



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



June 2023 | Issue Twenty Eight: Celebrating the Spirit of Juneteenth and the Black Gay "Family"
Lorenzo Taylor, Editor

Welcome to the Brothers' Drumbeat, a monthly e-news magazine 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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JUNE ACTIVITIES

Membership Meeting June 10

Our monthly membership meeting will be held at the LGBT Community Center of the Desert. We will return to our regular second Saturday morning at 11:00 am schedule. If you need the agenda or want to connect virtually to the meeting contact **Tim Vincent** at president@brothersofthedesert.org



Member and Allies Brunch/Lunch June 10

Grand Central Palm Springs
160 La Plaza, Palm Springs 92262
760-699-7185

<https://www.grandcentralpalmsprings.com/brunch-menu>

We will meet at the restaurant at 12:30 pm. Please make reservations by email to **Eric Davis** prior to June 9
Vicepresident@Brothersofthedesert.org

Sunday Supper, a Juneteenth "Family" Celebration with the Black LGBTQ Community June 18th

Many of us remember summers as a time to get together for a family reunion. Join Brothers of the Desert and members of our larger **Black LBGTQ+** community as we celebrate Juneteenth and consider its traditions and meaning. Dinner will be prepared and provided by some of our best chefs in the community. We will also be holding a contest for the best Juneteenth cake with a prize of a gourmet gift basket. Come show us your skills and let us know if you plan to join in on the contest by contacting Michael Taylor at M54Taylor@gmail.com



There will be a short program of music and spoken word offerings by **Sweet Baby J'ai, Keisha D, Richard Riley, Anye Elite, Perry Lang**. The gathering will also honor one of our recently departed heroes of the Valley **Gail Christian**. Ticket price for the event will be \$20 to cover food and room costs. They can be purchased at this link <https://www.eventbrite.com>



Los Angeles Field Trip with P.A.L.S. June 24

Our friends at PALS (Planning Ahead for LGBT Seniors) has put together a community-sponsored outing to experience the emotionally-charged "Not Another Second" Exhibition now on display at the Watermark at Westwood Village. The trip is intended to spark meaningful conversations between different generations of LGBTQ+ people. So don't miss out on what we know will be a very enjoyable way to escape the desert heat, while also sharing our diverse life experiences over lunch and creating new friendships and connections during the comfy ride from Palm Springs to Los Angeles and back. Brothers of the Desert is one of the community sponsors and there is no charge to attend but RSVP required only 50 seats available. <https://www.addevent.com/event/Fu16944719>

Juneteenth Discussion of Gospel Music June 28

Juneteenth for Everyone: A Conversation & Gospel Recital

Wednesday, June 28 at 480 South Sunrise Way, Palm Springs

Community Reception: 5:30 pm, Program and Recital: 6:00 pm

Join scholars and community leaders in a conversation examining the historic and social complexity of Juneteenth. What are the lessons the holiday imparts historically and currently? What are the implications for social democracy, community-building and cultivating a climate of hope? Palm Springs Mayor **Grace Garner** will make introductory remarks. The gospel recital will feature **Charles Huff, Hope Lang** and **Doug Need**. The event is free and open to all. Limited Space – Reservations required at link below:

www.Mizell.org

Community Partners: Brothers of the Desert, LGBT Community Center of the Desert, Stonewall Democrats of the Desert, KGAY-Gay Desert Guide



Equality Wine + Food Fest July 1

Join us for the Equality Wine Fest on Saturday, July 1 at Margaritaville Resort in Palm Springs. Enjoy over 60 wines, sample delicious bites, watch celebrity cooking demos, enjoy music, and learn from industry experts. Discover the diversity of Sonoma, Napa, and other regions, while supporting LGBTQ+, People of

Color, and Women wine producers. A portion of the proceeds goes to local charities. Get your tickets now to this one-of-a-kind event at EqualityWineFest.com. Hurry, space is limited.



