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"A TUNA
CHRISTMAS"



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2010-2011 Season

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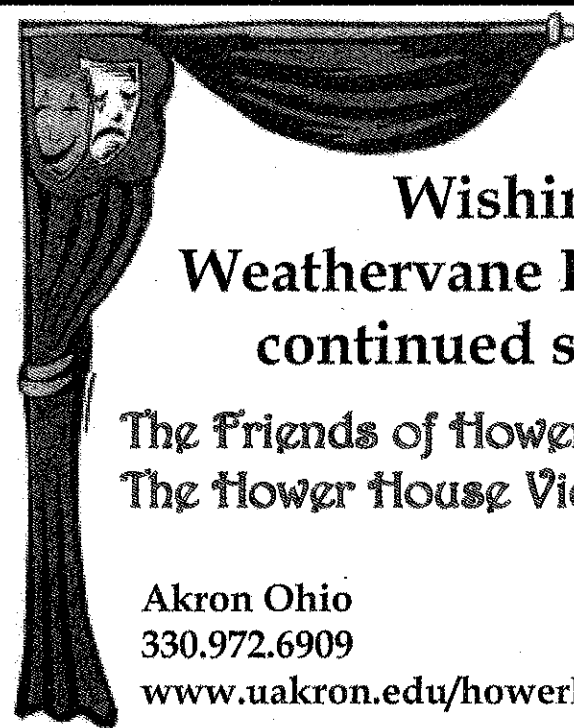


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A Brief History of Weathervane Playhouse

From the "barn" to Copley Road to the Valley...

Weathervane Community Playhouse began its run in 1935. Four artistically talented Woman's City Club members -- Grace Hower Crawford, Muriel MacLachlan, Laurine Schwan, Helen Troesch -- and a core of charter members rented the empty carriage house belonging to Akron's Senator Charles Dick. Their goal was to present a wide spectrum of plays: classics, dramas, comedies, new works -- even opera -- with casting open to anyone who fit a part.

The women chose a carnival as their fundraiser to start paying the rent. Despite a drenching downpour, they raised \$60. They named their space "Weathervane" after the rooster on the barn's cupola. After cleaning their new home, scrounging for seats, a curtain and a coffee pot, Weathervane opened its first season. During that summer of 1935 the group presented seven fully costumed and staged plays. In 1936, Muriel MacLachlan with the other founders offered classes to children and adults, beginning a tradition that has become today's Education Department. In 1938 a Women's Board was formed to offer volunteer financial assistance. It, too, continues to this day.

The "barn" was home until it was sold. In 1951 the Playhouse purchased a cement block building at 1471 Copley Road and renovated it for a theater with seating capacity of 125. The all-volunteer organization hired its first employee, Nora Scott, as custodian/ticket manager. Actual management of the Playhouse was handled by the Operating Board, which reported to the Board of Trustees. Because directors were becoming scarce, the Board hired Bob Belfance as full-time Manager/Director. He held the position from 1961-69 and from 1974-92. During the Copley Road days, plays were presented six days a week. Because of their popularity, not everyone who wanted to see a show could be accommodated. A new home was planned. During the 1960s the membership's plans came together in June 1970 with the opening of *Dark of the Moon* here on Weathervane Lane. Longtime friend and founder Grace Hower Crawford died in 1971, remembering the Playhouse in her will. Her money enabled the Board to pare down the mortgage and set up an Endowment Fund. The last mortgage payment was made in 1974 through a contribution of the Women's Board. Three major additions followed; these included first-floor restrooms, classrooms, a costume shop, fly gallery and elevator. The former scene shop became the John L. Dietz Theater/Classroom in 2005 and the lobby project was just completed for the opening of the 75th season.

