

# Encore!

July 2011

## The Firehall Theatre by Local Artist

Order your copy of *The Firehall Theatre* by Katherine O'Mally Greer now

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Cobourg artist Katherine O'Mally Greer, owner of *With All My Art!* on King Street, created this painting in acrylics. It captures so well the glory of the Firehall and the optimism of The Northumberland Players as the Firehall renovations near completion. The original painting is for sale but not before fine-quality prints are made for all those who wish to have this painting on their walls.

Northumberland Players asked Katherine to participate in this fundraising project as she is well-known for her paintings of Cobourg landmarks that have been so well received. The prices of the prints:

- Artist's Proofs are \$150.
- Limited edition prints are \$100.
- Special price for a framed print of \$295

Katherine could also custom frame your print to suit your taste with prices beginning at \$150. Prints will be delivered to you in July and will also be on sale at *With All My Art!*

A portion of the selling price of each print will go to Northumberland Players. To reserve your copy, call the Firehall Office at 905-372-0577.

Thank you to the contributors to this edition:

Jack Boyagian  
Carol-Anne Caswell  
Mary Liz Clark  
Marg Hilborn  
Helen Matthew  
Brenda Worsnop  
Chris M. Worsnop

## NORTHUMBERLAND PLAYERS

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## Volunteers Make Our World Go Round

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*Gail Malenfant, "TV Personality" and founding member of the Players, has made over a thousand telephone calls this Spring to create a database of patrons.*

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I'm known for my curiosity although some would be inclined to call it nosiness. I confess, I'm interested in others, and where they have been and what they've been doing with the last 6 or 23 or 65 years of their life. My curiosity burst forth the other day when I saw **Gail Malenfant** at the Firehall doing what Gail really enjoys doing, being a volunteer for Northumberland Players. So right on the spot I decided to see if I could get Gail to become my first interviewee. After a little arm-twisting she agreed and here's the scoop on Gail.

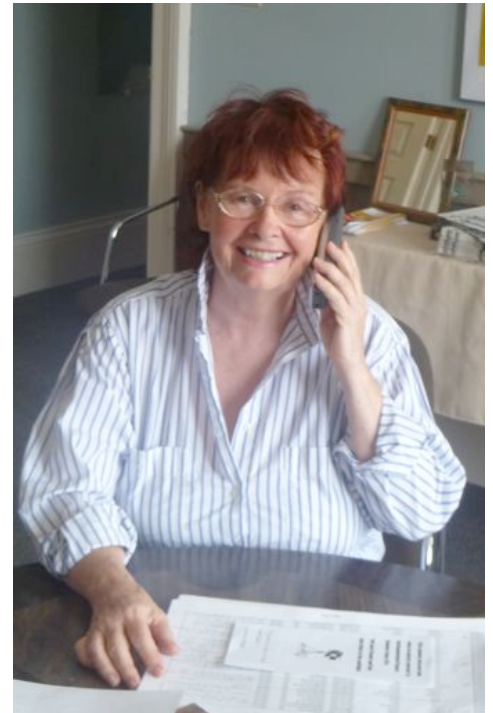
For those of you who have been a vital part of the Players for many years, you probably already know Gail. Not so for those of us who are newcomers. One thing we do know is that she a dedicated volunteer. I wonder if she has a bed stashed in the Blair Room. She is at the Firehall a lot. Gail was part of the founding group of ambitious and creative people, including the Templers, Winkworths, and others, who got together and started the Players 35 years ago. She produced or directed many plays including *Angels In love*, *See How They Run*, and *Gaslight Girl The Strangest Kind Of Romance*, to name a few. Her favourite play taken on by the group was *Wally's Cafe* and she'd love to see the Players mount it again. She bursts out laughing when she begins to talk about it. All you set designers out there: can you imagine the ballroom at the Best Western done up like a big hamburger bun?

