American Association of Community Theatre
Region Report

Report of: Region III

Report Date: May 18, 2005

Report Submitted By: Joanne Berry, Region III Representative

Upcoming State/Region Events/Activities

Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA): Summer regional (Ohio regions) excerpt festivals will be held in June and July in New Philadelphia, Hudson, Sidney, Hamilton, and Mansfield. 50+ theatres will be participating in these five festivals.

The 2005 Annual Conference will be held in Perrysburg on September 2-5 (Labor Day Weekend). The theme is “Close Encounters of the Theatre Kind” with Jerry Zimmerman as the Space Commander (chair). Three excerpts from each Ohio regional Octafest will perform. There will be workshops, parties, the famous OCTA feud (a la Family Feud) and a banquet and brunch. Contact Eleanor Smith at 614-418-9672 or <Smithec57@wideopenwest.com> for more information.

Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM): The annual Fall Conference will be held at Boyne Highlands Resort in Harbor Springs on September 23-25. The theme is Renaissance Harvest Festival. The conference promises workshops, great food, networking, showcases, contests, and much revelry. Regional resources will be used with workshops by Jill Patchin (MI), Morrie Enders (WI), and Jack Phillips (IL). CTAM resources will be used for other workshops. Contact conference chair Kirsten Jorgensen at <outofthewings@yahoo.com> for more information.

Strategic Plan Status

II – 1-A
State contacts will again be expected to contact groups and individuals whose memberships have not been renewed. This will occur after the membership renewal deadline.

Past/Future Work Report

Since the beginning of 2005 I have attended state AACTFests in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana. I also attended the Illinois AACTFest in August, 2004 (see previous report). I was unable to attend the Ohio AACTFest because it was the same weekend as the Wisconsin festival. I did attend the annual OCTA conference last September and will attend the 2005 conference. I appreciated the special hospitality of the host groups in each state. In April I attended the Region III AACTFest in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, hosted by Grosse Pointe Theatre. GPT and festival chair Mary Lou Britton are to be commended for an outstanding festival.

A meeting of the Association of Region Three (ART) was held during the regional AACTFest. Region III rotates the responsibility of hosting regional festivals and
providing a regional representative. My two-year term as Regional Representative will end in June during the national festival. Illinois takes its turn beginning in June. Ruth Bardy was recommended by Illinois State Contact Toni Higgins-Thrash as the Region III Representative for the next two-year term. Her appointment was unanimously approved. The board also voted to pay the fee for the regional winner that will represent us at the national festival beginning with the 2007 AACTFest.

**Interest Items**

**Illinois:** Ruth Bardy and Toni Higgins-Thrash will continue as the Community Theatre Representatives to the Illinois Theatre Association and serve on several committees. Toni serves on the Executive Director and Nominating committees. Ruth serves on the Executive Committee and the Finance and Membership committees. The Illinois Pre-Festival Committee composed of Illinois AACT members Ruth Bardy, Toni Higgins-Thrash, David Alex, Mike Partipilo, and John Thrash are beginning plans for the festivals of the 2007 cycle. The Schaumburg Park District (Toni’s home base) is exploring the possibility of hosting the regional festival. Toni received a $500 scholarship from the Suburban Parks and Recreation Association to use toward AACT and/or Illinois Theatre Association meetings/workshops. *Unveiling* performed by S.T.A.R. (Southwest Theatre & Arts Resources, Inc.) from Chicago represented Illinois at the Region III AACTFest.

**Indiana:** The ICTL/AACTFest was held in Muncie, Indiana, on March 18-20, hosted by the Muncie Civic Theatre and chaired by Ross Rowland. Since there were ten entries in the festival, Indiana was able to select two group to move on to the regional festival. Those were Elkhart Civic Theatre’s *Cabin Fever* and River City Family Theatre’s *Nunsense, Amen!* The runner-up was South Bend Civic Theatre’s *The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife.* Community Theatre Guild of Valparaiso’s *The Boys Next Door* place third. Trophies went to the following: Richard McNally and Laurel Purdue in Elkhart’s *Cabin Fever*, Jerry Burns in Terre Haute’s *Over the River and through the Woods*, and Tyrone Van Talenlove in Kokomo’s *Over the River and through the Woods.*

The second annual Robert Miller Educational Scholarship was awarded this spring.

