



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



January 2023 | Issue Twenty Three: Black Gay Men Making Strides and Spreading Joy into a New Year

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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UPCOMING EVENTS

Brothers Calendar

- January 14 BOD Monthly membership meeting and brunch
- January 16 Martin Luther King Day

Birthday Brothers

- Frederick Crawford 1/7
- Brian Bauchman 1/10
- Eric Davis 1/10
- Raymond Johnson 1/19

- Gerard McCallum 1/21
- Hal Cook 1/26

January BOD Activities



Membership Meeting and Brunch Jan 14

Our first membership meeting of the year will be held at the LGBT Center of the Desert. The meeting will start at 10:00 am. All members and guests are welcome to participate. If you wish to attend virtually contact **Glenn Alexander** for the link at secretary@brothersofthedesert.org. After the meeting, we will gather for brunch and social time at Blackbook. Please let David know if you will be joining us so that we have an

accurate count. davidmaurice.jones@gmail.com

Other small group social activities

Enjoy card games, movie outings, dineout and lots of other social activities with your Brothers of the Desert friends. If you are not already on David's email announcement list or want more information on these events, send him a request to join below.

davidmaurice.jones@gmail.com



December BOD Activities Recap



Membership Meeting Dec 10

We had a great members' meeting in December! There was an opportunity to recap the success and highlights of the Wellness Summit. **Michael Taylor** and his committee provided a preview of the New Year's Eve gala. But first, Tim asked us to share

reflections of the year and what we are looking forward to in the new year. A lot of positive energy, grandchild birth announcements, and vacation plans. **Tony Lanier** reviewed changes to the bylaws that will be ratified at the annual meeting, along with a membership dues proposal. There will be an election in February of 2023 to fill three board officer vacancies. We also welcomed two new members Dwayne and Frederick who came to meet us and check us out. The meeting ended with a birthday cake celebration of **Tim Vincent's** birthday.

New Years' Eve Gala Dec 31

A Mask'd Ball was BOD's fourth annual New Year's Eve celebration and fundraiser. It was held at the Margaritaville Resort in Palm Springs and brought out 185 supporters in their finest attire and most festive spirits. It was a magical evening of food, friendship, dancing, and revelry, as we reflect on this past year and celebrated all that lies ahead in this next chapter and journey of our lives. Special thanks to **Michael Taylor**; host **Ralph Cole Jr.**; entertainer **Niki Haris**; the NYE gala planning committee, and all the hard-working volunteers who worked so hard to make this NYE gala the best ever! In line with the theme of "legacy", BOD gave Legacy Awards to three honorees **Dr. Leo Moore**, Chef **Betty Berrysmith**, and Community Activist and Leader, **Jax Kelly**.

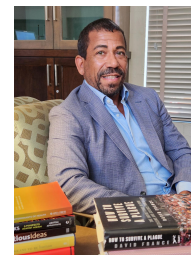




Dr. Leo Moore is the Medical Director for Clinic Services at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Dr. Moore is a thought leader who is committed to ending the HIV epidemic in the United States, with a focus on Black and Latinx communities. Dr. Moore currently serves as a member of the United States Presidential Advisory Council for HIV/AIDS.



Chef Betty Berrysmith earned her Culinary Arts degree from Los Angeles Trade Technical College and studied at Culinary Institute of America. Her company, B's Table, specializes in California Soul (CaliSoul) inspired by the rich culture of Southern cuisine. Betty served as a board member of The L-Fund of Palm Springs, a local nonprofit which provides grants for emergencies, education and the arts for lesbians. She co-chaired the 2019 Palm Springs Women's Week Food and Wine event.



David "Jax" Kelly, JD, MPH, MBA is an energetic and creative leader and advocate, with over three decades of achievements in building communities, collaborating with influencers and impacting the lives of Black, LGBT+ and HIV positive people like himself.

FEATURE ARTICLES

SO, WHY DO WE CALL EACH OTHER 'BROTHER'?



There is a very long history behind the use of the word "brother" between Black men. During the period of enslavement, African families were routinely broken apart by enslavers and their African names were taken away. The brotherhood terminology was adapted by our ancestors to reconnect the family and to defiantly assert their humanity. Many of us grew up hearing the term used in church to refer to male elders. During the Black Power movement of the sixties, there was an increased awareness of the need to acknowledge interconnectedness and kinship. Many Black people today use the terms "brother" and "sister" to show that we belong to a global community of 'Blackness' and the fact that we might actually be related to any Black person we meet. Indeed, we never quite really know if a Black stranger on the street isn't a distant relative. So we say 'brother' and 'sister' as a way of showing that we respect that there might be a family connection between us.

