

# "Early to 'Bed': Decatur audiences to see premiere of Vlachos' romantic comedy"

by **Tim Cain**

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A trip can be just the thing to get creative juices flowing.

It worked for Dr. Nick Vlachos, and the result will be on display Jan. 10-12 at the Decatur Club. "The Bed," an original play by Vlachos, will be presented in a dinner theater setting as a fund-raiser for the Lincoln Square Theatre.

"I started in August," says Vlachos, a physician for SafeWorks Illinois in Decatur. "I was attending a conference in Tucson, and I thought about it on the plane on the way out, and on the way back, I started outlining the idea."

"If you're a writer, when you know where you're going, it's easier to get there."

Vlachos completed the first draft in four weeks. Upon completing it, he called Millikin University and was put in contact with David A. Golden, a professor in the school's theater department. Golden was impressed with the effort and asked Vlachos, "What do you want to do with this?" Vlachos' reply was, "What can we do?" Golden offered a workshop reading with himself and Jim and Jill Goatley.

"One of the greatest thrills of my life was to have those people read it," Vlachos recalls. The play went through some changes, through workshops and work with a writing class being taught by Golden.

"There have been numerous changes made in the play because of our work on it," Golden says. "We started workshopping it about three months ago. We tried all kinds of people. We did eight different readings with a variety of ages.

"Actually, we started with Chad and Kristin."

Millikin seniors Chad Heuschober and Kristin Kudelka are the cast of the two-character play, which covers the life of a married couple from 1980 to 2045.

The pair are pursuing acting degrees at Millikin and anxiously await their chance to premiere the play. "It's a unique opportunity," Heuschober says. "The chance to do a play that's never been done before doesn't come along every day."

Kudelka says she's doing the play because of the chance to again create with Golden, whom she calls "the greatest director I've ever worked with."

Vlachos feels his play fills an artistic hole. "There's nothing like this out there," he says. "And it's kind of a shame. Married people are much more interesting. You can have childbirth, the commitment, the idea that you're going to be with one person for the rest of your life.

"The objective of the play is to show that a story about a married couple can be actually funnier and more entertaining than one about singles. My intent is to have the audience clutching their spouse during and after the show, anxious to renew their vows, and for the singles in the audience to want to run off and find their swan."

"It's really about marriage and how good marriage is," Golden says. "So its appeal runs the whole gamut. Anyone who is happily married should enjoy it. Or even anyone who's unhappily married."

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The play has already been translated into Italian, and Vlachos hopes to do Japanese and Greek translations. "I think the story is universal in its appeal," he says.

Vlachos is awaiting the premiere more anxiously than most.

"I've been banned from rehearsals," he says. "Dr. Golden said to me, 'Your job is done. Go write another play.'"

To that end, Vlachos says, "I've started with another story that's totally different. It's an outdoors story about ex-soldiers in the 1880s in northern Idaho on a hunting expedition. It's based on fact."

But once a doctor, always a doctor. While the story includes a mystery, a meeting with American Indians and finding a gold mine, it also has a character suffering from urinary obstruction. "The rest," Vlachos says, "is textbook description of renal failure."