

# DAILY NEWS

*Starkville*

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## SCT show wins regional competition

By BRIAN HAWKINS  
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The cast and crew of Starkville Community Theatre's award-winning competition show can now add another accolade to their resume — regional champions.

SCT's production of Mississippi playwright Laddy Sartin's "Catfish Moon" was named best production at the Southeastern Theatre Conference's Community Theatre Festival in Birmingham, Ala., on Saturday. The win at the SETC festival qualifies the SCT show to represent the Southeastern U.S. and compete at the American Association of Community Theatres national festival in Tacoma, Wash., from June 23 to 27. Directed by Kris Lee, "Catfish Moon" stars Paul Ruff, Gabe Smith, Krista Vowell and Marcus Vowell in a story about three men (played by Ruff, Smith and Marcus — childhood friends — who go on an overnight fishing trip to help mend their strained relationships, one of which is brought on by the fact that one of the men is dating the other's ex-wife (played by Krista Vowell)).

The show won a slew of awards at the Mississippi Theatre Association's annual conference in January, including best production. The win at SETC is a first for SCT in its 31-year history.

Since two shows from SETC are selected to advance to AACT, "Catfish Moon" will be joined by a production of the musical "Nine" by the Theatre a la Carte in Florida in representing the Southeast in Tacoma.

Reached by phone in Birmingham shortly after learning of the show's regional win,



The cast and crew of SCT's *Catfish Moon* celebrate their win at the Southeastern Theatre Conference regional festival.

Ruff said the awards dinner proved to be a guessing game for the cast, crew and SCT members who had traveled to Birmingham for the festival.

"You have all that time waiting while the awards are being announced, and you're trying to figure out which will be the top shows based upon the awards that are being given," Ruff said Saturday night.

In the community theatre festival, the awards were given to a wide variety of the competing theatre companies, which proved maddening as the cast and crew were trying to predict if they had

won one of the top two spots, Ruff said.

"Since we didn't win any of the individual awards, we were not thinking we'd be named top show," Ruff said.

But when SCT's win was announced, excitement erupted, he said.

"Kris (Lee, the show's director), just jumped up and ran up there to accept the award," Ruff said. "The excitement we're feeling is so amazing. For all of us involved with SCT, this is a passion, and to be recognized by our peers for excellence is so rewarding."

Krista Vowell, who also serves as SCT's current president, said the win at SETC means much for community theatre in Mississippi.

"This means the world... We went to MTA because we feel that it is a good networking opportunity and a chance to perform for our peers," Vowell said. "Moving on to regional competition at SETC is an honor in of itself because you get to see such stunningly magnificent theatre performances. The be singled out as the best in all the region is so amazing."

The win, Vowell said, is especially exciting because of the strong support SCT has from the greater community.

"The support that is shown to our theatre is second to none, and we could not do what we do without it. We are profoundly grateful for our supporters," Vowell said.

Ruff agreed.

"I cannot be prouder for Starkville. It says so much for our theatre," Ruff said. "We are proud to let people know we're from Starkville. It's really special."

At the AACT festival in Tacoma, SCT will represent Mississippi and the Southeast in competition against award-winning community theatres from such state as Connecticut, New York, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico and Florida.

In the coming weeks, SCT leaders will be conducting fundraisers to help defray the costs for the "Catfish Moon" cast and crew to travel to Tacoma and compete, including transport of the show's set and props.

For more information about SCT, visit the Web site at <http://www.sct-online.org> or call 323-6855.