

September 9, 2018

Ms. Julie Makinen
Executive Editor
The Desert Sun
P.O. Box 2734
Palm Springs, CA 92263

Dear Ms. Makinen:

Congratulations on being named executive editor of The Desert Sun and becoming a full-time resident of the Coachella Valley. I enjoyed Saturday's comprehensive article outlining your impressive career in journalism. Even more, I appreciated your vision of "expanding the Sun's commitment to," among other items, "community engagement."

It is the very lack of the Sun's community engagement with respect to local theater that prompted me to write a letter to Ms. Sarah Day Owen nearly two months ago. Ms. Owen did not respond.

As I read the conclusion of Saturday's article, I was heartened to learn that you "will be doing a lot of listening," that your "door is open to anybody," and that you "look forward ... to meeting neighbors." While I may not be Barry Manilow, I am one of your neighbors.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you take a moment to review the attached correspondence and favorably consider initiating coverage of local theater and the production companies that seek to culturally enrich our community.

As a neighbor, may I have the courtesy of your response?

Sincerely,

Frank P. Berman
President
Desert Theatre League

July 25, 2018

Ms. Sarah Day Owen
Interim Executive Editor
The Desert Sun
P.O. Box 2734
Palm Springs, CA 92263

Dear Ms. Owen:

I have been a Desert resident for 12 years. Prior to that, I was a Desert visitor for more than 20 years. I have been a patron of the arts even longer.

When visiting the Desert years ago, I always searched for local theatrical entertainment in order to plan my evenings. My tool of choice for such searches was always The Desert Sun. Unfortunately, my tool of choice has fled the scene and is nowhere to be found. To put it mildly, I am appalled.

Is not part of the mission of any local newspaper to report events of local interest to its readership? Is not support and advancement of Community Theater within the purview of that mission? After all, The Desert Sun's website states that you are committed to "serving the public interest," and that you will "provide community leadership."

Regrettably, I sense a disconnect between your website's stated declarations and reality. Accordingly, I must ask yet another question. How is a visitor to the Desert, or even a resident for that matter, to learn of local theatrical productions? Oh, I almost forgot. The Desert Sun sells advertisements. Some of our members are even your clients.

Could the Desert Sun's desire to generate revenue be a motive for your apathy when it comes to promoting local theater? Is it too much to ask for a "Spotlight on Community Theater" column in Friday's *Weekend* section? Without local entertainment information, the *Weekend* section is incomplete and your stated pledge of "serving the public interest" is without merit.

After all, The Desert Sun devotes many pages to TV calendars, TV plot summaries, TV reviews, and photos of TV stars on a weekly basis. Similarly, you publish a plethora of information for movies. Yet, in today's digital world and as recently acknowledged by your decision to discontinue game stories of Southern California sports teams, such information is readily available to anyone with an Internet connection. Not so for local theater!

The Desert Theatre League, of which I am President, endeavors to convey information of local theatrical events via a calendar on our website at deserttheatreleague.org. Though we count more than 30 theater and dance companies among our members, we are not widely known or recognized beyond the local theatrical community. Nevertheless, our member companies benefit the local communities, both economically and culturally.

As a long-time subscriber to The Desert Sun and on behalf of the local theatrical community which the Desert Theatre League represents, I would appreciate the courtesy of a response to the questions I have posed. Also, I would appreciate your acquainting me with The Desert Sun's editorial posture with respect to Community Theater.

Even more, I would welcome fulfillment of your stated website objective of "serving the public interest" by publicizing and promoting local theater.

Sincerely,

Frank P. Berman
President
Desert Theatre League