



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



April 2023 | Issue Twenty Six: Black Gay Men Steppin' Out and Blooming All Over the Coachella Valley
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.

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

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Leadership Message

When Brothers of the Desert began to organize, our intent was to

change the dynamics that produce isolation and inequities among the Black Gay community here in the Coachella Valley. As we realized how important it was to build, empower, and support our Black Gay community, we also realized how important it is to use our collective experiences, talents, and strengths to give back to communities we relate to and care about.



We are proud as an organization to continue to support two scholarships, Safe Schools of the Desert Cities, for eligible LGBTQ+ students and NASF (Negro Academic Scholarship Fund), a non-profit organization that has been giving scholarships to African American students in the Coachella Valley for 53 years. In this past month, we contributed to another educational opportunity with the Palm Springs Unified School District. They have a program to offer eligible African American high school students a tour of some HBCUs (Historical Black College and Universities) as part of a larger aim to support Black student success. The trip will happen this month and we are very grateful to be a sponsor.

Giving back is not solely related to fiscal support and our members have given time to volunteer efforts, advocacy work, mentoring students, and supporting our members in need. We have collective power as a group, and we are interested in using this power to help create a more just community. As quoted by Martin Luther King, " Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love."

Tim Vincent
President of the Board

APRIL ACTIVITIES



April Membership Meeting and Lunch April 8

Our monthly membership meeting will be held at the LGBT Center of the Desert (1301 N. Palm Canyon Drive) starting at 11:00 am on Saturday April 8. All members and guests are welcome to participate. At 10:30 am, prior to the Member meeting, there will be an "annual meeting of the corporation." This meeting is required by our bylaws and only voting members are able to participate. If you wish to attend either meeting virtually contact **Tim Vincent** to request the agenda and video link.

president@brothersofthedesert.org

After the annual and member meetings all are invited to socialize over lunch. Even if you don't attend the meetings (we hope you do) please join us for this no-host meal. This month we will dine at Boozehounds (2080 N Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs). RSVP to **Eric Davis** prior to April 8 at VicePresident@Brothersofthedesert.org

Check out their menu at the link below. <https://boozehoundsp.com/>



Black Artist's Exhibition and Dinner April 20

The Palm Springs Art Museum has a spectacular exhibition by contemporary young New York visual artist **Tahj Rust**, who



studied with **Kehinde Wiley** and recently had a residency with the museum. His large colorful portraits feature African American urban home life. Check it out with your BOD friends on Thursday, April 20th at 6:30 pm. Look for member **Lorenzo Taylor** in a BOD t-shirt on the front steps of the museum at 6:30 pm. We will have a brief introduction to the artist and exhibit and

view some other pieces in the museum by African and African American artists. Museum admission is free. Afterward, we will head over to nearby Juniper Table Cafe, off the lobby of the Rowan Hotel, for cocktails, pizza, charcuterie, and other light fare, and to discuss the art (or just kiki about whatever.) All are welcome to either activity and no RSVP is required.



MARCH ACTIVITIES RECAP



Bloom in the Desert Spring Fling Mar 10

Brothers of the Desert was honored with a Community Social Justice award at Bloom in the Desert Ministries Spring Fling 2023, “Bending the Arc” on March 10th. In addition to the beautiful glass plaque and a warm reception, Bloom in the Desert made a generous donation of \$250 to help continue our

work. The award was presented by advertising executive and fashionista **Aaron Walton** (far right in picture) and accepted by **Eric Davis, Will Dean, Lorenzo Taylor** and **Patrick Pierre**.