Gail's volunteer life was an extension of her professional life. During her working life she worked in television as a writer, researcher, broadcaster, actress, producer and director. She worked at CBC, CTV, and played Auntie Gail on the children's TV show *Uncle Bobby*. She performed in a CBC kids' after-school programme called *The Marbles* and starred in a program called *Sunday at 9*. As well, she did commercial work, and spot production writing, and wrote for such notables as Harvey Korman and Lily Tomlin when they worked in Canada. When reminiscing about those two brilliant comedians, Gail laughed and confessed Lily was her favourite. Over the few months that I have known Gail, I have found her to be a conscientious, hard working and persistent individual. Recently she has tackled many office projects, doing jobs that the rest of us never have time to get to. She has made over 1000 phone calls to patrons to get email addresses so that we can cut down on mailing costs but stay linked to the people who come to our productions. She has represented us at events such as Buskerfest, and Northumberland Mall Heritage Days to spread the word and hand out brochures about our tremendous organization. Gail understands that being in the public view and being tied in to the community is so very important. It may be a little harder now than it was 35 years ago but it is vital.

During our chat I asked her why she spends so much time at the Fire Hall. Her response "It's fun. I love talking to people and helping out to make a difference. I'm happy doing the mundane and the ordinary." Well she may like doing the mundane and the ordinary but as far as we're concerned she is far from an ordinary volunteer. Drop by the FH and get reacquainted with her if you haven't seen her in a while or introduce yourself and meet a fellow volunteer. As she said, she loves to chat.

That's the scoop on Gail.

by Marg Hilborn



## Announcing Our 2011-2012 Season

Choosing the season for the Northumberland Players is a very challenging task. Three reading committees, headed by Doreen Page, Cindy Barr, and Jack Boyagian, made a long list of plays and musicals for all the venues. Shows for at least two years were short listed. The committees thank the dozens of people who read, researched, and recommended plays. A special thanks to Antonio Sarmiento and Leah McMullen for their hours of researching titles, availability of performance rights, and dates.

Our selection process is affected by the availability of performance rights to plays. In our negotiations with the agents, we are competing with other theatre groups in the area and professional companies have a priority. Performance rights have not been confirmed for a few selections because these are often not granted to community theatre until months before the production dates. However, we thought it was important to inform our members, volunteers, sponsors and patrons of our playbill. Full details concerning performance dates, with evening and matinées performances, ticket prices and box office locations are available in our 2011-2012 brochure.

The 2011-2012 season has opportunities for roughly 22 male, 32 female, and half a dozen child actors who will be performing four comedies, one powerful drama, a children's Christmas show, and a musical in four different venues: The Firehall Theatre, The Cameco Capitol Arts Centre, Victoria Concert Hall and The Best Western Cobourg Inn. This is another ambitious season, a season with lots of opportunities for your participation and support.

We still are in need of producers, directors, and production crews. Please email Artistic Director Jack Boyagian at [jboyagian@cogeco.ca](mailto:jboyagian@cogeco.ca) if you are interested in any of the following shows and state what capacity you would like to volunteer for. Let's make this season another season of fabulous theatre!

***A Month of Sundays***, by Bob Larbey

*Cooper, a crotchety old man has gone into a nursing home to avoid becoming a burden on his family. While there he is content to flirt, banter, and note his physical deteriorations carefully.*

Directed by Jack Boyagian

Dinner theatre performance dates over three weekends are Oct. 21, 22, and 23; 28, 29, and 30; Nov. 4, 5, and 6, 2011 at the Best Western Cobourg Inn.

***Doubt, A Parable*** by John Patrick Shanley

*In this brilliant and powerful drama, Sister Aloysius, a Bronx school principal, takes matters into her own hands when she suspects the young Father Flynn of improper relations with one of the male students.*

Directed by Heather Jopling

Performance dates are: Nov. 4, 5; 10,11, and 12; 17,18,19, and 20 at the Firehall Theatre.

***Cinderella Christmas*** by Mary Doig

*The palace is in an uproar preparing for the annual Christmas Ball. The Queen has declared that the Prince must choose his bride!*

Produced by Marg Hilborn and directed by Mary Doig.

The 2011 annual Christmas family production will be performed at Victoria Hall. School performances will be during the day, November 23 to 25, and family performances will be on Saturday, November 26, 2011.

