American Association of Community Theatre

Summer Board Report submitted on 6/21/2016

Region I

Submitted by Bevie Lord, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
Tried hard to generate interest and participation in/for state festivals by contacting individual groups.

State & Regional Association Activities
• Connecticut is holding a one act play festival this weekend at the Phoenix Stage Co. in Oakland. They are using 2017 AACTFest guidelines as a teaching tool to school the entries as to the festival process.
• CT State Festival will be held in early Sept.
• NH State Festival will be held in early Sept.

Concerns in the Region
The price of rental space is too high. Therefore many groups are "homeless" for rehearsal and performance space. There seems to be difficulty in keeping ticket prices affordable for audience members.

Additional Support Needed?
• How do we get neighboring theatres to collaborate so that they are not always reinventing the wheel?
• It seems that the internet is serving to answer questions rather than working through AACT.

Additional Comments
There are no formal state organizations in Rhode Island or Vermont although there are many individual groups performing fine productions. Vermont has an active playwright society. Eastern Massachusetts is not holding a festival this year, but will reenter the festival cycle next year. Individual groups are still producing. Some are casting their fall productions now. My state contacts remain the same.
American Association of Community Theatre

Summer Board Report submitted on 6/13/2016

Region II

Submitted by Susanne Caviness, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
• Shared info sent by AACT to membership
• Provided an AACT report at the regional level during the Eastern States Theater Association Executive Committee meeting
• Used AACTFest Handbooks (as modified) during state fest in AACT years; loaded them onto our ESTA website for ease of use.
• Contributed online input on inquiries sent by AACT leadership

State & Regional Association Activities
• ESTAFests of Original Works celebration will replace all of the Region II state fests in non-AACT years. The 2016 new festival format celebrating original works and eliminating the expense of state festivals was well received. Based upon extensive participate feedback, upgrades are planned for the 2018 ESTAFest.
• Upgraded and revised the ESTA website structure to better reflect organizational documents and festival activities.

Concerns in the Region
• Where are the original works scripts that were culled from the second reading. We expected at the very least a list of titles with authors, synopses and contact info if not an actual download to an AACT website page. Instead all of this work was only seen by a small number of people ... it seems unlikely that only six of those submitted/read would be suitable for production somewhere. It didn't seem like a strong commitment to original works of all kinds.
• Formal resolution of the inclusion of DC into the state of Maryland for festival planning purposes. Questions have garnered different answers from different people. Would appreciate having a formal statement made in AACT meeting minutes for the purpose of ultimate clarity.

Additional Support Needed?
• Elimination of the AACT fee at the state level. It seems reasonable to make an AACT contribution when a production has already won at the regional level but levying an additional fee when each state is already trying to be very inclusive around types of groups and productions seems counter-productive.
• Coordinated efforts to reach out to the New Jersey state level groups to determine what it would take to bring them back to full competition cycle. We believe NJ theatres are already members of AACT but none of the ESTA outreach has generated any response. Since they are paying money to AACT, would they pay more attention to outreach from AACT?
• VP-Festivals at ESTA is asking for a list of state festival commissioners and other "assigned" personnel for festival work for 2017.
• A list of adjudicators would be helpful. At one point ESTA was asked to provide names and contact information for some type of list but ESTA has not seen a result of the inquiries.
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.
Summer Board Report submitted on 6/20/2016

Region IV

Submitted by Lynn Nelson, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
Attended regional festival in March, promoting AACT at workshops and divisional meetings. Invited all to participate in the NYC trip.

State & Regional Association Activities
The regional festival was held in Greensboro, NC in March. Wild Hare Productions from South Carolina with their production of Lone Star and Actors Warehouse from Florida with their production of Tshepang were the winners.

Concerns in the Region
Region IV still struggles with some states having trouble generating interest in AACT and the regional organization, as well as in the festival process. Other states, however, are very active.
American Association of Community Theatre

Summer Board Report submitted on 6/21/2016

Region V

Submitted by Nancy Eppert, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
• I attended the reorganization meeting for the Missouri state organization. They are in the process of forming a board of governors and will hold a state festival in Springfield next spring.
• I have: attended meetings with theatre organizations in Kansas and reached out via email to theatres in KS to stimulate interest in reorganizing that state, it looks promising;
• been a guest on local radio shows and talked about AACT and its programs;
• post and forward messages about conferences, the online Spotlight and all other information that comes to me;
• answered Resource Roster inquiries;
• and continue to encourage as many theatres and individuals as possible to partake of the many benefits of joining with the organization. I do not have a business card for my current job with our city, so I use my AACT business card all of the time...it has been a great way to start a conversation.

State & Regional Association Activities
• Missouri is now reorganized. Kansas is in the process of gathering theatres to do the same.
• Minnesota is busily working on the big triple: state, region and national festivals.

Concerns in the Region
The price of conference and festival accommodations is prohibitive to many.

Additional Support Needed?
I am not sure at this time; everything seems to be going as well as it can. The biggest concern is the vastness of our region geographically; it is prohibitive for face-to-face meetings and attendance to state events and productions.

