



The cast of "You Can Never Be Too Careful," an upcoming skit by Theatre West, features, from back to front, Larry Kenney, Roger Broersma, Ruthann Peirona, Connie Johnson, Neal Johnson and Lydia Harry; Pricilla Ebright, Linda Roach and Kathy-Lee Christensen; and Linda Hicks and Donna Meyer. [Submitted photo]
IF YOU GO

Theatre West highlights meeting with skit

Theatre West will present "You Can Never Be Too Careful," a short skit by R.E. Homer and directed by Ruthann Peirona, at its monthly meeting in February.

The meeting starts at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 20 in the Stardust Theater, 14400 W. R.H. Johnson Blvd.

In the skit, Bugsy will take possession of the speakeasy in 48 hours unless Jolene & Jigger come up with the money to pay off their debt. Their friends have joined them in making a plan.

"Come and find out what

happens," the theater states in a news release. "We can only say that it involves, guns, canes, ropes, knives and poison."

Members and invited guests are welcome to attend.

Theatre West is an organization for Sun City West residents interested in any or all phases of theatre and participation in play or musical productions to provide acting, training and experience, and to present theatrical productions for the community. Theatre West became a chartered club

What: Theatre West monthly meeting/skit

When: 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 20

Where: Stardust Theater, 14400 W. R.H. Johnson Blvd.

in 1980 and has grown to a membership of more than 400 members.

The theater's next stage production will be a female version of "The Odd Couple," which opens March 16.

VF saw Theatre West

Theater club sets stage for change at Stardust

By Tina Gamez
DAILY NEWS-SUN

For 26 years, Theatre West Club volunteers have been moving sets from the set-building room out a door, down two steps, out onto the parking lot to the back of the Stardust Theatre building and onto the stage through double doors.

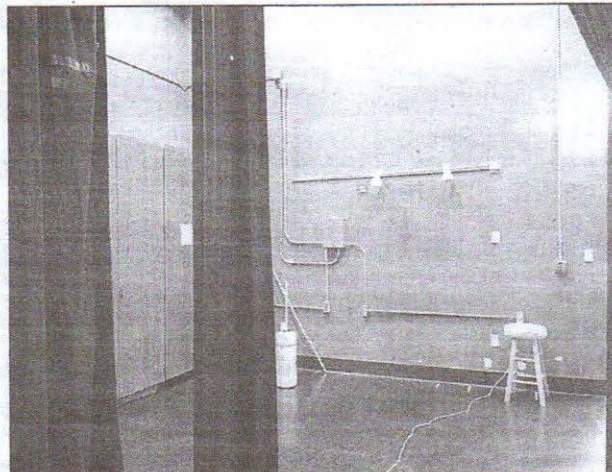
That's about to change.

Theatre West requested the Recreation Centers of Sun City West Properties Committee allow them to install large double doors on the wall between the stage and set room.

"We would like to run sets back and forth during the performance," said Al Lombardos, president of Theatre West, and the club has the \$20,000 in funds to pay for the project.

Behind the stage at the Stardust Theatre is a large room where rehearsals take place and on the left back wall of the stage is a double door that leads to the outside of the building, while to the right of the stage is the set-building room with no access between the two.

"Normally what we have to do, is take the stuff out the shop door, walk all the way around to the back of the building and get everything in through that way," said Lombardos.



A backstage view of the Stardust Theatre shows the wall that will be opened up and where large double doors will be installed so Theatre West Club members can easily move sets in and out of the set-building room on the other side. [Tina Gamez/Daily News-Sun]

"The real need here is that when we're bringing large set pieces," he said, "particularly for the musical, where we might change sets seven or eight times through the course of the musical."

During "Grease," workers had a golf car with several set pieces such as tables and a wall, all were jammed in the back area of the stage, "which meant the actors had to sort of squeeze through to get on stage."

Lombardos noted it's a safety issue when a show is going on because there's little room to maneuver.

"When we had the golf cart, it was all we could do not to get our toes run over

each time they drove the golf cart out."

The new double doors will allow the club to leave them open and "we can set those pieces in the shop," instead of crowding the back of the stage area.

Plus, it would be much easier to bring the sets in.

"In a musical you might use the same set three scenes later," Lombardos said.

He added that it takes 12 to 14 people to move the sets around the outside of the building before the play or musical and during the show it's four to six.

"It's a very precise kind of thing, you don't want to keep the audience waiting any lon-

ger than you have to. You try to make a set change in less than a minute and a half and sometimes as little as 30 to 40 seconds."

Lombardos said: "It's fun to watch if you're a director," but it does get tricky, "and if you don't get something done, or if you do it wrong, it really affects the actors."

"It's really critical that that kind of thing get done," he added.

RCSCW Director Jack Steiner sees it as a safety issue and said the work on the double doors should be done immediately.

Project Manager Larry Griffith said he doesn't see a problem with Maricopa County approving it quickly.

Theatre West has been around for 35 years, while the Stardust Theatre at the Kuentz Recreation Center has been there for 26 years.

The club is hoping the double doors project gets completed before the Stardust opens for Rec Centers-sponsored shows starting in mid-July.

Otherwise, they'll have to wait another year.