***Here on the Flight Path*** by Norm Foster

*John Cummings, a screwed up divorced nerd, is a long time resident of the Canadian Aurora Apartments which are a mile from downtown and on the flight path of a busy airport. The man's social life is built around his buddies and the ever-changing tenants, particularly the three unattached women who move into the apartment with the balcony adjoining his*

Produced by Kevin Ward and Leslee Argue, and directed by Helen Matthew

Dinner theatre performance dates over three weekends are Jan. 20, 21, and 22; 27, 28, and 29; Feb. 3, 4, and 5, 2012, at the Best Western Cobourg Inn.

***Cabaret***

Music by John Kander; book by Joe Masteroff; lyrics by Fred Ebb

*Set in 1931, Cabaret focuses on nightlife at the seedy Kit Kat Klub that serves as a metaphor for Berlin as the Nazis are rising to power. The story revolves around the 19-year-old English cabaret performer Sally Bowles, her relationship with the young American writer Cliff Bradshaw, and others at the club, overseen by the Master of Ceremonies.*

This popular musical will be performed February 24, 25, and 26; March 1, 2, 3, and 4, 2012, at The Cameco Capital Arts Centre in Port Hope.

***The Dining Room*** by A.R.Gurney

*The play is a comedy of manners, set in a single dining room where 18 scenes from different households overlap and intertwine. Each story is focused around a different family during different time periods who has in their possession the same dining room furniture set, manufactured in 1898.*

Produced by Doreen Page and directed by Chris Worsnop.

Dinner theatre performance dates over three weekends are April 20, 21, and 22; 27, 28, and 29; May 4, 5, and 6, 2012, at the Best Western Cobourg Inn.

***Six Dance Lessons In Six Weeks*** by Richard Alfieri

*This is a touching and human comedy about a retired woman who hires an acerbic dance instructor for a series of dance lessons. What begins as an antagonistic relationship blossoms into an intimate friendship as the two characters reveal their secrets, fears, and joys while dancing to the Swing, Tango, Waltz, Foxtrot, Cha-Cha, and contemporary dance.*

Directed by Leah McMullen and Alina Adjemian.

Performance dates are June 15 and 16; 22, 23, and 24; 28, 29, 30, and July 1, 2012, at the Firehall Theatre.

## Having Hope at Home Wins EODL Awards




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Giving awards to individuals was a way of honouring all of us, 'cause nobody does this stuff alone.

John Lazarus,  
Adjudicator

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**Having Hope at Home** was entered in the Eastern Ontario Drama League festival this year. It was the first time a dinner theatre was entered, and was therefore an unique experience for John Lazarus, the adjudicator. He spoke to the audience, cast, and crew after the performance, and privately to the cast later, to comment on the production. When the awards were announced in May, three actors in **Having Hope at Home** were honoured:

**Jody Ledgerwood**, who played expectant mother Carolyn, received the **Leonard Beaulne Memorial Trophy for Best Actress** in a Major Role.

**Honor Sylvester**, as Dawn the midwife, was nominated for the Margaret White Award for Acting Excellence.

**Greg Curtis**, the loving and patient husband Michel, received the **Arnold Connerty Award: Adjudicator Award** to honour a performance that the adjudicator, John Lazarus, "found charming and worthy of note, especially as it was done with a very convincing fake accent".

Although many question the value of competition in the arts, John Lazarus explained that "giving awards to individuals was a way of honouring all of us, 'cause nobody does this stuff alone." Congratulations to producer Doreen Page, Director Brenda Worsnop, and the entire cast and crew for making **Having Hope at Home** an award-winning production.

## EODL production from Kingston wins best play at the 2011 Theatre Ontario Festival.

By Chris M. Worsnop

The annual Theatre Ontario Festival, held in the week leading up to the Victoria Day weekend, features the best plays from each of the regions in Ontario. The regions are: Eastern Ontario Drama League, (EODL) Western Ontario Drama League (WODL), Quebec-Ontario Theatre Association (QUONTA), and the Association of Community Theatres - Central Ontario (ACT-CO). Each region takes a turn to host the festival in one of its community theatre centres. The Richmond Hill Curtain Club (ACT-CO) expertly hosted this year's festival. It was the fifth consecutive T. O. Festival that Brenda and I have attended.

