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The other side of the curtain

Noises Off! *director learning theater from a new perspective*

In the Spotlight

Chris Graham

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Morgan Smith was Brooke Ashton in a production of *Noises Off!*

She traipsed around on stage in a racy negligee. She practiced her breathing exercises in act two when Brooke needed a moment of relaxation during the show - which was pretty much whenever she was backstage.

Now Smith is on the other side of the curtain, serving as co-director of the Waynesboro Players production of *Noises Off!* that kicks off Thursday night at Waynesboro High School.

What she has learned to this point is that she thought she knew the play before.

"But it's different being on this side of the stage," said Smith, whose co-director is someone familiar to her, if not others in the know in the local theater community - her husband, Patrick.

"When you're acting, you only see what you're doing," said Smith, who has a degree in theater from Mary

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[THE TOP STORY: Pyles questions Michael's motives](#)

By Chris Graham/AFP The camera is trained on Tracy Pyles. It is Sept. 19, 2001, and Pyles, a Democrat and five-year veteran of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors, is preparing for a candidate debate with Republican Chris Saxman.

[INSIDE ... The \\$250-an-hour financial advisor](#)

By Chris Graham/AFP The local news media stirred up a controversy two weeks ago following Waynesboro City Council's decision to approve a contract with a Richmond-based financial-advisory firm. And city manager Doug Walker is still at a loss as to why that was. "This is not anything new ..."

[INSIDE ... In harm's way](#)

By Chris Graham/AFP Waynesboro City Council will decide in two weeks the fate of an application for a permit that would allow for the construction of a new home in the South River floodplain on Arch Avenue. At its meeting Monday night, city council introduced an ordinance ...

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By Chris Graham/AFP John Brown threw his hat into the ring for the Republican nomination to run for the open Augusta County treasurer job this past spring - and came up short. Deputy county commissioner of the revenue Richard Homes got the GOP nod ...

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Baldwin College in Staunton and has made a name for herself on the local theater scene through her work at MBC, Oak Grove and the Waynesboro Players.

"You know what other people are doing, too, but you're so focused on yourself that it's hard to get a complete picture of everything that's going on around you. But when you're directing, you have to see the whole picture," Smith said.

Challenge

Noises Off! offers a particular challenge to those in the creative set - in that the production is a play-within-a-play focusing on the exploits, such as they are, of a fledgling British repertory company that is trying with all its might to put on a play called *Noises On!*

Another challenge comes with respect to the delivery of the lines. All three acts take place as presentations of an act of *Noises On!* - as seen from three different perspectives.

In act one of *Noises Off!* we see the company struggling to work through a rehearsal hours before opening night. Act two features a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes as act one takes place out of sight of the audience.

Act three, meanwhile, is a comedy of errors - from flubbed lines and cues to the misappropriation of props.

"This is a difficult play to put on," Smith said.

"Everybody has to be right on the entire time. You have to know exactly what you're doing and what everybody else on the stage is doing at all times."

Details

Tickets for the show - which opens Thursday at 8 p.m. and features performances on Friday and Saturday nights at the same time - are \$5 for students and seniors and \$9 for the general public.



By Chris Graham/AFP Last fall, the Waynesboro Police Department announced that it was planning to emphasize seat-belt and child-safety-seat usage in the River City. The anecdotal evidence suggests that the program designed to achieve those ends - known as SABRE ...

COMMUNITY: Around Town

Today's topics: Find out more about a trip to the Urbanna Oyster Festival on Saturday; get details on an informational tax workshop on Thursday; get details on a Staunton-area chess club; learn more about a yoga class designed for children; and much more.

OBITUARIES: Oct. 29, 2003

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VIEWS ON THE NEWS: Questions that we'd like answered

Isn't it interesting how the big bombshells of the 2003 election season haven't been about who supports a tax increase here or who voted for a controversial program there? And instead, the controversies that we have involve ... the placement of campaign signs? And who supported whom in a recent gubernatorial election?

GUEST VIEW: A right that shall not be infringed

By Ed Clark I loved the story of Chris Graham, Amy Kehm and Sonia Randev at the police shooting range ("Stop, or this columnist will shoot," Oct. 27 *AFP*). I congratulate all three of you for

Tickets are available in Waynesboro at Donna's Hallmark, Sharon Bookstore and Quality Cleaners; in Stuarts Draft at The Village Green Florist; in Fishersville at Quail Hill Herb Shoppe; and in Staunton at The Bookstack, Holt's China and Gifts and Terry Court Pharmacy.

Tickets will also be available at the door.

Info: (540) 949-7509.

Chris Graham is the co-publisher of The Augusta Free Press.

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overcoming ...what ... your fears? your ignorance? your preconceived notions?

NOTES FROM THE PRESS: Election Guide 2003, crime coverage

By Chris Graham/AFP *The Augusta Free Press* - as was announced on Tuesday - is publishing *Election Guide 2003* in a special Saturday-morning edition. We have asked a series of questions of candidates running for the two dozen or so open seats up for grabs in the Augusta County area on Nov. 4.

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