Membership Meeting and Gastropub Brunch Mar 11

The March membership meeting was a wonderful

opportunity to welcome some new members and get updates on ongoing activities. **Tim Vincent** announced that **Martin Mitchell** has joined the board and that **Tony Lanier** has been elected as Secretary. The amazing **Glenn Alexander** has stepped down from the board at the end of his term. The other officers remain the same: Tim as President, **Eric Davis** as Vice-President and **Raymond Johnson** as Treasurer. **Andre Carthen** and **Larry Reese Kidd** are members-at-large, along with Martin. Tim did a quick recap of the busy February Black History month activities, including the Bingo and drag show that raised \$4300 for BOD, participation in



Jim Moore, Dominique Cole, and Vincent Price were new to BOD and joined us at the brunch.

the Black History Parade, and brunch with our Black lesbian sister organizations. There was a report out by those who attended the Bloom in the Desert gala and award (see above.) Tim invited members to participate in the Safe Schools Award Ceremony and the NASF Scholarship Fund Banquet. Tony explained the improved membership process and encouraged participation in committees. He also clarified the membership profile available to allies. Our guest speaker was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Some of the new members were among the fifteen who enjoyed brunch at 1501 Gastropub Restaurant after the meeting.



Scholarship Awards March 25 and 25

BOD is a donor for two local scholarship awards - the Safe Schools Desert Cities program and the Negro Academic Scholarship Fund. Members of the board and the Community Outreach Committee were on-hand to congratulate the young recipients of the those awards. Vice President **Eric**

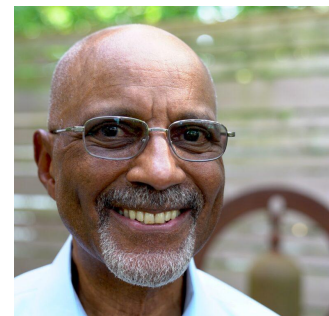
Davis said "We are honored to be apart of this youth empowering LGBTQ program our second year in awarding a deserving student." Special thanks to **Eric Johnson** (pictured at left with Tim Vincent) for leading this philanthropic effort for many years. **Tony Bradford, Thomas Sarkis, Michael Taylor** and **Tim Vincent** (pictured at right) attended the NASF Awards dinner.



FEATURE ARTICLES

OUTWORDS, MAKING BLACK STORIES PART OF THE LGBT HISTORICAL RECORD

OUTWORDS is a Los Angeles-based national non-profit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of LGBTQ+ elders across the US. To date, they have recorded nearly 300 interviews in 38 states and Washington DC. To learn more and see sample some of our stories, please visit theoutwordsarchive.org.



BOD Member **David Wilson** is one of the recorded interviews. You can see his interview at this link. [David Wilson interview](#) David is a pioneer of the Marriage Equality movement as one of the litigants in the Goodridge v. Mass. Department of Public Health case that in 2003 legalized gay marriage in the state. BOD member **Gil Gerald** has also recorded an interview about his work in Black LGBT rights. **Phill Wilson, Mandy Carter** and **Jewelle Gomez** are among the other Black elders on the site, with Black gay males significantly underrepresented in the archive.

In response, OUTWORKS Executive Director **Mason Funk** recently approached BOD to ask if any of our gay pioneers would be willing to be interviewed. The interviews are recorded in your home by a professional crew and are uploaded to the OUTWORDS online archive. According to Mason, "As a general note, we focus our efforts on interviewing "elders", and our definition of elder is generally someone at least in their mid-50s. We certainly want to

prioritize people who are considerably older than that, and who may not have much time left to share their story." If you or someone you know would like to be part of this important project please contact Tim at president@brothersofthedesert.org or Mason at mfunk@theoutwardsarchive.org. Be a part of this important effort to leave an accurate legacy to future generations. Pass the word on to others in our community who have made a difference.

