

**GAC Has Prescription for
Curing Winter Blues: Comedy!
By Greg Young**

Winter got you down with those long cold nights and shorter days. Maybe it's world or local events giving you that knot in your stomach. Greenbelt Art Center (GAC) has the perfect prescription to cure your blues and your ills: Comedy.

GAC Vice President of Programs, Wes Dennis, was scouting last year, as he often does, to encourage local artists to submit to GAC for a production. Jeff Dunne was one such creative artist and after meeting with Wes, Jeff submitted one of over 175 scripts he has written in the last 15 years. The play, *No Laughing Matter*, is a comedy sure to give you warm laughs, a perfect prescription for winter blues.

While Jeff is not a physician, he does have a doctorate in the sciences and did his post graduate work at Purdue. Completing intern work as far away as California and Utah and working his way back to the east coast. He has been residing in Maryland now for over 20 years. Writing scripts is not his only talent by a long shot. He loves to play guitar, and is accomplished with several other instruments, and has written over 150 songs. However, theater occupies much of his endeavors (when he is not working at Johns Hopkins) and that includes acting and directing. He has directed several short plays, and this is his second outing to direct a full length play.

Jeff has been working since December with his selected thespians whom he describes as a "super-talented cast". He confides it was stressful to have to turn away so many unbelievably talented actors. That's a good thing if you are a GAC fan because you will have the opportunity to see some of the very best local players. And since comedy is actually a pretty serious business for actors, it's good that Jeff had many performers from which to choose. It's not enough to know your lines, it's about timing, and it takes a lot of rehearsing to make it right.

Taking the opportunity to watch one of the rehearsals it was clear the actors were already honing their characters with much attention to detail. Jeff's creation uses character conflict to create a lot of laughs for his audience. He has found a way to blend outlandish characters and have them oppose others who are just trying to get through life. Can conflict be funny? Think of Will Ferrel and Mark Wahlberg in "The Other Guys". The cast of No Laughing Matter has several such conflicts, and they are sure to make the audience laugh out loud.

The premise of the play is sort of a spy thriller with two conflicted FBI (Federal Bureau of IDIOTS) agents who verbally spar with each other throughout their endeavors to catch a spy, a Russian spy. Their focus is on a recent Russian immigrant who is still learning English. His mistakes with the language add to many comedic opportunities to fulfill your prescription from Dr Dunne, uh, Director Dunne. Can't give away too much here, so you're going to have to see it for yourself.

No Laughing Matter opens Friday, February 21st and plays Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 pm through March 8th at the Greenbelt Arts Center, 123 Crescent Road. On Sunday, March 2, all supporting personnel and audience members are required to wear masks so those who are immunocompromised have an opportunity to see the show. Tickets are required. For more information go to www.greenbeltartcenter.org.