

TWO PARADES ON MLK DAY: SO WHAT!

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 23 January 2013 00:00



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a United States federal holiday marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year, which is around the time of King's birthday, January 15.

Alright, check this out!

Everybody and their mamma in Houston knows that we have two parades that occur on what we come to celebrate as the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. This past Monday, thousands of Houstonians attended both parades honoring Dr. King.

The Black Heritage Society held its' 35th Annual Original MLK Birthday Parade and Holiday Celebration in downtown Houston at 10 a.m., and Ovide Duncantell kicked off his 19th Annual MLK Grande Parade in Midtown which also began at 10 a.m.

Many people have opinions about the fact that there are two parades and many people are often critical of the fact that these two camps don't do the parades together.

I vehemently disagree with that thought process and I personally don't see anything wrong with it. I especially take issue with folks who seem to want to act like psychic hotline workers and pretending to conjur up the spirit of Dr. King and stating what they think he would have thought about the situation if he were alive. You don't know what he would have said and thought.

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Hey look!

If two different groups want to have a separate MLK parade, in the same city, on the same day, at the same time, that's their prerogative. No one has a monopoly on celebrating someone's life and no one has a monopoly on making money doing whatever they do.

Besides, other people celebrate Dr. King's legacy and many others make money doing so; Fortune 500 companies, businesses, community organizations, etc. Dr. King's children have even sought to ensure that they are a part of being a part of the commercialization of their father's legacy.

I mean, as each of these camps have the sponsors to support them, the staff and volunteers to help them and the attendees to view them, then why are people so critical of that?

If the sponsors aren't tripping, who is it hurting?

There were several MLK celebrations, events and breakfasts that took place during this season; not just parades.

There isn't anything wrong with that. I believe people are really over-hyping this so-called divisiveness, that they say is causing some sort of confusion and issues within the Black community.

Where exactly is the divisiveness? The only time I see that there may be some divisiveness is when other people bring it up and make it an issue. Nobody can clearly tell me what issues it is causing.

People aren't being forced to choose where they go. I don't see folks squabbling in the streets or folks with signs saying screw them come to ours. Most of the people who complain about the parades, don't even attend either parade anyway.

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It's a business decision. You think these guys are doing it solely because of a "celebration?"

If you have different visions as to how you wish to do business, you shouldn't be "forced" to do business with people you fundamentally disagree with concerning your business or with people that have a different vision than yours. Not everyone can work together and because this is America, they don't have to.

People do the same thing with all of our Black organizations, Black chambers of commerce, Black newspapers; yet I don't see folks, especially our own folks, scrutinized other cultural groups the way they do Black folks.

If folks want to attend one parade over another, well then just attend that one and leave the other alone. I understand that many people don't like the commercialization of the MLK holiday, but if you REALLY think that having one MLK parade is going to seriously address the many issues that are affecting Black Houston, you are SADLY mistaken.

There will be multiple NBA All-Star events and parties going on at the same time, will we complain the same way? Are you mad about every mall having someone portraying Santa Claus and taking pictures with the kids and all the while pimping Christmas?

EVERYBODY commercializes EVERY holiday. Well at least those that are seeking to make money from doing so.

Jeffrey L. Boney is Associate Editor for the Houston Forward Times newspaper, a Next Generation Project Fellow and a dynamic, international speaker. Jeffrey is the Founder and CEO of the Texas Business Alliance and is an experienced entrepreneur and business development strategist. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org.