Hip-hop, rap musicians, and Black filmmakers amplify this use of "brother" as an Afro-centric term of endearment and kinship in music and cinema. During the eighties, "Brother" or "Brotha" or "Bruh" were separationist terms, sometimes used as a measure of whether one was "black enough." More recently the term "Bro" has been culturally-appropriated as it entered the lexicon as a universal term of endearment between any male friends regardless of race - as in the recent gay movie *Bros*.

So, how did we become "Brothers" of the Desert? As **Andre Carthen** recounts it: "As we were first forming in 2018, we were trying to come up with a name that had a ring to it that didn't sound like a cult or a gang. We also wanted a name that people would identify with without involving a color because, in the beginning, we didn't know if we were going to include our Latin brothers as well. The "Desert" was an easy choice, "Brothers" on the other

hand...was it too much like the LA organization "Better Brothers?" Although we are certainly modeled after them, would anything with "brothers" in it allows us to stand separate from them and have our own identity? So we thought many people were coming to the desert, (think of the Jews roaming the desert) many names were offered up; Sons of the Desert seemed to capture the feeling and lineages that we were searching for. Of course, I knew we needed a backup, so Brothers of the Desert was always in the back pocket. "Sons of the Desert" became our working title while the research was being done. At first search, all seemed fine. We even started to print t-shirts with the name on them. Upon deeper research and someone calling us out on the name. I don't believe we had our emails yet so it must have come to me through our Facebook page. Apparently, the *Sons of the Desert* was a 1933 film by Laurel and Hardy. There's also a band that goes by the same name, formed in 1989. I believe I received a notification from The International Laurel & Hardy Society. A copyright search of "Brothers of the Desert" only came up with a religious base, a Jewish connection. We eventually settled on a connection to brothers of love and the desert than a comedy movie by Laurel & Hardy."

FESTIVAL BRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILMS AND BLACK CELEBRITIES TO PALM SPRINGS



The 34th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival is scheduled to be held from January 5-16, 2023. It brings together industry, film aficionados from across the country, and filmmakers from over sixty countries. Our BOD President **Tim Vincent** will be one of the jury members determining film awards.

Award-winning actress **Angela Bassett** will be in town to receive the Creative Impact in Acting award at the PSIFF gala at the Convention Center on January 5th. Other Black celebrities receiving awards at the event include **Viola Davis** and **Danielle Deadwyler**. The red carpet event will be co-hosted for the first time by two African Americans *Entertainment Tonight's* anchors **Kevin Frasier** and **Nischelle Turner** (pictured above).

"Racist Trees" is a documentary that you don't want to miss. It's a film about the planting of tamarisk trees along the historically Black Lawrence Crossley neighborhood in Palm Springs a symbol of blatant segregation. The battle to uproot them gained national attention and divided the community until their removal in 2018.

Filmgoers interested in the Black experience might be particularly interested in "Roberta" a new biopic about singer **Roberta Flack** and "Butterfly in the Sky" a documentary about **Levar Burton's** work hosting PBS' *Reading Rainbow*. One of the stand-out foreign films about the Black experience is "Thalia's Journey" a film about an Afro-Belgian woman who goes back to Senegal to connect with her roots. "Chevalier" is an opulent film based on the true story of the rise and fall of an eighteenth-century Afro-French virtuoso violinist Joseph Bologne (Black Mozart). The film, which opens in theaters in April 2023, stars **Kelvin Harrison Jr.** and will be previewed on Saturday, January 14th at the Annenberg Theater, with a talk-back session with the cast and director. The 2022 blockbuster "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" will also be screened on the first night of the festival at Palm Springs High School.

All-access passes start at \$350, a six-pack is \$69.00 and individual tickets are \$13-15. Get passes, tickets, and more information here: <https://www.psfilmfest.org/>



"Racist Trees" will be shown Saturday, January 7 at the Annenberg Theater, with encore presentations at other venues on January 8th and 11th.



"Chevalier" starring Kelvin Harrison Jr. will be shown on Saturday, January 14th at the Annenberg Theater with a talk-back session with the cast and director.



When you do online shopping this year, remember that through AmazonSmile you can turn gift deliveries into donations to Brothers of the Desert. AmazonSmile calculates a small percentage of what you've spent and donates it to the non-profit you choose. It's so very easy, just follow the directions to the right, and THANK YOU for choosing **Brothers of the Desert Corporation**.

