**Palm Springs turned clocks ahead 1 hour to boost business**

Tracy Conrad

**Special to Palm Springs Desert Sun**

In 1946, the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce planned to launch "Sun Time," a move that would have locals change their clocks one hour ahead to attract tourists. However, the plan was met with resistance from local residents and a tie vote by the city council. A year later, the city council adopted the plan, and businesses were encouraged to change their clocks to Sun Time. The chamber reported that hotel and business owners were overwhelmingly in support of the decision and that the city of Palm Springs and the rest of the country would cause too much confusion. Local residents were overwhelming in favor of the proposition and they packed a public hearing. When the chairman of the general committee asked attendance of the public hearing, a majority rose to their feet. He reported the results to the council at the next meeting of the City Council and they voted 6-1 to authorize Major Clarence Sloat to proclaim that clocks in the city of Palm Springs be turned ahead one hour on Nov. 17, for a trial period of 120 days. Members of the City Council said that the only way to see if Sun Time would work was to give it an honest try. The council directed that signs be erected at the major entrances to town advising visitors to advance their clocks by one hour if they were coming into the city and move their clocks back if they were leaving. Local artist Earl Cordrey was asked to prepare the signs. The State Board of Equalization declared that taverns and cocktail lounges in Palm Springs had to operate within Pacific Standard Time. Bars in Los Angeles and surrounding territories closed at midnight and the same was expected of bars in Palm Springs. Once Sun Time was implemented, bars in Palm Springs could operate until 1 a.m., but they could not reopen before 9 a.m.

The Desert School District adopted Sun Time only after Miss Katherine Finley announced that the board was going to take a poll of parents. Postcards were sent home. Parents were overwhelmingly in support of the decision. All schools in the district adopted Sun Time. Immediately the Chamber of Commerce received congratulatory messages from all over the country. Charles Horowitz, the vice president of the American Hotel Association, said, "Why should the mountains, no matter how beautiful, be permitted to deny you an extra hour of sunshine when a quick twist of the wrist as applied to the clock will do the trick. I am glowing over the fact that five weeks from today I will be soaking up that extra hour of sunshine down in Palm Springs." Merchants and residents were just as exuberant. And the little village of Palm Springs changed to Sun Time and was a small island in the ocean of Pacific Standard Time. But, it wasn’t so easy to swim against the tide. Visitors missed the signs at the entrance to town. Bus, rail and airline officials, as well as the telephone company, kept two sets of clocks, one on Sun Time and one on Pacific Standard Time. Tourists missed their buses or trains. Even local residents were confused. Barbara and Bill Foster were married on Nov. 26, 1946, and her parents were late to the ceremony having forgotten to change their clocks to Sun Time! By January 1947, after only 51 days in the trial of Sun Time, the Chamber of Commerce asked the City Council to rescind the Sun Time proclamation stating that hotel and business owners, residents and tourists were experiencing mass confusion negotiating the time difference.

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“Twilight descends on Palm Canyon Drive as the sun slips behind Mount San Jacinto.”

Phenomenon.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PALM SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Tourists enjoyed warm winters poolside thanks to “Sun Time.”

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