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Players bring Seuss stories to life

In the Spotlight

Chris Graham

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A Who he heard.

A what?

Not What.

A Who.

A Who who happens to be right behind you.

You'll leave the Louis Spilman Auditorium this weekend talking like this, guaranteed.

"Everybody's a Seuss fan, at one time or another. We all start out that way. And we grow up, and we continue to be Seuss fans," said Bob Wright, who is starring in the Waynesboro Players' production of *Seussical the Musical* as everybody's favorite Seussian elephant, Horton.

THE TOP STORY: The ins and outs of the energy bill

By Chris Graham/AFP A gallon of unleaded gasoline costs on average \$2.13 in Virginia, and \$2.22 nationally. This, we're being told, is the reason that the Congress and President Bush need to get together, and soon, on a new energy bill that is currently up for review in the United States Senate. To cut costs at the pump now. The question that begs to be asked here is ... will the energy bill do what its supporters say it will do?

INSIDE ... Kilgore offers L-word label for Kaine

By Chris Graham/AFP The rhetoric does it. So do the newspaper and radio ads. The Jerry Kilgore Republican gubernatorial campaign has clearly made referring to Lt. Gov. Tim Kaine as a liberal a point of emphasis. The Democrat's campaign can't figure out why exactly that is - they just know to be on the lookout for the rather, ahem, liberal use of the L-word by those on the other side.

IN FOCUS: Looking back at Our Big Dig

By Chris Graham/AFP It's been almost four years since life got back to normal in downtown Staunton. City leaders made the decision in the mid-1990s to begin work on streetscape improvements in the central-business district. Everybody involved - government officials, downtown business owners and regular downtown visitors - knew that what became known as "Our Big Dig" was going to be painful. They didn't know exactly how painful.

NOTES FROM THE PRESS: On the Old Dominion campaign trail

By Chris Graham/AFP Critics charged that the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee unfairly singled out Virginia Sen. George Allen for



"We all grew up with *Green Eggs and Ham* and *The Cat in the Hat*. This is a continuation of all those and a compilation of all those. Put them all together, and you get *Seussical the Musical*," said Wright of the show, which kicks off a four-performance run tonight at 8 p.m. at the Spilman Auditorium on the campus of Waynesboro High School.

It's one thing to read a Dr. Seuss book and its famous rhymes. It's quite another to spend two hours on stage knowing that you can't wing it like you can in a non-Seuss show where the lines aren't so tightly woven together when you're not sure of what to say next.

"It's like Shakespeare. If you can't rhyme it, you're in trouble," said Brian Holsopple, who is bringing the role of The Cat in the Hat to life.

"If you flub a line, and you can't rhyme it, yes, you're in trouble. Deep trouble," Wright said. "And the music is very structured, too. You have to fit your dialogue into the music, and if you don't fit it, you're off-rhythm, and you've got a problem."

They gathered around, for a community sing.

And my, how their voices, so high did they ring!

They startled the Who.

And his good Who-friend, too.

Who wasn't prepared for the hullabaloo.

This is where Barbara Spilman Lawson, as Sour Kangaroo, comes into the picture, right about the start of the hullabaloo.

"There are 11 or 12 stories that are used in bits and pieces in this bigger story. The two primary stories are the Horton stories. And in *Horton Hears a Who*, when he hears a dust speck flying by, of course he knows he hears it, but everybody else in the jungle thinks he's insane. I'm the leader of the ranters and ravers in the jungle," Spilman Lawson said.

"I enter at this point with a great big ol' gospel-type number that begins with an 'Aw, Lawdie,' and ends with, 'Aw, Lawd.' It's really quite a hoot," Spilman Lawson said.

criticism in relation to his ties to conservative broadcaster Pat Robertson, who made headlines with comments on a Sunday-morning news show to the effect that federal judges are a greater threat to Americans than the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists. Not true, said DSCC spokesman Phil Singer.

EYE ON VIRGINIA: AG candidates agree, disagree on prayer issue

By Chris Graham/AFP Government meetings have been opening with invocations since the first days of the Commonwealth, Democratic Party attorney-general candidate Creigh Deeds said. "And there's no reason to change that now," said Deeds, a Bath County state senator, who agrees with his two Republican opponents, Richmond-based attorney Steve Baril and Virginia Beach Del. Bob McDonnell, on the idea that the right of governing bodies to open their meetings with prayers needs to be protected.

EYE ON THE VALLEY: BRCC expanding options for students

By Chris Graham/AFP Jim Perkins is *thisclose* to wrapping up work on his goal of inking guaranteed-admission agreements for Blue Ridge Community College students with all of the colleges and universities in the Central Shenandoah Valley. And already the BRCC president is looking ahead to what he will do to this end down the road. "My next target is Virginia Commonwealth University ..."

BIOGRAPHY: To coin a phrase

By Chris Graham/AFP Young Matt Cauley's parents had given him a set of encyclopedias, "I suppose to stimulate my curiosity in the world at large," he said. On his ninth birthday, "my father came up to me with a package, and he said, 'There's something in here that I want to give you, but before I do, you have to tell me what's in here and tell me everything that you know about it,' "



The whole kit-and-kaboodle is a hoot - *Seussical, the Musical* features an exhausting 36 different song-and-dance numbers.

"It's meant to be a high-energy show. It just demands activity on stage," Holsopple said.

The stage was electric.

The players ... ecstatic.

The bystanders ... bemused by their melodic-themed antics.

"The show has two levels. There's a level that adults will get, and there's a level that kids will get. Neither one of it is off-color or foul or anything. It's just that there are some things that adults will pick up on, and both adults and kids will enjoy the characters and everything else to it," Holsopple said.

It was soon time to go.

"Oh, please."

"Don't say so."

"The show must go on," said one Who to the other.

"The show will go on."

The second said to his Who-brother.

Cauley recalled.

THE AGENDA: Lexington City Council meeting tonight

By Chris Graham/AFP Lexington City Council is meeting tonight at 8 p.m. in the Regional Court Facility at 150 S. Main St. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. The agenda for the meeting includes ...

THE AGENDA: Charlottesville School Board

By Chris Graham/AFP The Charlottesville School Board is meeting tonight at 7 p.m. at Charlottesville High School. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

OBITUARIES: May 05, 2005

Delta Bell "Poodle" Hailey, 83

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Details

Seussical the Musical is being offered by the Waynesboro Players in the Louis Spilman Auditorium at Waynesboro High School beginning tonight and running through Saturday at 8 p.m. each night and on Sunday at 2 p.m.

Related story

- [Whimsical, this musical](#), May 02, 2005 *AFP*

On the Web

- www.waynesboroplayers.org

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

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(Published 05-05-05/[Entertainment](#))