

Cathedral City's Greg Pettis Target of Desert Sun Witchhunt

Summary: The Desert Sun produces yet another Witchhunt birdcage liner to fill space in the newspaper's Sunday edition. Cathedral City councilmember Greg Pettis is their target (again) and the story is long, boring, inaccurate and filled with innuendo designed to convince the reader actual wrongdoing has occurred. The paper fails in their objective to convince and all that's left is the remains of a dead tree ready for recycling.

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Palm Springs, California. The Witchhunt reporters over at *The Desert Sun* newspaper last took serious aim at Cathedral City councilmember Greg Pettis in 2008. In that year he ran for the open Assembly District seat in the Democratic Primary against Manuel Perez. The newspaper's staff showed themselves supportive of Perez. Their reporter working alongside the Pettis campaign was caught passing along confidential information to a source in the Perez campaign. The paper's political reporter was caught assisting an individual in the production of a nasty anti-Pettis website. Nothing complimentary of Pettis appeared in the newspaper's reports during that period.

Today (Sunday, April 28th) the paper's Witchhunt reporters have again turned their sights on councilmember Pettis. In a "[Cathedral City councilman spent \\$92K on city-backed credit card](#)" story the reporter throws in a huge package of unrelated bits of information that fail to connect and only serve to give the appearance of a credible article - it's not! It claims to be about credit card travel and lodging costs related to his unpaid service as an intra-governmental associations representative of the community. The newspaper reporter appears to believe Pettis should bear all expenses related to his unpaid public services, in addition to those as a councilmember, representing his city and the valley. Definitely another creative "public servant" definition.

Councilman Greg Pettis belongs to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), League of California Cities (LOCC), National League of Cities (NLC), and the Riverside County Transportation Commission. His memberships require his unpaid attendance at monthly or annual meetings to which he incurs travel-related expenses on behalf of the public. Pettis is a Transportation Nut - one who seeks to improve all forms of transportation and travel modes for the benefit of valley residents! Whether it be Sunline Transit, passenger train access, bus routes, bicycle trails, pedestrian walkways or vehicle roads-streets-highways, Pettis seeks to ensure a valley voice is present in all official governmental groups working with these issues. One of his greatest joys in serving as a Cathedral City councilmember is the platform and opportunity it provides him to speak, lobby, smooze and wheedle transportation funds and support on behalf of Coachella Valley. His unpaid services participating in numerous monthly or annual meetings of SCAG, LOCC, NLC and Riverside County Transportation Commission require travel related expenses to locations outside the Coachella Valley. It is these expenses, allegedly totaling over \$92,000 over a five year period that *The Desert Sun* uses as justification for their current Witchhunt article aimed at Pettis.

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In producing the story the reporter relied on a number of issues that are clearly unrelated to five years of expenses (paid by official credit card) starting in 2008. The reporter mentions his 2008 Assembly race and how many votes his opponent won by; his 2010 personal bankruptcy filing (complete with photocopies of filing documents); his 2013 Facebook and Twitter accounts; a bounced company check for a small amount that was repaid; his upper cove residency, mortgage and home value; and map of hotel stay locations. None of these gossip-like tidbits have relevancy to Pettis' governmental-related travel expenses. They were clearly included for the purpose of defaming Pettis while making the story appear to be credible. While the reporter may have succeeded in obscuring anything of factual value it also fails to definitively state that Councilmember Pettis has done anything wrong. And, since the vast amount of personal time he has and continues to devote to transportation-related issues on behalf of the valley remains uncompensated, Pettis should be congratulated and thanks offered for his generosity and dedication to community service.

The Desert Sun is not a big city operation. It's true they recently won a number of small newspaper awards, but the reality is they were competing in a forum similar to primary school grade level. The best and brightest of their reporters leave for better opportunities at the first chance and many of the leftovers lack talent. This latest attempt to smear councilmember Pettis comes as no great surprise. It's been written by a relative newcomer with little personal knowledge of the valley, its communities and the many sins of her employer. She may not have known that obtaining quotes from former councilmember England and mayor DeRosa lack value for both are political opponents of Pettis who assail him at every opportunity.

According to a careful reading of the article, the reporter admits that "Cathedral City is reimbursed for the bulk of the councilman's travel" and City Manager Andy Hall is quoted as saying "I don't believe Councilman Pettis has misused his credit card." These two factual statements should have guided the reporter and served as warning. It's hard to write a convincing Witchhunt story when the truth calls into question the entire premise on which so much is based.

In summary, The Desert Sun newspaper's "Cathedral City councilman spent \$92K on city-backed credit card" story is a poorly researched, inaccurate, mean-spirited, almost hateful space filler. The newspaper, its editors and the reporter should all be ashamed - for this offering is more than objectionable - it's actually deceitful!

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Desert Political Opinion at www.DesertObserver.com
April 28, 2013

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