

Murder near Metrocenter



JOY SLAGOWSKI/TODAY STAFF

Glendale resident Geoff Goorin, left, gets an earful from Spence Chapman in "Murder! More or Less," a mystery dinner show by Pita Productions. Goorin wrote the original piece and is one of the company's three founders.

Mystery dinner theater opens with original script by West Valley resident

RICH OTT
TODAY STAFF

Want a little murder with your chicken?
If so, Pita Productions is serving your cup of tea.

"Murder! More or Less" is running through Feb. 25 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel off of Peoria Avenue just east of Interstate-17.

It's a murder mystery dinner show — so along with salad, chicken and cheesecake, you get a

few murders, clues and whacky characters to spice up your evening.

And while the concept is anything but new, the show is completely fresh thanks to Glendale resident Geoff Goorin.

"The show is from scratch," said Goorin, who is the show's writer, director and also portrays the butler. "I took the traditional murder mystery and turned it into a farce."

Goorin's comedy centers on renowned proctologist Dr. Philmore Bottoms, his wife, Phylles Bottoms, their son, Ruprecht "Dewey" Bottoms and their staff — butler Basil Johnsbury, governess Betty Johnsbury, maid Eulika Laschoop and cook Santino don Tomaso Cosa Nostri.

The butler and governess discover the will of long-departed Dr. Cravenmore Bottoms. The discovery brings Phylles' sister and former Las Vegas showgirl, Hortense Baudet, to the estate in hope that she lands



JOY SLAGOWSKI/TODAY STAFF

Kim Jeffries, a senior at Arizona State University, dusts off guest Jim Noble during "Murder! More or Less," running through February at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2532 W. Peoria Ave. in Phoenix.

some of the family fortune. Show patrons are "guests" for the reading of Dr. Bottoms' last will and testament.

Attorney and executor of the Bot-

tons' family estate, Gaston Von Schtunk, is en route to the mansion with his private assistant and

See Murder, B4



NYPD

(New York Pizza Department)

- **ADDRESS:** 8280 W. Union Hills Drive, Glendale (just west of Loop 101.)
- **PHONE NUMBER:** 561.6973.
- **HOURS:** 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
- **OWNERS/GENERAL MANAGER:** Scott and Greg Ziegler/P.J. Doran.
- **OPEN SINCE:** Aug. 4.
- **TYPE OF CUISINE:** Pizzeria-Italian.
- **SEATS:** 111, 24 on patio overlooking Aqua Fria River.
- **OTHER LOCATIONS:** Seven, including one in Surprise at 13980 W. Bell Road.
- **WEB SITE:** www.aznypdpizza.com.
- **SPECIALTY OF THE HOUSE:** Brooklyn Family Pizza — topped with pepperoni, sausage and fresh basil.
- **MOST POPULAR APPETIZER:** Wings — available in counts of 12 with three flavors: honey BBQ, upstate (medium) and Hell's Kitchen (spicy). Served with celery, blue cheese and ranch dressings.
- **MOST POPULAR LUNCH ENTREE:** Chicken Parmigiana Hero — breaded chicken cutlet breasts smothered in marinara and melted mozzarella.
- **MOST POPULAR DINNER ENTREE:** Traditional New York Baked Ziti — oven baked penne pasta, marinara, ricotta and melted mozzarella. Served with baked garlic bread.
- **MOST POPULAR DESSERT:** New York's Finest Cookie 'N' Cream — a baked chocolate chip cookie topped with vanilla bean ice cream.
- **RESERVATIONS:** Not taken.
- **AVAILABLE FOR:** Dine in, take out and catering.
- **PRICE RANGES:** \$3.25 (garlic knots) to \$21.25 (Da Works 18-inch pizza.)
- **SPECIALS:** Daily lunch special is any slice of pizza and house salad for \$4.50. Children eat free on Wednesday night. Monday and Tuesday special is buy one pizza, get second half off.
- **ENTERTAINMENT:** Two televisions by bar.
- **WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Each restaurant features a "Subway tile wall," Ziegler said. "It's a huge hit with families." Markers are provided for children to "leave their artwork," he said.
- **UNIQUE TIDBITS:** Scott Ziegler offered these reasons on why their pizza is different than most: dough is made fresh daily using New York filtered water, they use premium quality California tomatoes and homemade pizza sauce, cheese is 100 percent whole milk mozzarella made exclusively by employees at NYPD, the pies are had tossed the way they are back in Brooklyn and the pizzas are baked in a traditional stone oven.
- **HISTORY:** Brothers Scott and Greg Ziegler moved to Arizona from Long Island in 1996 and opened their first NYPD in Scottsdale that October. The Ziegler's pride themselves on "great food, service, a fun atmosphere and consistency."
- **FUTURE PLANS:** Will open two more locations this year in Litchfield Park and Gilbert.
- **SLOGAN:** "To protect and serve great pizza."
- **KNOW OF A GOOD RESTAURANT OR OWN ONE IN THE WEST VALLEY?:** Call Rich Ott at 623-876-2554 and be featured in a future Dining Out column.