The Wednesday opening night production was the musical *Suds!* by Steve Gundersen, Bryan Scott, and Melinda Gibb, produced by the Whitby Courthouse Players, representing ACT-CO. This is the second year in a row that Whitby has been the ACT-CO representative at the T. O. Festival. Adjudicator Jane Carnworth gave the production high praise for its energy, inventiveness, musicality and technical excellence.

On the following morning we attended the private adjudication for *Suds!* The practice is that anyone can observe the private adjudication, but only the members of the production company can take part. Each morning followed the same pattern, so that we could observe all four private adjudications.

Thursday afternoon offered a two-hour workshop by Jane Carnworth titled, "Working With Actors". The lucky first 20 to sign up got to take an active part in the workshop, while all others were able to observe. We learned a lot from this workshop that we will be able to apply to our own work in theatre.

Thursday's festival production, from QUONTA, was *Balconville*, by David Fennario, produced by Espanola Little Theatre. The director, Walter Maskel, was representing QUONTA the T. O. festival for the ninth time! *Balconville*, written in 1979, is Canada's first bilingual play. Ms Carnworth gave the production very high praise, both for its technical aspects and its acting, especially in the light of the fact that two of the cast members were novices on stage. One of them took the award for male supporting actor.

The next afternoon there was a Playwright-in-Person session by Canadian playwright Emil Sher.

Perhaps we should add here that each night after the production there was a "meet the cast and crew" green-room party, in addition to the many spontaneous gatherings at the hotel where we were all centered. A two-am bedtime was not unusual.

Friday's production was *Trying* by Joanna McClelland Glass, produced by Kingston's Domino Theatre (EODL). Carnworth acknowledged this Canadian two-hander as a tour-de-force in many areas, both technical and dramatic.

Saturday afternoon was taken up with local tours and attractions. The Saturday evening production was Theatre Windsor's (WODL) production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. In the adjudication, Carnworth pointed out the difficulties inherent in the play and gave the company high praise for its approach.

Sunday, after the private adjudication, was focused around the awards brunch. Here's a listing of the awards as they fell:

1. Five adjudicator's awards went to:
  - Espanola, for ensemble work.
  - Whitby, for brilliance in creation from limited source material. (the script contained little other than the actual words of the dialogue and lyrics)
  - Domino, for sound design
  - Windsor, for stage combat
  - Whitby, for over-the-top moments to remember

2. Outstanding performance by a female in a supporting role:  
Daniela Piccinin as Honey, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*
3. Outstanding performance by a male in a supporting role:  
Raymond Landry as Claude Paquette in *Balconville*
4. Outstanding performance by a male:  
William Morrow as Judge Francis Biddle in *Trying*
5. Outstanding performance by a female:  
Naomi Ballance as Sarah in *Trying*
6. Outstanding technical achievement:  
*Suds!* - Whitby Courthouse Players
7. Outstanding visual presentation:  
*Balconville* - Espanola
8. Outstanding coordinated production as chosen by the festival stage manager:  
*Trying* - Domino Theatre
9. Perry Short Award for set design:  
*Balconville* - Espanola
10. Outstanding director:  
Mike Trites - *Suds!* Whitby
11. Outstanding festival production:  
*Trying* - Domino Theatre, Kingston

The five-day trip to the Theatre Ontario Festival is a vacation Brenda and I look forward to. We always have a tremendous time and learn a lot to keep us fresh in our own theatre lives. Next year the festival will be hosted by QUONTA in Sault St. Marie. The dates are May 15 or 16 – 20, 2012. The possible extra day is to allow the host group the option of including two QUONTA plays, including one from the far north. We'll be there for sure. Want to join us?

## Celebrate Summer!

Annual Northumberland Players  
Members and Volunteers Barbecue

August 14, 2011.

3 p.m. at

3625 Kennedy Road, Coldsprings.

Please bring  
an appetizer, side dish or dessert,  
your choice of beverage,  
and a lawn chair.



## Upcoming Auditions for the 2011-2012 Season

### Cinderella's Christmas

Written and directed by Mary Doig.

*The palace is in an uproar preparing for the annual Christmas Ball. The Queen has declared that the Prince must choose his bride!*

The 2011 annual Christmas family production will be performed at Victoria Hall in November. School performances will be during the day, November 23 to 25, and family performances will be on Saturday, November 26, 2011.

