



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



October 2023 | Issue Thirty One: Hot Topics and Cool News for the Coachella Valley 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

As we move into the last quarter of 2023, we have a lot going on and a lot to be grateful for. We are holding our fifth annual Wellness Summit on November 11th, our fifth annual New Year's Eve gala and fundraiser December 31st and we are launching our newest program,



a series of in-person discussion groups on October 10th. We encourage you to help build a stronger community of Black gay men by participating in some of the smaller social events that are planned by BOD, our members, and partners.

We will also be celebrating Pride and we are excited to announce that Brothers of the Desert will be recognized with the ***Spirit of Stonewall Organization of the Year Award*** as part of the annual Greater Palm Springs Pride celebration from November 3-5, 2023.

Hope to see you all at many of the upcoming events featured below.

Tim Vincent
President, BOD Board of Directors

Brothers of the Desert is conducting our 5th annual Wellness Summit focusing on Black gay men and our allies in the Coachella Valley and beyond in-person on Saturday, November 11, 2023, at Margaritaville Resort in Palm Springs from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM. Reaching this five-year milestone is incredible and we plan to make this the best summit yet! It is important for us in this moment to reflect on the lessons we have learned from the past and use them to create a vision for a healthier future. “Honoring Our Past, Envisioning Our Future” is the theme of the summit. Join us as we offer the opportunity to learn from a diverse group of health and wellness experts. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The one-day event features innovative workshops, and inspiring keynote presentations on a range of topics, such as spirituality, relationships, mental health, financial literacy, racism, physical health, history and ancestry, building community, healthy sex, and the importance of advocacy. Lunch will be provided, space is limited, and registration is required.

A donation of \$25 is suggested and any amount given will be accepted.

The keynotes for 2023 include amfAR policy director, **Greg Millett**, Fellowship of Affirming Ministries Bishop **Yvette Flunder**, Pennsylvania State Representative **Malcolm Kenyatta**, and Emmy-nominated film director, **Nathan Hale-Williams**.

Click the link below to get tickets:

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES



Barbershop Discussion Group Oct. 10

BOD is collaborating with Let's Kick Ass Palm Springs to develop discussion groups with Black men. 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 sexual wellness topics will be equally diverse, ranging from dating and intimacy to aging with HIV. Beyond HIV, the "Barbershop" will be a Black space for honest talk about health and wellness. The meetings will be facilitated by BOD members **Stuart Huggins** and **Will Dean** and will meet monthly on the second Tuesday from 5:30-7:00 pm. The first discussion group session will be held on October 10 at the Mizell Center. Register to attend at this email address: info_barbershop@lkaps.org.

Membership Meeting Oct 14

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



Monthly Lunch Social at Cafe 111 Oct 14

Our monthly lunch after our members' meeting will be at Cafe 111 at Agua Caliente Casino Resort (Highway 111 and Date Palm Drive in Cathedral City) at 12:30 pm. The cafe has a large menu of breakfast and lunch items. We have a limited number of seats, but want to accommodate everyone. Please let **David Maurice Jones** know you are planning to join us by Friday, October 13th. [RSVP to David](#)

Pride Honors Award Ceremony Oct 16

BOD is one of just six honorees for this year's Pride celebration and the only organization to be honored recognized with the Spirit of Stonewall award. BOD member **Jace Nagaia** is also being honored with a Spirit of Pride award for his many contributions to the community. The organizers say "the Pride Honors Awards ceremony promises to be a night of inspiration and celebration, bringing together LGBTQ+ activists, allies, and supporters." We invite all members and friends to come be a part of this special recognition and celebrate with us on October 16 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at the Hilton Hotel in Palm Springs. The event will include entertainment, light snacks and drinks. Tickets are just \$25.00. Get tickets at this link: [Pride Honors Tickets](#)





Health Equity Walk Oct 29

BOD Member **Thomas Sarkis** is the team lead for participation in the 2023 DAP Health Equity Walk (formerly the AIDSWALK). BOD will have a table at the event, solicit donations online to meet a goal of \$1000 and walk together from Ruth Hardy Park. It's always a fun day to be with community, so come out and walk. Find more details and contribute to the team goal at the link below.

<https://secure.qgiv.com/event/daphew23/team/937901/>

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES RECAP



Patty Cakes' Dating Game

BOD member **Patrick Pierre** has done it again. For the second year in a row, he has hosted a successful fundraiser and fun raiser based on one of the epic television game shows. With the Dating Game he had three handsome bachelors vying for a date with another bachelor. Anye Elite and Icon City was on-hand at the Camelot Theater with pre-show Red Carpet interviews. The audience roared at both Patty Cake's ribald humor and the suggestive questions and responses. In the end Juan chose Aaron for a "not too private" brunch date at the JWB Grill and a more private spa treatment at the Margaritaville Resort. Patrick Pierre and several audience members showed up at the brunch date to make sure the couple behaved. The couple has been seen around town on subsequent dates.