PUERTO VALLARTA AND VANCOUVER PRIDE GETAWAYS

Puerto Vallarta Pride May 20-23 Vancouver Pride August 3-6, 2023

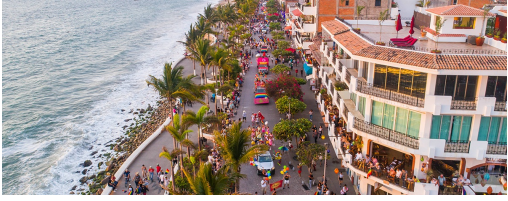
Most LGBT Pride celebrations in the U.S. are in the month of June. Palm Spring's November celebration is an exception and the latest in the country. Why not get out of the country (and the stifling heat) this summer for your next Pride celebration and visit gay-friendly Puerto Vallarta (PV) and/or Vancouver? Pride is a great time to discover all that a new city has to offer. Both are port cities with beautiful beaches, a vibrant gay community, and easy access from Palm Springs. English is widely spoken in both places. The events have very different flavors - PV celebrates Mexican culture and Vancouver (with it's large Asian population) has a decidedly more international flavor highlighting Hong Kong and Indian cultures. The average May temperature in PV is 85 degrees and the August average high in Vancouver is 72. Vancouver has non-stop flights on Delta, Westjet, and Flair and PV is only a few hours away on American, Southwest, United, or Delta. So grab your passport and get out there and explore!



Memorial Day weekend is the perfect time to explore Puerto Vallarta and beyond. B.A.G.Travel is organizing a Puerto Vallarta trip for Black gay men and their allies. The five-day event runs May 25 - 29, 2023. \$950 per person double occupancy with 4+ star boutique hotel accommodations. Airfare is not included. Highlights include a yacht cruise, day trip to Yelapa island and premiere seating at the Pride Parade festival. According to B.A.G.'s **Mike Henderson**;, "We will tour this hidden gem south of Puerto Vallarta to kayak, shop, dunk under waterfalls, splurge on coconut shrimp, snorkel in crystal-clear waters, or just lounge on what's been called the most beautiful beach in all of Mexico!" Deadline is April 20 to reserve at this link. [BAG Travel PV](#)



Vancouver has a large and diverse gay community, centered in the Davie Village neighborhood where dozens of gay bars and restaurants are located. The city which explodes with activity in the summer. BOD treasurer **Tony Lanier** and his husband **Dan Defore** live in the heart of the city and can make recommendations for your visit. There are so many events going on during Pride, a film festival, theater performances, circuit parties, and boat cruises. On Pride Saturday the city holds one of the biggest fireworks displays that you will ever see. After the hours-long parade, there is an Afroqueer dance party and a beachfront festival with booths and entertainment. The whole city gets into the celebration. Get more info at this link. [Vancouver Pride 2023](#)



'THE PROMISE' AND REPARATIONS



"Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!"

from Dr. King's final speech at
Mason Temple in Memphis
Tennessee on April 3, 1965

Fifty five years ago on April 3, 1968, the night before he was assassinated, **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** spoke about threats to his own life and his confidence that Black people would one day overcome oppression, racism, discrimination, and lack of equal opportunity. He encouraged his followers and the nation to keep moving toward that "promised land." On the next day, **James Earl Ray's** bullets took his life and led the nation into a period of violent uprisings, a leaderless movement, and strategic backpedaling in achieving the dream that he outlined for the steps of the Lincoln Memorial sixty years ago in August.

Lincoln made an unfulfilled promise of "forty acres and a mule" to freed enslaved people at the end of the Civil War. Instead, the freed slaves got Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and separate but equal rulings, while the defeated Confederates continued to gain wealth and power during Reconstruction. The freed enslaved African people were expected to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

Today there is a public debate about reparations to financially atone for the legacy of slavery and to close the racial wealth gap. Here in Palm Springs, the City is discussing reparations for descendants of the Section 14 tragedy and the State of California has a reparations task force scheduled to release its recommendations in June. And yet, polls show that roughly 75% of White Americans are opposed to reparations, while 77% of Black Americans support them. The opposition comes even in the face of clear evidence that labor was uncompensated, land was stolen, and lives were taken to benefit White Americans. Other groups (Native Americans and Japanese Americans) have received forms of reparations from the Federal Government for atrocities committed against them.

