

Gavin Jerome laughs at workplace problems

By MOLLY BATES
Messenger staff writer

A lot of problems in the workplace can be resolved with laughter.

So says Gavin Jerome, a stand-up comedian and former entertainment director for the Starlite Best Western in Fort Dodge.

For five weeks in April, Jerome will present "Comedy College," a course "where I teach people how to use humor more effectively in their professional and personal lives."

Jerome, who is now based out of Des Moines, has been a working comedian for the past 10 years. He has performed in comedy clubs across the country, and has worked with Jerry Seinfeld, Paul Reiser and other comedians.

For the last five years, he has used his skills as a comedian to teach people how to be funny.

"People gain a lot of positive things from Comedy College," he said.

"Just take a look at this world and see the people getting ahead are the people with a good sense of humor. And the best part about it is, it's like any other skill — it can be taught.

"Everybody has it in them to be funny," he said. "A sense of humor is a muscle — the more you use it the



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better and stronger it becomes. Some people just choose never to use it."

Helping people use that muscle — either for business or professional purposes — is what the comedy course is all about.

"We talk about all the skills you need to be funny, need to improve your sense of humor, and your joke-writing ability," Jerome said.

"When you write a joke, you need to be able to tell that joke. Part of the focus is for people who are interested in stand-up comedy, but it's for the business environment as well.

"Humor helps to increase productivity and teambuilding, and can help improve your message," he said. "For businesspeople who have taken this class, they have found a renewed self-confidence, they feel good about themselves and find humor in situations. They look at life from a 'glass half-full' perspective than a glass half empty."

Jerome said the classes involve "a lot of interaction and a lot of participation."

"The classes get really close-knit," he said. "They help each other out."

He said part of the class is spent on instruction and lecturing.

"The other half is really hands-on, where the students get up and share their ideas," he said. "It's basically a non-stop laugh party for about two hours a week."

The class is scheduled for five Mondays, beginning April 7. People may register by calling 1-800-96GAVIN.