Additional Comments
I have feelers out for a new state rep in Kansas and hope to have word on that any day. I will update the office as soon as I know.
Summer Board Report submitted on 6/27/2016

Region VI

Submitted by Jeffrey Brown, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016

State & Regional Association Activities

Concerns in the Region
Region VI has hopes of creating a Facebook presence specific to our region, and perhaps other electronic communication. Are there any concerns at the national level related to getting that kind of thing in place?
Summer Board Report submitted on 6/21/2016

Region VII

Submitted by Donna Fisher, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
I have contacted all companies to try to promote festivals. I think this is an important part of AACT, but I seem to be failing to stress the opportunity it serves for all companies. They are either struggling, or too busy, or just not interested.

State & Regional Association Activities
The only state organization is in Colorado. They are having their state festival starting on Thursday, of which I will attend.

Concerns in the Region
Lack of interest in this region for festivals. I have tried and tried and even did a mock festival to demonstrate the fun and educational benefits of the festival. I need some help because I have run out of ideas. We are too far apart, with no organizational interest, with very "iffy" weather from Nov. to May and no one wants to travel anywhere at that time.

Additional Support Needed
I think the only thing I have not tried is to travel through the region with another AACT rep. I have done it alone, talked to the companies, attended their shows, added members, but can't seem to generate interest for festivals.

Additional Comments
This time I actually got responses from seven companies about what they are doing, problems they are having, and general information. I am very pleased they responded. In January I had only one.
Summer Board Report submitted on 6/20/2016

Region VIII

Submitted by Gil Savage, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016

Using email campaigns and calling to reach out to local orgs in the region, as well as to AACT members to find:

- A host theatre for the state and regional AACT Fest
- Theatres that want to send productions to the fests
- Local orgs that want to have an AACT presentation to their groups on the advantages of AACT membership
- Theatres who want an AACT rep to speak to their board on what AACT website info might be helpful to them.

State & Regional Association Activities

- We have no state or regional orgs, other than Hawaii.
- The entire region has a dozen or so local orgs that are entirely locally focused. Their function is primarily to provide a local cooperative judging mechanism to allow for awards within their membership. These are mainly in California and Arizona. Hawaii has a state org which includes professional, semi-pro, educational and community theatres.
- The state rep for Arizona, Linda Miller, does a wonderful job of communicating with many of the community theatres there and promoting the communication between groups. Linda promotes AACT events and opportunities with emails to all the theatres in AZ.
- In California, Liz Lydic is engaged in recruiting activities around the state and outreach in the LA and Orange County areas.
- Also in Southern California, Dennis Gilmore is doing outreach in the Palm Springs / Indio area.

Concerns in the Region

- Finding a theatre willing to host a State or Regional event is again proving to be very difficult. Unfortunately, none of the past hosts are willing to do it again. Their reasons are that they didn’t make any money and it burned out their volunteers. On the participant side, so far we have one California theatre that has said they will go to a Fest, but until we have a date and a location for the State and Regional Fests, most are understandably not willing to consider it.
- Gil Savage (Region Rep and CA State Rep), Liz Lydic (current Board member), and Dennis Gilmore (former Board Member and current Co-Chair of the Accreditation Task Force) are teaming up to develop a plan and a budget for a limited scale States+Regional combo Fest that we would produce in the event that no member theatres are willing to take on the hosting of a Fest. We are committed to having a Fest and will devote our efforts and resources to produce it on our own. We believe that we can get theatres to commit to bringing a show if we have a venue, inexpensive lodging and a firm date for it. To do this we must recruit volunteers to travel to the Fest to Adjudicate and conduct workshops. We hope to solicit your support and aid in accomplishing this task. We believe it will take this kind of grassroots efforts for the next few Fest Cycles to build the level of interest and commitment for recruiting hosts that have the needed volunteer and subscriber base to make it viable for them.
Summer Board Report submitted on 6/21/2016

Region IX

Submitted by Jon Douglas Rake, Region Representative

Region Rep Activities since February 2016
• I have participated with the Washington State Community Theater board to help make some decisions about the upcoming State Festival.
• I was scheduled to be a guest Speaker at the Oregon State Conference but at the last minute the conference was postponed.
• I have talked to a couple of theatres in the Seattle area about AACT and joining the association. This is still under consideration.
• I have been in contact with the Idaho Association of Community Theatres and I am consulting with them for their 2017 festival and the Region 9 festival. I may at some future date fly to Boise and meet with the group to plan.

State & Regional Association Activities
The Boards of the state associations continue to meet on a regular basis. No events or conferences have taken place.

Concerns in the Region
Lack of volunteers to do the work that the State boards need.

Additional Support Needed?
More time. This has been a very busy season for me.
American Association of Community Theatre

**Summer Board Report** submitted on 6/8/2016

**Region X**

Submitted by **Dane Winters, Region Representative**

**Region Rep Activities since February 2016**

The annual US Army Tournament of Plays (TOPPERs) was held on April 23, 2016 in Kaiserslautern, Germany. 16 productions were adjudicated over a six-week period. Over 50 awards in 48 categories were presented. AACT and the US Army Region X were featured in the award ceremony and show program.

**State & Regional Association Activities**

A new US Army Europe Entertainment webpage has been unveiled: http://europe.armymwr.com/europe/theatre/our-entertainment-programs.

**Additional Comments**

Once again, US Army and DOD funding cuts are threatening Region X participation in AACT events. Other funding sources are being explored.

**Concerns in the Region**

Further cuts to military spending continue to threaten the existence of the 60 year old program.

**Additional Support Needed?**

Continued free AACT military membership.