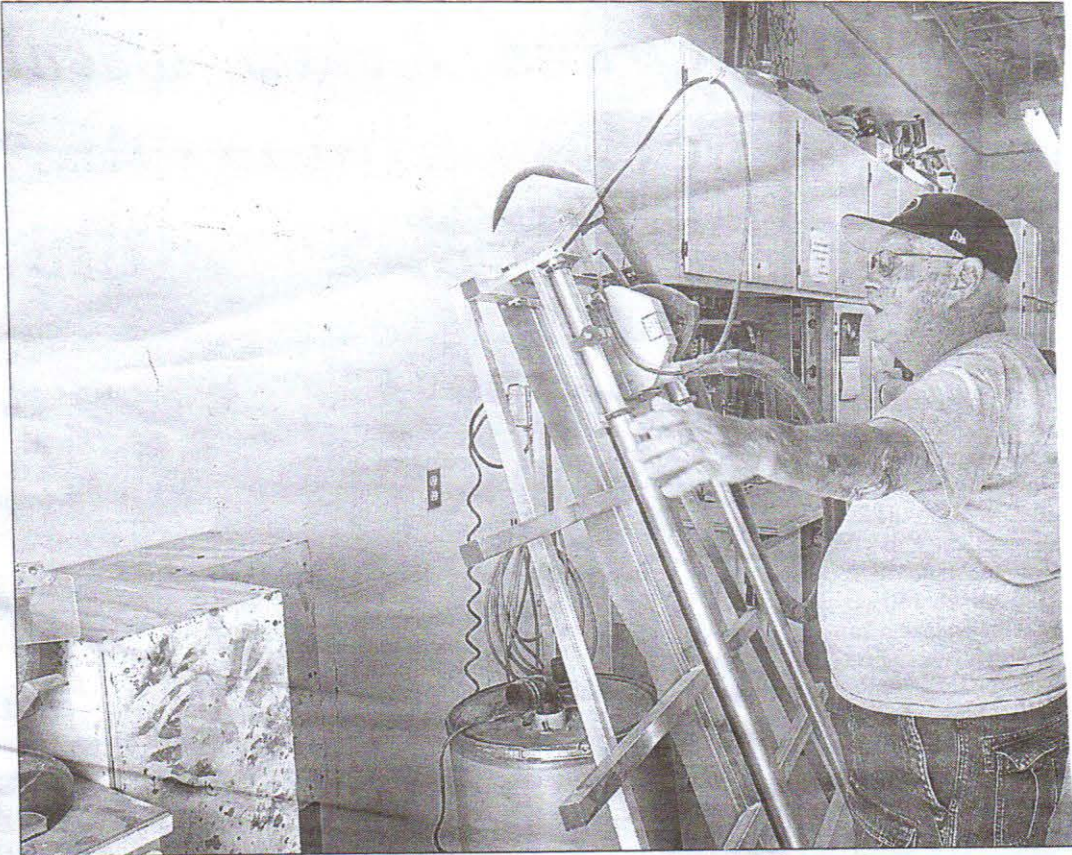
The RCSCW Governing Board approved the project last week.

The Stardust Theatre is located at 12702 Stardust Blvd.

UF SCW Theatre West Daily News-Sun June 4, 2015

IMPROVEMENT

Abe Lincoln, set builder for the Theatre West Club in Sun City West, shows where the double doors going out into the Stardust Theatre stage will be located in the set-building room. (Tina Gamez/Daily News-Sun)



Designer to leave Sun Cities

Says harassment forcing him out

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — Demetrius says he can't take the threats any more.

So he's moving away.

Demetrius, a retired professional costume designer, and his business partner, Christopher Brown, said they have been harassed by amateur entertainers over the fund-raising productions they've staged for organizations in the Sun Cities.

The two have donated their talents to raise thousands of dollars for various charities during the past four years, including the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Brown said.

The harassment has led to anonymous phone calls and unsigned, typewritten letters, they said.

After an article appeared April 16 in Northwest Community about their plight, the threats worsened, they said.

"We've had people call to say they are going to burn down our house," said Demetrius, who shares a house with Brown.

"I can't take it anymore," Demetrius, 70, said.

A personal tragedy — the death of his only child in January — also is part of the reason Demetrius is leaving. His 35-year-old son died unexpectedly. Demetrius said he plans to spend more time with his three young grandchildren.

Al Spanjer, president of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West board, said Demetrius will be missed.

"It's unconscionable that people would treat another person this way," Spanjer said of the threats against Demetrius and Brown. "They represent a minute minority of Sun City West."



■ DEMETRIUS

Brown, a retired professional director, dancer and choreographer, will stay in Sun City West, though.

"They won't drive me out," Brown, 68, said. "God gave me this talent, and I'm using it to help the community."

Demetrius is moving to Arkansas in July.

He said Arkansas is centrally located, allowing him to travel to neighboring states, where he will donate his costume design expertise.

"I have friends in the costume design business all over," Demetrius said. "I also plan to help young costume designers get started. It's very exciting to do that."

Brown said some amateur dancers and actors in Sun City and Sun City West resent professionals like him and Demetrius upstaging them.

The harassment began shortly after they moved to Sun City West four years ago, Brown said. It increased in February shortly after the production of the "Tale of Twin Cities Encore," which Brown directed and choreographed. That event raised money for the Community Funds of Sun City and Sun City West.

Demetrius is delaying his departure from Sun City West for a couple of months because he will accompany the Christopher Girls

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DESIGNER

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on a cruise ship this summer en route to Bermuda. Brown started the Christopher Girls.

Even after Demetrius has left Sun City West, he said, he will continue to design costumes for the Christopher Girls.

