



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



January 2024 | Issue Thirty Four: New Year and New Horizons for the Palm Springs Black Gay Community
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 - Watch Our New Videos

Brothers of the Desert wishes you much joy this holiday season. May your new year be filled with great health, full of lasting love, and prosperous beyond measure.

This past year has been another amazing year filled with



our annual activities like the Wellness Summit, as well as branching out to some new endeavors like the Juneteenth "Family Reunion." We are so grateful to our members for continually stepping up and making a difference! We ended this year by making a series of testimonials by our members and community allies the impact Brothers of the Desert has on the community and our lives. You can view them on our BOD Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH_6Uy_AbPY

JANUARY ACTIVITIES



Special Brunch Get-Together (Fundraiser) Jan 7

Dinner with Patsi Fundraiser Brunch from 9:30-12:30 am at Low Desert Modern Mexican in the Smoketree Shopping Center (near Sunrise and Palm Canyon.) This restaurant just opened this year and the menu includes vegan and vegetarian dishes. No need to RSVP, just show up and bring your friends. The link

below describes the fundraising aspect of the "Dinner with Patsi" program.

[Dinner with Patsi](#)

"Barbershop" Discussion Group Jan 9

The Barbershop" is a monthly "Black space for honest talk about health and wellness." Twelve men met for the November "Barbershop," including two who are new to BOD. According to Barbershop discussion group co-facilitator **Stuart Huggins**, the December meeting covered the following topics:



- Relationships with other gay men
- Interracial dating
- International black experiences, not just African American experiences, specifically differences in culture that are very different from the AA experience
- Parental relationships

The group is always open to new attendees. Check it out at the next meeting on Tuesday, January 9 at a meeting room in the Palm Springs United Methodist Church (1555 E. Alejo Road, Palm Springs). Dinner provided. No haircuts, but the Barbershop is a place for Black men to discuss whatever is on their minds and and in their hearts.

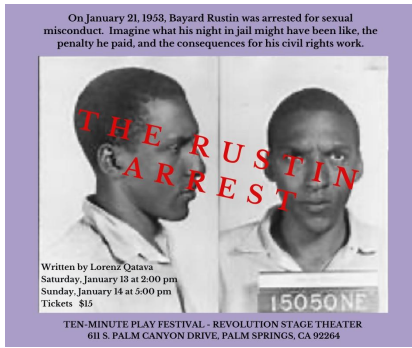


Member Meeting and Member/Allies Lunch Jan 13

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

This month's Members/Allies Luncheon will be held at Blackbook Bar following the Member meeting. Reservations by Friday, January 12 to **Eric Davis** at Vicepresident@Brothersofthedesert.org



Bayard Rustin Play on Stage Jan 13 & 14

BOD members **Keith Holmes**, **Wes Rankin**, and **David Maynard** will be performing in Lorenz Qatava's new play about the 1953 arrest of Black and gay civil right leader **Bayard Rustin** for gay sexual activities in a parked car in Pasadena. It is one of ten plays being presented MLK weekend as part of Revolution Stages Ten Minute Play Festival. The play will be performed on Sat. Jan 13 at 2:00 pm and on Sun. Jan 14 at 5:00 pm. BOD members are encouraged to attend the Sunday performance. Tickets are just \$15 and can be purchased at the link

below or at the theater box office.

<https://www.revolutionstagecompany.com>



BOD Supports Local MLK Day Rally Jan 15

As part of BOD's ongoing outreach to the larger Palm Springs Black community it is sponsoring/supporting an event for MLK Day coordinated by the Survivors of Section 14 group. The event will start with a rally at Francis Stevens Park at 11:00 am. In the spirit of Dr. King and the Civil Rights movement, there will be a symbolic march and an interfaith religious

service at 12:30 pm. BOD members are encouraged to attend and to wear BOD t-shirts so that there will be visibility for the group.

Throw Down Card and Games Party Jan 20

Start off the new year right by coming over with your game on and enjoy an afternoon of fun at the home of a BOD member. BOD member **Thomas Sarkis** has offered his Cathedral City home on January 20th from 1:00 to 3:30 pm. We had a great time last year at his home playing cards and a variety of board games. The menu would include the basics: chips, fruit, humus, veggies, waters, coffee. Feel free to bring-your-own drink if you wish to have an adult beverage. To RSVP and get the address contact Thomas at thomasarkis@gmail.com



Info A Go-Go and Monthly LGBT Social Jan 25

BOD will have a table at this annual community fair sponsored by the LGBT Community Center of the Desert. It's an opportunity to check out all the diverse groups, clubs, organizations, and activities that the Coachella Valley has to offer. Drop by the BOD table at the Margaritaville Resort from 3:00 - 6:00 pm, then join community members at the monthly Center Social from 6:00-8:00 pm.

