The data on such crimes is inexact and prone to misinterpretation, and some of the incidents classified as anti-Latino hate crimes involved violence between Latino gangs and non-Latino rivals, Stein said.

The law center has listed numerous incidents not fitting that profile. In one such assault, in February 2007, three men broke into a mobile home in Wright City, Mo., yelling "immigration enforcement" and beat an illegal immigrant from Mexico with a piece of lumber, according to police reports.

In Arkansas, where the Latino population has grown rapidly, there have been several recent violent incidents. In December, police said, a Hispanic man was fatally beaten in Lowell, Ark., after his nephew spoke Spanish to the assailant's girlfriend.

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