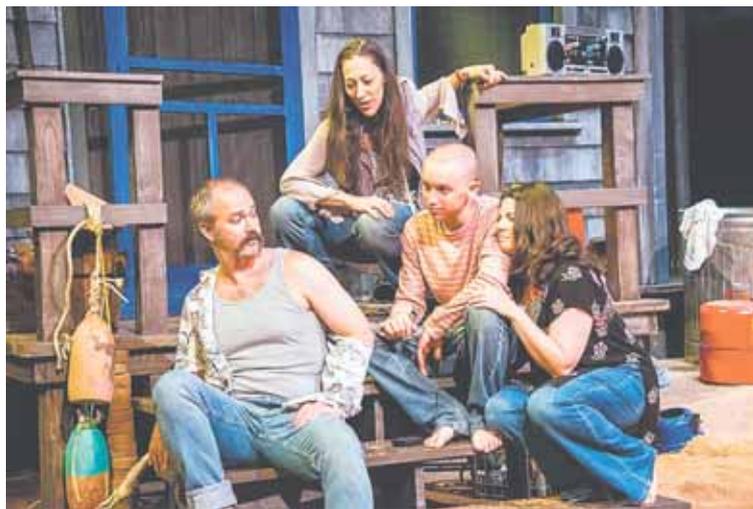


THEATRE

Matthew R. Wilson, Jessica Lefkow, Ethan Miller and Teresa Castracane in “Swimming with Whales” at 1st Stage. The show runs through June 24, 2018 in Tysons.



PHOTOS BY DJ COREY/
COURTESY 1ST STAGE

A Message of Hopefulness

“Swimming with Whales” at 1st Stage.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Written by D.C. area playwright Bob Bartlett, an affiliated artist with the National New Play Network, “Swimming with Whales,” is a moving family drama about strained family relationships, with abundant comic undertones and exquisite magical moments. Its ultimate message is one of hopefulness even with the strains of living.

Directed by Alex Levy, the 1st Stage production of “Swimming with Whales” is a mixture of magical realism, laughter and healing from heartbreak with an unlikely wellspring propelling the story into a spiritual parable. The wellspring for understanding is a solitary juvenile whale swimming near a Nantucket beach. The whale is able to communicate, in his own way, with chosen humans who chose to listen.

Theatrical magic for audiences at “Swimming with Whales” begins the moment the stunning set design developed by Kathryn Kawecki, with exquisite lighting design by Robbie Hayes come into audience view. Along with Cindy Landrum Jacobs’ detailed props and Sarah O’Halloran’s sensitive sound design, the production has a visually “you are there” seashore location. There is plenty of faux-sand, a wood shingled cottage, beach chairs, the sea and clouds and, of course, some empty beer cans and a grill.

As the play opens, the audience meets Patrick (a sadly trenchant Matthew R. Wilson), a local fisher-

Where and When

1st Stage presents “Swimming with Whales,” at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Performed through June 24, 2018. Performances Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$33 (General Admission), \$30 (Senior 65+), \$15 (Student/military). Call 703-854-1856 or visit www.1stStage.org. Note: Wheelchair accessible. Free parking is available. 1st State is about 2 blocks after leaving the Silver Line’s Spring Hill stop.

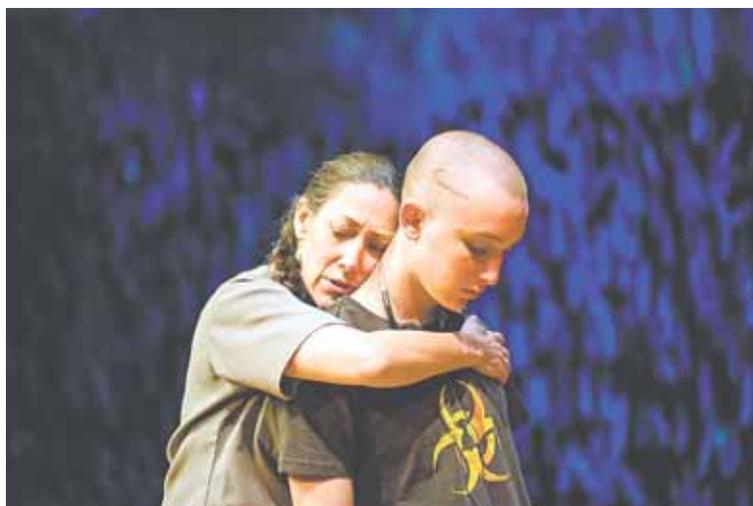
man who has done something unthinkable and trying to talk his way out of the consequences with a local park ranger named Gracie (portrayed with kindness and understanding by Jessica Lefkow). As time goes by, a teen-ager named Owen (an acerbic, marvelously sullen, Ethan Miller) appears in tow with Anne, his mother (Teresa Castracane portraying an overwhelmed mother). Owen has many a medical issue. He even hates the sand. Clashes are immediate.