BOD Vice President Eric Davis promoting the event at the monthly meeting,

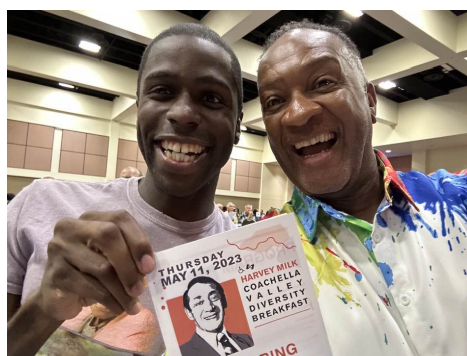
MAY ACTIVITIES RECAP



Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast May 11

BOD was well represented at a table at the community Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast. Ten BOD members were at Table 41, right in the center of the Convention Center Ballroom. Thank you **Tony Bradford, Martin Mitchell, Dominic Cole, Ron Odom, Lorenzo Taylor, Raymond Johnson, Wes Rankin and Anye Elite** for stepping out to

the event that honored the slain gay civil rights leader and celebrated the diversity of our community. Palm Springs Council Member **Ron DeHarte** paid homage to the late **Gail Christian** for her contributions to our LGBT community.



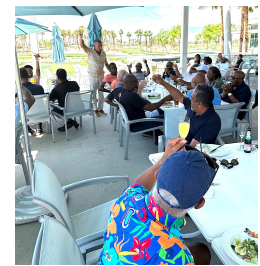


Membership Meeting May 20

About thirty people participated live and virtually in the May membership meeting. It included a presentation by **Jarvis Williams** who reported on the successful HBCU colleges tour for local high school students that he organized. He thanked BOD for it's \$2000 contribution to the program, which was the largest donor to the program. In addition to pictures from the trip, he reported that one student received their Howard University acceptance letter while they were at the campus. **Jax Kelly** from Let's Kick ASS discussed the BEAM Community grant for Black gay men discussion groups. He and BOD President **Tim Vincent** asked for input into the design of the program which will be jointly administered by the two organizations. There were announcements of several upcoming events during the months of June and July (most listed in this newsletter) and **Andre Carthen** announced a Police Town Hall Meeting with the LGBT community on June 6th at Hunter's. There were updates from the planning committees for the Wellness Summit Weekend on November 10-12 and the New Years Eve celebration and an invitation to get involved with those planning committees.

Anniversary Brunch at Escena May 20

Five years ago, some of our charter members gathered at Escena Golf Club to explore the possibility of creating a group for Black gay men in the Coachella Valley. On May 20, 2023 thirty-five men gathered again on a sunny day under the umbrellas of Escena Grille to enjoy a prix fixe brunch and have a champagne toast to celebrate the five year anniversary of the organization.



May, 2018



May, 2023

FEATURE ARTICLES

THE AMAZING GRACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH PALM SPRINGS MAYOR GRACE GARNER

Grace Elena Garner became Mayor of Palm Springs in January of 2023. She is an attorney and second-generation Palm Springs resident who was first elected in 2019 to serve a three-year term on the Palm Springs City Council, representing District 1. After being reelected to a second term last November, she became mayor . The position is mostly symbolic, though Palm Springs continues to be a trailblazer in having selected LGBT mayors and now its first Latina



mayor. Grace has been a longtime supporter of Brothers of the Desert, showing up for numerous social events. *Drumbeat* sat down with her recently for an interview:

1. What goals do you hope to accomplish during your time as Mayor?

My main focus as Mayor is to move forward our work on housing and homelessness as well as begin needed community infrastructure projects that have already been allocated funds. I want developers and residents to see Palm Springs as a place to invest in moderate priced housing too. Encouraging the building of ADUs, apartments, and other types of housing is extremely important.

2. What have you done (or expect to do) to address the needs of Black gay men in the city?

It is important to me to create honest and trusting relationships with every community in the city. I do my best to attend events held by Brothers of the Desert to learn more about how I can support Black gay men. Through that I have engaged with our police department on how to improve relationships with the Black community and have worked to diversify the residents that serve on our boards and commissions. I am always available to discuss specific and broader needs of the community.