Brown and Demetrius, who have been business partners for 31

years, donate about \$4,000 a year of their own money for costumes for various fund-raising shows.

For example, Brown wrote the variety show "Tale of Twin Cities," based on the life story of Sun Cities founder Del Webb. The show raised money for charity.

Theatre West provides for Stardust Theater expansion

By Katy O'Grady
Volunteer Correspondent

Thanks to a \$168,000 pledge from Theatre West, all Sun City West residents will soon be able to enjoy the results of an expanded Stardust Theater at Kuentz Recreation Center.

The thespian group already has made a \$50,000 down-payment to repay the Recreation Centers of Sun City West for the construction project. The Governing Board last year approved the agreement in which Theatre West will pay for the entire cost, and the improvements will become the property of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West.

The construction plans are awaiting approval from Maricopa County Planning and Zoning. Construction will begin soon after the plans are approved.

The two-story expansion will provide a permanent space on the lower level for the 27-member Designing Divas of Theatre West, who make all the costumes for the group's performances. In addition, an expanded wardrobe storage area will be built on the second story.

"Our current wardrobe space is bursting at the seams," said club President Roseann Wagner.

"We have about 300 hats and 100 wigs, and then there are all the costumes. We also have a lot of World War II stuff that we are saving," said Publicity Chairman Chuck Imsande. Ms. Wagner said the club welcomes donations of period clothing, particularly fedoras and other era-defining hats.



Submitted to the Independent/Katy O'Grady

Taking part in groundbreaking ceremonies for the expansion of the Stardust Theatre at Kuentz Recreation Center on June 15 are, from left, Past Governing Board Director Cher Petersen; Jerry Hallstrom, the set construction and shop foreman; Theatre West Past President Mary Bunting; President Roseann Wagner; and Governing Board Director Carl Elitz.

The Divas currently must share their sewing space with other clubs, so the ladies have to trek their sewing machines and other equipment up and down stairs on a regular basis. With the expansion, the Divas will have a permanent space for their eight sewing machines, three sergers, and various ironing boards and other equipment.

The club has come a long way since Theatre West was first formed in 1979 with just about 20 members, said club historian Lydia Boyer.

"When they started, they just

kind of read from plays for seven or eight years until Mike and Jeanne Tarr joined, and then they started doing plays," Ms. Boyer said.

There are now 409 members who put on a variety of performances for the community, as well as smaller acts at their regular meetings.

Anyone wishing to join Theatre West or the Designing Divas, as well as anyone with period hats and clothes in their closets that they'd like to donate for costumes, may call Roseann Wagner at 546-0186.

Tarrs to step down as Sun City West entertainment directors

Couple schedule grand finales for Variety and Theatre West productions

By Jack Hawn

After 18 years of entertaining Sun City West residents with major Sundome productions and Theatre West stage shows, Mike and Jeanne Tarr are mapping plans for a final fling in 2006.

Mike Tarr, who has been plagued with major health problems for some time, said Monday his coming Theatre West comedy, "Anything Goes" (March 21 to April 8) will be his last as director.

The 69-year-old former dentist—who made his directorial debut in Sun City West in 1988 with "The Odd Couple"—said he will have directed 34 shows and has appeared on stage in about half of them.

Director Jeanne Tarr, meanwhile, has scheduled her final Variety Show for Oct. 29 to Nov. 18 of next year after her successful "Winners Circle" sold

out for 15 performances at the Stardust Theatre last month when the Sundome became unavailable.

"It's been a good run," Mike said. "We've had wonderful support from the community. We want everyone to know how much we appreciate it."

Mike said he and his wife will depart on a cruise Dec. 23, returning Jan. 2.

"When we get back," he continued, "I will get full bore into 'Anything Goes.' We have another cruise planned after the show. I have no reservations after that."

However, he will assist Jeanne as usual in preparing for the annual Variety Show, which again will be staged at the Stardust.

"After that, he'll be finished," Jeanne said. "I'll feel sad. I can't do it without Mike. He does all the technical stuff and the music



"It's been a good run" for SCW entertainment icons Mike and Jeanne Tarr.

and teaches the chorus. It's been a wonderful, wonderful 18 years, but it's an impossible thing for us to continue."

For the Variety Show grand finale, Jeanne has come up with another creative theme—"Our Favorite Thing."

"We'll pull out some of the biggest hits over the last 18 years," she said, "and we'll bring a few people back that we didn't have in the last show."

Hailed by many as a more "watchable" show in the intimate 298-seat Stardust—unlike past

productions in the cavernous Sundome—"The Winners Circle," nonetheless, proved exhausting for entertainers.

Again Jeanne has scheduled 15 performances, but next year, they will stretch over three weekends, providing more off days for the cast and crew.

"And we will never do two in one day," she said. "It will be much easier. Tickets will go on sale Sept. 5."

Several weeks ago, the nine-member Variety Show committee met to discuss the 2006 production.

"None of us wanted to go back to the Sundome," Jeanne continued. "Number one, Mike

and Jerry Hallstrom (committee chairman) have health problems. The stress and uncertainty about the Sundome (were major factors)."

The committee finally decided to bring down the final curtain in 2006, ending an era during which not only have thousands of residents been entertained but the Sun Health organization has benefited by contributions exceeding \$1 million.

"For the first time, however, proceeds from next year's show will not go to Sun Health," Jeanne said. "Instead, the money will go to the Stardust Theatre building fund."