Casting Call: 7 young women, aged 12-17  
3 older women, aged 30 +  
6 young men, aged 12-17

Open auditions: Wednesday, August 17, 2011,  
5 p.m to 8 p.m. at the Firehall Theatre, 2nd floor, 213 Second St., Cobourg



For further information call Mary Doig at 905-349-2831



### Here On The Flight Path

By Norm Foster

Produced by Kevin Ward  
Directed by Helen Matthew

*John Cummings, a screwed up divorced nerd, is a long time resident of the Canadian Aurora Apartments which are a mile from downtown and on the flight path of a busy airport. The man's social life is built around his buddies and the ever-changing tenants, particularly the three unattached women who move into the apartment with the balcony adjoining his. We meet Fay, the sex worker; Angel, the would-be singer-actress; and Gwen, the driving instructor who has just separated from her husband.*

Dinner theatre performance dates: three weekends from January 20 to February 6, 2012, at the Best Western Cobourg Inn.

Cast includes: 1 male character (45-55ish);  
3 female characters (20s,30s,40s ish)

Open auditions: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx 2011  
at 7pm  
Firehall Theatre  
213 Second Street, Cobourg, 2nd floor

A limited number of scripts are available at the NP Firehall office (905-372-0577)

Please prepare a short comedic monologue, if possible.

## 2011- 2012 Workshop Plans

Since we began our regular series of workshops for members in 2008-2009, Northumberland Players has hosted 9 workshops and attracted 110 participants. Our smallest workshop had only 4 taking part; our largest had 20. The purpose of all workshops is to increase our own expertise and improve the productions we offer our audiences.

We are planning at least two workshops for the 2011-2012 season:

### ***The Great Northumberland Players Backstage Symposium for Newbies***

This workshop will be held on September 10 or 17 at the Firehall. It will run like a convention with four short sessions of 70 minutes each offered twice during the morning, and four different ones offered twice in the afternoon. We plan to use our own group members as the leaders of the workshop areas. A participant will be able to sample up to four different areas of backstage or offstage skill during the day. Possible topics:

set design, set décor, props, costumes, dresser, lighting design, lighting operation, sound design, sound operation, (assistant) stage management, script assistant, producer, director, marketing & publicity, fund-raising, project management.

What better way of finding out which area you would most enjoy? By restricting the workshop registration to 30, and capping each workshop at eight participants we will be able to guarantee small groups and lots of participation. The best news is that we will be able to keep the cost of the day at or below \$20.00, including lunch and refreshments.

### ***The Great Northumberland Players Onstage Symposium for Experienced and Less-Experienced) Actors***

This workshop will be held during the winter at the Firehall. It will focus on a series of short (70-90 minutes) sessions conducted by Northumberland Players directors. Participants will be able to sample up to four different sessions during the day, experiencing the skill-stretching techniques of four different directors.

Enrolment will be limited to 20 to keep the individual group sizes small enough for meaningful participation. The cost will be at or below \$20.00 including lunch and refreshments.

I would be very happy to hear from you if you would be interested in volunteering to lead a backstage or onstage session in either of these workshops in an area you know well. (Each session leader in these two workshops will receive double what I am paid to organize them.) Contact me at [cworsnop@cogeco.ca](mailto:cworsnop@cogeco.ca) or at 905-372-2126.

### **Follow Up to the Play Writing/Rewriting Workshop**

The last workshop of the 2010 – 2011 season, ***Play Writing/Rewriting***, was held in the Firehall on Saturday, 30 April. Five people were able to attend on the day – all of them NP members: Jack Boyagian, Carol-Anne Caswell, Mary Doig, Margaret Hilborn and Chris Worsnop. The small group made for a very productive, informal and intimate session, not to mention successful.

Larry Hines and Deb Robertson jointly led the workshop, and gently persuaded the participants to take more risks, and be more organized in their play-writing work. There were two major results: First, we all agreed that our confidence had been bolstered by the experience; and second, we all resolved that we would finish the plays we had begun as part of the preparation for the workshop.