3. What policies have you supported that will advance racial equality and social justice in the city?

I have supported improving community relationships with the police, including enhanced bias training and hiring more diverse officers. I also supported moving our code enforcement from a punitive system to one that assists residents in making changes to their homes. Diversity and equity is engrained in all the work we do as a council. When I make policy decisions I think about the impact on all communities. For instance, the need for housing at all price points and reducing fees for the use of our parks and recreation programs and community buildings. We know that the community that needs these changes tend to be lower income and often are Black or people of color. The question on my mind is always: how do we make Palm Springs a place for everyone.

4. Are there any Black gay men that you personally consider as heroes or role models?

The members of Brothers of the Desert! I am continuously in awe of all the people I meet at Brothers of the Desert events. It is an incredible community. On a more personal note, my friends and producers, directors, and playwrights, **Steven Butler** and **Courtney Baker-Oliver**. Not only do they create incredible performances that highlight the Black experience, they unconditionally love and support their cast and crew. They carry themselves and others to the highest standards and I strive to reach them. For more: RestorationStage.org

*Mayor Garner with Palm Springs' first gay African-American Mayor and BOD member **Ron Oden** at the 2023 Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast. BOD congratulates Ron on his recent appointment as a trustee on the board of College of the Desert.*



THE BLACK GAY PRIDE MOVEMENT LIVES ON



June is Pride month in most cities across the country. Time to pull out those rainbow beads and flags, and dance for joy and freedom in the streets. The Black Gay Pride movement began in the 1980s as a way to provide Black LGBT people an alternative to the largely White mainstream LGBT movement. They tend to focus less on LGBT political power and more on cultural expression, history, and connecting with the larger Black community. Today there are over 20 of these annual

events across the U.S., with the biggest ones in Atlanta and DC.

Did you know that there are two Black Gay Pride events right in own back yard? L.A. has the biggest Black Gay Pride on the West Coast and celebrates "Black Gold" with dances, dinners, and performances, culminating in a big beach party finale. It's held June 28-July 1.

<https://www.blackpridela.com/>

San Diego Black Gay Pride "Black Joy Renaissance" is July 6-7. It includes an LGBT Black San Diego pageant, a mini ball, a day party downtown, and a pool party at an estate.

<https://www.sdblackcoalition.org/blackpride2023>

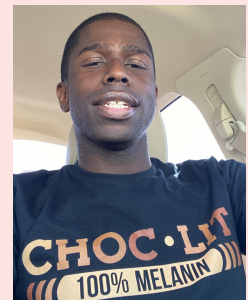
So, if you have never been to a Black Gay Pride, do yourself a favor and check one of these out.

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce a thirty-five year old who is one of our younger members, the fabulous **Dominic Cole**, aka Miz Palou.

1. How long have you been in Palm Springs? Where did you grow up and where did you move here from? I have been here three years this passed March. I was born and raised a RARE Native of the San Francisco, Bayview district.



2. What have you done in the community (or for work) prior to being involved with BOD? I work part time at Acrisure arena in greater Palm Springs, and I also run an Airbnb.

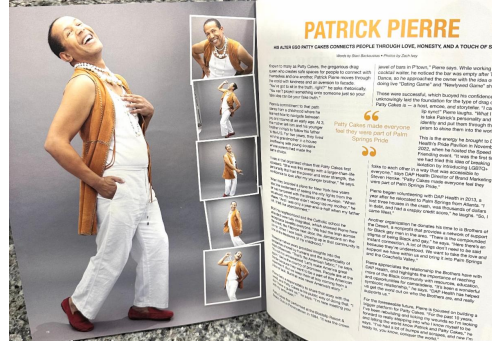
3. Why is BOD important to you and how have you participated in Brothers of the Desert? BOD is important to me because I can see more African-American brothers like me in the desert. I have participated in Brothers of the Desert by attending 1 meeting so far (more to come in the future) and putting the word out by word-of-mouth of other African-American guys who did not know about it.