Jeanne will continue her active roles with Theatre West, handling tickets, mainly, and taking charge of the theatre's use.

And, who knows? She may even appear on stage now and then, strutting her stuff in a role she just won't be able to turn down.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

March 30, 2005

RCSCW board OKs loan

Theater wants sewing room

By Cecilia Chan
Independent Newspapers

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West Governing Board last week approved loaning up to \$150,000 to charter club Theatre West to build a sewing room.

The 1,000-square-foot room is planned for the Stardust Theatre, located at the Kuentz Recreation Center.

"At this point when we are financially stressed and there's an increase of (rec) fees we pay by 15 percent, this falls into the wouldn't it be nice category," said Director Hank Fields, the sole dissenter. "We need to ensure we have enough money to continue operating what we have today. I urge a no vote on this."

He said he would vote

"wholeheartedly" for the proposal if the rec center was financially better off.

Director Ronnie Hoover said a 15 percent increase was not set in stone. She said people should not jump the gun until the proposed budget is presented in a couple of weeks.

Director Randy Fuller, who chairs the Properties Committee, called the agreement a win-win situation for both. He said the club will pay up front \$50,000 and then \$20,000 each year for five years.

Bids so far for the project were \$6,215 for architectural, \$4,200 for civil engineering if needed and \$79,859.00 for construction.

"The total cost will be paid

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Loan

Continued From Page 1

by the club and it will increase the value of the association's assets," Mr. Fuller said.

Internal auditor Roger Lansberry said it would be cash loan, not part of the 2005-06 budget.

"They will be repaying, so it's not a budget item or a detriment," Mr. Lansberry said. "It's a real advantage to you because they are paying the bill."

Director Carolyn Jennings called the club an asset to the community and a must-do.

"If the group is willing to pay for it we should help them do it," she said.

Mr. Lansberry said RCSCW would not collect interest, 2.5 percent a year, and would be responsible for the maintenance of the addition.

"If we get \$50,000 up front we won't lose a heck of a lot of interest," Mr. Fuller said.

Frank Meyerholtz questioned the potential future cost.

"I've lived here for 4.5 years," he said. "It's nice to see improvements in the facilities. I some-

times wonder if we might not have enough staff to maintain the facilities we have."

General Manager Mike Whiting said the bill for air conditioning the addition is estimated at roughly \$60 a month and did not expect much impact on staff.

*Post your comments on this issue at newsblog.info/0302
News editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 972-6101 or cchan@newszap.com.*

THE WESTER Thursday, January 27, 2005

Theatre West members OK Stardust expansion, ticket price boost

**\$151,000 two-story
addition must be
approved by Rec Board**

By Jack Hawn

Members of the Sun City West Recreation Centers chartered club Theatre West last week approved spending up to \$151,000 to expand the Stardust Theater at the Kuentz Recreation Center.

Home for numerous theatrical productions since the Stardust was built in 1989, normally four shows a season, the 296-seat building will—if approved by the Recreation Centers Governing Board—get a two-story addition at the rear and provide a sewing room for the "Designing Divas" and added storage space for costumes and props.

Club Pres. Mary Bunting re-

ported that members also approved an increase in ticket prices, from \$5 per show to \$7, to create a building fund, effective for the Oct. 24 production of "The Odd Couple." Tickets will go on sale April 25. Plans for funding the project call for a \$50,000 down payment, the balance to be paid in five years.

Gen. Mgr. Mike Whiting said Theatre West had requested the addition a month ago and it was "favorably" received since the club said it would foot the bill.

"It's a little like the baseball project," Whiting said, referring to the softball clubhouse that was built at the Kuentz center last year. "They paid for that."

Whiting couldn't estimate when construction might begin, noting that a "full planning process" in-

cludes Board and county approval, architectural design, bidding and so on.

"These things take time," he said. Speaking at a recent Ex-Press Club luncheon, Variety Show director and former Theatre West Club president Jeanne Tarr was excited about the building project, which, at that time, had not been formally approved by the

membership. "We have earned an excellent reputation," she said, "producing four shows a season, usually two comedies, a revue and a major musical."

"On the opening day of ticket sales, it is not unusual to sell 2,500 tickets, with 300 people

See **Theatre West gives
okay, Page 2**

SCW Variety Show director Jeanne Tarr, with Ex-Press Club Pres. Jack Hawn, talks about proposed addition to Stardust Theater during a recent club luncheon at Briarwood Country Club

Photo, Roy White



waiting before the 8:30 selling time. "We have added a fully equipped workshop, state of the art microphones and sound equipment, stage curtains and the latest lighting effects, all on a \$5 ticket price...I think we can be proud of all these improvements we've made to Recreation Center property."

"Mike (Tarr) and I have been very active in Theatre West activities since the beginning, both

serving as two-time presidents and in many capacities on the board. Mike is technical director of the theatre and directs two shows each year. I am ticket chairman and vice president of the Stardust Council and we both have performed in many shows. Theater is our life!"

Theatre West production of Neil Simon classic ends run Sunday

By Jack Hawn

Walter Matthau and Art Carney wowed 'em on Broadway, Matthau teamed with Jack Lemmon in the hilarious movie version and Jack Klugman and Tony Randall kept TV viewers laughing for many seasons.

In Sun City West, it's Mike Tarr and Carlos Wilson in the spotlight, sharing the apartment in the Neil Simon classic, "The Odd Couple," which ends its highly successful Theatre West run Sunday at the Stardust Theatre.

