



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



February 2024 | Issue Thirty Five: Lifting Our Voices for LGBT-Inclusive Black History

Lorenzo Taylor, Editor

Welcome to the Brothers' Drumbeat, a monthly e-newsmagazine to keep you informed about what's happening and coming soon with Brothers of the Desert. If you have questions, please contact info@brothersofthedesert.org. Follow us on Facebook and visit our website brothersofthedesert.org

Please share our newsletter with someone who will benefit from the information!

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Leadership Message - Board elections reminder

In February BOD will be electing new members to the Board of Directors to fill four vacant positions. All members in good standing will receive ballots electronically. Please return your ballot



via email no later than February 8th. Results will be announced at our February membership meeting. Please contact me, as BOD Secretary if you have any questions about the election process. Thank you.

Tony

Lanier membershipsupport@brothersofthedesert.org



FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

Membership Meeting Feb 10

The monthly membership meeting will be held at the LGBT Community Center of the Desert (1301 N Palm Canyon Drive) at 11:00 am. If you need the agenda or want to connect virtually to the meeting contact **Tim Vincent** at president@brothersofthedesert.org



Member and Ally Lunch Social Feb 10

BOD members and friends will get together for a no-host lunch on Saturday Feb. 10 at 12:30pm. This will be an opportunity to get to know each other in a fun, casual event. Low Desert Modern Mexican Restaurant at 1775 East Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs Smoketree neighborhood. See the menu at Lowdesert.net. Reserve your spot with **David Maurice Jones** prior to Friday Feb 9th at Davidmaurice.jones@gmail.com



Barbershop Discussion Group Feb 13

Brothers of the Desert invites you to the next meeting of Barbershop: A Black Men's Space for Honest Talk about Wellness. Building upon the tradition of barbershops in Black communities, the discussion group is designed to encourage open and honest conversation. The free monthly meetings will be inclusive, welcoming the full spectrum of Black men each month: gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, and straight allies. The discussion

topics are determined by the group. In January the following topics were discussed:

- Sex and the intersection of sex and relationship.
- Family and the impact familial relationships have on our self esteem.
- The people in our lives who know us best.

Meetings begin with a meet-and-greet with dinner at 5:30 pm and the discussion group starting at 6:00 pm. The group is facilitated by **Stuart Huggins** and **Will Dean**. To register to attend the meetings and get the location send an email to info_Barbershop@lkaps.org

For questions contact **Tim Vincent** at president@brothersofthedesert.org or **Jax Kelly** at jaxkelly@lkaps.org



Yucca Valley Day Trip and "Jazz" Brunch Feb 17

Desert Road Trip * Saturday, Feb. 17 * 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Hey Brothers:

Coming off the success of our recent game afternoon, we're ready for a road trip, and Yucca Valley is the place to be! Let's meet in Yucca Valley and explore the Noah Purifoy Desert Art Museum of Assemblage Structures and Pioneertown movie set in the morning. Afterwards, we'll gather for a relaxing potluck brunch, have great conversations, and meet new people of course -- with Jazz to set the mood at the home of **Michael Hardwick**. Please RSVP to davidmaurice.jones@gmail.com to get the address of the potluck and to name the side dish you're bringing. Check out the schedule below. BOD members, their guests, and allies are all welcome.

10:00 am - Meet at the home of Michael Hardwick

10:30 am - Head out to Noah Purifoy Desert Art Museum

Approximately 12:00 pm - Dash over to Pioneertown

Approximately 2:00 pm - Arrive back at "Jazz Central," and let the party begin.

6:00 pm - Departure

Please note: Bring a jacket, be aware the house requires shoes off, and park on the street only. -- cul de sac or surrounding streets.

David Maurice Jones

See a video of African American sculptor **Noah Purifoy** and his Desert Art Museum at the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HthDv890ac8&t=19s>



Bingo at the Roost Feb 18

BOD will be a beneficiary of Bingo at the Roost Lounge Sunday-Feb 18/\$20 per person (Including 5 Games). Bingo is sponsored and presented by GED Magazine, hosted by **Ethylina Canne** at Ethyl's Place at the Roost Lounge. Contributing sponsors are Roost Lounge, Ketel One Vodka, LGBT Wine Society and Himistry Skin Care. Bingo will be at Roost Lounge at 68718 E Palm Canyon Drive #203 in Cathedral City. Make sure

you call to reserve a seat ASAP at 760-507-849, since last year the event sold out. Bingo starts at 12:30 pm. Doors open at noon.