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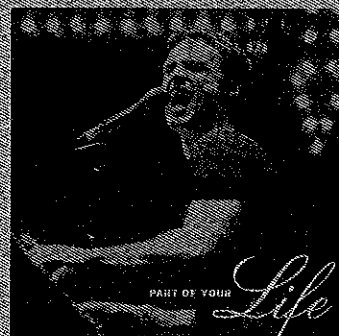
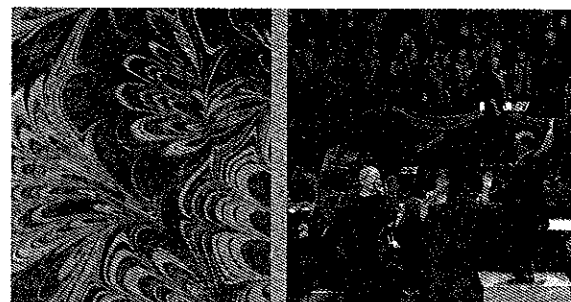
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Sincerely,

John Hedges, Executive Director

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Weathervane
— PLAYHOUSE —



From Our Executive Director

The Messiah May Be One of Us

This seems like an appropriate time of year to tell this story. With a nod to Benjamin Zander from his book, *The Art of Possibility* (and with special thanks to Doug Kohl for introducing me to the author) I give you "The Monks' Story":

A monastery has fallen on hard times. It was once part of a great order, but due to religious persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had lost all its branches. In fact, there were only the Abbot and four other monks left in the mother house, all of whom were over seventy. Clearly it was a dying order.

One day, the Abbot visited a nearby Rabbi to see if he could offer any advice that might save the monastery. The Rabbi commiserated saying "I know how it is, the spirit has gone out of people." "Have you any advice that might save the monastery?" the Abbot asked. "No, I am sorry," the Rabbi replied. "I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

The Abbot returned to the monastery downhearted and bewildered. The monks wondered to themselves what possible significance the Rabbi's words might have. Did he mean the Messiah is the Abbot who's been our leader for so long? Or did he mean Brother Thomas who is a very holy man? Surely, he couldn't have meant Brother Phillip - he's too passive. But then he's always there when you need him. Or Brother Elrod - he's so crotchety. But then Elrod is very wise. Of course he didn't mean me - yet supposing he did?"

As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect, on the off chance that one of them might be the Messiah. And on the off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.

Because the monastery was situated in a beautiful forest, people often came to visit. When they did, they began to sense this aura of extraordinary respect that permeated the atmosphere. As a result, their visits became more and more frequent, eventually bringing friends, and their friends brought their friends. After a while, some of the younger men, drawn to this enormously positive energy, asked if they might join. Miraculously, within a few years, the monastery became a thriving order once again and - thanks to the Rabbi's gift - a vibrant community of light and love.

Respect is a core value at Weathervane Playhouse and I believe our renewed commitment to it is one of the main reasons why we find ourselves experiencing a real organizational renaissance. So, at this time of year (and all year long), let's never forget - the Messiah may be one of us!

With my deep respect,

John Hedges
Executive Director



Weathervane

— PLAYHOUSE —

76th Season -- 2010 - 2011
Special Holiday Production #4
December 2 - 18, 2010



Comedy by
**Ed Howard,
Joe Sears and
Jaston Williams**

Directed by Eileen Moushey

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A Tuna Christmas is produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French, 45 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10010-2751.

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Ticket Office: 330-836-2626 • Fax: 330-873-2150 • weathervaneplayhouse.com



About the Play and Playwrights

About the Play's Production History

A Tuna Christmas is a sequel to *Greater Tuna* – but even those who have not seen the first play will be able to fully enjoy the amusingly eclectic citizens in this Yuletide-themed outing. Creative collaborators Ed Howard, Joe Sears and Jaston Williams first created the “Tuna phenomenon” more than 20 years ago as a party skit in Austin, Texas. After this whimsical, improvised beginning, the men crafted a full-length play, *Greater Tuna*, which had its first production in Austin in the fall of 1981. Two of the creators, Sears and Williams, played all the characters in the play – and after much critical acclaim in Texas, the show took to the road.

The resulting *Greater Tuna* tour proved to be such a success that even “sophisticated” New York City took notice, and the show enjoyed a 13-month, 501-performance run off-Broadway at Circle in the Square Downtown. Next came a 1984 HBO cable-TV special, which increased the show's popularity.

