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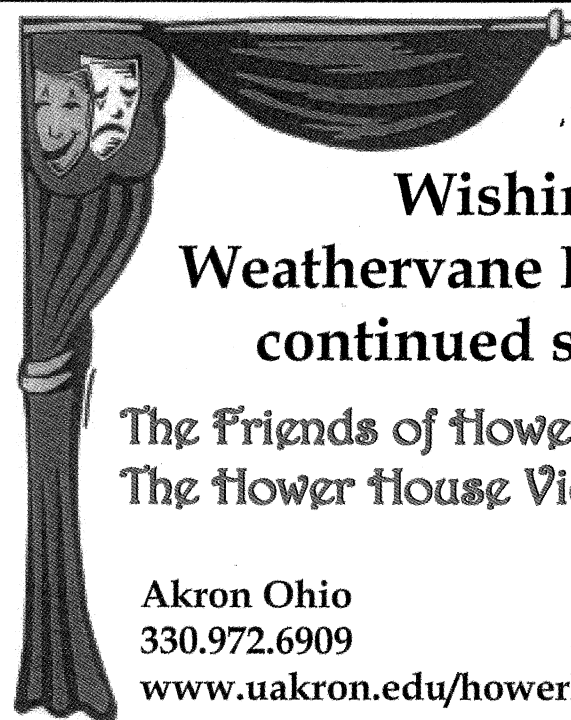


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A Brief History of Weathervane Playhouse

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.

Weathervane's Legacy Society

Your Legacy Gift to Weathervane can be as simple as including the playhouse in your will, establishing a life insurance policy or trust, or making the theater a beneficiary of your retirement savings plan.

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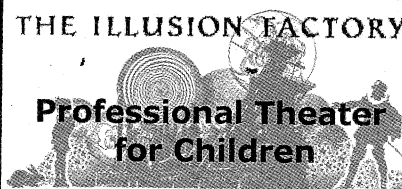
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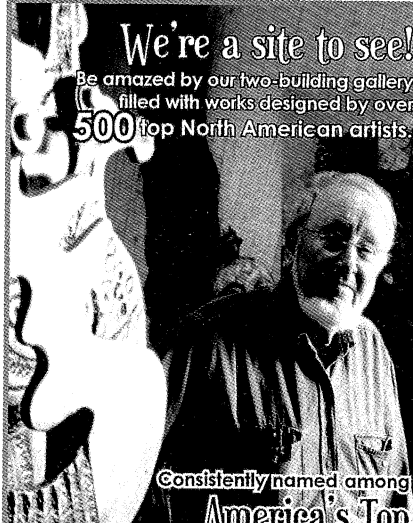
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As you probably know, earned income accounts for only 65% of our total expenses. The plain fact is, if each Weathervane patron gave just \$1 extra after each show, we would be able to meet our goal for Individual Contributions! Won't you show your appreciation of this performance with a "Thank You Dollar" after the show?

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Sincerely,

John Hedges
Executive Director



From Our Executive Director

Excerpted Remarks by John Hedges to Leadership Akron Class XXVIII
(December 7, 2011)

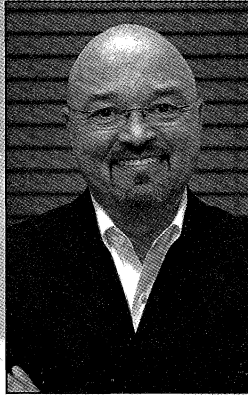
Weatherwane's business model can be characterized as one that:

*Is driven by altruistic rather than commercial priorities.

*Produces an entirely new set of artistic products each year that are extremely labor-intensive, with very little working capital, and no test marketing to indicate whether or not there'll be any buyers for those products.

*Has limited the access to those products to certain days and times throughout the year that the general public can actually "consume" them.

*And, even if those products become wildly successful, they are still unable to pay for themselves, they do not financially benefit any individual associated with the company, and are subsequently discarded to produce more untested, labor-intensive, limited-access artistic products.



Money is a means to an end at Weatherwane, not an end in and of itself. As a matter of fact, I would say that the creation of theater at Weatherwane is a means to an end as well.

The end for us can be described in similar terms as the Red Cross defines its end goal as "to serve the most vulnerable" (when they could say, "to gather bandages and administer food to disaster victims"), or the Salvation Army describes its goal as "making citizens of the rejected" (as opposed to "distributing clothing to those without any").