There are lots of questions about who should receive reparations, what form they take, how much they should be, and how they should be paid for. The topic will undoubtedly get a lot of attention in coming weeks. This Brookings Policy brief lays out the arguments, historical context, and makes the case for reparations.

<https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020>

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce a new couple that recently joined us. Welcome **David and Patrick DeFelice**, who have already been active with the BOD Special Events, Sponsorship and Fundraising Committee, raising needed funds from corporate donors.



1. How long have you been in Palm Springs? Where did you grow up and where did you move here from?

We first moved from Los Angeles to the Coachella Valley in 2006 because we really appreciated the unique quality of life that Palm Springs and the desert offered compared to city living.

2. What have you done in the community (or for work) prior to being involved with BOD?

David has his Master's degree in Education with a focus on Autism. He spent many years teaching Economics at Palm Springs High School. Patrick earned his MBA from University of California Berkeley and immediately after graduation started working for Intel Corp, Fortune 500 company. He is currently Chief of Staff for an Exec. VP in channel and global distribution.

3. Why is BOD important to you and how have you participated in Brothers of the Desert?

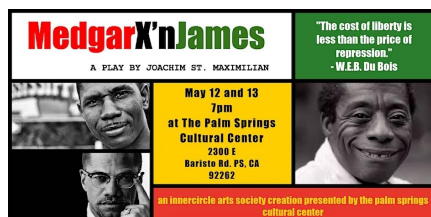
As an interracial couple, it has always been difficult for us to find an inclusive supportive community. BOD offers us both a pathway to participate in supporting our community and way to find true fellowship.

4. What have you accomplished that you are most proud of?

Having built a strong giving and loving relationship and marriage together of 24 years is by far our greatest accomplishment.

5. What haven't you done yet that you would like to do someday?

Over our years together we have been blessed to have lived out many of our dreams in education, career and travel. We now look forward to a future that offers us new adventures, experiences and an opportunity to build a strong network of friends.



New Play About Black Icons at the Camelot in May

One person shows are always a challenge, but when one actor portraying three Black icons it's near impossible. Playwright **Joachim**

Moore is taking on the challenge in his new play, *MedgarX'nJames*, The play explores the impacts and intersections of the lives and deaths of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and James Arthur Baldwin. There

will be two performances at the Palm Springs Cultural Center on May 12 and 13 and tickets are just \$35. They can be purchased at the following link. [medgarjamestickets](https://www.medgarjamestickets.com)



Dominique Wins Bar 111 Drag Competition!

On March 20th our young member **Dominique Cole** (AKA Miz Palou) took home the grand prize in Season 2 of the ten-week *Drag Star Challenge* at the One Eleven Bar in Cathedral City, taking home the crown and a big fat \$1111.00 prize. Dom was with us at the March meeting and brunch. Dom also helped us collect donations at the February fundraiser at the Roost.



Jessaye Martin, One of the "Old Gays" and Gay Men's Chorus Soloist in April

We haven't seen much of BOD member **Jessaye Martin** lately. He has been deeply involved with the "Old Gays" a performance group of four older gay men who have taken the internet by storm. Their funny, self-deprecating repartee can be found on Youtube, TikTok, and other social media. They have made frequent appearances on television and have an upcoming documentary. View some of their work at

this link. <https://www.youtube.com>

Jessaye said "I really appreciate and love what Brothers of the Desert is doing in the community and wish that I could participate more, but the Old Gays are keeping me very busy these days with an exciting new project coming out soon." He is well known locally for his standout gospel performances with local choral groups. He will be singing the lead vocal for "I Know Where I've Been" from *Hairspray* in the PS Gay Men's Chorus spring concert on April 28, 29, 30 at the Annenberg Theater. Get tickets at the link below.

