

P'town maps plans for O'Neill Society session

■ Officials organizing for the 2005 session to honor the playwright are considering guided tours of his haunts and staging of some plays.

By **CONOR BERRY**
STAFF WRITER

PROVINCETOWN – Town leaders and members of the theater community say they'll put their best foot forward when the Eugene O'Neill Society brings its sixth international conference to town in June 2005.

Among the possibilities being discussed by local organizers are a guided walking tour of O'Neill's favorite haunts – some of which still exist – and a tour of the Outer Cape's fabled dune shacks.

The former Peaked Hill Bar Life Saving Station, where O'Neill worked on sev-

eral plays, has long since washed away.

Local theater companies may also stage some of O'Neill's plays, organizers said at a town hall press conference yesterday afternoon.

Selectman Richard Olson will be the town's liaison to the O'Neill Society. Olson is forming an advisory committee to plan the social and entertainment portions of the conference.

Charles Turley, executive director of the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, said he will focus on gathering history and research materials for society

members, some of whom plan to travel to town prior to the conference to do research for papers they will present at the conference.

Provincetown tourism director Patricia Fitzpatrick will coordinate travel arrangements, accommodations, meals and other activities for participants, many of whom will be traveling from abroad.

O'Neill Society member Leona Rust Egan, a former research psychologist and university professor who lives in Provincetown, will serve on the local advisory committee.

Egan, author of the 1994 book "Provincetown as a

Stage: Provincetown, The Provincetown Players and the Discovery of Eugene O'Neill," is an authority on O'Neill's years on the Cape. For years, Egan has been a tireless advocate of elevating O'Neill's profile in town.

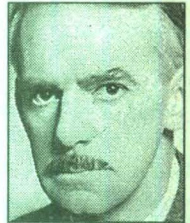
According to Turley, "American drama was born" in Provincetown largely because of O'Neill.

A town delegation, which included Olson, Turley, Fitzpatrick and Stephen Borkowski, a Provincetown Repertory Theatre official, traveled to the society's conference in France last month to pitch the town for the soci-

ety's 2005 conference.

The now-defunct Provincetown Players staged "Bound East for Cardiff," the first-ever production of an O'Neill play, on July 18, 1916. The theater company relocated to New York City's Greenwich Village, which helped propel O'Neill onto the international stage, Turley said.

An apprentice playwright, O'Neill was unknown when he first came to town in 1916. But Provincetown "nurtured him," Turley said, and by the time he left, some nine years later, O'Neill was wealthy and famous, with a Pulitzer Prize to his credit.



Eugene O'Neill
The Provincetown Players staged "Bound East for Cardiff," the first-ever production of an O'Neill play, in 1916.