The end objective for Weatherwane – and for live theater as an art form in general – is to be a catalyst for a more tolerant, empathetic, imaginative, and enlightened society.

We believe that engendering creativity in people through participation in theater arts will not only enhance their quality of life, but will also help us begin to solve some of the major issues that face our society and, indeed, our world. Through seeing life from someone else's point of view and figuratively "walking in their shoes" there can emerge a greater sense of understanding and empathy for others. In a very real way, this holds out the promise of helping with things like rising crime rates, tensions between races, and, yes, even global conflict.

Charles Fowler, one of the great thinkers and theorists of our time on the importance of the arts, said: "The arts are the ways we human beings 'talk' to ourselves and to each other. They are the language of civilization through which we express our fears, our anxieties, our curiosities, our hungers, our discoveries, and our hopes. They are the universal ways by which we humans still play make-believe, conjuring up worlds that explain the ceremonies of our lives. The arts are not just important; they are a central force in human existence."

Sincerely,

John Hedges
Executive Director
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Weatherwane

— PLAYHOUSE —

77th Season -- 2011 - '2012

John L. Dietz Dietz Theater Production #16

January 12 - 28, 2012

YELLOWMAN

Drama by Dael Orlandersmith

Directed by Jennifer Kay Jeter

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Yellowman is produced by special arrangement with
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Ticket Office: 330-836-2626 • Fax: 330-873-2150 • weathervaneplayhouse.com



About the Play and Playwright

About the Play

Yellowman is a multi-character "memory play" about an African-American woman who dreams of life beyond the confines of her small-town Southern upbringing and the light-skinned man whose fate is tragically intertwined with hers. The play explores the negative associations surrounding male blackness as well as the effect these racial stereotypes have on black women.

In his 2002 review of the original off-Broadway production, Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* described the basic story line of *Yellowman*: "In its baldest terms, its plot suggests a brutal variation on *Romeo and Juliet*, recast according to the arcane sociology of Gullah society in the South: light-skinned boy and dark-skinned girl fall in love and are torn asunder by their squabbling families.

"But the divisions in *Yellowman*, presented as a narrative counterpoint delivered by [the play's two actors] are as much within families as between them, and even more so within the individuals who make up families. The play's central characters and storytellers, Eugene and Alma, are determined not to turn into their parents. The odds, needless to say, are ominously against them."

Yellowman was first commissioned and developed by three regional theater companies – McCarter Theatre Center (in Princeton, New Jersey), Wilma Theater (in Philadelphia, PA) and Long Wharf Theatre (in New Haven, Connecticut) – and it was developed in part with the support of the The Sundance Institute Theatre Program (of Park City, Utah). This three-way co-production of the play opened on Jan. 10, 2002 at McCarter Theatre Center. Thereafter, Manhattan Theatre Club produced the first New York production of the play; it opened on Oct. 22, 2002 at New York City Center's Stage I, where it played for a limited two-month engagement. Playwright Dael Orlandersmith played the role of Alma in both of these first two productions of her play. *Yellowman* received three 2003 Drama Desk Award nominations, two 2003 Outer Critics Circle Award nominations and was a finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

About the Playwright

Dael Orlandersmith was born in New York City in 1959 as Donna Dael Theresa Orlander Smith Brown. As a child, she grew up in public housing in New York's rough-and-tumble East Harlem neighborhood and her parents sent her to Catholic schools. When she was still a child, her father died and her mother struggled to afford the tuition for her daughter's parochial-school education. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Orlandersmith's neighborhood was a dangerous place, and so was the South Bronx neighborhood where her best friend lived. Several decades later, in an interview with *American Theatre* magazine, Orlandersmith recalled that "Heroin was at its height then. I remember people would carry an extra \$5, in case a junkie came up to them, so they wouldn't lose their life."

Outside of her schooling, she began writing a journal at the age of 10, in which she wrote of her budding interests in reading and music – both of which she devoured voraciously. A teacher suggested that she sign up for an acting class, which she did, and during her teens she performed with The Nuyorican Poets Cafe on New York's Lower East Side. After high school, she enrolled at Hunter College for a while but then returned to perform with the Nuyorican group as a poet/performer and even toured Europe and Australia with the troupe. She soon began to get small acting jobs here and there (such as a bit part on one episode of the ABC-TV situation comedy, *Spin City*).