The annual meeting of ICTL was held during the state festival and the existing officers were re-elected.

**ICTL** is proud to recognize the work of Pulse Opera House of Warren and their production of *The Fantasticks*, which was selected to perform at the Bunte Buhne Festival in Fellbach, Germany, in November 2004.

**Michigan:** The CTAM Joyce Schultheiss Memorial Scholarship auditions were held in February. Two students were awarded $1,000 scholarships: K. T. Gavin, sponsored by Grosse Pointe Theatre, and Susan Jolink, sponsored by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. At the Michigan AACTFest in March, *Proof* was selected to represent Michigan at the Region III festival. The Rosedale Community Players of Detroit produced it. *A Little Something for the Ducks* produced by Ichabod’s Little Theatre in the Hollow of South Haven was the runner–up. The festival included workshops conducted by Tom Perkin, Paul Kuhlman, and Barb Elliott and a showcase performance by the Corunna High School Drama Club. The festival was held in Owosso and chaired by Chuck Bump.
CTAM’s annual playwriting contest was held this spring with the winners being announced later this summer. This year CTAM opened the contest to the entire region. Several long-term and hard-working volunteers from local theatre groups were presented a Dorothy Arnett Volunteer Service Award. These individuals have contributed at least ten years of service to their groups and were nominated by their organizations. CTAM board members made the presentations at events at the local theatres.

Ohio: The Ohio AACTFest was held in February in Cincinnati. The Laramie Project produced by Emerald City Players of Dublin was selected to represent Ohio at the Region III festival where they were selected as Region III’s alternate for the national festival. Kathy Sturm and Eric Ewing received “Excellence in Acting” awards at the regional festival.

Five groups have become first-time OCTA members during the past year. Jerry Zimmerman, OCTA past president, will receive a Distinguished Merit Award from AACT at the AACTFest in Kalamazoo.

Wisconsin: Two Rooms, produced by the Village Playhouse of Wauwatosa, was selected to represent Wisconsin at the Region III festival. The alternate production was Of Mice and Men, produced by River Valley Players from Spring Green. This was Spring Green’s first entry in an AACTFest and they received honors in make-up, set design, direction, and ensemble performance. There were six productions in the festival. Workshops were also held. The WACT annual meeting was held. The new board of directors is: President Bob Kafka, Vice-president Frank Peot, Secretary Lynn Ruhl, Treasurer Dee Baldock, and members-at-large: Carla Gallun, Mark Holten, Dick Jellings, Elaine Jellings, Marie Peterson, Jeannie Pitsch, and Russ Stetler.

Lynn Ruhl will be the new AACT State Contact for Wisconsin, replacing Morrie Enders. Beaver Dam Area Community Theatre has volunteered to host the 2006 WACT Conference on February 24-26.

At the Region III AACTFest in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Nunsense, Amen! produced by Elkhard, Indiana’s River City Family Theatre was selected to represent Region III at the national festival in Kalamazoo. The alternate production is The Laramie Project from the Emerald City Players of Dublin, Ohio.

Information for this report came from Toni Higgins-Thrash (IL), Craig Muck (IN), Joanne Berry (MI), Eleanor Smith (OH), and Morrie Enders and Lynn Ruhl (WI).

Best wishes to Ruth Bardy of Illinois as she assumes the duties of Region III Representative and chair of the Association of Region III board. I have enjoyed serving Region III during the past two years and will continue to be interested in the activities of the groups in our region. I expect to continue, whenever possible, to attend events in each of the states in our region.