One of the most effective sessions in the workshop was writing a synopsis of the play we "had in our head". We all resisted the task at first, claiming we had written only a scene or a

scrap of a play and had no idea what would be in the rest of it, but once we set ourselves to the task we found that there was a lot more of the play lurking in the hidden corners of our crania. So let's hope the work gets done and that The Northumberland Players will soon be faced with some original scripts as the next step on their journey to the stage.

### **The Play Writing/Rewriting Workshop, Part 2**

This workshop will be in the spring. In it, the participants from this year's play writing workshop will bring their finished (or almost finished) scripts to be read or "walked through" by volunteer actors. Each script will be workshopped separately as a way of giving the writer feedback on how the script works under production conditions. Depending on how many scripts are offered, the workshop may need to be offered more than once. There will be no fee for this workshop other than a \$10.00 charge to cover lunch and refreshments.

*Thespians:*

*WOW! What an enriching experience it has been working and playing as a member and volunteer of the Northumberland Players. I joined the Players in 2002 and began my thespian adventure with an audition for To Grandmother's House We Go. The part couldn't have gone to anyone finer and grander than "Dame Mary" Doig, as I would like to call her, because I was just a greenhorn.. I came directly from experiences of marriage, child-rearing and then the empty nest whereupon I dreamed, as I did as a teenager, of being an actress on the stage. Now, in my 65<sup>th</sup> year, A Dream Come True. Perfectly heartfelt.*

*I've gained priceless knowledge from working on set as well as attending the hands-on workshops, learning how to produce, direct, build sets, design sets, playwriting...all new, all exciting. This greenhorn has now volunteered backstage as properties manager, assistant stage manager, assistant director, producer for 9 different shows. And I have acted in 9 different shows including musicals, dinner theatre and the Christmas shows*

*Join Northumberland Players! Learn Theatre. It's so much fun! Being a part of a show is the reward. We don't get paid. We do it because we love to...lots of laughs, sad times, meaningful, thoughtful, music, music, costumes, dancing and dancing...*

*Give us your time, have fun doing it, and learn as you go.*

*Sincerely,*

*Carol-Anne Caswell*

*P.S...I'm not done yet!*

## A Special Venue: One Producer's Reflections on the Firehall Theatre

By Mary Liz Clark

I took my first foray into producing this year. Over the past 25 years I have dabbled within the Players organization doing make-up, costumes, and backstage work but had never performed a larger task. I was lucky as the neophyte producer of *The Elephant Man* to have both an amazing stage manager and a cast member who was a wellspring of knowledge and skill to help guide my path. (Thanks Antonio!)

My initial reason for functioning in this capacity was that my husband was the production's director. I soon discovered that working on something together put some additional excitement into our 30-year union. Instead of watching HGTV with our dinners on our laps, we sat at the table discussing the latest "E.M." events and challenges. Helping in the magic of this play was a singularly satisfying experience.

The subject matter of David Merrick's life has a particular poignancy that touches us all in regard to both its tragedy and message about overcoming adversity. This universal quality combined with the really stunning performances, beautifully detailed, subtle costumes, and evocative lighting and sound made the play an exciting, sell-out event. It was a satisfying reopening for the Firehall and hopefully is a harbinger of more theatre experiences to come.

There is great potential for choosing plays that suit the Firehall's atmospheric qualities. It is truly a gem of a place and although it is small, its intimacy provides a huge emotional potential. Future productions - and the new seating - will hopefully include well-crafted lighting, simple sets, and carefully orchestrated sound. I look forward to enjoying many more plays in this amazing space and maybe being a part of some of these productions as well.

## Northumberland Players Arcade

The Arcade will be closed on the regular Monday morning hours for the summer months but will we will be answering inquiries and setting up appointments when requested (phone is on remote pick-up 905-372-5856).

Producers, set designers and costume designers should note that we have acquired bolts of material as a donation which could be used for any upcoming productions in re-dressing and upholstering furniture and set pieces. We hope to store at the Third Space. Please make this your first stop before purchasing any fabric for productions.

## The Seats Have Arrived!

The Firehall Theatre has new comfortable seating thanks to the hard work of Jan Crane. Jan put in hundreds of hours designing multiple staging and seating models to suit a variety of productions, meeting with town officials concerning the building and safety codes, and discussing specifications with representatives of two companies that bid for the contract. The cost of the seating was about \$38,000 and paid from a generous grant from Cameco Corporation.

