

Opinion

Community Conversations Editor: James Folmer • (760) 778-4625 • james.folmer@thedesertsun.com

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.”

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

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OUR VOICE

Our wish for 2011: More jobs

After a month of columns from local leaders sharing what they are optimistic about in 2011, The Desert Sun turned to even more of them with an invitation to finish this sentence: “2011 will be successful if ...”

As is often the case, we were impressed with the responses. We received more than 50 answers – too much to fit all of them on these pages. (All the responses can be found at mydesert.com/opinion.)

Many answers call for an end to partisan bickering and for leaders to work together for the common good. Leave your egos at the door, etc. Those are predictable, but all are heartfelt.

Some got carried away. Desert



Hot Springs' verbose city manager, Rick Daniels, offered 28 endings to the sentence.

Local tea party leader Christina

Michas gave nearly 400 words of passionate rhetoric.

Coachella date farmer Albert Keck invokes Ralph Waldo

Emerson's definition of success: “To laugh much; to win respect of intelligent persons and the affections of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends.” (Read the complete quote on Page B10.)

The Desert Sun would finish the sentence like this: “... the economy generates more jobs.” Many responses shared that sentiment.

Nothing could solve this valley's problems more effectively than putting more people to work. Promoting job creation will be a major emphasis for The Desert Sun throughout the year.

How would you finish the sentence? Send your response via our website, mydesert.com/letters

Leaders complete this sentence: ‘2011 will be successful if ...’



“... as a region we can embrace the value of small business and entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic and social prosperity while recognizing a well defined and limited role for government.”

WES AHLGREN

Coachella Valley Economic Partnership chief operating officer



“... state government doesn't blow it!”

MARION ASHLEY

Riverside County 5th District supervisor



“... a bipartisan/multipartisan spirit of cooperation among all decision makers at all levels commits to work together to solve our economic problems.”

KARL BAKER JR.

Desert Hot Springs City Council member

“... that the drive for improvement – for making tomorrow better, giving the kids a leg up, learning a new skill, forming a more perfect union – is a



common aspiration. That the status quo is never enough. Achieving perfection, while an important ambition, is just not in the cards. Our effort however — makes the world better. Let's be more vigorous, inventive, industrious, and caring in the coming year — it could be a blockbuster.”

FRED BELL

Noble Renewables chief operating officer

“... the council will work together for the good of Palm Desert and put personal agendas and different personalities aside and do what we

Desert Hot Springs city manager shares several of his thoughts

“... Ziggy Marley, Rodney Yee and Dr. Steve Gundry do a conga line at a music festival in Desert Hot Springs.

“... there is no more costly flooding in Desert Hot Springs.

“... dummies quit driving around ‘road closed’ signs jeopardizing their lives and their rescuers.



“... violent crime rates drop throughout the valley.

“... street gangs become out of style as a way of life for the 13- to 18-year-olds.

“... the Roy's Homeless Resource Center and Martha's Village and Kitchen sit vacant because of lack of clients.

“... sobriety becomes cool.”

RICK DANIELS

Desert Hot Springs city manager

were elected to do. We have always had the reputation of a well-run city and I want it to stay that way.”



JEAN BENSON

Palm Desert mayor

“... I work as hard on myself as I do on my job; give some of what I have to another who is without; because behavior never lies.”



GREG BERKEMER

California Desert Association of Realtors executive vice president

“... we put an end to partisan politics — we need to ALL work together for co-equal goals.”

JEFF BOWMAN

Living Waters Spa owner and Mission Springs Water District board of directors vice president



“... we can materially reduce unemployment in the U.S. and are able to challenge China.”



MICHAEL BRAUN

Wessman Development senior vice president, Palm Springs

“... we all shop locally, hire locally, eat locally and cities contract with local merchants and contractors for needed products and services.”



BARBARA DEBOOM

Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce president and CEO

“... we all focus our attention in the upcoming year to working in a non-partisan manner toward the greater good. Surrounding ourselves with people that share this principle and working collectively to make a difference would certainly be considered a success for 2011!”



FRANZ DE KLOTZ

Coachella Valley Water District director

“... the government reduces its spending, health care reform is repealed, the unemployment rate decreases, and the private sector is able to take back our nation so America is once again ‘the land of opportunity.’”



LINDA EVANS

La Quinta City Council member

Read more answers inside and all the responses at mydesert.com/opinion

INSIDE OPINION



Palm Springs police chief

Readers debate whether David Dominguez should be fired after apology for expletive. **B11**



Letter of the week

Writer says her kids spent the holidays on Facebook. **B11**



Monday Newsmaker

Jim Foote, manager of the Santa Rosa-San Jacinto National Monument

Leaders complete this sentence: '2011 will be successful if ...'