By 1985, *Greater Tuna* ranked among one of the most-performed plays in America. And thus was born the idea for a sequel – *A Tuna Christmas*. In the fall of 1989, *A Tuna Christmas* had a “pre-Austin” try-out in San Francisco prior to opening in Austin in November of that year. In the years thereafter, Sears and Williams continued to tour across America with *A Tuna Christmas* show each Yuletide season. Ultimately, the two men took the show to Broadway in 1994, where *A Tuna Christmas* played for a limited run of eight previews and 20 performances. For his multiple-character portrayals, Sears was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play. In the years since, two more plays have been added to the Tuna canon – *Red, White and Tuna* and *Tuna Does Vegas*. As of December 2010, Sears and Williams are still touring with *A Tuna Christmas*, which is booked for several engagements in Tennessee and Texas between now and January 2011. (Check out the tour schedule and learn more at www.GreaterTunaVisitorsCenter.com.)

About the Playwrights

ED HOWARD collaborated with Joe Sears and Jaston Williams to create the four Tuna plays (and their multitudinous characters): *Greater Tuna*; *A Tuna Christmas*; *Red, White and Tuna*; and *Tuna Does Vegas*. His other plays include *Romeo and Thorazine*, *I'm Not Lying*, *Morning Star*, *A Little Iffy*, *Splendor*, *The Tempest Tossed* (co-written with Dennis West), and *Coming Attractions* (based on the novel *Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man* by Fannie Flagg). As a director, his Broadway credits include *A Tuna Christmas* and his off-Broadway credits include *Greater Tuna*, *A Tuna Christmas* and Romulus Linney's *Laughing Stock* (starring Frances Sternhagen).

JOE SEARS collaborated with Ed Howard and Jaston Williams to create the four Tuna plays (and their multitudinous characters): *Greater Tuna*; *A Tuna Christmas*; *Red, White and Tuna*; and *Tuna Does Vegas*. For his performance in *A Tuna Christmas*, he received a 1995 Tony Award nomination for Best Actor in a Play. His other acting credits include many roles in summer stock, outdoor drama, a season at TheatreworksUSA in New York City, television, films and several Shakespeare plays. He wrote the Cherokee Nation's outdoor drama, *Trail of Tears*, which runs during the summer months in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Among his awards, he received the 1993 Los Angeles Dramalogue Award for Best Actor in *A Tuna Christmas* and the Theatre L.A. Ovation Award for Best Actor in 1999.

JASTON WILLIAMS collaborated with Ed Howard and Joe Sears to create the four Tuna plays (and their multitudinous characters): *Greater Tuna*; *A Tuna Christmas*; *Red, White and Tuna*; and *Tuna Does Vegas*. For his performance in *A Tuna Christmas*, he received a nomination for Washington D.C.'s Helen Hayes Award, and he holds another Helen Hayes Award nomination for his performance in *The Foreigner*. His hometown is Austin, Texas, where he has appeared at the State Theatre in *The Chairs* and at the Zachary Scott Theatre in *The Laramie Project* and *Tru* (for the latter of which he received the Austin Critics Table Award for Best Actor in a drama). As a playwright, his shows include *Romeo and Thorazine*, *I'm Not Lying* and *Cowboy Noises*. Among his awards, he received the L.A. Dramalogue Award for both *Greater Tuna* and *A Tuna Christmas* and the Texas Governor's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts by a native Texan.



A Tuna Christmas -- Ensemble

Gerard Neary

Gabriel Riazi

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

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- ♦ We request that you remain seated until the house lights have come up at intermission and after the curtain call.
- ♦ The use of cameras, recording equipment and laser pointers is forbidden during this performance.
- ♦ As a courtesy to fellow audience members, please make sure that cell phones and pagers are turned off during the performance.
- ♦ Please do not bring refreshments into the auditorium. However, if you have candy, please remove wrappers before the performance begins.
- ♦ NOTE: In case of an emergency in which the performance cannot continue, Calamity Vouchers will be issued for a future performance. Thank you.