Doubling as director, Tarr falls a bit short of the grungy slob portrayed so memorably by Matthau, but sloppy enough in his Mets sweatshirt and baseball cap as he sprawls on the sofa, dumps cigarette ashes on the

floor and reaches under his armpits for sandwiches carried in from the kitchen to serve to his poker buddies.

Playing sportswriter Oscar Madison, Tarr, nonetheless, hits a home run with his rapid-fire one-liners that keep conflict edgy and the play moving swiftly.

As prissy hypochondriac Felix Unger—whose housekeeping fussiness drives Oscar to the point of physical violence—Wilson is perfectly cast. He delivers an outstanding performance that brings to mind more of Randall's version of Felix than Lemmon's.

The curtain opens with Oscar hosting his weekly poker cronies—Speed, played by Jay Horne, Murray (Ron Bunte), Roy (Len Atwill) and Vinnie (David

Parrent), all giving polished performances.

A wall picture is askew, items strewn about, the apartment showing no signs of having been tidied up for guests. But, for Oscar, who lives alone, having shed his wife—or vice versa—and struggling to pay alimony, it's home sweet home.

When Felix fails to arrive for the game and his wife phones to tell Oscar they also have split up, the men begin to worry, believing Felix could—gulp!—be so distraught he might attempt suicide.

Soon, however, Felix shows and quickly demonstrates how weird a guy he really is—obsessive neatness, fastidious and emotional behavior, penchant for gourmet cooking, imaginary

kinks in his neck (which Oscar massages) and hilarious moose calls to clear his sinuses of circulating dust.

Feeling sorry for his longtime buddy who suddenly has become homeless, Oscar takes him in, but, predictably, their relationship sours almost immediately. We find the poker table set with crystal glasses containing starched red napkins and when the gang arrives, Felix—a white apron neatly hanging from his belt—takes drink orders.

Eventually, even the players have had enough, and the game is ruined.

"Kindly remove the spaghetti from my poker table," Oscar bellows at one point, producing a laugh from Felix.

"What the hell's so funny?" he asks.

"It's not spaghetti," Felix tells him, "it's linguini."

Picking up the plate, Oscar hurls it into the kitchen out of the audience's view, but we know it's a sticky mess, the linguini plastered against a wall.

"Now," Oscar says, his red face twisted in anger, "it's garbage."

In a later scene, when the "Odd Couple" seem close to blows, Oscar tells Felix that everything he does irritates him, including the note he was left on his pillow:

"Out of comflakes—FU."

As the audience bursts with laughter amid a few gasps of embarrassment, Oscar quickly defines "FU"—"Felix Unger."

While playwright Neil Simon masterfully crafted the lines, he didn't provide the precision timing required from actors to get the most out of his marvelous script. Tarr and Wilson took on difficult assignments, learned their lines well and delivered them with the timing of professionals.

Adding a huge dose of spice to the comedy are Janet Hochstatter and Bobbie Sherrie, who portray the lovely Pigeon sisters—attractive single women who share an upstairs apartment.

Despite Felix's reluctance to meet the sisters, Oscar invites the women to dinner in their apartment, which ultimately proves disastrous. Not only is Felix's London broil burned to a crisp because of Oscar's and the couple's tardiness, but Felix soon has the women in tears when he pulls out a string of photos and rambles on in self-pity about his failed marriage and his kids.

Entering from the kitchen with drinks in hand and a lascivious smile, Oscar is astounded to find the tearful trio huddled on the sofa, in no mood for merriment.

Furious at Felix for spoiling what he anticipated would be an

Odd Couple, from Page 1
exciting evening, Oscar evicts him.

The Pigeon sisters, gushing with sympathy for Felix, take him under their wings and provide their apartment as a place to stay. We don't know if it's temporary, neither does Oscar and, apparently, neither did Neil Simon when he plotted the comedy. But it hardly matters. Oscar is happy and Felix seems pleased with the arrangement as well.

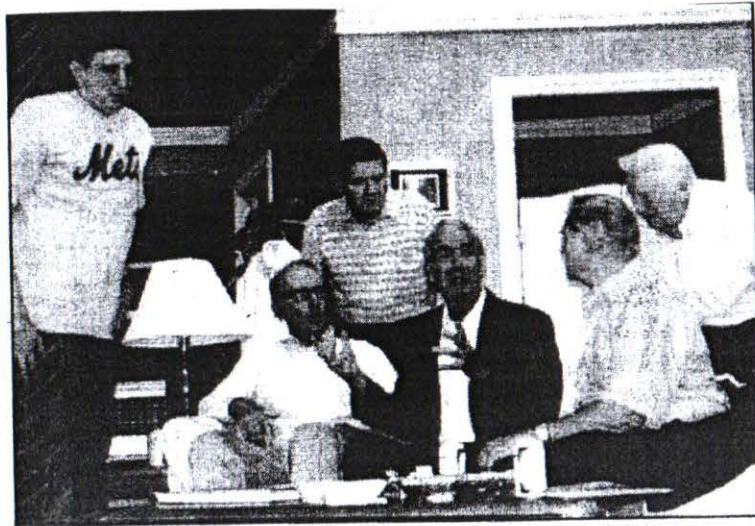
The next Friday night, the poker group, minus Felix, arrives to resume their weekly ritual.

"Marriages come and go," Oscar tells his buddies, "but the game must go on, and," he quickly adds, "watch your crumbs, will you fellas? This is my home, not a pigsty."

