

# The struggle with daylight saving time

## Palm Springs tried using 'Sun Time' for 51 days in 1947

**Renee Brown**  
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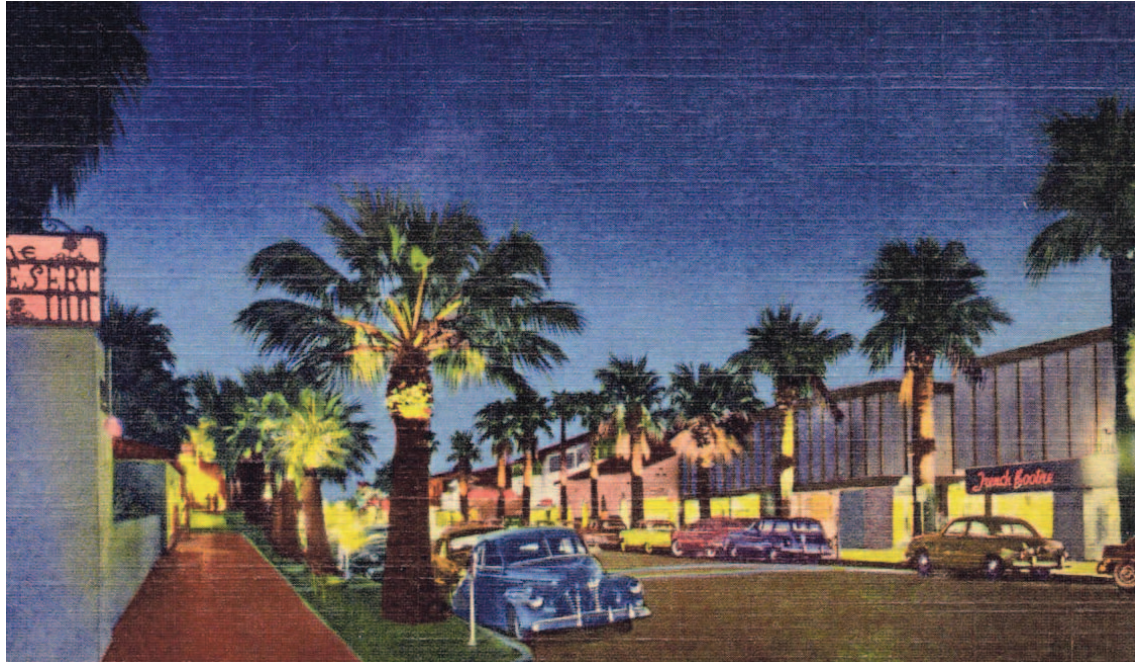
In Palm Springs after Daylight Saving Time ends the first week of November, the sun begins to slip behind Mt. San Jacinto earlier and earlier each day. Winter visitors from all over the county come to enjoy the desert's sunshine and warm winter weather. Many tourists head out for the day in shorts after enjoying breakfast, a dip in a heated pool and then proceed to beautiful Palm Canyon Drive to do a little shopping.

About 3 p.m., the sun disappears behind the mountain and the temperature dips dramatically and tourists scurry back to their hotels to change into warmer clothing before heading out for dinner. Historically, local business owners have bemoaned this tourist pattern believing that time for shopping is shortened when the sun sets early.

In 1946, the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce believed they had a solution to this tourist pattern. They approached the Palm Springs City Council with an idea for what they called "Sun Time." The idea consisted of having Palm Springs move forward by one hour from Pacific Standard Time.

The chamber reported that hotel and business owners were overwhelmingly in favor of the time change. Opposition was voiced by the bus line, freight lines, and similar transportation entities stating that this conflict in time between the city of Palm Springs and the rest of the world would cause too much confusion.

Local residents were overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition and they packed a public hearing. When the chairman of the general committee asked attendees of the public hearing if they were in favor of the measure, a ma-



**Palm Canyon Drive at night, c. 1946** Stephen Willard-photographer. PALM SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY/SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

jority rose to their feet. He reported the results to the councilmen at the next meeting of the City Council and they voted six to one to authorize Mayor Clarence Hyde to proclaim that clocks in the city of Palm Springs be turned ahead one hour on November 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 decided that four signs would be erected on Hwy 111, two at each end of 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, who

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**La Plaza (140 S. Palm Canyon Drive), c. 1946.** PALM SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**Jackie Cooper, Bonita Granville at El Mirador c. 1946.** PALM SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY/SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

## Sun Time

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set the regulations for alcohol beverage control in 1946, 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.

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. Before schools in the Desert School District adopted Sun Time, Katherine Finchy announced that the board was going to take a poll of parents in the district and postcards were sent to the students' homes. After hearing that parents were in support of the measure the local school district adopted Sun Time.

Immediately the Chamber of Commerce received congratulatory messages from all over the country. Charles Horrworth, 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 gloating over the fact that five weeks from today I will be soaking up that extra hour of sunshine there in Palm Springs."

In January 1947, after only 51 days into the trial, the Chamber of Commerce once again approached the Council asking them to rescind the proclamation stating that hotel and business owners, residents and tourists were experiencing mass confusion because of the time difference.