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/TODAY STAFF

New York Pizza Department owner and founder Scott Ziegler is ready to taste some of the house specialties at his eighth Arizona location, in Glendale. Clockwise from left, New York Cheesecake with raspberry topping; Garlic Knots; Pizza Blanca (olive oil, crushed garlic, ricotta, mozzarella, spinach and Roma tomato); Al Capone Calzone (sausage, pepperoni, onions, ricotta, mozzarella and marinara sauce); Spaghetti with Homemade Meatballs; and in the middle, a Greek Salad.

Matt Krause, left, Peter J. Hill and Jack Dwyer keep the audience in hysterics while "reminding" them of America's history at Copperstate Dinner Theater in Phoenix.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Humorous historians

Trio leads Copperstate crowd through America's past

RICH OTT
TODAY STAFF

Who knew history could be so fun? Apparently three guys by the names of Adam Long, Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor, who together penned "The Complete History of America (Abridged)."

"It's lighter than it would appear by the title," said Valley actor Jack Dwyer. "It's not like turning on the History Channel. It's like Comedy Central doing history."

And like watching a good stand-up comedian, after the show nobody can remember all the jokes.

"It's shotgun comedy" said Peter J. Hill, the producing artistic director of Copperstate Dinner Theater, where "America (Abridged)" is running through Feb. 14. "You fire everything you can and hope some hit. And it does hit more than it misses."

A few hits by "America (Abridged):"

"The Minute Men, better lovers than you might think."

See America, B3

Murder mystery:

Company hopes to stay in West Valley



JOY SLAGOWSKI/TODAY STAFF

Jill Becvar portrays Nurse TKO, who is a personal assistant to attorney Gaston Von Schtunk, seated and played by Roger Edmonds, in "Murder! More or Less." Spence Chapman, as Dr. Philmore Bottoms, looks on.

From B1

nurse, Anita Turnenkoff. Shortly after the duo arrive, and during the reading of the will, a body falls, which brings chief of police, Barnabas Dogood, into the fold.

Dogood gives his best Columbo impersonation while attempting to solve the murder, which eventually leads to more mayhem and killings. Toward the end of the evening, the audience is asked to write down who they believe is the murderer, and one person with the correct answer receives a grand prize at the end of the night.

As you might have deciphered by now, there is plenty of zaniness to fill the show's three-hour length.

"We want to give them a product they will have fun with," said Glenna Lesure, who portrays Hortense Baudet.

Lesure and Goorin have worked the murder mystery dinner show circuit in the East Valley.

"I have performed dinner theater for quite some time," she said. "I found out some were not pleasant."