About Our Director



EILEEN MOUSHEY (Director/Sound Co-Designer) is a freelance writer/director. Her company, Mysteries by Moushey, performs throughout Northeast Ohio and her mystery scripts have been produced by more than 1,000 theaters and schools all over the world. Eileen also writes video scripts and is a two-time regional Emmy winner. She has been active at Weathervane for more than 25 years as a volunteer and has received several of the Playhouse's Chanticleer Awards for sound, lights and properties designs as well as a "Best Actress" honor. She directed our special holiday production of *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* last year and our Dietz production of Mitch Albom's *And the Winner Is*. Her co-direction of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* earned a Best Production Chanticleer. Eileen has also served on Weathervane's Board of Trustees including a stint as president and her leadership during the last two capital campaigns has been invaluable. She lives in Kent with her husband, Stephen. They have three children and three grandchildren.

In the Harris Family Gallery

Weathervane's Harris Family Gallery is proud to display art work by third grade students from Crouse Elementary School in Akron. Their work will be on display during the run of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *A Tuna Christmas*. These students are from the classrooms of Mrs. Julia Spangler, Mrs. Terri Hudson and Ms. Tara Green. Ms. Erica Flemmer and Ms. Ami Hedri are their Art teachers and supervised the work that they created for this exhibit. The students are Weathervane's invited guests for a daytime performance of *Joseph* and a reception after the show. This year marks the eighth anniversary of the special relationship between Weathervane Playhouse and Crouse Elementary School.

Marci Paolucci, Gallery Curator

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Ensemble Biographies



GERARD NEARY has taken a hiatus from the stage for several years. Some of his past credits include Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (The Players Guild), Mickey in *Greetings*, Mortimer in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and George in *Chapter Two* (Coach House Theatre), Petruchio in *The Taming of The Shrew* and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Stan Hywet), Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* and Orin in *Little Shop of Horrors* at Weathervane Playhouse. Gerard teaches high school English and is the department head of the Theatre Arts program at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School where he is currently directing a production of *Blithe Spirit*. In his free time Gerard enjoys spending time with his family, his friends,

and his dogs. He also enjoys spending time outdoors and traveling. Gerard thanks his family and friends for all of their love and support. Gerard dedicates his performance to the memories of his loving parents, George and Charmaine Neary.



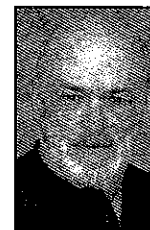
GABRIEL RIAZI was seen recently as Ron Miller in our production of *Breaking the Code*. He says, "How exciting to be back in a theater that really feels like home!" following a hiatus while pursuing his theater degree. A two-time Chanticleer recipient (*Gypsy* and *Oliver!*), he was recently seen in the none too fragile theatre's production of *Romance*.

Creative Team Biographies



MARY KATE CLANCY (Stage Manager) The stage-managing bug bit Mary Kate back in 1995 during the Women's Board production of *Wolftales*. She has been stage-managing ever since with such shows as *Lips Together, Teeth Apart, A Man for All Seasons* and *Blithe Spirit*. Mary Kate stage-managed three Chanticleer winners, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Wit* and *Lend Me a Tenor*. She holds a Master's Degree from Kent State University. Her talent for organizing led to a position as the resident stage manager for Mysteries by Moushey, Inc. Mary Kate's skills extend to her career as a teacher - she's "stage managed" second-graders at Chippewa Elementary School in Brecksville for 25 years. Her only acting is in her classroom when she appears as her "cousin" from Ireland, Margaret Murphy.

Enterprises and works behind the scenes for his wife, Eileen, and Mysteries by Moushey.



JEFF BIXBY (Assistant Stage Manager) has been seen on stage and has worked off stage at Weathervane for the past two seasons. Growing up in Medina and then graduating from Kent State University, he taught elementary school for 30 years in Cincinnati before moving back to the Akron area which he loves. He won a Marquee Award for his performance as The Barber in *Man of La Mancha* in 2008 and was seen as Clarence the Angel in last season's *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*. Off stage, Jeff has helped with set props and lighting, and was assistant stage manager for *The Wedding Singer*. Jeff is a member of the boards of CANAPI and The Illusion Factory. He is tickled to be in another Moushey production.