Black History Gala and Parade Feb 3 and 24

In celebration of Black History Month, the Palm Springs Black History Committee (PSBHC) and the City of Palm Springs James O. Jessie Desert Highland Unity Center will sponsor the the "37th Annual City of Palm Springs Black History Month Parade and Town Fair." This year's Black

History Month theme is " African Americans and the Arts". Black History Month started as a result of Negro History Week launched by Carter G. Woodson in the 1920s (see bio below.) Black History Month is now known internationally as a time to recognize the progress and achievements of African Americans. The Committee would like to celebrate Black History Month by sharing African American cultural history, talents, educational events, and historic contributions. Everyone is welcome to share in this celebration of events.



February 3rd is the prestigious 14th Annual Awards Gala at Margaritaville Resort. Brothers of the Desert will be honored for its support and tickets are \$100. There will be events at the Palm Springs Art Museum every Thursday during Black History Month. Other planned events will be the Gospel Fest, Sip & Paint event, and Adult Basketball Tournament. The final event, on February 24th, will be the 37th Annual Parade and Town Fair in downtown Palm Springs. The parade begin at 11:00 am and take place on Palm Canyon Drive. BOD will again have a contingent in the parade. Immediately following the parade there will be the Town Fair located at the Downtown Park near the PS Art Museum. For tickets, times and locations of all events, please visit their website or call (760) 323-8271. palmspringsblackhistory.org

Contact **Eric Davis** to march with BOD VicePresident@Brothersofthedesert.org

JANUARY ACTIVITIES RECAP

BOD Vice President Eric Davis always arranges a nice lunch outing following the monthly meeting. January's lunch was at Blackbook.



Above, BOD at the January 15 MLK Day rally, Member Ken Montiero gave one of the rally speeches. Below, BOD members in the cast of "The Rustin Arrest" at Revolution Stage on January 14th



BOD member Thomas Sarkis hosted a fun afternoon of cards at his home on January 21st.



BOD had an information table at the January 25 Info-A-Go Go at Margaritaville Hotel.



See a gallery of photos from the NYE gala on Eric's Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/>

FEATURE ARTICLE

ARE YOU A TRUE "ALLY" OF BLACK PEOPLE?



Nicolas Snow asked a provocative question on his January 14 "Snowstorm" podcast promoting MLK Day events in Palm Springs. He asked those who consider themselves as allies "Do you REALLY care about Black people?" He challenged White listeners to examine whether they are true allies in the struggle to eliminate white supremacy in this country. He talked frankly about the need for significant financial reparations and reflected on the atrocities of his own slave-owning ancestors. **Ibrahim X. Kendi** raised similar questions in his book *How to be an Antiracist*, saying "Like fighting an addiction, being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination."

Being an ally or antiracist is not just hanging out with Black friends or repeating "woke" platitudes. It means recognizing and appreciating the history and culture of non-White people in this country and actively working to bring down walls of separation, checking your own privilege, and challenging policies that are racist in nature. As Nicolas says, "it's hard work, but people of color have to do it and much more every day. "Believing that you are "colorblind" or "everyone is equal" is not enough to erase the damage that has been done by systemic racism in this country and the burden should not be on people of color to point it out and correct it. Below are a few suggestions on how to be a better ally.

- Know the real history of this country - including indigenous genocide, centuries of slavery and government supported policies of racial oppression.
- Support Black events and organizations with your time, talent, and treasure. That might involve a donation to the Equal Justice Initiative, the NAACP, or BOD. Participate in events like Juneteenth and MLK Day to show solidarity.
- Resist the trap of referring to people of color as "minorities." Many have been in this country for generations and are as just as "American" and essential and invested in the country's growth and prosperity.
- Challenge casual racist comments and actions, including times when there are no people of color in the room.
- Recognize and challenge spaces that should be multi-racial, but are not or only have token people of color participation.
- Honor spaces that people of color create to share their culture. Sometimes your presence may be seen as an effort to dilute the voices of people of color after years of trying to force them to "assimilate" into the "dominant culture." In many cases, this may involve simply listening, more than talking.

See Nicolas' full podcast at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lud8wAgBSCE&t=838s>

**RACIAL HEALING PAVES THE WAY FOR
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND REVELATIONS OF THE TRUTH
ABOUT PAST WRONGS DUE TO INDIVIDUAL AND
SYSTEMIC RACISM AND ADDRESSES THE PRESENT.**

<https://healourcommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Conversation-Guide.pdf>

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce our esteemed BOD treasurer **Raymond Johnson**.

How long have you been in Palm Springs and where did you come from, or have you lived previously?

I have lived in Palm Springs for six years this March. I grew up in Compton and have lived in Palmdale, Los Angeles, and Pasadena.

What kind of work have you done and/or how have you been involved in the community?

I am seven years retired from the County of Los Angeles. The last eleven years as an Operations Chief with the Treasurer and Tax Collector Department. I also worked in hospital administration, Public Health, and Public Social Services.

