

**Choir**

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she asked. "The song we learned last week."

With all the heads in the choir going up and down signifying an answer of 'yes,' Ingram sat back down and commenced to let her fingers do the walking on the organ.

And within 10 minutes the choir was up on their feet rocking back and forth as they clapped their hands to the beat of the uplifting song.

"Yes I'm holding on ... Yes I'm holding on ... Yes I'm holding on and I won't let go of my faith-my faith, yes I'm holding on and I won't let go of my faith."

Over and over the words of the choir resonated throughout the sanctuary as each member was caught up in the emotion of the song.

It got so good that even

Ingram stopped the music to join in with a little foot stomping and hand clapping of her own.

By the time they finished, the choir had missed its closing deadline by about 10 minutes, but no one was complaining.

"How many you are enjoying it so far," Randleman said with a wide smile.

Randleman, who directs all the choirs at Church of God in Christ gave her new choir a few instructions for next weeks practice on the 11th and asked members to spread the word to get more people to come out.

Ingram says the choir has one more song to learn before the 18th and the way rehearsals have been going, she can't wait for the program.

"It's been a wonderful fellowship," she said. "I'm excited about it and I'm looking forward to the concert."



Members of the Ministers Conference Mass Choir rehearse Monday. Photo by Damon Ford

# Asheville NAACP officers suspended

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ASHEVILLE - The national NAACP has suspended all officers of its Asheville branch for non-compliance with state and national mandates, the executive director of the state organization said.

State NAACP officials will be in Asheville within 30 days to elect new officers and reorganize. Those officers could include President H.K. Edgerton and other suspended incumbents if the voting membership so chooses, said the Rev. George I. Allison.

In the meantime, officers must not make any administrative decisions or actions, Allison said in a letter to Edgerton dated Dec. 22.

"Any and all actions taken by you in the capacity of president or in any other capacity of the Asheville NAACP branch is invalid and out of compliance at this time," Allison said in the letter.

Edgerton said the noncompliance involved a failure to pay assessments of about \$2,250 to the state chapter. But he said he had made arrangements - with Allison's approval - with one of the state organization's financial officers to pay half of the amount due by Jan. 17, and that he understood that would constitute compliance.

Allison refused to say which of the mandates had not been met by the Asheville branch, but said they could include "financial reports submitted timely on an annual basis, activity reports submitted timely on an annual basis and all financial assessments that are required to be submitted annually - those are the three basic items."

The national office could have suspended the branch's charter but instead decided to reorganize, Allison said.

The action comes after Edgerton earlier this month asked a Black Mountain law firm headed by a white separatist to help the local NAACP sue the city. The local NAACP branches believes the city has failed to look into why blacks are underrepresented as homeowners.

Edgerton asked attorney Kirk Lyons for help on the issue. Lyons founded the now-defunct legal

foundation CAUSE, which stands for Canada, Australia, United States, South Africa and Europe.

Edgerton's association with Lyons has been strongly criticized. He met Lyons and Lyons' brother-in-law for lunch this year and drew fire after being photographed with them.

This past summer, Edgerton was again in the headlines when he vowed to step down as president

unless \$25,000 was raised by Sept. 1. The money wasn't raised, and he never stepped down.

O.L. Sherrill, a member of the local branch's executive committee, said he looks forward to the reorganization.

"I think it's the only way (the Asheville Branch) can be saved there's no doubt about that - and we have to have credibility restored to the organization," Sherrill said.

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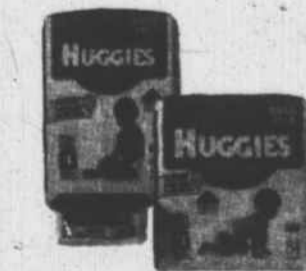
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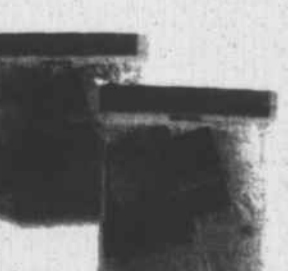
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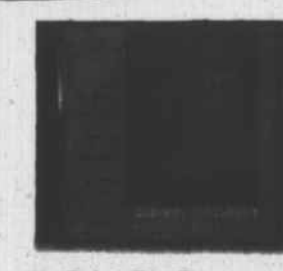
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