"... if Americans place God first in their lives instead of pushing Him away."

CINDY FINERTY
Palm Desert City Council member

"... we see our unemployment lines reduced, our economy recovering, with hospitality, ag and manufacturing rebounding."



TOM FREEMAN
commissioner with the Office of Foreign Trade, part of the Riverside County Economic Development Agency

"... the state of California balances its budget without taking money from local governments who have already made tough financial decisions to stabilize their finances."



DAVID GARCIA
Coachella city manager

"... all of us who live in this magnificent country recognize and act as Americans first and put everything else second. Our political beliefs, sexual orientation, ancestry, color and all of our other 'differences' should be considered less important as united and equally we all strive to become better Americans and thus help create an even better country."



ALDEN GODFREY
College of the Desert journalism instructor

"... we can continue the great working relationship we have on our City Council, complete the year with our projected budget surplus and continue to provide quality services to our residents so they can have the quality of life they have come to expect in Indian Wells."



DOUG HANSON
Indian Wells mayor pro tem

"... we can finally convince the elected officials in this valley that the mountains, hillsides and ridge lines are simply too valuable a resource to allow them to be developed."



JONO HILDNER
chairman of Save Our Mountains, Palm Springs

"... America wakes up to the reality of what is happening to this nation. Political correctness must stop and truth must take its place. We the people must do our constitutional duty to govern our elected representatives and become that informed electorate we are to be."



CRYSTAL CHATHAM THE DESERT SUN

Christina Michas of Palm Desert talks to a radio program during a protest in July 2009 outside the office of Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack in Palm Springs.

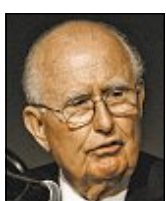
CHRISTINA MICHAS
founder/leader of the Palm Springs Patriots Coalition Desert Valley Tea Party



"... calm the need to be right and forgo the need to prove others wrong."

SCOTT HINES
Rancho Mirage City Council member

"... as a nation we reduce the screeching rhetoric and personal attacks over political matters, and get serious about solving social and economic problems that can only be resolved by compromise. That means pain for all interests concerned and if we are unwilling to accept that pain, there will be no success."



DANA HOBART
Rancho Mirage mayor pro tem



"... we can bring the unemployment rate down."

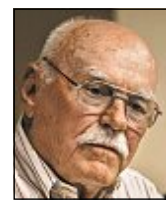
TERRY HENDERSON
La Quinta City Council member

"... we all have hope, and that hope becomes reality. The promise of jobs and an increase in business for small and large companies alike, an increase in consumer confidence, and the desire that people will then be able to stay in their homes and provide their families with everything they need. Happy New Year!"



ELAINE HOLMES
Indio City Council member

"... if the American people, Congress and the president confront the harsh reality that the national debt demands immediate sacrifice and action by one and all."



DARYL JAMES JR.
Navy Reserve veteran

"... if we all agree to put partisanship aside and truly focus on finding solutions that acknowledge all parties' concerns and interests."



FRED JANDT
dean of Cal State San Bernardino's Palm Desert campus



"... we begin to see a turnaround in the economy, which will create jobs and in turn will help local businesses."

RICHARD KITE
Rancho Mirage mayor

"... 1) Americans can unlearn the culture war confirmation bias that has increasingly prevented us from even being able to talk to one another to get needful things done, so that if 2), having relearned how to find common ground as to those things where we can agree, we can also learn how to disagree agreeably, so that 3) we can work to rebuild our battered economy."



PAUL S. MARCHAND
Cathedral City City Council member

"... we all realize in government and the private sector that customer service is the most valuable product we provide. Happy New Year to all."



SCOTT MATAS
Desert Hot Springs City Council member

"... my loved ones are healthy, happy and help make the world a better place and that there will be less homeless and hungry in December than there is in January."



RON MEEPOS
Rancho Mirage City Council member

"... Republicans and Democrats finally learn to reach across the aisle and work together to find common sense solutions to the problems facing the Coachella Valley, the state of California and our nation."



GLENN MILLER
Indio mayor pro tem

"... we emulate our grandmothers whenever making decisions regarding the welfare of others."



MATT MONICA
Desert Sands Unified School District trustee



"... The economy has recovered and people are finding jobs."

BRIAN NESTANDE
Palm Desert Republican representing the Assembly District

"... we can free more people from their fossil fuel-burning cars to experience the ease of traveling on a smooth-riding, environmentally friendly, hydrogen- or CNG-fueled SunLine bus."



