Region Rep Activities since June 2016
Following the summer meetings in NYC, I shared the results of those meetings and my perspectives of national projects in progress with our State Contacts. With attention to our five states’ community theatre interests, I have participated in statewide community theatre events in WI (Jun), IL (Sep & Nov), MI (Sep), and OH (Sep). I have promoted participation in the several state festivals and I am co-chair (with Richard Gannon) of the approaching regional festival in my hometown of Champaign, IL. My proposal to the Applied Media Promotions class at our local community college was accepted and has provided significant marketing and promotions in the forms of materials and a marketing plan for the Region III AACTFest. I participated behind the scenes (with Bob Frame) in review and promotion of revised Design Competition rules for the 2017 AACTFest. I served on the AACT committee to determine workshops for the 2017 AACTFest, prior to which I had encouraged and assisted one group’s proposal, but I remained silent in deliberations until after others participating in the first round review committee had provided a “thumbs up” without my input. That workshop proposal is among those which were later selected for the national festival. I created a succinct database of documented discussions and action items of the Association of Region Three, since inception, for the purposes of Board discussion and action, as well as for my own observations of progress, trends, and such. I have encouraged AACT membership directly through face-to-face and digital communications, working with people but focusing on organizations rather than individuals, and working with Cran Dodds and others serving the five states. Finding high value in the New Play competition and performances, I promote that project and the winning playwrights and works whenever I address groups.

State & Regional Association Activities
Prior to meeting in September, the Association of Region Three Board reviewed materials documenting decisions, tabled actions, and rules, from inception to present day, with attention to and reconsideration of recurring concerns, dropped topics, and existing rules which may be either ignored, forgotten or outdated. The Board then convened for the annual board meeting during OCTA conference in September: Board members and the Region III webmaster joined via teleconference and in person in Independence, OH, hosted by Dawna Kornick and OCTA. Board members are in touch with me also regarding various state events including those which provide AACTFest competition productions advancing to the regional festival. Plans for the Region III AACTFest 2017 are on track, now moving into the execution stage. Co-chairs are Richard Gannon (AACT Board Member) and Lucinda Lawrence (Region III Representative); host is Community Theatre Illinois. The festival will be held at Parkland College, Champaign, IL (Apr 27-30). The Board will conduct the annual meeting during the regional festival in Champaign and elect the next Region III Representative (2017-2019) per bylaws of the organization.

Illinois. Members of Illinois Theatre Association (ITA) Community Theatre Division were among participants in the ITA Inaugural Gala and Awards (Sep 17) and a few CT Division members met in a break-out session of the annual membership meeting the next morning (at Harper College, Palatine), during which attention was focused on the approaching state festival. ITA presented the AACTFest Illinois state festival (Nov 4-6), hosted by Engle Lane Theatre, Streator. Two productions have advanced to the regional festival.
Indiana. The Indiana Community Theatre Association AACTFest planning is on track and the festival will be hosted by Kokomo Civic Theatre (Mar 17-19).

Michigan. The annual Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) Fall Conference was held in Cadillac (Sep 23-25), with the anticipated large turnout. CTAM festival planning is on track and will be hosted by Bay City Players (Feb 9-12). The 2017 CTAM Playwriting contest has been announced: deadline is May 15.

Ohio. Ohio Community Theatre Association's series of state "regional" festivals through the summer months provided a huge slate of productions for the "Wild, Wild OCTA Conference" (Sep 2-5). During the conference several productions chose to compete for AACTFest advancement. Two productions have advanced to the regional festival. OCTA and Dawna Kornick hosted the board meeting for Region III during the state festival. Planning for the 2017 series of state 'regional' festivals and annual OCTA Conference is on track.

Wisconsin. Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre’s WACTCON (Jun 24-26), hosted at the Village Playhouse, included a sampling of short plays with demonstration of AACTFest-style timed set and strike, as well as adjudicator feedback (Frank Peot), in part as a means of preparing registrants for the approaching state festival. WACT’s state AACTFest (Feb 16-19) will be hosted by Central Wisconsin Community Theatre at Sentry Theatre in Stevens Point.

Concerns in the Region
Most concerning to me is that several small community theatre organizations, including some long established, are failing to thrive, folding. Those having their own facilities are better able to sustain their activities than those without their own facilities, but facilities are becoming even more expensive to acquire and maintain. While conferences, workshops, and festivals help such organizations to thrive, those, too, are quite dependent upon facilities offered for use.

Additional Support Needed?
I would like to see an improved public image of AACT’s support of community theatres as compared with the public image of focus on gaining income through membership, conferences, and festivals. For instance, the attention being given behind the scenes, in committee, to small budget, all volunteer community theatres as compared with large ones having professional staff, such as is embraced in the current development of an AACT accreditation program for community theatre organizations, is a good image. That outward image of AACT, and no-brainer perks I can identify, will help me promote AACT participation. Perhaps a recurring image of a pie chart of "where your membership dollars go" can be considered.

Additional Comments
1) I appreciate timely access to Board materials prior to meetings. 2) I applaud expansion and development of the Design Competition. 3) I would prefer to have an online AACT Archives for our past Board materials and Reports rather than having to make a request to gain access, the better to investigate trends, progress, successes, failings, and unaddressed or recurring issues through comparison over time. 4) Improvement of search capability of the “no longer new” AACT website will help direct outsiders to AACT in the first place. 5) The NewPlayFest provides tremendous value to AACT members and theatre in general.