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[THE TOP STORY: Scout's honor](#)

By Chris Graham/AFP The Boy Scouts of America is a private group - and as such, should be permitted to set its policies for membership however it wants. This is the argument that the Boy Scouts and the United States Supreme Court seem to have come to some agreement on, anyway. But critics of the organization's decisions to exclude gays and atheists from their midst wonder aloud how the Scouts can claim to be private while receiving millions of dollars in public benefits in the form of free government-building rentals for meetings and the use of Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia for its quinquennial national jamborees. [\(poll\)](#)

Huck Finn in the flesh

In the Spotlight

Chris Graham

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You know Huckleberry Finn. You read the book, reread it - maybe more than once.

You have an idea in mind of what the Huckster would look like.

This worries Colton Berry to no end.

"It was a big challenge for that very reason. It's really hard to make everyone's expectation of that part come through - because everybody knows what they want to see on the stage, and it's really hard to try to pull that all together and make sure that I'm doing the role justice," said Berry, a Wilson Memorial High School sophomore who has the role of Finn in the upcoming Waynesboro Players' production of *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"It's good that everybody knows it, in a way, because I know where to pull from. But a lot of times I'm worried that people are going to see it and say, 'That's not Huck,' " Berry said.

INSIDE ... The merits of ward and at-large voting

By Chris Graham/AFP To say that Waynesboro has a unique way of seating members of its city council would be to soft-pedal the issue. The River City approach embraces elements of both the traditional at-large systems favored by its neighbors and the ward system in use in much larger cities. The news on this front is that Waynesboro leaders are talking about instituting a change that would bring the city in line with the way city councils are elected in Charlottesville, Harrisonburg and Staunton. **(poll)**

ON THE FRONT ROW: Teaching moment

By Chris Graham/AFP Sports, to some - to many - is a tableau where race and class and gender aren't important, where people from different backgrounds and cultures can come together as one to hone their crafts and play games and compete without prejudices entering into the equation. That idealized view of the sports world has been brought into question by the events unfolding over the past several weeks at Duke University - which has suspended the season of its highly ranked men's lacrosse team in the wake of reports that a woman was raped at an off-campus team party ...

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE: Top of the draftin' to ya

By Chris Graham/AFP Three of the top five or six prospects in this month's NFL draft are Atlantic Coast Conference alums. The rumor that John Swofford has a smile on his face that could stretch from Chestnut Hills to Coral Gables likely isn't that far off from the truth. "The ACC is consistently one of the top conferences in the country - if not the top conference. They get the best talent, and that carries on to the NFL draft. The pipeline just continues," said Scott Wright, the president of NFLDraftCountdown.com. There's even an outside chance that an ACC star could be the first name announced ...

SPORTS: The Sound and the Fury

By Chris Graham/AFP Topics include ... Media culpa; Four on the ACC football hotseat; Time to go to Plan D; The write stuff; Fun and games; From the comforts of his home office; and Bright future for UVa. basketball?



That also comes to mind for Berry when it comes to the musical numbers that are central to *Big River* - which opens tonight at Waynesboro High School.

"It's different - when you think of the book, you don't think of Huck dancing and singing. But this show is going to be true to the style and the flair of the story. I think it flows really well and fits really well. At first, I thought it was going to be a challenge to make this tough-guy character dance and sing, but actually it's written so well that it just flows," Berry told *The Augusta Free Press*.

What makes the Players' production flow is the ease of interaction between Berry and costar James Stewart, who portrays Jim, the runaway slave who accompanies Huck on his adventure on the Mississippi River.

"One of the things that is important to me is the core friendship that exists - the friendship between Huck and Jim - and how it crosses racial barriers and age barriers. Two guys traveling on a raft really puts things into perspective as to what's important," said Stewart, whose day job has him working as the director of clinical services for the Whisper Ridge residential program in Staunton.

The large ensemble cast featuring more than three dozen of the area's best actors and actresses and singers seem to have seized on that feeling of friendship between the two leads.

"This has become a whole big family now," said Barbara Spilman Lawson, who is directing the musical along with Duane Hahn.

"It's typical of a family. You have your gripes and your people who are getting along great and people who have little arguments - but you work it out and move on. I think we've pretty much succeeded. Everybody has commented that it's been a lot of fun - a lot of hard work, but a lot of fun," Lawson told the *AFP*.

That sense of fun should translate from the rehearsals to the stage to the audience at this weekend's performances.

"I'm amazed at the talent on stage in this show. It blows me away - and I've seen a lot of shows here," Lawson said.

"This is probably the first time that most people have actually seen the show and

FIRE AND ICE: Me and T.O.

By Tasha Dean When Jerry Jones and the Dallas Cowboys opened up their checkbook and gave Terrell Owens a three-year, \$25 million deal to don the star that he once insulted as a San Francisco 49er, this long-time Cowboys fan had to catch her breath. In fact, the simple task of breathing became difficult. I had, of course, heard the speculation and rumors, but the thought of the signing actually happening did not cross my mind. It's just talk, I said - it's not going to *actually* happen. I guess that shows how much I know.

heard the music. They might know the story, but they haven't seen it visually or heard it musically. That's what makes this so different and so great," Lawson said.

**Details**

The Waynesboro Players' production of *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will be presented at Waynesboro High School tonight and Friday night at 8 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.

THE LIGHTER SIDE: Trail blazers

By Chris Graham/AFP It really is a different world up there on the Appalachian Trail - one that appeals to high-school and college students, people going through various mid-life crises, recent retirees and, more and more these days, in particular, artists and filmmakers. "You really have a lot of elements with the Appalachian Trail that are great for storytelling. One, it's a unique world that I think people are really fascinated by because it's so unusual. But two, I think the majority of the people there is at a crossroads in their lives," said Ben Wagner, who made a feature film set on the Trail ...

(poll)

On the Web

- www.waynesboroplayers.org

What do you think? Share your thoughts on this story at news@augustafreepress.com.

(Published 04-20-06)

**CARLY AT THE MOVIES:
Waynesboro movie buff cops
contest prize**

By Carl Larsen Stephen Winslow can now claim the title of Augusta County's Number One Film Fan. A distinguished panel of judges announced this weekend that the Waynesboro resident has waltzed off with the top honor in "The Fifth Annual Carly-at-the-Movies Recasting the Classics Contest," in which prizes are awarded for the cleverest, most appropriate recasting of a classic film - this year being the 1975 Steven Spielberg blockbuster, "Jaws."

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MOUSE TRAILS: Concatenation?



By Ron Doyle Did that word catch your attention? If so, you probably aren't alone. OK, go ahead and run for your dictionary. If you did, you found something similar to, "to link together in a series or chain." Now you are also thinking, "I thought Ron wrote a computer column. What is this - a vocabulary lesson?" Believe it or not, I have received questions about this several times. I got another one just recently. *Concatenation* usually involves Excel. The writers of the questions never know the word; they just know what they need to do.

THE FORUM: A week in the world of politics

By Chris Graham/AFP Topics include ... Speculate on this; Which one is it?; Race and immigration; The face of poverty; Kaine and gay marriage; Memo to the local media on the WTA; and Customer service and the bottom line.

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Last updated 2/16/05; 7:17:47 AM