American Association of Community Theatre
Region Report

Report of: Region III
Report Date: January 12, 2005
Report Submitted By: Joanne Berry, Region III Representative

Upcoming State/Region Events/Activities:

February 25-27 Ohio AACTFest; Cincinnati, Ohio
February 25-27 Wisconsin AACTFest (WACTFEST); Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin
February 27 WACT Annual Meeting; Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin
March 11-13 Michigan AACTFest; Owosso, Michigan
March 11-13 Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) Adjudication Training Workshop; Owosso, Michigan
March 18-20 Indiana AACTFest; Muncie, Indiana
April 8-10 Region III AACTFest; Grosse Pointe, Michigan
April 10 Region III board meeting; Grosse Pointe, Michigan
June 14-18 National AACTFest; Kalamazoo, Michigan
September 2-5 Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) Conference; Perrysburg, Ohio
September 23-25 CTAM Fall Conference; Boyne Highlands, Petosky, Michigan

Strategic Plan Status:
II – 1A
After the AACT office sent lists of groups and individuals whose membership had not been renewed to the state contacts, I sent reminders to the state contacts to get in touch with these individuals and groups. I also made some personal contacts. Sending the lists directly to the state contacts is effective. As of the publication of the 2004-2005 Directory, Region III has 135 group members.

II – 1C
Last spring I requested the Region III state contacts learn what they could about Black and Hispanic community theatre groups. A couple of contacts reported that they tried to get information, but were unsuccessful. We need to continue this effort.

Past/Future Work Report:

I attended the Illinois AACTFest in Belvidere, Illinois in August 2004, encouraged the festival goers to attend the regional and national festivals, and helped to present awards. I followed up with a thank you letter to the chair and host group. Labor Day
weekend found me in Cincinnati at the annual OCTA conference. The 2004 Association of Region III board meeting was held during the conference. CTAM’s appointment of Grosse Pointe Theatre as the host of the regional AACTFest was endorsed. Annual dues were lowered from $50 to $25. The board was reminded of Region III’s rotation system for regional representatives and regional AACTFests. The next regional rep will be from Illinois and will assume that position when the new AACT board meets in June 2005 in Kalamazoo. The 2007 Region III AACTFest will be in Illinois. Illinois state contact Toni Higgins-Thrash and I have been communicating about the responsibilities Illinois will assume. September 24 – 26, I attended the annual CTAM Fall Conference. I promoted AACT and AACTFests at both conferences.

In February, I plan to attend the Wisconsin AACTFest. I will be attending both the Indiana and Michigan AACTFests in March and the Region III AACTFest in April. I will chair the 2005 Association of Region III (ART) board meeting in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Of course, June will find me wrapping up my job as regional rep at the national AACTFest.

I have been in frequent contact with the chairs of the Regional festival and the Michigan festival.

Throughout the year, I have handled phone calls and emails from people in the region seeking help or information about AACT and AACTFests and written a letter of recommendation for an AACT award at the request of a state organization.

**Interest Items:**

**Illinois:** State contact Toni Higgins-Thrash put together a committee that organized the first Illinois AACTFest in over ten years. It was hosted by the Main Street Players of Boone County in Belvidere, Illinois. Joan Kole served as chair of the festival. There were three shows presented and several workshops were conducted, including one by AACT past president Jack Phillips who had recently assumed his duties as artistic director of Theatre of Western Springs. At the fall festival of the Illinois Theatre Association, Ruth Bardy and Toni Higgins-Thrash were appointed joint chairs of the Community Theatre Division of ITA. They are committed to increasing the participation of community theatres in their state in ITA and AACT activities.

**Indiana:** The Indiana AACTFest will be hosted by Muncie Civic Theatre. Muncie Civic and the Indiana Community Theatre League (ICTL) are working to promote this festival.

**Michigan:** Michigan scores a Triple Play during the 2005 AACTFest cycle. The state festival will be hosted by Owosso Community Players in a beautifully restored 100-year-old theatre (Joseph H. Lebowsky Center). An adjudication training workshop will be held during the festival and will be conducted by Ross Rowland of Muncie, Indiana. Grosse Pointe Theatre is “Point-ing the Way to Kazoo.” The War Memorial, where the performances will be held, is an outstanding theatre facility. Adjudicators for the regional festival are: David Oosting, Jim Carver, and Annette Proconier. In June we all come together in Kalamazoo for the national festival.
The volunteers and staff of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre as well as all of Michigan’s community theatre folks are eager to welcome you to our state. CTAM and the Theatre Alliance of Michigan (TAM) plan to co-host a hospitality room one evening during the festival.

CTAM held its annual fall convention at a conference center in the woods on a lake. The theme was, naturally, Camp CTAM. We had several outstanding workshops, performances by Master Arts Theatre (*Driving Miss Daisy*) and Rosedale Community Players (*Escanaba in da Moonlight*), and social events that included campfires and somemores. All CTAM board members were “camp counselors” with whistles to summon their charges to events. Each group (determined by camp T-shirt color) performed its own interpretation of the camp song. The state and regional festival chairs presented AACTFest promotions. CTAM’s Scholarship auditions will be on February 27 at Farmington Players.

Ohio: OCTA had 613 people at the Annual Conference with 9 people from other states (Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, and Missouri). 15 excerpts were presented along with several workshops, a banquet, parties, and award presentations. In October, OCTA held its annual board retreat where a major issue was the revision of rules for their annual OCTA Fest. Ten minutes will now be allowed for set-up, sound check, light check, etc. Originally, five minutes was allowed for set-up and two minutes for sound check. The new rules will increase the time needed for the excerpt portion of the Annual Conference. The new rules will be put in place at the 2005 Annual Conference in Perrysburg. Jerry Zimmerman will chair the conference.

The Ohio AACTFest will be held at Seton High School in Cincinnati on February 25-26. So far, four groups have indicated they will participate. OCTA now has 114 member theatres. Five new applications were approved during 2004.

Wisconsin: The Wisconsin AACTFest or WACT FEST 2005 will be held February 25, 26, and 27 in Prairie du Sac at the River Arts Center. Adjudicators for this festival are Kay Armstrong, Allen Ebert, and Morrie Enders. The WACT Annual Meeting will be held Feb. 27 at the conclusion of the festival. Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre is growing and now looking to expand its leadership and workload.

Information on state activities was provided by Toni Higgins-Thrash (Illinois), Craig Munk (Indiana), Eleanor Smith (Ohio), Morrie Enders (Wisconsin), and Kevin Arnett and Joanne Berry (Michigan).