4. What have you accomplished that you are most proud of? Entering a drag competition challenge for 10 weeks, pushing myself to the limit, and stepping out of my comfort zone and placing first place, when I thought I was not going to win at all but as a hard work pays off and it did. #ShesAWinnerBabby

5. What haven't you done yet that you would like to do someday? My long life dream is to hopefully go to the motherland Africa, one day

DAP Magazine features BOD Members Eric, Tim, and Patrick

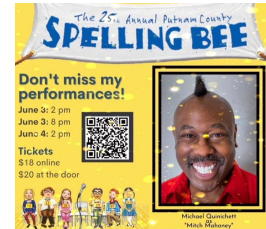
Brothers of the Desert was prominently featured in DAP Health's new magazine, with several articles about the organization and a profile of member **Patrick Pierre**. The issue has a cover photo of our favorite local chanteuse **Keisha D.** and full page pictures of our president and vice president. It can be found at DAP Health and Revival locations throughout the Valley.



Micheal Q. in Spelling Bee Musical June 3-4

Multit-talented BOD member **Michael Quinchett** will appear as Mitch Mahoney in J Stages production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." Purchase tickets at this link.

<https://search.seatyourself.biz/webstore/accounts/jstage/buy-tix>



Project Legacy Announces Grand Opening of LGBT Housing Project in Riverside on June 30

Congratulations to our good friend **Gabriel Maldonado** and TruEvolution on the grand opening of Project Legacy which is designed to address the needs of an underserved demographics through a one-of-a-kind community campus model where residential bungalows and comprehensive supportive services co-exist at the same location. Gabriel has spoken to BOD several times over the years about his

efforts to use public private partnerships to bring this kind of facility to the Inland Empire. That dream is now a reality. Well done, Brother Gabriel!



The new housing project in Riverside. 80% of those living in the Project Legacy housing program will identify as LGBTQ+, including those living with HIV, youth transitioning out of the foster care system, and senior citizens.

Local Acting Opportunities

We know that there are some very talented performers among our Brothers of the Desert group. There will be general auditions for eight Coachella Valley performing arts groups on June 23-26. Just go to the website and sign up for a spot. If you are a singer you can perform part of a song (accompanist provided) as well as perform a monologue. If you are an actor only, you can bring in two short contrasting monologues (a comedy and a drama for example).

Don't be afraid! Come do it. Directors might be looking for someone just like you. Click on the link below for more info and to sign up to audition.

<https://cvrep.org/aodt-auditions/>



UNIFIED 2023 - 2024
AUDITIONS
JUNE 23-24 @ **CVRep**
COACHELLA VALLEY REPERTORY

Go to cvrep.org/aodt-auditions to learn more and sign up



ONE AUDITION - MULTIPLE THEATRES

Coachella Valley Repertory Palm Springs Dance Project
Desert Ensemble Theatre Company DeZart Performs
Palm Canyon Theatre TigerBear Productions
The Bent Green Room Theatre Company CV



Honoring our Ancestors



E. Lynn Harris

On June 20, 1955 **Everett Lynn Harris** was born in Flint Michigan. When white and gay publishers declined to publish his steamy romance novels about Black gay life and about men on the "downlow," he took them to barber shops and beauty salons in the Black community. By the time of his death in 2009, he had authored ten consecutive books that made The New York Times Best Seller list, making him among the most successful African-American or gay authors of his era. During the nineties, Mr. Harris was a prominent spokesman for the Black gay community, appearing frequently on the Oprah and other talk shows. Learn more about him on his official website.

<https://www.randomhouse.com/features/elynnharris/about.html>



Brothers Calendar

- June 10 BOD Monthly Membership meeting 11:00 am
- June 10 Member and Allies Brunch 12:30 pm
- June 18 Juneteenth Black LGBT Sunday Supper
- June 24 Day Trip to LA with P.A.L.S.
- June 28 Discussion on Gospel Music at Mizell 5:30 pm
- July 1 GED Equality Wine+ Food Festival
- July 2 Police Town Hall with LGBT Community
- July 8 BOD Monthly Membership meeting 11:00 am

Birthday Brothers

- June 6 Robert Banks Ramirez
- June 14 Ty Green
- June 19 Christian Cooper
- June 19 Michael Quinchett
- June 21 Ted Chapin

- June 22 Johnnie McKinley
- June 22 David Brutus

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

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