There are many long-time connections between the “Swimming with Whales” characters including that Owen’s dad is Patrick, and that the three adults grew up together each deeply involved with Owen’s upbringing. The anthropomorphic whale, not an easy design element to depict, is endearingly portrayed by a human actor, Nate Shelton.

Bartlett’s “Swimming with Whales” probes big issues related to loss and resilience, along with comic moments full of good natured teasing surrounding how best to eat pancakes and how teenagers cannot fathom thinking their parents could ever have been young lovers and aging hippies.

“Swimming with Whales” has plenty to ponder. Most of all, the 1st Stage production leaves both its human characters and audience more optimistic for the future.

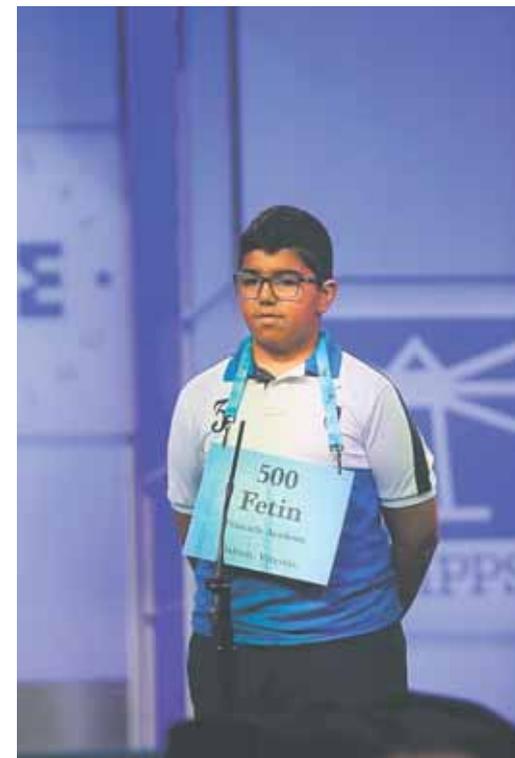
Jessica Lefkow and Ethan Miller in “Swimming with Whales” at 1st Stage. The show runs through June 24, 2018 in Tysons.



Fetin Hussain thinks over how to spell “wisent” in round two of the Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 29.

Oakton Student Competes in National Spelling Bee

The 91st Scripps National Spelling Bee took place from May 29 - 31 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Md. A record-number 515 spellers competed this year after launching an invitational program called RSVBee. Among the competitors was Fetin Hussain, a 12-year-old 7th grader at Pinnacle Academy in Oakton. He did well onstage by spelling “wisent” correctly in round 2 and “wheezy” correctly in round 3, but he did not advance to the finals based upon his score on the preliminaries test.



Fetin Hussain correctly spells the word “wisent” in round two to advance to the next round.

PHOTOS BY
TOM MANNING/
THE CONNECTION

VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PAGE 5

Vandalism — 700 Block Marshall Road, SW May 28, 10:30 a.m. A resident reported their mailbox had been damaged.

Animal Case — 100 Block Harmony Drive, SW May 28, 12:54 p.m. Officers responded to a dog running at large. The dog was transported to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter after officers were unable to contact the owners.

Attempted Fraud — Cloud IX Homes, 340 Mill Street, NE May 28 between 9 and 9:30 a.m. An employee advised an unknown person hacked his email account and attempted to have a payment redirected to another account. The employee and customer were able to have the bank stop the transaction before it was sent to the wrong account.

Narcotics Violation — 300 Block Maple Avenue, West May 29, 6:30 a.m.

Officer Williams initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle that was traveling above the posted speed limit. Upon his interaction with the driver, the officer detected an odor of marijuana. A small amount of marijuana was located and confiscated for destruction. The driver was released on a traffic summons and a verbal warning regarding the marijuana.

Arrest - Narcotics Violation — 400 Block Maple Avenue, East May 29, 7:57 p.m. MPO Smith observed an occupied vehicle in a parking lot and detected an odor of marijuana emitting from the vehicle. Upon his interaction with the driver he located a measurable amount of marijuana and a concealed firearm. The 29-year-old man from Beauregard Street in Alexandria was issued two summons charging Possession of Marijuana and Concealed Weapon. He was released on his signature.