

Encore!

The Newsletter of Northumberland Players

213 Second Street, Cobourg, Ontario K9A 3N7
 Tel. 905-372-0577 / Fax 905-372-3662



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 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 wall. The price of limited edition prints is \$100.

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.

The Firehall - There've been some changes made..

Maybe it's all the work that has gone into the renovations of our Firehall theatre that started it all - who knows? Northumberland Players also has been through a "restructuring" over the summer. The goal was to update the organization and make it more efficient while maintaining the ideals that have made the Players successful for 35 years.

There have been many changes since 1976. Although we remain a group of volunteers committed to working together to produce quality theatre in our community,

other things have changed. Perhaps the most significant has been the decline in the money available - remember Wintario grants? - at the same time as expectations for the quality and sophistication of creative products have increased. Then there are the legal requirements that change how we interact with our members and volunteers - to get your signed permission to ask for your personal information, for example. The Players have to become more efficient at achieving higher and higher standards while meeting our legal obligations.

continued on page 8

Audition Notices

Here On the Flight Path
 October 13 and 14

Page 2

Theatre seats for the Firehall

How new theatre seating at the Firehall will make your theatre experience more comfortable.

Page 3

Membership Survey

What it was all about and what we learned about your role in Northumberland Players.

Page 6

☆☆☆ Auditions ☆☆☆



Here on the Flight Path

By Norm Foster

Produced by Kevin Ward

Directed by Helen Matthew

Performance Dates:

January 20th – February 6th, 2012

To be performed as Dinner Theatre at the Best Western

Audition dates:

Thursday, October 13, with callbacks Friday, October 14, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

At the Firehall Theatre (behind Victoria Hall)

213 Second Street, Cobourg, 2nd floor

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

Scripts, sides and monologues are available at the Firehall office which is open 10:00-1:00 Tuesday to Friday (905-372-0577).

Please prepare a short comedic monologue, if possible.

A Month of Sundays

The time: 4:15 p.m.

The date: Sunday September 11th.

The place: the second floor of the Firehall theatre.

The event: production meeting for A Month of Sundays, the Players' first dinner theatre presentation of the season.

The conversation:

Jack Boyagian: (director) So when Dave (Clark) wets himself, what are we going to use?

Me: How about a ziplock bag...the kind with the zipper?

Mary Liz Clark: How much water should be in it?

Jack: Well, we can't have him completely soaked...

Marg Hilborn: Green pants would be best – they'll show the stain...

Jack: He can't do the entire scene with a water tight zip lock bag in his pocket...and to reach into his pocket will look obvious...

Mary Liz: What about a balloon – with a pin?

Jack: Yeah, and he can go to the bathroom and when he comes back to his chess game he can just pop it with a pin...

continued... 2

A Month of Sundays

By Bob Larbey

Directed by Jack Boyagian and produced by Leah McMullen

Starring Dave Clark

October 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30 and November 4, 5, 6, 2011

Dinner Theatre at the Best Western Cobourg Inn

Call 905-372-2105 for tickets

Great minds gathering together to solve the atypical issues that arise during any production.
I love it.

Let's move onto fake food. Yes, resourceful Carol Anne Caswell has discovered a company in Mississauga that creates prop food good enough to eat.

A plate of scrambled eggs is 10.99.

All eyes turn to Jack and I suggest that because Benjamin Moore so kindly donated paint, we may have money in the budget for prop food

(A Month of Sundays requires a breakfast plate and a dinner entrée with faux roast beef and mashed potatoes).

Me: And we'll have it forever!

Norma: We have tons of grapes and bananas upstairs...

Marg: Apples, oranges...

It appears we may only choose future plays that require elaborate repasts and fruit buffets.

While the actors learn their lines, and rehearse, behind the flats a small but determined contingent of people create the world in which those actors will live every performance.

Hats off to dedicated and resourceful Players like Norma and Carol Anne who comb the thrift stores and beg retailers for authentic props that transform the set into a believable and engaging environment.

Mary Liz Clark, costumier, whose mission is to find polyester pants, beehive wigs, and power suits so that the era of the play accurately reflects its era, the 80s.

And then there's Wally in lighting who prefers the tangibility of the board to that of the computer.

To hear him say that it was "awesome" to achieve a lighting transition in a complex scene, timing and skill warmed my heart. His eyes lit up and he goes on to share he's so used to working on his own, that it's a welcome change to be part of a team: a Players team.

At the head of the table are Jack and Marg, seasoned board members who've rallied many a crew and cast and achieved award winning theatre.

Then there's me – who's never officially produced before, energized by the enthusiasm and creativity of those around this twizzler-tossed table.

