Region Rep Activities since February 2016

• As follow-up from workshops (Jan), I continued to make contact with selected participants’ home community theatres around Illinois.
• I met with Nancy Eppert and worked with her toward AACT Committee charges.
• I continue as a primary team member (with Rich Gannon) planning the next Region III AACTFest for 2017, on track.
• I provided a presentation and Q&A for Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) members at their meeting (March) for interface of their annual conference cycle and AACTFest.
• A video conference Orientation to AACT (April) provided assurance to me as Region Rep.
• I continue to stay apprised of state associations’ activities and support those State Contacts who seek help to provide engaging activities: more than one state has had to cancel or reschedule state-wide events for this year.
• I attended the premiere production (June) of an AACT NewPlayFest winner in our region, made acquaintance with leadership and theatre-goers in Valparaiso, IN, and continue to promote the work – and other winning works – among other CT groups.
• I speak personally with producers of selected works I see in Illinois, encouraging participation in the state festival, and make acquaintance of select CT groups across the region to interest them in AACT membership.
• I will participate in Wisconsin’s WACTCON (late June).
• Prior efforts for the Regional Association to meet in 2016 have thus far been unsuccessful: I recently have suggested that we convene in Ohio to enjoy the magic of their annual event, and Dawna Kornick has extended invitation to the Regional Board. In case that, too, is not good for all the State Contacts or alternates, then I have also posed the lesser option to hold a video and telephone conference meeting in a pinch, though there is no easy means to make a video conference open to member observers.
• Meanwhile, with my 2-year term half over, I continue to research Region III governing documents, so the voting Board – State Contacts – can address those as needed, such as the existing “catch” of needing a signed contract for a festival venue before announcement, but also needing approval from the Board before going forward with that venue. The goal is a handy reference documenting practice, agreements, and laws, even oral tradition. That, and my list of collected resources and other things each Region III Rep. should know, both in progress, are intended to be handed along and to be updated by the succession of people rotating into the position (2-year terms), following a pattern established for documenting regional festivals.

State & Regional Association Activities

• Region III AACTFest 2017 will be held at Parkland College, Champaign, IL (Apr 27-30, 2017), not against the marathon schedule after all!
• INDIANA: ICTA cancelled the 2016 Festival (non-AACTFest cycle) due to a lack of entries. The ICTA board is interested in hearing what type of non-competition events have been successful elsewhere; ideas discussed include a youth theatre event with workshops and a theatre weekend in Indianapolis. The ICTA AACTFest will be hosted by Kokomo Civic Theatre (Mar
17-19, 2017). ICTA President Steve Hughes served as de facto CT representative for the final weekend of The New Harmony Project, an annual script development conference which was celebrating its 30th year of nurturing new writing for performance.

- MICHIGAN: CTAM’s Spring Conference at Tawas Bay Players (May 13-15) was highly successful with excellent workshops and networking. The annual Fall Conference will be held in Cadillac (Sep 23-25), and a large turnout is expected with the annual meeting. CTAM is struggling to find a venue for the 2017 state festival after a venue pulled out; CTAM is contacting other potential theatres around the state.

- WISCONSIN: WACTCON is being held Jun 24-26 in West Allis.

- OHIO: The OCTAFest 2016 cycle is in full swing with 6 festivals (Jun 4 - Jul 10) and 1 junior festival (Aug 6) to select works for the State Conference in Independence, OH (Sep 2-5). An impressive line-up of workshops is being offered.

- ILLINOIS: ITA Annual Gala Awards and Membership Meeting (Palatine, Sep 17-18). ITA will present the AACTFest Illinois state festival (Nov 4-6); host is Engle Lane Theatre, Streator. The AACTFest Regional 2017 has been announced. (see above)

Concerns in the Region
Some state-wide events fail for lack of interest, so leaders need a good way to share ideas for engaging CT organizations and individuals. Ohio is the exception, having tremendous traction and momentum for their annual big event, always over the Labor Day weekend. The planning, preparations, organization, and ideas for something new seems to be ongoing. I observe that the relatively compact geographic area, along with major cities around the state, is an asset to getting together for their several administrative meetings.

Additional Support Needed?
- For the first part, I am very glad to have the support and validation of having been charged with “ambassador” duties across the region.
- I recommend that the Region Representatives Handbook be made available officially.
- Where can I find the national marketing print materials, if any other than Spotlight? Who are charged with making pitches to potential CT organizations after I identify them? Further, who is charged with ensuring that state associations understand the structure and purpose of AACT, as well as their interface with that?
- For the second part, I need a way to give a potential member access to selected details of the many discounts afforded members, but without having to log in, and without giving away the actual discounts to non-members, i.e. hide only how to get the discounts.

Additional Comments
I applaud those board members who said in February meetings that no, we do not need more surveys for this or that planning, because we have expertise right here, all around the room. That engaged everyone in making progress. Receiving reports and proposals more than a week prior to board meetings will afford time to digest the material and come prepared to meet discussion and voting responsibilities.