STEPHEN MOUSHEY (Sound Co-Designer) co-designed sound for last season's holiday special, *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*, and for *And the Winner Is*. He also designed sound for *Of Mice and Men*, *Seven Guitars* and *Lend Me a Tenor*. In his other life, he is a print salesman for SWC



TOM ABDOO (Properties Designer) is a resident of Clinton whose previous props or props co-design credits with Weathervane include *Italian American Reconciliation*, *Man of La Mancha* (for which he won a Chanticleer Award), *Tale of the Allergist's Wife*,



Creative Team Biographies continued

The Dinner Party, The Odd Couple (Female Version), The Glass Menagerie and A Man for All Seasons. He has also worked on props crews for many other productions. He works in the wholesale division at Parrish/McIntyre Tire Company and is the proud father of three and doting grandfather to six.



SUSAN STOUT-DAVIS (Lighting Designer) began volunteering at Weathervane in the fall of 1983 and won a Chanticleer for her work on *Camping with Henry and Tom*. In addition to her activities at Weathervane, she has also worked on productions for

Goodyear Theater, Stow Players, Geauga Little Theater and Cleveland Opera. Additionally, Susan worked on many shows at The University of Akron for the Department of Theatre, Music and Dance and the Student Programming Board. Susan has served in various offices of the Theatre Guild at UA and the productions board at Weathervane. She is currently serving as a Deacon at her church and as the Wellness Champion on the Safety Committee at the United Parcel Service. Susan and husband Gary have two sons, Nick and William.



JASEEN J. SMITH (Costume Designer) joined the Weathervane staff in August of 2008. Since joining the staff he has designed: *Children of Eden, Joseph, Bloody Murder, The Great White Hope and Pride and Prejudice* and co-designed *Man of La Mancha* (for which he won a Chanticleer), *Putting*

It Together and *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. Jaseen also won the 2009 YACIA Marquee award for Best Costume Design for *Children of Eden*. Other regional designs include Porthouse Theater: *The Odd Couple*; Case Western Reserve University: *The Philadelphia Story, How I Learned to Drive, Much Ado About Nothing, Stage Door*; Ohio Light Opera: *Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, Robin Hood and The Merry Widow*. Jaseen is also a Lecturer of Costume Design at Case Western Reserve University.



ALAN SCOTT FERRALL (Scenic Designer) began with Weathervane as a backstage volunteer under the tutelage of the late John R. Thomas. This is Scott's 14th season as a Weathervane staff member. Previously, he worked at Cuyahoga Falls High School and has designed sets for the

Players Guild of Canton, Cleveland Signstage Theatre and Western Reserve Public Media (PBS-TV Channels 45/49). Scott has earned six Chanticleer Awards – one as stage manager for *Fences*; lighting designs for *The Laramie Project* and *A Lesson Before Dying*; and co-lighting designs for *A Man for All Seasons, The Full Monty* and *Man of La Mancha*.



Production Team

Alan Scott Ferrall -- Technical Director
Kathy Kohl -- Assistant Technical Director

SET CONSTRUCTION

Ruth Richardson
Roger Dieringer
Todd Dieringer
Kevin Ford
Erin Katz Ford
Joe Hunter
Jonathon Hunter

SOUND

Lois Bennett
Sue Snyder
Lane Smerglia

LIGHTING

Steve Lawson
Ron Cuirle
Erin Katz Ford

PROPERTIES

Barbie Trotter
Sylvia Collier

COSTUMES

Susanne Abernathy
Diantha Seibert
Carol Smith
Jacqui Sukie

DRESSERS

JoAnn Francis
Gerry Bowman

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The following are the dedicated volunteers who have assisted us recently.