You could have the worst day of your life (i.e. only an hour before I was weeping in my car – don't ask, all will be revealed in the Pulitzer Prize winning play I know I'll never write) but here, in the Firehall, everyone's day job/mid-life crises/worries/fears/etc. etc. fall away.

The person you may conceal beneath the veneer of responsible citizen is allowed to "play" again.

As a cast or crew member you're given full license to explore your imagination, throw out ideas and see them spark with others'...ultimately creating magical realms.

On our season brochure we encourage our audience members to "be a player"...take us up on it.

And if you have any suggestions beyond a balloon for Dave's "accident" scene, by all means email me at leah0005@gmail.com.



The little theatre that could

Jan Crane introduces the new theatre seating

After more than 5 years of renovations to the Firehall theatre we are finally beginning to see the fruits of our labours. From massive electrical upgrades, installation of central air conditioning, general cleanup and repainting, upgrading washrooms and modifications to the theatre walls and south foyer, we have now installed our new modular seating, thanks to a generous grant from Cameco.

The new seating consists of lightweight aluminum platforms that can be arranged in a number of different configurations of various heights in just a few hours. There are no tools required thanks to innovative latch type brackets, wing nuts and lever type clamping handles.

We have designed three basic configurations: the first we call our “standard configuration”, which is suitable for black box theatre. It has 4 rows of platforms with 6 inch steps between platforms, all facing toward a stage area at the east end of the theatre.

The second is an “in the round” configuration which retains the highest two levels of platforms in the same arrangement, to provide a cute little balcony (no extra charge for these seats I believe?). The other platforms are arranged around the theatre perimeter. The third configuration, we call the “side stage”, has the stage area on the south side of the theatre with 3 rows of platforms along the length of

continued...

the theatre east to west. This arrangement is useful if a director wants actors to enter through the audience as it has a central stepped pathway in the platforms that can be accessed from our north foyer.

The stage area is usually meant to be at floor level, but can be elevated with risers if required. The platforms can also be used for an elevated stage with seating at floor level.

All the configurations will hold between 60 and 70 seats, depending on what a director needs for back stage areas and set pieces, a great improvement from the 40 or so in our old theatre. Also, all configurations are fully compliant with accessibility standards, as our new washrooms will be.

The seats that were chosen are portable audience chairs that have an automatic flip -p seat when not in use. They are a generous width with armrests, have a padded seat and back, and are extremely comfortable even for larger patrons. They have classic theatre red upholstery with black steel frame. They can be ganged together when in use and folded up when not required. They were purchased from Wenger Corporation who also provided the platforms. The chairs are manufactured by Ducharme, a Canadian Company in Montreal. Nice that they are Canadian!

The first installation took place in time for this

year's summer camp and was configured in the side stage arrangement shown in the photo. We have yet to complete some wall modifications to the theatre and washrooms and this was the most suitable arrangement.

Of course it hasn't taken any time at all for our very creative members to challenge our ability to provide even more flexibility in the theatre seating arrangements. For the mounting of the great play "Doubt" in the theatre in November, we were able to satisfy the needs of the director with yet another arrangement. You'll have to come to the show to see that one! So I guess that means we now have 4 basic configurations to choose from. Layouts for these are kept at the Firehall office and anyone mounting a play can view them to decide on an arrangement. All configurations conform to accessibility standards and fire regulations.

We still have a way to go with the renovations but with the help of our members and volunteers we are proving that this will be the little theatre that can.

Jan Crane designed the seating arrangements and created the CAD drawings to facilitate ordering the seating as well as present and future installations. Thank you, Jan!

Northumberland Players Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Northumberland Players will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Firehall Theatre.

Members will be asked to approve the revised By-law.

Members will elect Directors to the restructured Board of Directors.

All adult members may vote.

Wine and cheese reception to follow in the Blair Room.

Membership may be paid and nominations made at the meeting.

Members will receive formal notification of meeting and motions.

The Membership Survey

Members want to share a life-long interest with like-minded people

The membership survey was conducted from February to June of 2011. Thanks to all those members, volunteers and friends of Northumberland Players who responded, we now have a clear idea of what membership means and how people want to become involved with the Players.

The majority of people who responded to the survey choose to become members for reasons that relate to their participation in community theatre and see the purpose of membership as providing a pool of talented people. Our By-Laws state only that membership is necessary to vote and to become a Director. However, By-Laws deal only with governance, not the day-to-day operation of the Players. Members are more interested in their roles outside the AGM. The Board of Directors, on the other hand, is concerned about membership as a source of revenue for operating expenses, especially in September and October, and as a measure of commitment for grant and sponsorship applications.

The respondents almost unanimously answered that membership should be required for participation in the activities of the Players. However, experience over the years has been that there are many arguments concerning what level of participation should require membership. Past experience in Northumberland Players and other organizations suggests that requiring membership is more likely to deter volunteers than it is to increase membership.

