

TIMES-NEWS
Metro

Sisco Kid

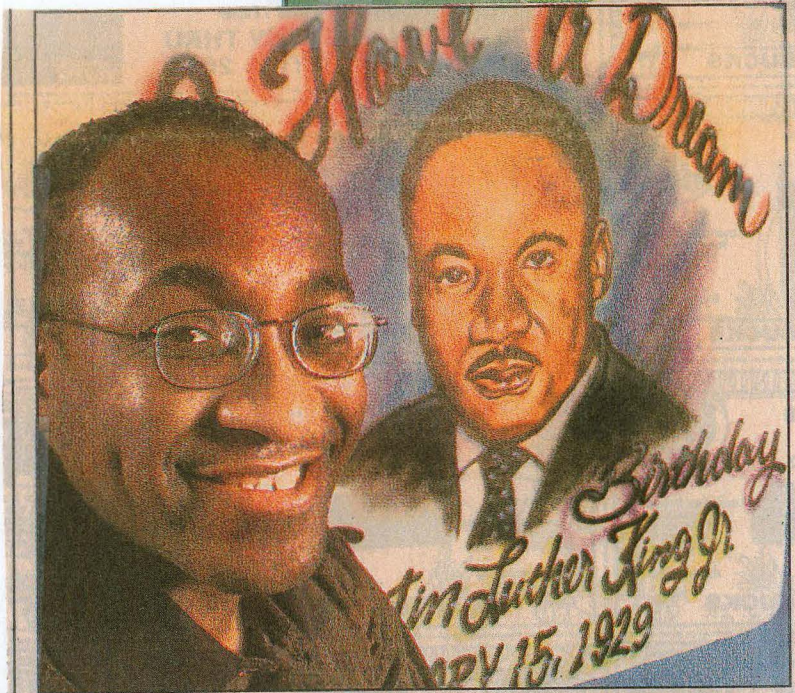
Rickey and Desirae Ray had expected their third child to arrive the day after Thanksgiving. He didn't, but neither of them figured the birth of their son would be a problem. **Page 8C.**



New laws	3
Car tax	3
Deaths	4-5

Kingsport Times-News

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David Grace — dgrace@timesnews.net

Ronnie Collins, district overseer with the Tennessee/Virginia Fellowship Against Racism, is hoping to start a parade in celebration of Martin Luther King Day.

Kingsport groups planning parade to celebrate MLK

■ **Sponsoring** organizations hope to draw in wide participation in a celebration of what binds us together as a community.

By **JOELLEN WEEDMAN**
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KINGSPORT — A new tradition in Kingsport could begin on Martin Luther King Day this year if enough Model City

residents and organizations are interested.

Instead of its annual march, the Tennessee/Virginia Fellowship Against Racism is hoping to host the city's first annual parade in celebration of Martin Luther King Day.

"A parade is more inclusive," said Ronnie Collins, organizer of the parade. "A march goes back to the civil rights

Please see **TWO**, page 2C

2C Kingsport Times-News / Sunday, December 31, 2000

Two Kingsport groups planning parade in celebration of MLK Day

Continued from page 1C
concept of still trying to overcome."

Collins is hoping the theme of celebrating the legacy of Dr. King will bring all cultures together.

"We no longer want this to be a single group march, but an inclusive group of organizations coming together in honor of the legacy Dr. King left," said Collins. "We're going to put forth an effort of diversity and unity."

Kingsport Tomorrow is helping to get the ball rolling.

Leisa Jenkins, director of the organization, said marches and speeches about perceived racism was an idea that the organization was uncomfortable promoting.

But she said the idea of a parade with a theme about being one community despite differences among individuals is an event that would fit with this year's community unity worship service and associated events.

"If there is sufficient interest in the community to have a parade, then we certainly want to support it," said Jenkins. "We want to reach across those barriers and celebrate those things that bind us."

Collins and Jenkins said they hope bands from area schools, organizations and individuals will step up and enter a car, float or other exhibits.

"We encourage people from all cultures to participate," said Collins, adding that youth

groups, fraternities and other youth organizations are invited and encouraged to participate.

"They are our future," he said.

A service project is also tentatively planned for after the parade.

"We ask all goodwill individuals, groups and organizations to do an act of love by participating in a service event on the afternoon of Jan. 14 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," Collins said.

Anything from feeding the poor to giving time to the elderly to visiting hospitals, jails and prisons is urged, he said. My Brother's Keeper will be distributing turkeys and canned goods to some 50 families.

"Love is action," Collins said. "Dr. King challenged us to do more than just talk or continue to be silent onlookers while we see those around us hurting."

The parade is scheduled to start at noon on Jan. 15 at the intersection of Sullivan and Main streets and will end across from City Hall.

"This is not a day off, but a day of caring," said Collins. "We can't just talk about racism, we have to do something about it."

Anyone interested in participating should call Kingsport Tomorrow at (423) 246-2017 or e-mail elderroncollins@aol.com or staff@kingsporttomorrow.org.