C. MIKEL OGLESBY
general manager, SunLine Transit Agency

"... we remain optimistic, sustain the valley's prominence in tourism, attract business and industry to provide jobs and continue to revive the valley's economy."



JERRY PATTON
president of College of the Desert

"... there are 100 new businesses and 1,000 new jobs in Cathedral City."



GREG PETTIS
Cathedral City City Council member

"... we remember to practice the 'golden rule' with all of our personal and business dealings throughout the year 2011 will be the best ever! And remember to thank God for all of our blessings!"



WILLIAM POWERS
Indian Wells City Council member

"... when the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Rancho Mirage reopens."



PATRICK M. PRATT
city manager, Rancho Mirage

"... our local, state and federal governments collectively make the right decisions,



without fear of scrutiny, regarding necessary and efficient spending cuts."

JAN PYE
Desert Hot Springs City Council member

"... people tackle the obesity crisis in this country by eating more fresh fruits and vegetables."



JOHN POWELL JR.
president and CEO of Peter Rabbit Farms

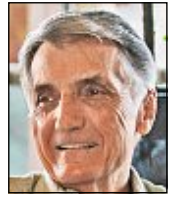
"... each and every person would show their appreciation for what they have rather than focusing on what they lack."



MARY T. ROCHE
Indian Wells City Council member

Leaders complete this sentence: '2011 will be successful if ...'

"... the people we just elected to all levels of government remember the election is over, they put aside the toxic partisan campaign rhetoric and they understand their highest priority is to work together to solve our pressing national, state, and local problems. The highest priority domestic problem is jobs, and government at all levels must be creative with the private sector to create new jobs."



the toxic partisan campaign rhetoric and they understand their highest priority is to work together to solve our pressing national, state, and local problems. The highest priority domestic problem is jobs, and government at all levels must be creative with the private sector to create new jobs."

LARRY SPICER
Indian Wells City Council member

"... Succinct
United
Collaborative
Collective
Economic
Socially responsible
Strategies
Focus
Unprecedented
Leadership



LUPE RAMOS WATSON
mayor of Indio

"Together we will achieve mutual goals!"

"... the Palm Desert retail sales continue to be as strong as they have been during the recent holiday season."



ROBERT SPIEGEL
Palm Desert mayor pro tem

"... We improve the business environment in the Coachella Valley by diversifying our economy, creating business opportunities and more good jobs for folks within our region."



MARK WEBER
manager of the Coachella Valley Enterprise Zone

"... all the politicians and activists would leave their egos and personal agendas at home and come together with good common sense and work for the good of our country and all of its people."



JIM STUART
founding chairman of the Palm Springs Lincoln Club

"...the city of Palm Desert continues its tradition of providing exemplary services and programs, while being mindful of current economic conditions."



JOHN WOHLMUTH
Palm Desert city manager

"... we work shoulder to shoulder toward a common goal. Keep our belts tight and appropriate the sacrifices that the public is making to see us through these hard times."



SAM TORRES
Indio City Council member

"... the Indio City Council builds a cohesive team and works diligently, with compromise, to solve the leftover issues and moves Indio back in the right direction."



MICHAEL WILSON
Indio City Council member

"... we all stand strong in our faith and commit our lives to something bigger than ourselves."



CHUCK VASQUEZ
Cathedral City City Council member

"... we concentrate our resources on ROAs — result-oriented activities."



NANCY WRIGHT
Mission Springs Water District director

Finally, Albert Keck, owner of Hadley Date Farms in Coachella, quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson for his response:



"... The definition of success — To laugh much; to win respect of intelligent persons and the affections of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give

one's self; to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm, and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived — this is to have succeeded."



Ralph Waldo Emerson

VALLEY VOICE

Football game delay because of snow is an insult to the sport

Last Sunday the NFL did the unthinkable. They delayed a football game on account of the weather. Because of the blizzard, they postponed the Vikings-Eagles game in Philadelphia until Tuesday night. A debate ensued. Here's my take. We begin with potentially any winter football game.



bruce bonafede

Two months ago, the field was green. Tonight it's white. Figures are moving on the field, but they're hard to see. Is there something wrong with the television? No, they just don't have a TV camera yet that can see through falling snow.

This isn't a game, it's football

It's 20 degrees on the field, but the wind makes it feel like 5. Between plays, or on the sidelines, you jump in place and swing your arms to keep from freezing up, but it doesn't help much. You can keep your muscles loose, but your joints hurt. Every inch of your skin hurts. You can't breathe through your nose. You blink constantly but you can't see through your eyes they're so dry. Still, they don't call the game. They can't call the game. This is football.