The respondents are in agreement with the Board of Directors: we should aim to have more members, 100 or more. However, they do not suggest reducing the membership fee, except to allow for family discounts. Only one respondent expressed any concern about getting any benefit in return for the membership fee. Membership appears to be a self-motivated choice that some people make because they want to make a voluntary commitment to Northumberland Players.

So, the challenge continues to be encouraging more people who want to be involved in community theatre and to work with people who share that interest to choose to become members.

As a result of the survey, the Board of Directors accepted the following recommendations:

A. To define membership

1. A member shall be defined as "an individual who has applied for membership, paid the annual membership fee, and been accepted for membership by the Board of Directors". Members aged 18 or older have a vote at meetings and may be appointed to the Board.

B. To increase the measure of commitment to Northumberland Players that membership represents

2. Maintain a voluntary annual member status and provide recognition of members.

3. Add a more-structured Volunteer status and develop a database to keep track of the interests and contributions of volunteers

C. To increase revenue from membership:

4. Maintain the membership fee at \$25, introduce a family membership of \$40 for any family group of one or 2 adults and any number of children, youth/students, and implement an online payment system as soon as possible.

5. Appeal for donations from members when they renew their membership.

6. Investigate new strategies for soliciting donations from members and volunteers.

If you would like to receive a copy of the complete report, contact the Firehall at 905-372-0577.

Maureen Holloway is a member of Northumberland Players and chair of the membership committee.

There's been some changes made...

Northumberland Players has a new organizational model that describes more clearly what individuals can do. Our lives are more complex today so it seems to be harder to "pitch in" and help, so dividing the responsibilities allows individuals to choose what they can do and choose how they will get it done. There are now eleven directors, each with specific responsibilities, and twelve non-board positions, each with specific tasks related to the operation of the Players.

Unfortunately, the restructuring and the examination of our budget revealed that we cannot afford to pay staff, not even part-time. In August, we said goodbye to Patti Ryan and Shannon Van Watterghem-Levasseur who have been working in our office for two years. The office will now be staffed by volunteers, from Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You can still reach the Players at 905-372-0577 or at info@northumberlandplayers.com.

When the members vote for the directors at the Annual General Meeting, they will be electing people for specific positions. You are encouraged to have a look at the list of positions because the idea is that clearer roles make volunteering more manageable. The nominations committee, chaired by Marg Hilborn, charged with the responsibility of finding people who have what it takes for each position. If you are one of those people, call the Firehall and leave a message for Marg.

Directors

President

- the "face" of the Players, legally and within the community, ensures that the Players oversee all aspects of the Players to ensure that we operate efficiently

Vice President

- as President's "right hand", oversees the Youth theatre and oversees governance and policy concerns

Treasurer

- oversees the development of the budgets and the management of all financial business of the Players

Secretary

- the recording secretary ensures that accurate records are kept of all business

Director of Physical Plants

- oversees the operation, use, and maintenance of the three properties: Firehall, Arcade and Third Space

Director of Marketing

- develops and implements marketing, branding, and

advertising strategies with the budget

Director of membership, Volunteers and Communication

- oversees the recruitment of members and volunteers, facilitates the matching of volunteers and production teams

Director of Fundraising

- implements strategies for fundraising through grant applications, special events, and fundraising drives

Executive Producer

- prepares annual plans and mentors producers to ensure that each production has the volunteers, talent, resources and support necessary

Artistic Director

- oversees script selection each season and mentors directors to ensure that each production is an artistic success

Member-at-Large

- manages the functions of the Players and Firehall day-to-day, including correspondence, rentals, schedules.

Non-Board Director Positions

Youth Program Coordinator

- identify, organize, and oversee programs for children

Governance and Policy Coordinator

- ensures that By-laws and policies are up-to-date and appropriate and oversees elections at AGM

Health and Safety Coordinator

- ensures that health and safety procedures are followed during all Players activities in all venues

Front of House Coordinator

- organize front of house including 50/50

Education Coordinator

- organize and oversee annual workshop schedule, children's workshops, mentorship opportunities, and the scholarship/bursary program

Arcade Coordinator

- oversee the maintenance and storage of costumes for use in our productions and a marketing plan for renting

Coordinator for Special Projects

- currently oversees the on-going renovations

Webmaster

- designs and maintains website and social media

continued on page 8

Northumberland Players AGM

What is that and why should I attend?

Every year you probably receive an invitation to the Northumberland Players Annual General Meeting, or AGM for short. Some of our members, volunteers and patrons attend but there are a lot of people involved with the Northumberland Players have never been to this AGM. In this article I want to clarify what the AGM is and why you should attend.

