

College paying price for hazing

By Andrew England
THE CAPITAL OUTLOOK

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Hazing is an issue that most people on college campuses are reluctant to talk about, yet, the clandestine, often brutal and sometimes deadly practice simply refuses to go away.

Over time, there have been sporadic incidents at Florida A&M University that have cast a dark shadow over on-campus organizations and the extent of what prospective members must endure in order to be accepted.

And although the hazing spotlight is most often on fraternities and sororities, other organizations get caught in the hazing business as well.

Ivery Luckey, a former clarinet player in FAMU's famed Marching 100 band, was a victim of a hazing incident in 1998.

Luckey, a former business student from Ocala, was allegedly paddled at least 300 times, causing him to be hospitalized and left him permanently injured.

At the Feb. 10 meeting of the FAMU Board of Trustees' meeting, trustees voted to settle a lawsuit by awarding Luckey \$50,000.

"He will also receive \$208, which is one-third of his mediation services," said Avery McKnight, general counsel for FAMU.

"The monies that Luckey will receive comes from the risk management fund on behalf of the FAMU Board of Trustees," he added.

Band members like Deanna Carpenter, a 21-year-old senior newspaper journalism student, are happy that the Luckey issue is over.

"I am glad that the case has been settled," said Carpenter, who is the current clarinet section leader.

"I do not condone hazing as a section leader," added Carpenter, who came to FAMU in 2000 and has marched with the Marching 100 all four years.

"I think people mistake hazing for discipline and mistake discipline for hazing," she said.

Lt. Louis Wichers, who works for the FAMU Police Department, said hazing is all about power and describes it as "ritualized and socialized domestic violence."

Wichers has handled several hazing cases, but he is most concerned with the victims.

"The victims, no matter what the level of injury, will

not usually come forward," said Wichers, who has been with the FAMU PD for 13 1/2 years. "And the ones doing the hazing definitely don't want to talk."

Wichers also said hazing can also lead to school suspensions, and in some states, even criminal prosecution. In 1998, 12 FAMU students were suspended in connection with the Luckey case. "In Florida, hazing is not a criminal act, but an administrative act, which means it is up to the administration as to how they will take action," he said.

Some states, however, do consider hazing a criminal act and hazing had led to jail terms for offenders.

Meanwhile, the Marching 100 is trying desperately to erase the negative image that past incidents, as well as members, have done to the band's reputation.

"We have and will continue to participate in anti-hazing workshops that usually start the first week of the season," Carpenter said. "In these workshops we break down Florida statutes that define hazing and we also tell members how we feel about hazing."

THE CHARLOTTE POST (USPS 965-500) is published weekly for \$40.00 per year by the Charlotte Post Publishing Co., 1531 Camden Rd. Charlotte, NC 28203-4753. Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte, NC. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **THE CHARLOTTE POST**, PO Box 30144, Charlotte, NC 28230

BROTHER (SNOW)MAN



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Siblings Kibrittany Crowder, 9, Keith Crowder 15, and Kelvin Crowder, 14 added their own flair to a snowman after last week's record snowfall, which reached 17 inches of precipitation in some parts of Charlotte. This week's weather has been much milder.

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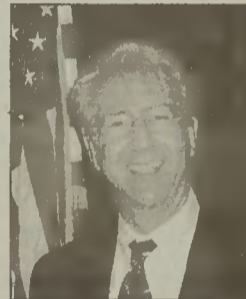
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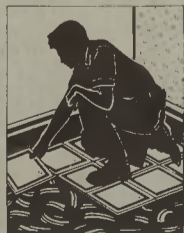
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