They don't play golf in weather like this. Golfers can't play in the snow. Baseball players can't even play in the rain — they might slip and fall down. Or they might not see a line drive hit in their direction. Of course, nobody worries about a tight end on a crossing pattern who can't see the linebacker about to drive him into the rock-hard ground.

Coachella Valley residents don't get it

It's funny watching football with somebody who grew up in the warm Coachella Valley.

"How can they play in that weather?" she asked. "It's snowing. Nobody can see anything."
"Nope," I said.
"Then why do they play?"
Why indeed? We always played football back East when I was a kid. Never baseball. And we played year round; tackle football without pads, no matter what the weather was. I was always limping home with some injury, and at thirteen spent three

weeks in bed with torn ligaments. My high school's field was next to a lake which made it a popular stopping place for Canada geese flying south in the fall. I'd come home from practice and games with my jersey and pants smeared all over with smelly green goose stuff. My mom would hold her nose and quickly take my uniform to the washing machine. Then she'd shake her head at her crazy son.

We love football because it's hard

Why do so many Americans love football against all logic and common sense? I think it's because we know it's hard, and we like that. In fact, the harder it is the more we like it. Not hard as in difficult — golf is difficult — I mean hard as in requiring a completely crazy level of physical and mental toughness.

Baseball was America's sport, until America realized the world was a tough place, and baseball didn't reflect what we saw around us. The Chinese in Korea didn't care if the weather was bad, and neither did the Viet Cong and neither do the Taliban.

Football is like the world is. I'm too old to play football now. But I get to watch Hester return kicks and Polamalu come flying out of nowhere and Freeney spin through a blocker and Brady tall in the pocket, staring down field, ignoring the snow and the chaos of bodies falling all around him. And none of them give a flip about how cold they are. In fact, come on world, make it worse. Make it harder. We play football, and you can't make us stop no matter what you throw at us.

Bruce Bonafede is a writer and consultant in Palm Desert. He can be reached at bruce@bonafedecomunications.com.

The new 'True Grit' just can't ride with the original

On April 7, 1970, John Wayne received the Academy Award for best actor after wowing people in the movie "True Grit." For Wayne, it was really a lifetime achievement recognition, as he beat out the likes of Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole, Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight, all considered "serious" actors, unlike Wayne, who specialized in personality-driven performances.



bill o'reilly

Wayne's portrayal of hard-drinking U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn was a classic. The actor totally blew away his co-stars Kim Darby and Glen Campbell (yes, that Glen Campbell). In one scene, the Duke is riding the range between Darby and Campbell, and they look like Lilliputians to Wayne's Gulliver. Whatever else you might think about John Wayne, he dominated the screen whenever he appeared on it.

Forty years later, there is a remake of "True Grit," starring Jeff Bridges as Cogburn. Bridges is a serious actor and plays the part well. But he can't touch Wayne. By the way, another serious actor, Matt Damon, plays the Campbell part, and Bridges blows him away. Some advice for the younger leading man: Stay away from the old pros; they know how to move the audience in ways you don't.

The "True Grit" comparison also reflects the times the films were released. Back in 1969, the United States was in turmoil over Vietnam and the rise of the Woodstock generation. Revered traditions were breaking down fast, confusing and angering many Americans. John Wayne was a throwback to better times, a man respected by traditional folks. And it was Wayne they were watching on the screen, not Rooster Cogburn. It was Wayne who protected the young girl out to avenge her father, and it was Wayne

who imposed justice on the brutal bad guys. The strong-minded actor brought audiences comfort amid chaos both on the screen and in real life.

Today we are a country once again experiencing turbulent times. But Jeff Bridges offers no antidote to that; in fact, his portrayal disturbs rather than comforts. Bridges plays the flawed marshal well and may very well be nominated as Wayne was, but he revels in Cogburn's neurosis, whereas the Duke used it as a prop. John Wayne was accessible to the audience as basically a good guy. Jeff Bridges puts the troubled character he plays right in your face.

And that's the difference in America over these 40 years. We once were a country with boundaries and rules of behavior. Now many of those boundaries are gone. We expect explicit violence and personal angst. Many of us relish seeing that. In 1969, when "True Grit" played in the theaters, Americans were looking for heroes like John Wayne to show them nobility. Today there are far fewer heroes, and we don't expect much nobility, even in the movies.

I liked both "True Grits." But for me, it is Wayne who still deserves most of the cheers. The man was larger than life, a symbol of the insurmountable American spirit. Boy, do we need that today.

Bill O'Reilly is a political commentator and host of "The O'Reilly Factor" on Fox News. Reach him at oreilly@foxnews.com



Back soon
Executive Editor Rick Green's Sunday column will return.