Eventually, however, Orlandersmith turned her artistic energies toward writing. She traveled west to Park City, Utah to hone her writing skills at the famed Sundance Institute Theatre Program (established by actor/director Robert Redford). Following her stint at Sundance, she returned to New York to star in her new play, *Beauty's Daughter*. For this tale of a young woman in Harlem growing up under the wings of an alcoholic mother, Orlandersmith won a 1994-1995 OBIE Award (the *Village Voice* honor for the best in the off-Broadway season).

Her next play, *The Gimmick*, played at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1998 and at the New York Theater Workshop the following year. This one-woman play – starring the playwright herself – confronts the consistent temptation of sex, drugs and money that can surround and drown a creative, artistic person.

continued...



Cast

Alma Nichole Strong
Eugene Marc Jackson

There will be one 10-minute intermission between scenes II and III.

About the Playwright continued...

Her next solo play, *Monster*, was staged at A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) in Seattle. Another story of a young woman growing up in Harlem, Orlandersmith played nine different characters. The play deals with the cycles of family violence that can occur over several generations. When *The New York Times* asked her to write an article about her plays, she admitted that she often went back to the same subjects. "There is a theme throughout the work that I write," Orlandersmith wrote, "about childhood and the sins of the father, the sins of the mother, and how people take on the very thing they don't like about their parents and they become them."

Yellowman, Orlandersmith's next play, marked the first time she wrote a play for more than one actor. She set her play in the coastal South Carolina area that is home to the distinctive Gullah culture, and here she was able to expose the issue of black-on-black racism through a star-crossed love story between two characters, Alma and Eugene. As a child, Orlandersmith had spent summers with relatives in this rural South Carolina area. In an interview with *The New York Times*, she remembered a light-skinned black family who "for generations...had interbred to keep the light-skinned color line going. And they would condemn people who were darker. So you had people who hated this family and whom this family hated."

Orlandersmith continues to live, write and perform in New York City.

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About Our Director ~ Jennifer Kay Jeter



JENNIFER KAY JETER (Director) Trained as a performance artist, Jeter will often collaborate with traditional artists or with non-traditional partners including social service organizations to create curriculum, programming and theatrical works in order to spotlight societal concerns such as homelessness, addiction and sexual abuse. This Ohio native is an advocate of the arts. Jeter works in educational, community and professional theatre. Her thesis entitled, *The Rites of Being: An Analytical Review of Performance Art*, was an attempt to legitimize the abstract art form of performance art. As a Social Artist, she continues to develop art constructions that address the changing needs of the community. Jeter creates commentary through her photography, writing, directing, painting and/or a combination of select media. Jeter previously directed *Fifteen-Minute Hamlet* for Weathervane's First Night contribution several years ago. *Yellowman* will be her first full-length production for Weathervane in the Dietz Theatre. Concentrating primarily on African American theatre, Jeter's past directing credits include *Black Girl*, *The Amen Corner*, *For Colored Girls...*, *On Striver's Row*, *Crowns* and *The Piano Lesson*.



Director's Notes

Dael Orlandersmith's *Yellowman* relays the spoken and unspoken complexities of friendship/love/desire between Eugene and Alma in their South Carolina communities of St. Stephens and Russellville. *Yellowman* begins in the 1960s when colored/negro/blacks heads were reeling from racial tensions -- stories of black and white tensions running daily in national newspaper headlines. However, the story that *Yellowman* embraces is not the one that made for tabloid fodder, but rather the internalized racism within the colored/negro/black community.

Whether that "internalized racism" was a result of institutional planning by a white constituent to divide a group of colored/negro/blacks for financial profit (slavery) was not the concern. Slavery had been abolished by at least three generations in the 1960s, but those slave descendants had not yet washed away all of the racial residue developed when slavery was a burgeoning business in the south.

Instead, colored/negro/blacks held to those values and firmly developed a self-loathing that found black/black skin distasteful and celebrated lighter hues as more palatable. A self-loathing that referred to thickly coiled locks as "nappy" and straighter hair as "good." A self-loathing where being black/black was synonymous with "ugly" and being yellow was synonymous with "pretty."

Marriage alliances were determined by color and how the offspring would benefit. Churches and social organizations required people to pass a "brown paper bag test." "Black get back, brown stick aroun', white - well all right!" was not just a ditty but a way of life.

I've always been fascinated by race and how individuals process who they are - information gleaned from family members, friends, immediate community and from their own collective thoughts after staring at themselves in a mirror. Has "internalized racism" touched your life in any way?

