

# Southern band disbanded over hazing incident

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
BATON ROUGE (NNPA) — The Southern University marching band, one of the nation's premier college marching bands, has been temporarily disbanded as the East Baton Rouge district attorney investigates a hazing incident that led to several band members being hospitalized over the Bayou Classic weekend and arrests of seven band members in alleged hazing violations last fall. East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney Hillar Moore told *The Advocate* last week that he is moving forward with prosecution of seven Southern University band members arrested for hazing late last year.

Moore said the process is taking longer than expected because the two primary victims do not live in Louisiana.

Southern University Chancellor Kofi Lomotey said last week that the marching band has been temporarily "disbanded" for the semester. With the exception of an occasional parade, the SU Human Jukebox performs less often during the spring semester because football season has ended.

"The band has been disbanded and students are having to reapply, in a sense," Lomotey said.

Such actions are important to "increase expectations" and highlight the seriousness of the matter, he said. "That kind of behavior is not to be accepted," Lomotey said of hazing concerns.

The prosecution of the seven band members stems from a recent alleged hazing incident that was part of a Nov. 25 initiation into the marching band's unofficial French horn fraternity — "Mellow Phi Fellow" — prior to the 2008 State Farm



Southern University marching band has been temporarily disbanded because of hazing.

Bayou Classic football game, according to arrest records. The hazing occurred at a home north of Baton Rouge.

According to police reports, the three victims were allegedly beaten with a 2-by-4-inch wooden board.

Two of the three victims were hospitalized with injuries that could have led to possible organ failure, authorities said.

Since being released from the hospital, the two band members have returned to

their homes in Mississippi and Georgia, Moore said, as did five of the alleged perpetrators. East Baton Rouge authorities and university officials have refused to release the names of the victims.

Moore said that his office

recently received all of the reports and photographs taken by sheriff's deputies.

The district attorney's office is in the process of scheduling meetings with the victims to gather additional information, Moore said.

The district attorney's office has not yet determined whether it will proceed with charges against all seven who were arrested through a grand jury investigation or by charging each defendant through a bill of information, which is not a grand jury indictment but a formal charge of the crime.

"Any time a student is injured on campus or at any campus-related event, it's serious," Moore said. "And hazing is taken very seriously."

Some students dream of being in Southern's Human Jukebox marching band, Moore said, "only to have to be beaten" for initiation.

Dr. Lomotey said that the seven students who were arrested — all of whom were released on bail — remain in-

definitely suspended by the university.

The seven undergraduate students are accused of "ritualistic torture" and were booked with aggravated second-degree battery and ritualistic acts, which carries a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison.

While some band students are still practicing together on their own time, Lomotey said that the university does not plan to "reconstitute" the band during the spring 2009 semester.

Southern spokesman, Ed Pratt, said that while some freshman band members have been performing at Southern home basketball games at the Felton G. Clark Activity Center, they are not considered the full marching band.

Southern's band director Lawrence Jackson, refused to comment when he returned a phone call saying only that he was not authorized by the university to discuss the matter. Jackson said, "I'm not at liberty to say anything."

## Wealthy ethnic buyers control \$282 billion

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

(NNPA) — Affluent ethnic Americans have been invisible to luxury marketers until now. A new study by chief economist Greg McBoat of the research firm and consultancy, Diversity Affluence, reflects "Estimates of Population, Income and Purchasing Power for African, Asian and Hispanic Americans in America."

It defines affluent ethnic individuals with an annual income of at least \$75,000 and households with an annual income of \$150,000 or greater.

"Our data confirms

wealthy ethnic groups, defined as 'Royaltions,' are a significant audience for all marketers to target," McBoat said.

"Of the three primary groups of Royaltions that we researched African-Americans possess \$87.3 billion in purchasing power, Asian-Americans possess \$90.2 billion, and Hispanic-Americans hold \$104.5 billion."

These influential consumers are the "new holders of the gold," said Andrea Hoffman, Diversity Affluence CEO.

"While these recessionary times have luxury marketers

overly cautious, reducing spending is an imprudent way to cut costs because a brand risks attracting new audiences that could otherwise help them survive and thrive," she said.

"However, marketers should reallocate money towards new media and new audiences. It's more affordable, measurable and can deliver prospects instantly with the right call to action."

Hoffman suggests that marketers better educate themselves about the Royaltions' needs, interests and economic significance, particularly since affluent ethnic consumers have an average household income

of \$233,000.

"Although they account for only 2.4 percent of all ethnic individuals in the country, Royaltions represent 39 percent of total income, a significant portion of wealth," said McBoat.

"In other words almost one of every 42 people is affluent, income earned by the Royaltions represents one dollar out of every \$2.56 earned."

Hoffman said, "No ethnic group possesses the raw buying power and growth potential more than Hispanic-Americans... Marketers' traditional market base is saturated and it is imperative to find new customers to main-

tain sales and revenue growth — regardless of economic times."

Hoffman also noted that the new study will help marketing managers, media buyers, retail and business development executives substantiate initiatives and pilot programs that target, attract and build loyalty between brands and Royaltions.

"The media and marketing landscape will continue to change at Internet speed, and luxury marketers are at a challenging crossroads," Hoffman said. "But the raw numbers prove that new and affordable opportunities do exist if marketers choose to be nimble."

## Eighth oldest Black church in danger of wrecking ball

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

NEW ORLEANS (NNPA) — Historic Wesley United Methodist Church, the second-oldest African-American church in New Orleans and the eighth-oldest in the United States, is in need of financial support and resources. The church is scheduled for demolition due to extensive damage from recent hurricanes.

Wesley United Methodist Church was initially built by enslaved Africans and has

hosted many civil rights events. The church also organized meetings and developed strategies to enforce antiracist laws. In 1951, the church was deconstructed and moved to its current location on Jackson Avenue in New Orleans.

Members of Wesley United Methodist Church eagerly participated in the reconstruction, but have been worried about the decision of the church's demolition due to the lack of finances. One

church member stated, "My family and I have been attending Wesley since I was a little girl. It would absolutely kill me to see all that history torn down."

The uptown New Orleans church is an important part of U.S. history and needs to be saved for future generations, members say.

To make a donation to Wesley United Methodist Church, call (504) 906-0644 or go to the website [www.savewesleyunited.org](http://www.savewesleyunited.org).

## 100 Women

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energy efficiency in their homes and paying their bills, conservation strategies and allows viewers to conveniently pay bills. Meantime, Southwest Gas representatives Valarie Lewis and Valerie Lucas educated attendees on ways to improve their interaction with the utility company.

The 100 Black Women's event drew a cross-section of prominent supports, including Clark County Commissioner Lawrence Weekly, who called the event "wonderful and timely."

Jo Cato appreciated the entrepreneurial forums, while Rochelle Hooks enjoyed the employment component.

Genie Stokes was thrilled at the breadth

of talent. "I enjoyed the presenter's uniqueness and ability to talk to individuals and not at them about available resources."

"A current goal is to build the coalition's membership and to utilize the talents and skills of professional Black women for causes similar to today's event," 100 Black Women's president, Hannah Brown, said of the organization's immediate goals. She hopes to attract the type of members who can develop into leaders continue advocacy in the areas of social services, banking, health, education and welfare. The organization is looking for a few good women, especially African-American professionals.

Interested individuals are encouraged to contact Rose Crowder, (702) 492-2481.