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES RECAP



Above, BOD Board Member Martin Mitchell provided information on the NYE gala. Below, BOD President Tim Vincent was surprised by board member Chef Andre Carthan with a delicious homemade carrot cake birthday cake after the monthly meeting.



Over twenty members and allies enjoyed the monthly brunch social outside at the Playhouse Lounge.



Gala attendees brought in the New Year in style with music, food, and dancing at "Dancing Through the Decades," BOD's annual gala/fundraiser. This year had record attendance of 224.



FEATURE ARTICLES

New African American Art Exhibits in Riverside

Just an hour's drive from Palm Springs you will find the Riverside Art Museum, which is featuring "Sacred



Spaces" an amazing exhibit of **Charles Bibb's** works and his personal art collection. There are about 100 paintings and sculptures on display, including three African-inspired quilts that are part of his personal collection. The world-renown Bibbs is a Riverside native and community activist in the process of creating an African American cultural center for his community. His

works and collection cover three galleries and the colors are brilliant and evocative. The etched figures often have oversized hands and prominent African features. Many are portraits, including a series of work on homeless men (the Bagmen), a series honoring Black women, and another on civil rights movement. The exhibit runs through March 10, 2024. Another RAM gallery features the graphic work of **Rico Gaston** entitled "Icons" where he centers lines of color onto portraits of a dozen Black legends, including Obama, Audrey Lourde and Richard Pryor. Learn about Bibbs and his work at this link. <https://riversideartmuseum.org/>

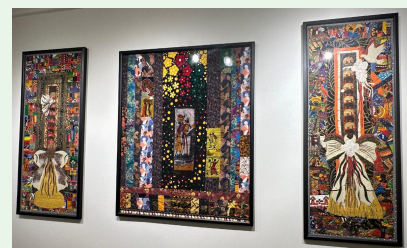
Your RAM admission includes the Cheech Museum of Chicano Art and Culture. His eclectic collection of paintings, photography and videos on all aspects of Mexican American life fills a second building.



"Marching In the Spirit" is a good example of the dozens of Biggs prints in the exhibit



Rico Gaston's massive "Icons" exhibit fills an entire gallery.



Colorful African American quilts in Mr. Bigg's collection

"TRUTH BE TOLD" FILM ON BLACK GAYS AND THE CHURCH



Among the hundreds of movies and documentaries to be screened at the ten-day Palm Springs International Film Festival, the one that you don't want to miss is "Truth Be Told" by director **Nneka Onuorah**. As the program describes it, "This deeply emotional and probing documentary looks at the troubled relationship between the Black church and its LGBTQ+ members."

It features **Billy Porter**, **Cedric the Entertainer** and the rousing lesbian **Pastor Pam**, who shows the way toward healing. This documentary screens on Tuesday, January 9 and Wednesday, January 10. More information, a trailer, and tickets are at the link <https://www.psfilmfest.org/film-festival-2024/film-finder/truth-be-told>

There will be a screening of the motion picture "Rustin" on Friday, January 5 at the Mary Pickford Theater, with a live appearance by lead actor **Colman Domingo**. Other films that may be of interest include a screening of the 1990s gay epic "Paris is Burning," "The Color Purple," and a bio-pic about a gay icon and legendary disco diva "Gloria Gaynor: I Will Survive." Actresses **Danielle Brooks**, **Taraji P. Henson**, and Director **Blitz Bazawule** will appear live at the January 4 "Color Purple" screening. BOD member **Johnnie McKinley** reminded us that "Studio One Forever" a documentary

about the legendary Los Angeles disco will also be screened on January 11, 12, and 13. See the full festival schedule at this link: <https://www.psfilmfest.org/film-festival-2024/films>

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce the incomparable **Johnnie McKinley**, whom we wish a very happy birthday this month.

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

I was born and raised in Riverside, CA. I spent most of my adult life in Los Angeles. In 2020, my spouse and I bought a place in Palm Desert, and we divide our time between LA and the desert.

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

I was born and raised in Riverside, CA. I spent most of my adult life in Los Angeles. In 2020, my spouse and I bought a place in Palm Desert, and we divide our time between LA and the desert.

3. Why is BOD important to you?

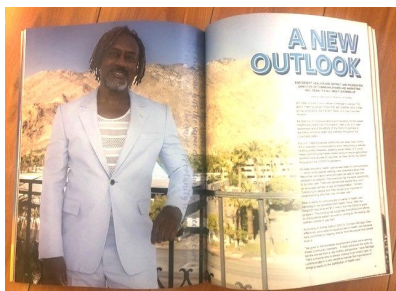
I am very pleased to have found a Black men's organization here in Coachella Valley, and I'm impressed with the organization's worthwhile goals and community outreach. As a close friend said, "Johnnie, you have found your tribe !!!"

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

Music is the love of my life. I am in the process of pursuing opportunities where I can share my musical talents.