<https://www.psmuseum.org/events/psgmc-notorious?date=2023-04-28>

Carl Helps With Tahquitz Creek Cleanup

BOD member **Carl Sessoms** got up early on a Saturday morning in March to pick up trash along Tahquitz Creek. It's part of a monthly effort by a community organization and the local chapter of Gay4Good to help the environment. After the clean-up the volunteers were treated to lunch and kind words of praise from City Council member **Lisa Middleton** and the new City Manager. Carl, who is a former city employee, is pictured above with Lisa and **Scott Stiles**.



Supporting our Transgender Allies

BOD was well represented at the Transgender Health and Wellness Fair "Trans Pride" on March 26. **David Maurice Jones** and **Patrick Pierre** spent the sunny Sunday afternoon staffing a table to distribute

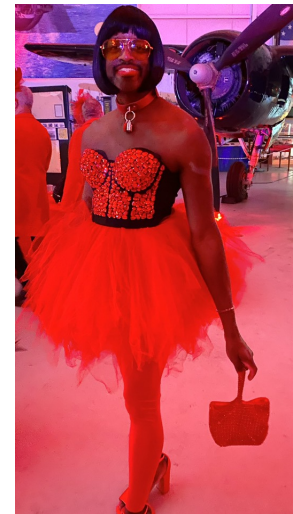


information about our organization. By the way, don't miss Patrick as his drag character "Pattycakes" headlining the 29 Palms Pride event with his unique version of Family Feud on Friday, April 7th. Tickets available at this link [eventbrite rediscover29](#)



Brothas Representin' at the Red Dress Party Fundraiser

BOD Members were well represented among the thousands of attendees at the Red Dress Dress Red Party on March 18th. The annual event was held at the Palm Springs Air Museum and featured music, dancing, aerialists, food trucks, and an incredible array of red-themed costumes. Congrats to **Charles Huff** as part of the LGBT Center team that pulled off a seamless event. The pictures feature red-hot fabulous costumes worn by Wes and David; Will and Jase; Bob, Charles and Martin; Tim and Michael, David, Lorenzo and Stuart, Ray and John, and Damon. Fortunately, drag is still legal and celebrated in California.





Brothers Stylin' at "The Chase" DAP Health fundraiser

April is the fundraising season in Palm Springs. On March 25 **Robert Banks Ramirez** hosted at table at the annual Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards. Over 1000 donors came out to the Palm Springs Convention Center for the festive event that raised over \$1.4 million for the DAP Health. Pictured below are **Stephan Scoggins** and **David Maurice Jones**, (with Robert) enjoying the al fresco meal and entertainment. **Anye Elite** and **Rob Street** (pictured on left) were fashionably attired for the cocktail hour.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Brothers Calendar

- April 7 Pattycakes "Family Feud" at Twentynine Palms Pride
- April 8 BOD Monthly membership meeting and brunch at Boozehounds
- April 20 Tahj Rust exhibit and dinner at Juniper Table Cafe
- April 28-30 Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus concert at the Annenberg Theater

Birthday Brothers

- April 3 Clifton Tatum
- April 4 Glenn Alexander
- April 9 Christian Cooper
- April 18 Tony Lanier

What's in Your Garden?
Celebrating a Black Gay Scientist Pioneer



Spring is a season of planting and nurturing! The Black Urban Gardening Society (BUGS) encourages African Americans to get involved in horticulture and farming and have declared April 15th as International Black Gardeners Day. Many of us were brought to this country to labor for free and were happy to escape back-breaking labor in the agrarian South. **George Washington Carver** (1864-1843) a Black gay ancestor, was a Tuskegee Institute scientist who revolutionized agriculture by finding novel uses for peanuts and sweet potatoes (he invented peanut butter) to replace cotton harvesting. He also shared a household and left his estate to his life partner **Austin J. Curtis Jr.**

Let's celebrate Carver and reclaim the joy of touching the earth and seeing plants blossom from seeds. Take time this April to dig into the soil, appreciate the beauty of the nature that surrounds us and savor all the things that bring us joy!

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.

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