Black and Blue Breakfast

BOD organized a police-community conversation that brought out about twenty-five community members to meet with Palm Springs Police Chief **Andy Mills** on Tuesday, Sept. 27. There was a wide-ranging discussion of the police community's relationship with the Black community in general and the need to no stigmatize certain north Palm Springs neighborhoods. Thanks to Blackbook for hosting this important annual conversation.



FEATURE ARTICLE

BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN BLACK STRAIGHT AND GAY MEN



It's time we had a talk with straight Black men. For many of us, our only relationships with SBMs are through our birth families. And yet we share so much in common growing up as Black boys in this country. This "Let's Talk, Bruh" podcast raises some of the topics that we need to get to in order to have better Black male friendships.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xj4P5mFGQdc>

Historically, our Black male elders have been most vocal in condemning our lifestyle, particularly religious leaders, politicians, civil rights leaders, and athletes. Many straight Black men still think of gay men as predators who only see them as potential sexual partners. Many gay Black men carry that feat of being bullied or taunted by the hyper-masculine males in school. Particularly in a place like Palm Springs, where our numbers are small, we need to find ways to unite to fight discrimination and open opportunities for each other and our youth.

Some Black straight celebrities now courageously speak out in support of LGBT equality, but most don't. Barack Obama opened up a long-neglected dialogue in the Black community through his open support of marriage equality. After years of peddling homophobic slurs, comedian D.L. Hughley now uses his platform and writing to support Black queer men and sports legend Magic Johnson publicly supports E.J., his 20-year old openly gay son. Actor Will Smith is another outspoken advocate for LGBT acceptance in support of his bi-sexual daughter, Willow. BOD has made an effort to cultivate allies among the straight Black male community in the Coachella Valley and has a few heterosexual Black male member/allies.

Drumbeat wanted to know how comfortable our members are in building meaningful friendships and talking about their lives with straight Black men. Some responses are below. Let's keep the conversation going.

Raynard Pearson: Straight Black men are.... complicated. Especially around me. Some are comfortable around me others are not.. It just depends on the man himself. I don't switch up my "Butchness" to fit in. I don't have time or the energy to do that. So most times I don't play with them.

Michael Hardwick: I am not intimidated by straight Black men. However, I don't go out of my way to strike up a conversation. I will chat if I am approached. I do have things in common with straight black men. Too many to mention.

Anye Elite: Straight black men are the catalyst of all black peoples continued existence. Put some respect on their name!

Will Dean: Straight Black men are generally more accepting of the LGBTQ+ community than when I was growing up. At one time even the thought of going to a barbershop was discomfoting. However, the majority of my recent experiences with straight Black men have been mutually respectful. I don't have any close friends who are straight Black men, just acquaintances in passing.

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce the amazing **Michael Hardwick**.



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

I live in Yucca Valley. I have been here 5 years on the 30th of September. I moved from San Diego which was my home for seven years.

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

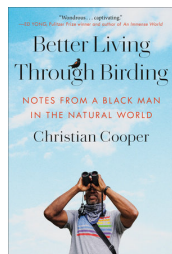
I am an IT Professional. I have worked in many IT arenas such as Education, Private and Public, Investment Banking, Healthcare and many others.

3. Why is BOD important to you?

BOD is important to me because of the camaraderie. BOD understands the many struggles of being a Black man and a Black Gay man. There is nothing like keeping it real with my brothers and hearing different perspectives of life. I attend the monthly meetings and socials and am a member of the advisory committee for the Barbershop discussion group.

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

I am a crazy for Jazz Audiophile. I am an ex-singer as well. Vacuum tube Vintage audio is my jam! I also enjoy smart home technologies from programming to installation. OK, I am a nerd.