P.S.—A week from tonight (Oct. 27) "The Odd Couple" reopens on Broadway 40 years after raising its curtain there, this one starring Nathan Lane as Oscar and Matthew Broderick as fastidious Felix. What's more, it's a virtual sellout.

Will it never end?

See *Odd Couple*, Page 2



Mike Tarr (left) as Oscar Madison and Carlos Wilson (jacket) as Felix Unger chat with poker buddies Jay Horne, Ron Bunte, Len Atwill and David Parrent in a scene from "The Odd Couple," currently playing at the Stardust Theatre in Sun City West.

THE WESTER Thursday, November 21, 2002

Sun City West Variety Show another 'dazzler,' draws 13,227

Five-performance production showcases abundance of talent

By Jack Hawn

An old Wester news clipping headlined "Hollywood Variety Show dazzles 'em in Sun City Grand" was accompanied by a note from Jeanne Tarr, received a few weeks ago.

"We hope to dazzle 'em too!!," the note said, punctuated by two exclamation points.

Tarr, of course, was referring to the 23rd annual Sun City West Variety Show, which drew 13,227 spectators for five performances last week at the Sundome.

"Dazzle 'em," the show definitely did.

"I don't think this one could be beat," a woman told her companion as the two walked up an aisle during intermission.

Another, after seeing it all, proclaimed, "This was one of the best." A moment later, she amended her remark. It *was* the best," she decided.

Invariably, it seems, the annual SCW shows are compared from year to year, and invariably, it seems, the same conclusion is drawn—they continue to improve.

There will be no comparison here, however, certainly no comparison with the Sun City Grand show earlier this year—its third in the relatively new community.

Jeanne Tarr, directing No. 12, "Give My Regards..." assembled another huge cast—128 dancers, 106 vocalists and 25 soloists—and crew in a spectacular 2½-hour production.

A warmup trio of musicians, headed by veteran bass player George Rouvalis, set a lively mood with "Lullaby of Broadway" and other familiar tunes before the curtains parted.

Narrator Lynn Reed delivered a nostalgic well-written monologue that neatly stitched the two acts to the overall theme.

Appropriately scheduled in the program, the various songs and dance routines extended "Regards" to New York, Richard Rodgers, Broadway and, finally, to all of America—a rousing, red-white-and-blue finale that filled the stage with marchers, baton twirler Lee Daugherty, precision leg-kicking chorus lines, flag-wavers and patriotic songs.

Fast-flowing and impressively staged to maintain a heavy accent on "variety," the show weaved smooth transitions not only from soloists to dancers and singers, but also mood swings from lighting experts and stage crews.

For example, midway through "Gigi," sung by Don Jennings, a mist suddenly appeared at floor level, slowly rose and began to swirl across the stage. Gliding through it in the background, Janet Lang, a long-legged blonde, danced with the grace of a swan.

"Smoke" again was effectively used to create a similar mood for Mike Tarr's and Barbara Paripovich's rendition of "All I Ask of You," from "Phantom of the Opera."

Tarr's voice never sounded better, and Paripovich gave her typically superb performance.

Interestingly, the "smoke" immediately vanished for the next number—"On a Clear Day"—a 360-degree mood transition for Jennings' bright second-act encore.

In "Magic to Do," a flowing, sensual sequence performed by Jan's Jazz Dancers, the professional lighting technicians created a shadowy background and tight roving spotlight on individual dancers, mostly on Jan Wilson. The unusual lighting suggested

OVER



A "Guys and Dolls" scene, in this case, turns out to be seven guys and Sun City West Variety Show director Jeanne Tarr who hook up for a hilarious number at the Sundome. From left: Bud Redburn, Jerry Golden (rear), Bill Cannella, Jeanne, Arnie Ross, Sig Hjermstad, Dominic Reilly and Bill Ulrich.

an eerie form of...*m-a-g-i-c*.

Stage gimmicks weren't required for "Trouble," one of the show's best numbers.

Backed by the talent-rich chorus, Mike Tarr had the audience's toes tapping with his machine-gun delivery of lyrics about pool with a capital P that rhymes with T, and that spells "Trouble" for River City.

As the chorus softly chanted "trouble, trouble, trouble," Tarr reeled off his lines without an apparent miscue, prompting a burst of applause.

Tarr also was center-stage for a novelty number with the Nian Dancers, titled "Our Favorite Son." Seated next to each other

in a long line, Tarr and the dancers performed a rapid synchronized hand movements from knees to elbows to heads, hats, etc. Very impressive.

Jeanne Tarr delivered her usual sparkling contribution as well, teaming with veteran Theatre West actor Arne Ross in "Sue Me," a hilarious duet from "Guys and Dolls."

Gamblers seeking a site for their big crap game also included Bud Redburn, Sig Hjermstad, Bill Cannella, Bill Ulrich, Jerry Golden and Dominic Reilly.

A full stage of Rhythm Tappers, wearing sexy costumes, got

See **VARIETY**, Page B3

the show off to a high-kicking start with impressively choreographed movements to the music of "New York, New York."

Nian Cadman Dake, the Tappers' choreographer, not only created that eye-grabber and a few others, but also stepped into the spotlight for her Variety Show debut as a soloist.

Clickety-clicking all over the stage to "Hello Dolly," her dancing feet seemed almost like a blur at times. The audience exploded with applause.