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce a new member, the fabulous **Frederick Crawford**.

1. How long have you been in Palm Springs? Where did you move from?

I have lived in the Palm Springs area for 18 years - (12 part-time and 6 full-time). I was in the U.S. Navy Search and Rescue Corps and a medical specialist. I enlisted in the military immediately after graduating high school in Georgia. I completed my undergraduate degree at Pepperdine University while transitioning out of the military and into civilian life, and subsequently earned my graduate degree from California State University, Long Beach. I

moved here with my amazing and unique husband, Gerald, whom I met at a Palm Springs Pride event approximately 19 years ago. We were legally married in 2013.

2. What have you done in the community prior to being involved with BOD?

My community service work in the Palm Springs area is very limited. I am a complete work addict and haven't been able to connect with the local PS community. I just learned about The LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert because I recently attended my first BOD meeting there. Professionally, I work for a managed healthcare corporation and I am responsible for managing provider contracting for hospitals, medical groups, and ancillary services in twenty-one states.

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

According to social psychologists, people join groups because groups satisfy one's social and psychological needs such as a sense of belongingness and comfort. I want to align my personal goals with the long-term objectives of Brothers of the Desert.

4. What is your guilty pleasure?

Consuming multiple servings of dark chocolate to reduce stressful situations.

5. What is your lifelong dream? (something on your bucket list)

Continue to work on being a more social person versus an introvert and visit the most commonly accepted seven continents in the world. Fortunately, within the past ten years, I

have already visited various countries/cities in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. The remaining continents of Antarctica and South America are on the horizon. South America is next on the bucket list.



Christmas Day Charity Breakfast at Oscar's

Several of our members helped out with K-GAY and Oscar's Palm Springs Christmas Day outreach providing breakfast and toiletries for homeless persons. **Michael Hardwick, Patrick Pierre, Yvan Jourdain,** and **Ray Ellington** with KGAY dee-jay **John Taylor** (pictured on left) were among those providing a hot meal and spreading good cheer to members of our community, Of course, some of these BOD angels stayed for the disco tea dance party with DJ Vargas later in the day.

Congratulations on Your Retirement, Martin

With great JOY we report that our long-time member **Martin Mitchell** retired from an outstanding career at the end of 2022. Martin was the Director of Human Resource Operations with the Oakland Unified School District. Other highlights of his career include being on the Board of Directors for the Northern Section of the California Association of School Business Officers, finance chair and church treasurer for City of Refuge UCC in Oakland, and Board treasurer for Our Family Coalition in San Francisco. In retirement, Martin plans to spend more time with his husband **Bob Cox**, traveling to visit family and doing genealogical research, taking some classes, and catching up on reading. He tells Drumbeat that he plans to leave things open. "I don't want to rush into anything for the first six months to a year." What a great way to approach this amazing phase of life!



Hal and David Heading Across the Pond Soon

With great SADNESS, we report that our long-time member **Hal Cook** and his husband David have decided to leave our bucolic valley to live in David's native homeland - Great Britain. They are buying a home in Manchester and will be transitioning there in early 2023. They have both been tremendous supporters of BOD through the years and Hal served on the Wellness Summit committee and has donated thousands of dollars worth of his glasswork for silent auctions. He and David recently provided host housing for members of the cast of "Choir Boy." We are so happy to have had their friendship through the years and look forward to their return visits when they need an escape from dreary ole England.



Our Civil Rights Heroes: Bayard and Pauli

Dr. King accomplished a great deal during his short lifetime, a legacy that we celebrate annually on the third Monday in January. Much of it would not have been possible without the assistance of a Black gay man named **Bayard Rustin**. Bayard was the chief brain trust behind the 1963 March on Washington and many other Civil Rights protests. Despite homophobic attacks from other movement leaders, Dr. King valued Bayard's advice and friendship. **Anna Pauline "Pauli" Murray** was an American civil rights activist who became a

lawyer, gender equality advocate, Episcopal priest, and author. She was an open lesbian who criticized the sexism of the civil rights movement and coined the term "Jane Crow." As we celebrate MLK Day, let's also remember the contributions of our often-overlooked Black LGBT ancestors who courageously and humbly helped advance racial equality while living in their truth as same-gender-loving persons in times when it was not so easy to do so.

Brothers of the Desert is a non-profit 501-c 3 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

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