Patrice Bechtol

June Bretzin

Karen Burridge

Mary Campbell

Ken Carder

Gail & Leonard Cheslock

Suzanne Clapper

Wendy Cooley

Thelma Coss

Brenda Costarella

Lauretta Cypher

Steve Davis

Margaret Dietz

Ann Edwards

Helen Fleming

Jill Forster

Janis Gallagher

Marilyn Heagerty

Linda Heath

Judith Holder

Chuck Kelades

Evie Kidder

Sarah Kovach

Carol Krueger

Bunny Lacey

Nancy Mahoney

Jo McGarvey

Mitzi Mild

Sheila Motter

Lois Murray

Patricia Obenour

Barbara O'Connor

John O'Neill

Lee Peterson

Marci Paolucci

Bess Raines

Ruth Richardson

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Debbie Shama-Davis

Lois Simmons

Sue Smith

Amy Snel

Pat Spayne

Jacqui Sukie

Sally Taylor

Diane Thomas

Barbie Trotter

Pete Ulrich

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Connie Velotta

Emma Weihe

Marta Williger

Mary Wolfman

Gen Woods

Elizabeth Young

B.J. Zeigler

Elynnmarie Kazle

Zimmerman

A Gift to Weathervane's Endowment Fund
was made in memory of
Paul Simmons
by Margaret J. Dietz

JOHN HEDGES, Executive Director

Mr. Hedges has an extensive background in theatre as both an actor and a producer. Prior to coming to Weathervane, John spent ten years in the acting company at the Barter Theatre in Virginia, where he performed in over 60 shows. Other acting credits include performances at Town Hall in New York and the Pantages Theatre in Los Angeles. Regionally he has worked at the Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville and the American Stage Festival, where he appeared opposite Academy Award-winner Olympia Dukakis in *The Cherry Orchard*. John has been Managing Director of First Stage Milwaukee, Associate Producer of North Shore Music Theatre, Business Director of Gloucester Stage Company and General Manager of New York's award-winning Pearl Theatre Company. Mr. Hedges is a member of Actors' Equity Association, served on the Board of Directors of Boston's StageSource and chaired its Strategic Planning Committee, been a Conference Panelist for the American Alliance for Theatre & Education and written for *American Theatre* magazine. He studied at Indiana State University and the Professional Theatre Training Program at the University of Delaware, is a graduate of the National Shakespeare Conservatory and holds an honorary MFA degree in theatre from Stafford University. A 2009 graduate of Leadership Akron (Class XXV), John lives in Akron.

Annual Holiday Drop-In

Dec. 15
5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

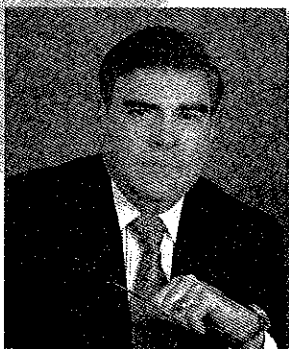
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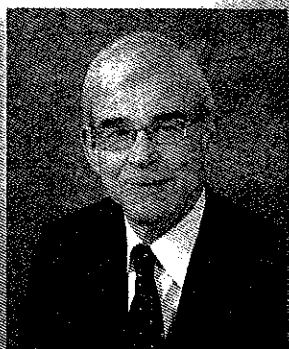
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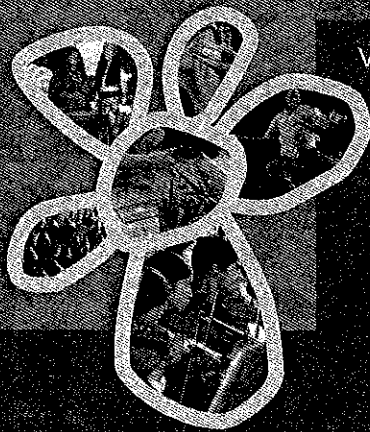
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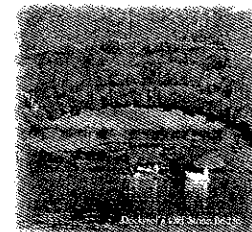
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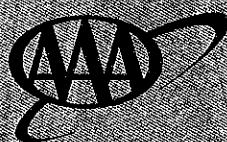
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