The Country Cousin Cloggers, always a favorite group, also provided fancy footwork in a humorous number called "The Farmer and the Cowman."

Bob Collins' "Some Enchanted Evening," Janet Hochstatter's "I Can't Say No," Verne Stout's "Kansas City" and the chorus' high-spirited rendition of "Okla-homa!" were among selections paying tribute to Rodgers.

Helen Larmon, singing "Big Daddy, Gotta See Mama," was hilarious and totally convincing—hand on hip, tapping foot, finger-pointing, et al.

Barbara Schiefelbein ("Not While I'm Around") and Beverly Allyson ("They Say It's Wonderful"), both former Broadway singers, added a distinct professional quality with their stage presence, smooth phrasing and bell-clear voices.

Jan Rittmaster, a shapely former Ms. Arizona beauty pageant winner in a sparkling red full-length gown, also scored big, singing "On a Wonderful Day."

Other soloists who deserve special recognition: ballroom dancers Debra and Owen Lowe, the dancing Comorre twins, Don

and Dave, with Roseann Wagner, violinist Louisa Kellam ("Climb Ev'ry Mountain") and vocalists June Cornelius, Carolyn Turvin, Lynn Jankowski, Ron McCollor, Bill Munson, Greg Klazura and Doris Pirret.

Costumes, many adorned with sparkling rhinestones and other fancy jewelry, were coordinated by Roseann Wagner; set design and construction was the combined responsibility of Jerry Hallstrom and Mike Tarr (also technical director and lighting consultant); and Mary Jo Copelan was stage manager.

Having surpassed \$1 million in donations to the Del Webb Hospital from previous show proceeds, Jeanne Tarr & Company added another \$90,000 to the total. The money will be spent on new beds.

A few individuals benefited as well, including Gus Milanez, a well-known Sun City West resident, who held a winning ticket in a Saturday matinee drawing for a Holland America cruise.

A wrap party was held Saturday night at the Palm Ridge Recreation Center for the cast, crew and spouses—an annual affair all to unwind after months of preparation.

Jeanne Tarr planned to unwind even more with a trip this week to Las Vegas to see a few stage shows... and, perhaps, glean a few ideas for next year's extravaganza.

It's already scheduled—Nov. 13, 14 and 15. The theme, appropriately titled "Celebration," is in keeping with the community's year-long Silver Anniversary party.

Another dazzler, no doubt.

Sat., March 28 and Sun., March 29, 1998 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.



Gregory Harris/Daily News-Sun

Ben Franklin played by Verne Stout, at left, John Adams played by Mike Tarr and Carlos Wilson in the part of Thomas Jefferson sing a song in a scene from the play '1776' at the Stardust Theatre in Sun City West. The production runs through April 11.

Patriotic intrigue, music fuel '1776'

OVER

Production is on stage at Stardust Theatre

By LANCE W. EVANS
Features editor

When Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone were working on the music, lyrics and book for "1776," they stuck to historical fact as much as possible.

But there were some "artistic" expressions of revisionist history. For instance, the play shows the debate over the document's wording taking place *before* it was signed. Also maneuvered was the actual day of signing. In reality this was a months-long process. However, both the play and the movie that followed shifted the signing scene to July 4, a gesture that dramatically lifts the presentation's appeal.

Not that the Revolutionary War era needed that much help to be entertaining. The play reflects George Washington's feelings of abandonment, the diverse personalities (and agendas) of the men who formed the congress and the strategies they concocted to have their way in forming the new nation.

The work, which ran for 1,217 performances in the late 1960s and early

1970s in New York City, later toured for two years.

Now "1776" is on stage at the Stardust Theatre in Kuenz Recreation Center, Sun City West, through April 11.

In both the play — at least in the original cast — and the film, three actors stood out: William Daniels, as John Adams; Howard Da Silva, as Benjamin Franklin; and Ken Howard, as Thomas Jefferson.

While there are other powerful roles, it is the interaction of these three men which generates much of the plot line. In the local show, Mike Tarr portrays Adams; Verne Stout is Franklin; and Carlos Wilson is Jefferson.

This is the Stardust group's biggest play of the year and its costuming shows it through its excellence and imagination.

The show runs everyday through April 11. There are 1:30 p.m. matinee performances on Thursdays and 2 p.m. shows on Sundays. Evening performances begin at 7 p.m.

For information, call 584-7025.



Gregory Harris/Daily News-Sun

Greg Klazura plays the part of Edward Rutledge, a South Carolina representative and slavery's most ardent defender.

People packer

Stardust Theatre's success is not without its problems

By Julia Jones
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — The Stardust Theatre, just 16 months old, is making a name for itself as the most popular place in town.

Nearly every performance produced by its five resident theatrical companies is a sellout, packing the 300-seat auditorium at the \$5 million Fred Kuentz Recreation Center, 14401 R.H. Johnson Blvd.

Runs of even the most popular productions can't be extended, because there's always another waiting in the wings.

Special programs mounted by the five companies beyond their regularly scheduled seasons are limited by availability of the stage for rehearsals.

When the Rhythm Tappers, the dance troupe that calls Stardust home, agreed to send 30 members to Japan this month, scheduling extra rehearsal time was elevated almost to an art form.

And a representative of Del Webb's Sun City West, which built the theater, called early this month, six months ahead of time, to be sure of finding an open date for a November event.

"It's an excellent performing hall. The acoustics are wonderful," says Thelma Young, a member of the Musicians Club, a resident performing group.