Christian Cooper Discusses New Book Oct. 14

Avid birdwatcher and BOD member **Christian Cooper** will discuss his new biography "Better Living Through Birding" as the keynote speaker for the second Pride on the Page LGBT Author Festival at the Camelot Theater on Saturday, October 14. Christian gained international notoriety in 2020 when he was confronted by a white woman while birdwatching in Central Park. He will be interviewed at 10:00 am to open the festival, in conversation with BOD member **Lorenzo Taylor**, followed by a book signing. The conversation and writers panel events are free. However, tickets are required for a reading/conversation with author **Armistead Maupin** on Friday October 13th. More information here: www.prideonthepage.org

Will Dean's Pre-Halloween Shindig Oct 17

"Dance, drink, eat, play and test-drive your halloween costume." BOD member **Will Dean** is cohosting a Halloween-themed mixer on Tuesday October 17 from 7:00-9:00 pm at the Impala Bar (333 S. Palm Canyon). It's part of something they call "The Mix Palm Springs", which is all about encouraging and fostering diverse, inclusive, social spaces. Free admission, but he asks that you RSVP to him at Willdean66@gmail.com.





J'ai's Talent Night

Brothers, get ready for an exceptional blend of captivating melodies and uproarious laughter as California Jazz and Blues Hall of Famer **Sweet Baby J'ai** Presents A Night of Music & Comedy at the Palm Springs Cultural Center on



October 28th. The evening showcases the side-splitting comic **Gina Yashere**, renowned for her four Netflix specials and a hit comedy show, a special guest appearance by the velvety-voiced **Charles Huff** with **Lori Jenaire**, and much more! This isn't merely a show; it's an unforgettable fusion of blues, soul, jazz, and comedy! In the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, a 15% discount is extended to the Brothers of the Desert. For tickets and information for this event, visit sweetbabyjai.com. Please use the promo code "Brothers" when you make your purchase.



Bayard Rustin Biopic Opens in Theaters 11/3

At long last a major motion picture about Civil Rights leader Bayard Rustin will open in theaters nationwide in November, and stream later on Netflix. The film will star **Coleman Domingo** and feature an all-star cast of Black actors. For years the life of this openly-gay strategist has been celebrated by Black and gay

activists, but largely ignored by the straight community. This production, directed by **George C. Wolfe**, will bring his fascinating and often overlooked story to the big screen. Watch the trailer at the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IBqMhZ3NBg>

Brothers of the Desert and Let's Kick Ass Palm Springs Present:




Barbershop

A BLACK MEN'S SPACE
For Honest Talk About Sexual Wellness



Mark Your Calendars

October 10

Reserve your seat here



Brothers Calendar

- Oct 10 "Barbershop" Discussion Group for Black Gay Men 5:30-7:00 pm
- Oct 14 BOD Monthly Membership meeting LGBT Center 11:00 am
- Oct 14 BOD Monthly Lunch Social 12:30 pm
- Oct 14 Pride on the Page with Christian Cooper, Camelot Theater 10:00 am
- Oct 16 Palm Springs Pride Awards Ceremony, Palm Springs Hilton 5:30 pm
- Oct 17 Will Dean's Pre-Halloween Shindig 5:00 pm
- Oct 28 DAP Health Equity Walk, Ruth Hardy Park 9:00 am
- Oct 29 Night of Music and Comedy, Camelot Theater 7:00 pm
- Nov 3-5 Palm Springs Pride weekend
- Nov 11 Wellness Summit (no BOD monthly meeting in November.)

Birthday Brothers

- October 1 Ray Ellington
- October 18 Thomas Swope
- October 26 Eric Williams
- October 28 Raynard Pearson
- October 29 Thomas Sarkis

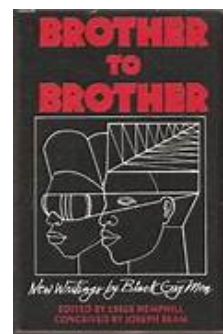
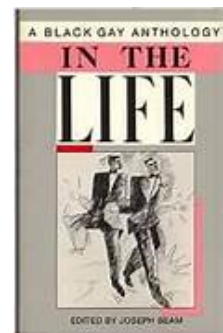
Honoring Our Ancestors



Joseph Fairchild Beam (1954-1988) was a Philadelphia-based African-American gay rights activist, writer, and poet. While working at a gay bookstore he was appalled at the absence of literature by Black gay authors. In 1996 he assembled stories, poems, and essays into his seminal work *In the Life: A Black Gay*

Anthology. It was the first collection of its type and he hoped that it would help Black homosexuals to create a community of their own. "We are the poor relations," he wrote, "the proverbial black sheep, without a history, a literature, a religion, or a community. Our already tenuous position as Black men in white America is exacerbated because we are gay." Beam died of AIDS before his second anthology *Brother to Brother* could be published, but his mother and **Essex Hemphill** completed it.

Beam wrote. "The bottom line is this: We are Black men who are proudly gay. What we offer is our lives, our love, our visions We are coming home with our heads held up high."



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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