So, Lesure and her husband, Marc, along with Goorin, decided to begin their own murder mystery troupe, and Pita Productions was born. The trio all happen to be graduates of Arizona State

University. Both Lesures are Phoenix natives and graduates of Camelback High School. Goorin, 34, is from Pittsburgh.

The company first ran "Murder! More or Less" at two hotels off Interstate-17 in November and December. The show returned Jan. 27 to one of the hotels, Crowne Plaza, at 2532 W. Peoria Ave. in Phoenix.

"We are having a wonderful time," said Goorin, who, through his writing and acting, hopes to bring culture back to the West Valley. "There is not as much culture on this side of town as in central Phoenix or the East Valley," he said.

Which is one reason why Pita Productions decided to perform near MetroCenter. The troupe also wanted to be right off a freeway and "to be in a place where the others were not," said Marc Lesure, the company's business manager.

Marc Lesure said the company signs contracts for the foreseeable future, they can't



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Logan Mosier, center, the valedictorian at Glendale's Mountain Ridge High School in 2001, portrays the dumbest character imaginable in Pita Productions premiere murder mystery dinner show. Mosier is flanked by fellow actors Spence Chapman and Gail Rae, who portray his parents.

space in the middle of the month for the following month, so while every intention is to remain at the Crowne Plaza Hotel for the foreseeable future, they can't

guarantee that the hotel will always be available to them.

Marc Lesure said the company would try to find another hotel in the Metro-center area if the Crowne Plaza wasn't available.

"We are looking to stay on the West side," he said.

The company intends to offer new shows every year, which is why the troupe began with Goorin's unproven script as opposed to something that is tried and true.

"We wanted something that hadn't been shown before," Marc Lesure said. "We wanted something that was fresh and funny."

Goorin is already creating the troupe's second show, "Murder Ahoy," which will take place on a cruise ship. The company hopes to premiere it in September, and the writer is banking on the high seas providing plenty of laughter.

"After all," he said, "laughter is what makes the world go round."

Movies

From B2

- **Something New PG13**
Friday-Thursday: 2, 7, 20.
- **When a Stranger Calls PG13**
Friday-Saturday: 10:45, 12:35, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 5, 6:05, 7:20, 8:30, 10, 10:55.
Sunday: 10:45, 12:05, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 5, 6:05, 7:30, 8:25, 10, 10:40.
Monday-Thursday: 12:05, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 5, 6:05, 7:30, 8:25, 10, 10:40.
- **Annapolis PG13**
Friday-Thursday: 11:25, 1:55, 4:30, 7:10, 9:40.
- **Big Momma's House 2 PG13**
Friday-Thursday: 11, 12, 1:35, 2:35, 4, 10, 5:10, 6:45, 7:45, 9:25, 10:25.
- **Nanny McPhee PG**
Friday-Thursday: 10:55, 1:30, 4:05, 6:40, 9:20.
- **Underworld: Evolution R**
Friday-Thursday: 11:15, 1:50, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45.
- **The New World PG13**
Friday-Thursday: 11:05.
- **Hoodwinked PG**
Friday-Sunday: 10:25, 12:45, 3:05, 5:25, 7:50, 10:10.
Monday-Thursday: 12:45, 3:05, 5:25, 7:50, 10:10.
- **Last Holiday PG13**
Friday-Thursday: 11:20, 4:35, 9:55.
- **Fun with Dick and Jane PG13**
Friday-Sunday: 10:30, 12:50, 3:15, 5:35, 8, 10:20.
Monday-Thursday: 12:50, 3:15,