5. What is your lifelong dream?

I would like to travel, for example, to Brazil, Africa, and Australia.



Will Dean Featured in DAP Health Magazine

Don't miss the profile of BOD member **Will Dean** in the latest edition of *Daphealth Magazine*. Writer **Daniel Hirsch** traces Will's love of journalism back to his childhood in Kentucky. The article also explores his formative work as editor of the LGBT publication *Desert Outlook* and dedicated outreach to underserved communities as Director of Communication and Marketing

for Health District. It even manages to get in a plug for the Mix Palm Springs (an itinerate diversity-focused social club) and for BOD, where Will was a founding member of the Board of Directors. The article ends with a wonderful quote that describes Will perfectly: "Attention to detail. Respecting people's needs. Showing up. All in a day's work for Will Dean."

Gay Men's Chorus Auditions Jan 2 and Jan 9

Join BOD member **Jessaye Martin**, **Raul Valenzuela** and over eighty other local gay men who form a chorus that perform concerts in Palm Springs and will travel to Minneapolis for the national Gay Chorus festival in July. If you love to sing, there will be an opportunity to audition to join the chorus this month.

Auditions for the Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus are by appointment-only on January 2 from 6-8 pm and on January 9 from 5:30-6:45 pm. To make an appointment, go to the website below or call 760-219-2077.

<https://psgmc.com/auditions/>



Patty Cakes and Patrick Say "Call Kevin"

Our resident diva, raffle promoter, and game show hostess Patty Cakes (aka BOD member **Patrick Pierre**) has made commercials for the Kevin Crockett law firm. It is a brief testimonial about the work that the firm did for them after a car accident. Apparently Patty appears in the heavily LGBT

markets and Patrick appears more broadly. You can view the commercial by Patty at the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/876269832/de136c917d>

Perry Lang Speaks on Sexuality and Religion

BOD Member **Perry Lang** was moderator of a December 15 panel discussion called "Out and Faithful: LGBT People, Religion and Spirituality" which looked at how local churches embrace the LGBT Community. The panel included **Rev. Shezarone Carter**, Pastor of Ajalon Baptist Church, Rabbi **Sally Olins**, and **Rev. Eunice Chaffant** moderator of the Center for Spiritual Living, and **James J. Mellon** of the Global Trust Center. There were about forty people in attendance at Mizell Center as part of their Third Wednesday Speaker discussion series organized by BOD member **Ector Simpson**. Perry did a wonderful job of keeping the discussion on track and providing space for the audience to share their experiences (positive and negative) with religious institutions.



Don't Miss These January Events

Special Brunch With Patsi

Sunday, Jan 7, 9:30am to 12:30pm



benefiting



Empowering Black Gay Men
and Allies in the Coachella Valley
www.brothersofthedesert.org

hosted by



1775 E Palm Canyon Dr #405
Palm Springs
760-656-0231

Tribute | March | Interfaith Service

MLK DAY

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Monday, January 15, 2024

11:00 AM UNITY RALLY

11:30 AM SYMBOLIC MARCH

12:30 PM INTERFAITH SERVICE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Brothers Calendar

- Jan 7 "Dinner with Patsi Brunch" Fundraiser at Low Desert Mexican
- Jan 9 Barbershop Discussion Group
- Jan 13 BOD Monthly Membership Meeting and Lunch
- Jan 14 "The Rustin Arrest" at Revolution Stage Play Festival
- Jan 15 Martin Luther King Day Unity Rally
- Jan 20 BOD Cards and Games
- Jan 25 Info-A-Go-Go
- Feb 24 Black History Parade (BOD will march)

Birthday Brothers

- Jan 4 Johnnie McKinley
- Jan 7 Frederick Crawford
- Jan 10 Brian Bauchman
- Jan 10 Eric Davis
- Jan 19 Raymond Johnson
- Jan 21 Gerard McCallum
- Jan 26 Hal Cook

Honoring Our Ancestors



Sylvester James Jr. (1947-1988) Perhaps the most widely recognized Black gay entertainer in the world, Sylvester was flamboyant and androgynous way before it was popular (or safe) to do so. His 1978 hit "You Make Me Feel Mighty Real" is universally recognized as one of the major hits of the disco era and we are still proclaiming it in song forty five years later. Sylvester was born in Watts and raised in a middle-class, religious family. Homophobia chased him out of Pentecostal church and he moved to San

Francisco, where he flourished as a cross-dressing performer and recording artist. Sylvester was also an activist who campaigned against the spread of HIV/AIDS and in his final years, he insisted on the inclusion of HIV positive people in the San Francisco

Gay Pride parade. He died from complications arising from the virus in 1988 and left his future royalties to AIDS charities. He blazed a trail for acceptance and creativity and his legend and his music will live on forever.

***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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