As a charitable organization in Canada, Northumberland Players is required to hold an Annual Meeting of all of its members at least once a year. It is at this meeting that members are able to have a say in the governance of Northumberland Players. Key business items dealt with at this meeting include an annual Financial Report, a report from the President of the board, and the election of the Board of Directors for the next year.

It is also a forum where members have a voice and a vote in determining what happens with your Northumberland Players. Now, what do I mean by member? Members are those people who have paid their membership dues (\$25, \$40 for families) and have the right to vote at the AGM if they are 18 years or older. You have been approached to either renew or join as a member for 2011-2012. Memberships will be available for sale at the AGM as well.

This year our AGM will be held on Wednesday, November 9, at the Firehall Theatre behind Victoria Hall in Cobourg. Invitations will be sent out to our members with more details. The AGM is also a really good event to meet other members. There is always a social event tied in with the meeting so it's also a lot of fun!

This year you want to make sure you attend because the Northumberland Players Board of Directors will be presenting new By-laws which are the governing articles for the organizations. The By-laws have been revised in accordance with Ontario legislation concerning not-for-profit corporations like Northumberland Players. The review was also an opportunity to ensure that the By-law were written in plain English for easier reference. The new by-laws are currently posted on the website at www.northumberlandplayers.com for review so that members can prepare to vote on the articles at the AGM.

So make sure you join us this year for the AGM and have a say in YOUR Northumberland Players. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

Meaghan Macdonald is a Director and chair of the Governance Committee

There's been some changes made...

Coordinator for Special Events
EODL Representative
• liaison between Northumberland Players and EODL and Theatre Ontario

3rd Space Building Manager
• oversees the maintenance, security and organization of the building and on-site storage of materials and set pieces

Firehall Building Manager
• oversees the cleaning, maintenance and security of the Firehall Theatre and other space to ensure that it is ready for use by the Players

Light, Sound, and Properties Manager
• oversees maintenance, security, and organization of sound and lighting equipment and properties for use in productions

Six Weeks in the Summer of 2011

We can be extremely proud of the theatre programme the Players offered to the community this year. The kids had a blast learning new skills. Two- and four-week campers participated in top quality workshops in movement, monologues directing, and mask making. The one-week campers put on delightful performances for parents and friends after only 4 days of rehearsals. To top it all off the new seating was delivered and installed in the theatre on July 6 under the careful eye of Jan Crane by our faithful construction crew. Needless to say the campers were thrilled to be performing in a real theatre space.

Shannon Oliver, who is always a camper at heart, returned as camp co-ordinator and she, along with the rest of the staff, worked as a committed enthusiastic and caring team. Our counsellors, Tory, Kristy, Lindy, and Kelsey, were top notch and had expertise in several different facets of theatre and most importantly ensuring that each child had the best camp experience possible.

The Youth Camp committee, consisting of Christine Sharpe, Chris Worsnop, and myself, initiated a mentoring programme this year which is a little different from the programme in the past. We had mentor candidates apply, interviewed them, and then offered mentoring positions to those who seemed to be a good fit. I am happy to report that Jessica McDougal accepted our offer and worked as a mentor each day of camp. She was thrilled with the experience and we were ecstatic to have her on board each day.

For next year 2012 we will continue to build on our strengths, smooth out any bumps and plan another summer theatre experience which is as much a blast as the Players summer camp of 2011.

Marg Hilborn is a Director and the Youth Theatre liaison.

PA Day on November 25? Northumberland Players has part of the solution: **Cinderella Christmas**

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

Cinderella Christmas is this year's Youth Theatre production for the schools and families in and around the Cobourg area. Written by Milenda Janda, and adapted for the Players and directed by Mary Doig, **Cinderella Christmas** is a musical performance for children and the child-at-heart that adds the "spirit of the season" to a classic that we all know so well.

Cinderella Christmas will run for 3 weekdays, with 2 performances a day, on November 23, 24, and 25 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Victoria Hall. There will be a performance at 2 p.m. on Saturday for the public, also.

This year, **Friday November 25** is a Professional Activity Day for the public schools so public elementary children will not be in class. What's a parent or caregiver to do?

Solution? Why not bring the kids to Victoria Hall that day (if their teacher hasn't already done so) to see a humorous rendition of the classic Cinderella story. Tickets are very reasonable at \$6 and \$8 and the children will enjoy the nonsense and pandemonium at the castle.

ENCORE IS PUBLISHED 6 TIMES A YEAR. THE DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER ISSUE, BEFORE THE AGM, IS OCTOBER 27.

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES AS UNFORMATTED TEXT AND PHOTOS AS JPGS TO GARTH AND MAUREEN AT zaria@cogeco.ca