- 5:35, 8, 10:20.
- **Brokeback Mountain R**
Friday-Thursday: 6:25, 9:35.
- **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe PG**
Friday-Thursday: 11:50, 3.
- **Glendale AMC ARROWHEAD 14 ARROWHEAD TOWNE CENTER 7700 W. Bell Road**
Friday Feb. 10-Thursday Feb. 16-
Information: 487-1400
- **Curious George G**
Friday-Sunday: 1:20, 3:50, 7:15, 9:15.
- Monday-Thursday: 1:55, 4:15, 6:50, 9:15.
- **Final Destination 3 R**
Friday-Saturday: 12:25, 2, 4:30, 5:40, 7:20, 8:10, 9:50, 10:30.
- Sunday: 12:25, 2, 4:30, 5:40, 7:20, 7:55, 9:25, 10:10.
- Monday-Thursday: 1:15, 2, 4:40, 5:40, 7:20, 8:10, 9:25, 10:10.
- **Something New PG13**
Friday-Sunday: 12:50, 4:45, 7:05, 9:20.
- Monday-Thursday: 2, 4:45, 7:05, 9:20.
- **When a Stranger Calls PG13**
Friday-Saturday: 1:40, 2:30, 4:05,

See Movies, B5

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Saturday, February 4

- Robson's Arizona Mining World Classic Car Show - 10am-3pm
- Tour the historic mining camp, enjoy the cars displayed - (928) 685-2609
- Wickenburg Art Club Fine Art Festival - 12noon - 8pm - Many of Arizona's finest artists will be presenting their works in all mediums with demos during the show - Artists' Reception 5pm-8pm - (928) 427-4565
- The Desert Coboleros Western Museum "Guns & Sizzling", 6pm A rip-roaring night of chance, good fortune, music, and more! \$30 member/ \$45 Non-members (928) 684-2272

Sunday, February 5

- Garban Pancake Breakfast at Hospitality RV Resort - 7am-9am - (928) 684-2519
- President's Trek at the Hossayampa River Preserve led by John Carr, past Chamber Past President - Jim Hartman - 10:00 a.m. - \$5 per person/Reservations-684-5479
- Wickenburg Art Club "Fine Art Festival" - 12 Noon - 5:00 p.m.
- Desert Coboleros Western Museum - "The Next Phase: Settler's Collection of Navajo Weavings" - 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m. - Admission required

Monday, February 6

- Desert Coboleros Western Museum - exhibits continue - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Wickenburg Fine Art Festival Continues. 12 Noon - 5:00 p.m.
- Georgia Little Red Schoolhouse - Visit the 101 year old schoolhouse - (928) 684-7473

Tuesday, February 7

- Desert Coboleros Western Museum - exhibits continue - 10am-5pm
- Wickenburg Fine Art Festival Continues. 12 Noon - 5:00 p.m.
- Gold Nugget Art Gallery Art Reception - 5-7:00 p.m. - Art, food & music - (928) 684-5849

Wednesday, February 8

- Desert Coboleros Western Museum - exhibits continue - 10am-5pm
- Wickenburg Fine Art Festival Continues - 12 Noon - 5:00 p.m.
- Buckshot Boats - 2nd Annual Red Hat Rendezvous - 12 Noon - 2:00 p.m.
- Lunch tickets are \$15 per person in advance - (928) 684-0750

Thursday, February 9

- Wickenburg Fine Arts Festival Continues - 12noon - 5p.m.
- Finger Lickin BBQ & Daughters of the Purple Sage Concert at the Desert Coboleros Western Museum - 4:30 pm-5:30 pm & 6:30 p.m. - \$25 per person (928) 684-2272
- "Sons of the Sun" Jojoquin Concert at the Del Webb Center - 7pm-9:27 (928) 684-6624

For more information contact The Chamber at 1-900-942-5242
Visit our website for a complete schedule of Gold Rush Days February 9th-12
www.wickenburgchamber.com

FEBRUARY 10TH-12TH

- Wickenburg Art Club Arts/ Crafts & Fine Art Festival
- Old-fashioned Melodrama Nightly - 7 p.m.
- Senior Pro Rodeo - Sat. & Sun. 2 p.m.
- Gold Panning, Free Stage Entertainment
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- WSC BBQ - Sat / Rodeo Dance Saturday
- Gold Panning & Mucking & Drilling Contest - Sunday

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