"There isn't a bad seat in the house," adds Joan Frear, a member of The Westernaires, a 65-member mixed choral group that calls the Stardust home. "The seats are all on one level, so you're right there."

Stardust's popularity has taken some by surprise.

"Actually, we didn't really expect it to be such a huge success," says Kay Ginsberg, who was president of The Organ Club when the theater was planned; she now is a member of the council that manages the theater.

Suffering most from the space and rehearsal-time crunch is probably Theatre West, Sun City West's community theater group, which has given the Stardust some of its biggest hits.

As the fifth resident company,

"But you know, speaking as a member of the audience, the theater just couldn't be nicer. There isn't a bad seat, and it's very intimate; just lovely."

Kay Ginsberg
president, The Organ Club

Theatre West needs more of everything: dressing rooms, rehearsal halls, backstage area, you name it.

But it's not for lack of trying, says Jan Ryder, who is generally credited with getting the idea of a theater off the ground.

Ryder and her husband, Norman, both Theatre West members and longtime actors from England, surveyed the performing groups that needed a home, marched over to the developer's office and invited the company to build one.

The idea was passed along, approved by the developer as a centerpiece for the recreation center, then passed back to the committee for specific suggestions.

"We started out wanting a 300-seat theater, and that's what we got," says Jack O'Connell, president of the recreation center advisory board and chairman of the advisory committee on the theater.

"We took a bigger backstage area instead of a big lobby, for instance, because we figured people could mingle out on the patio."

It was "very much a community effort," says Martha Moyer, manager of public and community relations for Del Webb's Sun City West, the recreation center builder.

"But it has been utilized even more than we imagined. Productions have just skyrocketed."

And now that push has come to shove, the Ryders and other members of Theatre West are busily seeking ways to gain more space.

"We're bursting at the seams," Jan Ryder says. "We need a room



Tom Tingle / Staff photographer

Jan and Norman Ryder, longtime actors from England, are on the advisory committee for the Stardust Theatre.

on each side of the theater, an extension of the theater, really, for rehearsals and all, and then dressing rooms. We need backstage area, too, you know."

Without hall rental fees, and without a construction debt to retire, the five companies have parlayed their sold-out houses into equipment for their new home.

"When we got the Stardust, Del Webb had put in seats and a certain amount of curtain, among other things," Jan Ryder says. "We needed more lighting, more side wings, things like that."

Theatre West contributed proceeds of its opening show last year, "Stardust Review," for sound and light equipment. All five compa-

nies were represented, and the effort was sufficient "for just the essentials," she says.

This year's effort in January, "The Mayflower Players," was another old English-type musical, with proceeds earmarked for the building fund.

"But you know, speaking as a member of the audience, the theater just couldn't be nicer," Ginsberg says. "There isn't a bad seat, and it's very intimate; just lovely."

Right down to the name.

The idea originated with Jan Ryder, O'Connell says.

"It's kind of unique: It's on Stardust Avenue. . . . But no one else had thought of it."

Stardust Theater coalition seeks more space

By JENNIFER ARP
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Five months shy of its first birthday, the Fred Kuentz Recreation Center's Stardust Theater already is slated for expansion.

Saying there is a lack of space that is needed to produce professional results, a coalition of five performing arts clubs is prepared to raise \$90,000 or more to see to it that the theater thrives with age.

The coalition dubbed the Stardust Theater council is seeking approval of 780-square-foot additions to both sides of the stage. One of the approximately 26-by-30-foot rooms is proposed for building and housing production sets.

The other would be used as a "green room," or waiting and rehearsal room.

The Recreation Centers advisory board on Tuesday forwarded the request to its properties committee, despite board member William Bain Jr.'s suggestion to approve the expansion request pending a committee recommendation.

"It looks to me like a very excellent addition to the theater and very necessary," Bain said.

Virginia Ritson, advisory board president, said she wanted the properties committee to evaluate the "structural appropriateness" of the project. She called "very commendable" the theater council's offer to finance the

expansion project with proceeds from various fund-raising ventures.

The theater council is believed to be the first group of Recreation Center users to finance its own building project.

"To my knowledge, this is the first time five chartered clubs have recognized their participation and involvement in Recreation Centers programs to the point they were indicating they wanted to do the funding," said Steve O'Donnell, assistant manager of Sun City West Recreation Centers.

O'Donnell said space is available on the theater property, 14401 R.H. Johnson Blvd., to house the proposed

room additions. "There should not be any impact at all."

Del Webb Corp. retains architectural control of all structural development in Sun City West. As a result, O'Donnell said, "the final 'yea' or 'nay' (on the project) must come from Webb."

A vote whether to seek final Webb approval is expected at next month's meeting of the Recreation Centers advisory board.

Rejection of the theater expansion project would mean theater users will have to put up with the facility's shortcomings, advocates.

Sig Hjermstad, theater council chairman, said performing arts clubs in Sun City West now are rehearsing in

private homes, banks, churches and multi-purpose craft rooms.

Citing logistic problems that arose during the "Stardust Review" and other large-scale productions, Hjermstad stated in his letter to O'Donnell, "This dicey arrangement cannot possibly work as a permanent solution and the need for more room under one roof is paramount."

O'Donnell disputed one advisory board committee member's contention that the original plans for a larger Stardust Theater had to be pared down due to budget constraints.

When the theater was being planned two years ago, a larger theater was deemed impractical, O'Donnell said.