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## Whimsical, this musical

In the Spotlight

Chris Graham

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Barbara Spilman Lawson remembers what she was thinking when she heard that the Waynesboro Players were thinking of doing a Dr. Seuss sendup.

"I heard *Seussical the Musical* and wondered, 'OK, so how did they mess this up?' " said Spilman Lawson, who is bringing the character of Sour Kangaroo to life in the Players' production, which opens Thursday night.



## Most Recent Headlines

### **THE TOP STORY: Inside the separation of church and state**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** The ability of governing bodies to open their meetings with religious invocations is at the heart of a Central Virginia legal case that could be on its way in short order to the United States Supreme Court. "This case raises important issues regarding the equal treatment of people of all religious faiths," said Rob Boston, a spokesman for the Washington, D.C.,-based Americans United for the Separation of Church and State ... *(Part one of a two-part series)*

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### **INSIDE ... Where does Kaine stand on referendums?**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** Does presumptive Democratic Party gubernatorial nominee Tim Kaine support referendums as a way of giving Virginians more say in the way their state government is run ... or not? "Basically what happened there is the writer mischaracterized the lieutenant governor's position on the referendum issue. Tim has absolutely no problem with referendums on transportation ..."

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### **IN FOCUS: Suit pending on Staunton treasurer-finance controversy**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** A lawsuit resulting from the February vote of Staunton City Council that gave sweeping powers of discretion over fiscal matters to the city finance office appears to be in the offing. Attorney John Gibney confirmed to *The Augusta Free Press* that he is preparing to file suit against the city on behalf of city treasurer Elnora Hazlett.

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### **NOTES FROM THE PRESS: Virginia, national politics notebook**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** Democratic Party lieutenant-governor nomination candidate Chap Petersen kicked off a

"You can really mess up Seuss, and I thought they really messed it up with the two movies. They took them so far and stretched them so far and added things in that were so un-Seuss-like to make a full-length movie out of what are essentially simple little stories. So when I first heard about this, I thought it could be really bad. I also thought of people running around in furry animal costumes," Spilman Lawson said.

Other than Duane Hahn being forced to run around in a furry animal costume as The Grinch, there's nothing to worry about on that end.

And as for the show itself ...

"It's meant to be a high-energy show. It just demands activity on stage." said Brian Holsopple, a.k.a. The Cat in the Hat.



*Demands* is the operative word. There are no less than 36 musical numbers in the two-act musical mixing in elements from a dozen Seuss titles, including favorites ranging from *The Cat in the Hat* and *How The Grinch Stole Christmas!* to *Green Eggs and Ham* and *Horton Hears a Who*.

"And unlike in other musicals, where you have a song and then maybe three or four or five minutes of dialogue, this is just song after song after song after song. So it got a little harrowing here and there thinking, OK, this song, I've got to do something here, so let's try this," choreographer Jami Lea Cook said.

"The cast has been great because they've been really easy to work with, and I've been open to suggestions so when we're maybe not feeling it, we can change things up to fit better what people are feeling," Cook said.

Of interest is that Cook is one of the few affiliated with the Players' production of *Seussical the Musical* that didn't take in the musical when it was being performed in Winchester last summer.

"It was good for me, because I was working from a clean slate. It was all up here," Cook said, pointing to the top of her head. "Which was very much along the Seussian lines, imagination running wild.

"I took a lot of my inspiration from listening to the music and saying, OK, this sounds like what I'm doing, so let's try this," Cook said.

Spilman Lawson takes her inspiration from the Seuss titles that she has essentially committed to memory from 20-plus years in education.

"You read the Seuss books. You've got to read the Seuss books. That's where it all begins," Spilman Lawson said.

statewide RV tour on Sunday that the Fairfax delegate hopes will demonstrate what he says is his broad-based, across-the-Commonwealth appeal. "My campaign for lieutenant governor is about uniting all Virginia to give our kids the education they deserve, create jobs for everyone ..."

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**EYE ON VIRGINIA: The right to vote ... again**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** They have paid their debt to society and are attempting to live on the straight and narrow. Many have been out of prison for so long that it is hard for them to remember the person that they used to be on the inside. One area where their friends and neighbors are reminded of the same comes every November at the ballot box. "Just because you have served time doesn't mean your vote should stay behind bars ..."

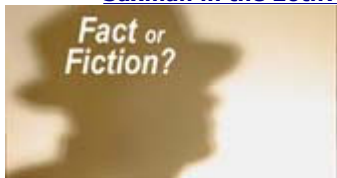
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**EYE ON THE VALLEY: Waynesboro PD honors eight**

**By Chris Graham/AFP** The Waynesboro Police Department on Friday honored a local resident for her brave actions in assisting an officer who found himself in major distress in a January incident involving a burglary suspect. Linda Jewell was presented with a departmental appreciation award for coming to the aid of police detective Robert Luzader on Jan. 21.

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**FACT OR FICTION: An opponent for Saxman in the 20th?**



**By Chris Graham/AFP** Will Staunton Republican Del. Chris Saxman run unopposed for re-election in the 20th House District? It appears not, if the word on the streets in the Queen City is



**Details**

*Seussical the Musical* is being offered by the Waynesboro Players in the Louis Spilman Auditorium at Waynesboro High School Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m. each night and on Sunday at 2 p.m.

**On the Web**

- [www.waynesboroplayers.org](http://www.waynesboroplayers.org)

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

*What do you think? Share your thoughts on this story at [news@augustafreepress.com](mailto:news@augustafreepress.com).*

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