-Jennifer Kay Jeter
Director *Yellowman*



Cast Biographies



NICHOLE M. STRONG (Alma) is making her Weathervane stage debut playing Alma in *Yellowman*. Nichole is very excited to be working with Jennifer Kay Jeter on this thought-provoking show. It is an honor to work with a director whom she both respects and considers a dear friend. A junior at The University of Akron, Nichole spent this past summer working with Terry Burgler and the illustrious company of Ohio Shakespeare Festival: a fitting training ground to prepare for this role. Some of Nick's previous shows include *King Richard III* (OSF 2011), *Elegies for Angels*, *Punks and Raging Queens* (First Grace UCC 2010), *You Can't Take It with You* (Coach House Theatre 2009) and *Ragtime* (WCP 2008). What actress would be complete without a fan club! She thanks her mother and stepfather, Tamela and Sharaf Al Mulaiki, grandmother Patricia Strong, father Kenneth Eugene Strong, Cristann Frazier, aunts Lillian Mitchell and Lucille Humphrey, Chet Williams, great grandmother

Gertrude Brewer, and a host of other family, friends and fellow thespians. On with the show! Nichole's performance is dedicated to Dr. Samuel E. Strong Jr. I love you, Doc.



MARC JACKSON (Eugene) is thrilled and honored to be in *Yellowman* after his Weathervane debut in *Ragtime* (2008). A Cleveland native, Marc holds a B.A. degree in Theatre from The University of Akron. Marc has been involved in numerous productions at the university and in the community. His favorite roles include Ross in *Macbeth*, Selsdon in *Noises Off!*, the Lawyer in *A Dream Play*, gang member in *Ragtime* and, more recently, Jesus in *Godspell*, at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Solon (2010). Marc is also involved in many scenes, plays and short films for his church: SPAN Ministries, in Tallmadge. He is thankful to God, family, and friends for their ongoing love and support. Please enjoy the show!



Creative Team Biographies



DANIELLE M. TERLONGE (Stage Manager) is pleased to return to Weathervane after several years' absence. She has been a part of stage management, sound, lighting, and properties teams at the theater in the past. Danielle is a recent graduate of The University of Akron with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She thanks her husband for always supporting her crazy schedule.



TODD DIERINGER (Properties Designer) is thrilled to be designing props for *Yellowman*. You may recall his work as props designer for *Pippin* last season and as co-designer for *The*

Wedding Singer. Todd was our scenic designer for *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Children of a Lesser God*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Three Tall Women*. He helps build scenery for many of our productions and serves as the Properties Department Chair on our Production Board. He shares his passion for theatre with his father, Roger, who also volunteers in the scene shop. Todd is the systems administrator in the admissions office at The University of Akron. Todd says, "Theatre is a communal art and I'm proud to be part of the Weathervane community - my second family."



Creative Team Biographies ~ continued



RYAN DURFEE (Lighting Designer) is a graduate of Kent State University with a degree in Theater. He works for a local production company where he is a production manager for various concerts and events. Some of his lighting designs at Weathervane include *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Emperors New Clothes*, *Our Town* and a *Doll's House*, and co-designs for *As Bees in Honey Drown* and *Crowns*.



JASEN J. SMITH (Costume Designer) joined the Weathervane professional staff in August 2008 as its Resident Costume Designer and Costume Shop Manager. Since then, he has designed costumes for the Playhouse's productions of *Children of Eden*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Bloody Murder*, *Intimate Apparel* and *Pride and Prejudice* among others. His co-costuming credits include *Putting It Together* (with Adam Thatcher) and *Man of La Mancha* (with Hedy Jones), the latter of which earned him and his collaborator the Chanticleer Award for best costume design. Jasen also won the 2009 Marquee Award for Best Costume Design from the Youngstown

Area Community Theatre Association for his work on *Children of Eden*. His other regional costume-design credits include Porthouse Theatre, Case Western Reserve University and the Ohio Light Opera (*Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Robin Hood* and *The Merry Widow*).



ALAN SCOTT FERRALL (Scenic Designer) began his association with Weathervane as a backstage volunteer under the tutelage of the late John R. Thomas. This is Scott's 15th season as a

Weathervane staff member, serving as the Resident Technical Director and Scenic Designer. Previously, he worked at Cuyahoga Falls High School. He has designed sets for many local high schools as well as for the Players Guild of Canton, Cleveland Signstage Theatre and Western Reserve Public Media. Scott has earned several Chanticleer Awards – one as stage manager for *Fences*, lighting designs for *The Laramie Project* and *A Lesson Before Dying*; co-lighting designs for *A Man for All Seasons*, *The Full Monty* and *Man of La Mancha* and, most recently, for Best Technical Element/Young Actor Series – Lighting Design for *Joseph*.