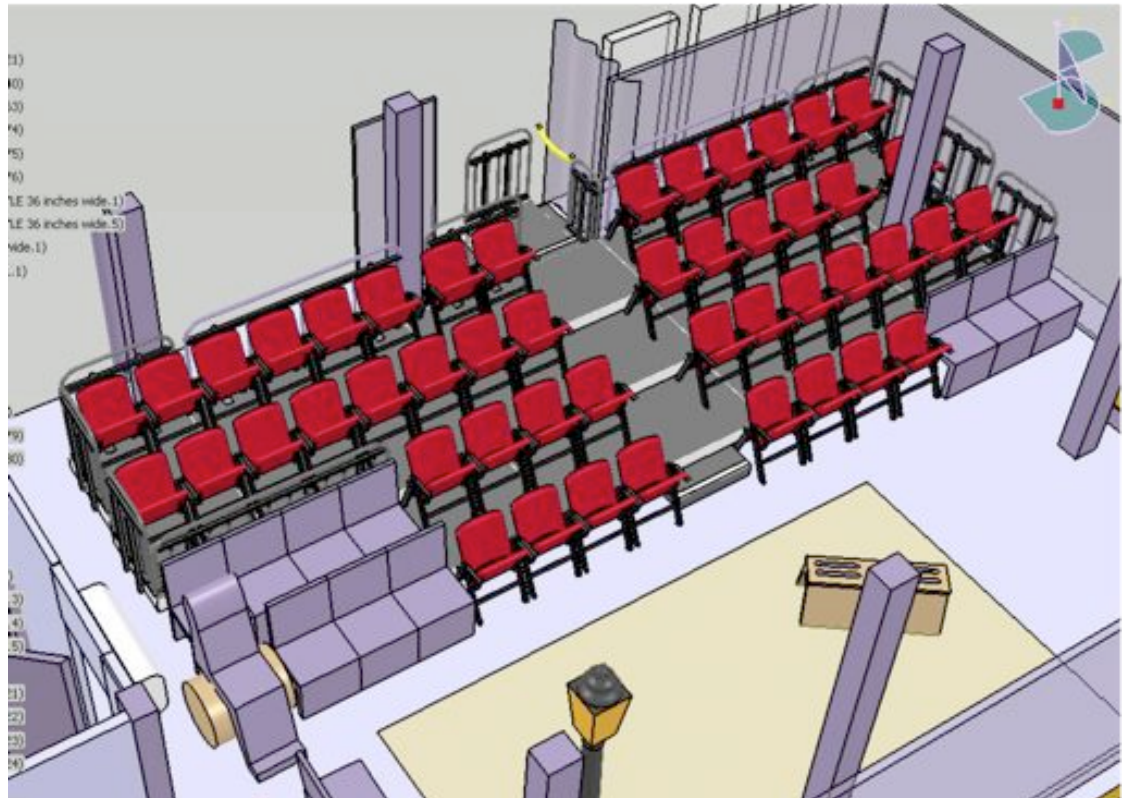
The modular system that we have installed, consisting of risers, safety railings, and wide, cushioned seats with arm rests, was purchased from Wenger Corporation. The modular design allows us to arrange seating to accommodate a variety of stage designs suited to the productions in the Firehall. The risers allow seating to be raised to improve sight lines for the audience. A crew of set-construction volunteers can re-arranging the seating in a couple of hours.

This is an intimate theatre with maximum seating of 63, including spaces for wheelchairs. The stage is located at the south side for the productions during Summer Camp, but "theatre in-the-round", which was recently used for *The Elephant Man* is another design that can be used. Directors and set designers of future productions will be able to choose the arrangement of stage and seating that best fits with their creative vision.

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*Come to the next production and experience for yourself how a comfortable seat frees you to focus on enjoying a performance.*

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Jan Crane's drawing shows one of the multiple seating and stage arrangements for the Firehall Theatre using the new modular seating. This arrangement is currently being used by the Summer Camp for their performances, July 26 to July 29. Tickets are available at the Firehall.