I was a member of the Los Angeles County HIV/AIDS Commission representing the Antelope Valley community and was Chief of Staff of the Office of AIDS Programs and Policies during the height of the AIDS crisis. I also served as a board member of several non-profits organizations that provided services to children, foster youths and teenagers on probation.

Why is BOD important to you?

It provides a forum for Black men and our allies to connect and have a sense of belonging in the Coachella Valley.

What are your hobbies or non-work activities that bring you pleasure?

I enjoy family time with my grandkids, live entertainment, and sharing life with friends around the globe.

What is your lifelong dream?

To travel more extensively and experience different cultures, to always live in the present, and to live a life with no regrets.

Chambers' Documentary Film "Merman" at Sundance

Congratulations to local digital creator, registered nurse, entrepreneur, man-about-town, and muscle bear beefcake **Andre Chambers** whose life was the subject of the documentary film *Merman*. It was included in the prestigious 2024 Sundance Film



Festival in January after debuting at the Tribeca Film Festival last summer. As the LA Times wrote, "Merman unveils the unique life and struggles of a Black, queer man who grew up amidst societal clashes in a Southern California beach town." The short film can be viewed online at the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9i7M-lxGM5M>

Tysen Knight Black History Expressions of Art and Culture Feb 10-12

Stop by the Desert Art Center (550 N Palm Canyon Dr.) to view this exhibit curated by BOD ally **Tysen Knight**. It explores "the Art of three African American Artists from the Coachella Valley on their journey of self-expression, while seeking to reach out, touch, communicate and bring people together with their Art."



Denny Pascasio describes his mixed media artwork as a toon-influenced multiverse of art, dubbed "Gutterdoodles." **Brittney S. Price** is a fine artist and muralist. She specializes in impactful visual commentary on current events. **Tysen Knight** is an International Artist, Muralist and Award Winning Filmmaker. His "Masterpiece Mash-Ups" remix his artwork with his version of classics from artists such as Picasso, Basquiat and Warhol into colorful, graphic creations.



Inner Circle Presents Two Plays on Black History

Theater producer, actor, and BOD ally **Joachim Moore** will present two plays this month at the Palm Springs Cultural Center. On February 3-March 3 see the return of his one-man show *Medgar X'n James* which tells the stories of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and James Baldwin. On Feb 21-29 they will present *A Sacred Obligation: Educational Docutheater*, a combination of film and live theater that explores the life of abolitionist **John Brown**. Tickets can be purchased at the PSCC (2300 E. Baristo Road in Palm Springs) or at the link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-sacred-obligation-educational-docutheater-tickets-725688542967>

Christian Cooper Speaks on Activism Feb 28

BOD member **Christian Cooper** will discuss his lifetime of activism as an advocate for civil rights, environmental protection, and LGBT rights. Christian gained notoriety in 2020 when a white woman in Central Park NY threatened to call the police on him. Since then, he has written a best-selling memoir and hosted a television program on birding. The program will be on Wednesday, February 28th at 5:30 pm at the Mizell Center 480 S. Sunrise Way in Palm Springs. Reservations required at www.mizell.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

Brothers Calendar

- Feb 3 Black History Gala 6:00 pm
- Feb 10 BOD Monthly Membership Meeting and Lunch 11:00 am
- Feb 10 Black History Expressions Art Exhibit
- Feb 10 Member/Ally Lunch Social 12:30 pm
- Feb 13 Barbershop Discussion Group 5:30 pm
- Feb 17 Yucca Valley Day Trip and Jazz Brunch 10:00 am - 6:00 pm
- Feb 18 Bingo at the Roost 12:00 pm
- Feb 24 Black History Parade
- Feb 28 Christian Cooper Speaks on Activism, Mizell Center 5:30 pm

Birthday Brothers

- February 1 Langston Hughes
- February 8 Bob Cox
- February 15 Charles Huff
- February 18 Frederick Douglass
- February 19 Wes Rankins
- February 23 Tony Bradford

Honoring Our Ancestors



Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) Woodson is best known as the creator of Black History Month. In February 1926, he launched the celebration of it's predecessor "Negro History Week." The son of formerly enslaved parents, he excelled in scholarship with degrees from several university and eventually became only the second Black person to get a doctorate from Harvard University. He went on to become an historian, author, journalist, and the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. He severely criticized the passivity of the NAACP and Christian churches in his seminal work *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, published in 1933. He never married during his 75 years and little is known about his personal life. This handsome gentleman once declared that he was married to his work. HmMMM.

Brothers of the Desert is a non-profit 501-c3 organization whose mission is to build to

***nurture, support and connect Black gay men in the Coachella Valley through philanthropy, volunteerism, mentorship, education, advocacy and social networking.
Follow us on Facebook & Instagram Brothersofthedesert***

Brothers of the Desert | 333 N Sunrise Way Box 1314, Palm Springs, CA 92262

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