In the Harris Family Gallery

Christine Morrow is a vibrant, talented woman who has been working in the digital photography medium since 2001. That was the year she replaced her chemical darkroom with a computer and imaging software. For more than 10 years prior to 2001, Christine created her art through film photography using various traditional chemical darkroom applications. She was inspired by her father, William Jordan, an accomplished photographer.

"Once I acquired the computer and software, I had the needed tools but skill was another matter. The computer skills I've acquired have been through video tapes, magazines, sharing information with others, and spending every free moment experimenting. It is all about learning through doing and allowing my imagination free reign. For the majority of my 'digital darkroom' images, my photos are combined with digital paint media to produce images that lie somewhere between the two artistic expressions. I photograph everything: landscapes, scenes, still life arrangements and people -- all with a preference for natural light."

Christine has exhibited as a solo artist in juried shows and in group shows, winning a number of awards. Her photographs have also been featured in *Color, a Magazine for Collectors of Fine Photography*. She received a Gold Award for her work in Special Issue 7, May 2010, and was a Merit Winner in Special Issue 10 (Nov. 2010) and Special Issue 13 (May 2011). Her piece, *Under Lock and Key* was on view at the Butler Museum in Youngstown in 2011 and later won Second Place at Summit Art Space's *Kaleidoscope* exhibit. We are pleased to include it here in The Harris Family Gallery.



Production Team

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

SET CONSTRUCTION

David Ruggles
Leah Magnus
Ruth Richardson

LIGHTS

David Ruggles

SOUND

Christopher Czirok

COSTUMES

Susanne Abernathy
Diantha Seibert

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Patrice Bechtol
Phyllis Bernel
Connie Bowen
June Bretzin
Dennis Brinton
Karen Burridge
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Mary Campbell
Brenda Castorella
Frank Castorena
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Pearl Sentelik
Dorothy Shaffer
LaVerne Smith

Sue Smith
Jacqui Sukie
Barbie Trotter
Helen Vari
Marta Williger
Mary Wolfman
Elynmarie Kazle
Zimmerman
Special Thanks to the
parents of the *Joseph* cast.

Memorial donations were made in memory of
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A Memorial donation was made in memory of
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Donations were made in honor of the 50th Anniversary of
Sue and Richard Smith
by Margaret J. Dietz and Keith D. Campbell

A donation was made in honor of
John Grafton & Richard Worswick
by Vieven & Dan Moore

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 Medina.

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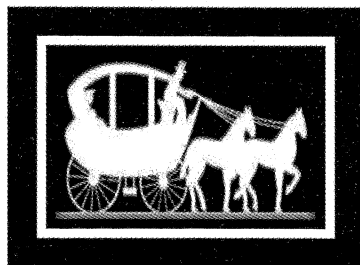
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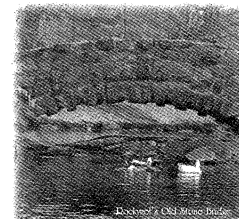
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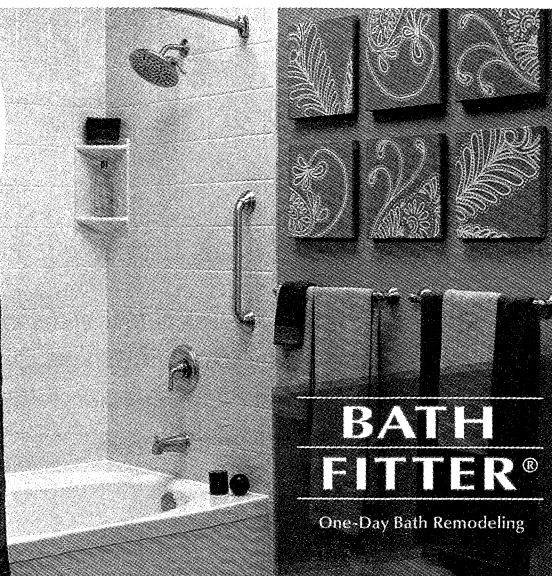
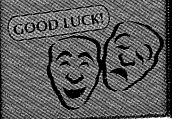
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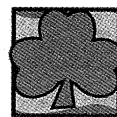
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