



September/October 2011



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

One Saturday a few weeks ago, James Bond was outwitting Goldfinger on the Hospitality Center's movie screen, and Calder, one of our regulars, took the seat next to me and leaning closely, quietly said, "You're my friend, right?"

"Of course, Calder," I said.

"Can I talk to you as a friend?"

"Sure." But the noise of gunfire and explosions as Goldfinger was raiding Fort Knox was too deafening for me to hear Calder well. "Let's talk outside," I said.

Once we stepped out into the fresh air, Calder began by saying, "Charlie's got bugs. You know--lice? He won't do anything about it. And since I'm camping with him, I'm afraid I'll get them, too."

I've known Charlie for a long time, too. He's been showing up at Nightwatch since well before I came aboard as Director. A nice guy. Drinks too much sometimes, but is always a gentle, unassuming soul. I told Calder I could invest in some de-lousing solution for him to take back to Charlie at camp, but he would have to take it from there. Did he feel comfortable talking with Charlie about his lice problem?

He could do that, he said. But it turned out that lice weren't the real thing on his mind. "Charlie's really let himself go. He doesn't seem to care about anything anymore. It's like he's just given up. And I love that guy, man! I'd do anything for him. But I don't know what to do. I keep trying to interest him in things--like coming here--but he just doesn't have any interest. He says, 'You go on without me.' And he doesn't take care of himself. He doesn't clean up. Now he's got the bugs, and he's going to give them to me, too."

"Sounds like he's depressed," I said.

"I don't know what to do," Calder shook his head again.

"Would you talk with him?"

"Of course, I would," I said.

And once again, it was reinforced to me why Nightwatch is here. When most people conjure up mental images of the homeless, they draw associations with figures pushing shopping carts along downtown sidewalks or standing behind cardboard signs at freeway on-ramps. But they are only that--just figures--figures without faces, outlines filling ragged clothes who hardly have any more substance to them.

They rarely think of them as fellow human beings. Human beings who, like us, have inner lives. Human beings who not only ache because they may have missed a meal and are exposed to the elements, but because they also hurt inside. Human beings who can finally reach the limits of their emotional and spiritual resources. Human beings who can get

depressed.

That's not something a bowl of soup can cure. Neither can a roof simply put over their heads. Only a human connection can. Human beings need human beings.

Most of the rest of us, when we get depressed, have resources we can access: families, friends, health plans. When the homeless get depressed, they have . . .

Well, Nightwatch isn't the total answer, but at least we can make those who come to us feel as if they are not completely abandoned.

That for them, a light shines at least *somewhere*.

Gary L. Davis

BECOME A FACEBOOK FRIEND OF NIGHTWATCH

If you're on Facebook, become a friend of Operation Nightwatch Portland. In doing so, not only will you keep up-to-date on all that's going on, but you'll also be helping us out. When we apply for grants, many foundations are now gauging an organization's strength-of-support by the number of connections it keeps via social networking.

We already have a host of pictures posted on our Facebook "wall"—many seen nowhere else. Go to the "Operation Nightwatch Portland" page to check them out!

NEW PROGRAM COORDINATOR ARRIVES

James Antonio is the new Program Coordinator for Operation Nightwatch.

Although this is the first time that he can properly call Portland his "home" city, he is no stranger to the Northwest. James was born and



raised in the shadow of the Space Needle – the beautiful city of Seattle, Washington. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in math and physics from the College of the Holy Cross, a small Jesuit liberal arts college in Worcester, MA, James went on to do a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Nashville, TN. There he worked as a Client Services Counselor for a non-profit called Project Return, Inc., working with people being released from incarceration.

Now in his second year as a JV with Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest, James serves as the Program Coordinator for Operation Nightwatch. As the Program Coordinator, James serves as the primary point person for the Hospitality Center. He orients new volunteers and attends to the smooth operation of the center. He, along with his 7 community members live in Northeast Portland and all serve in various social service placements in Portland.

When not running the evening hospitality center or with his community, you can find James at Stumptown Coffee where he enjoys their bottled cold brew coffee, one of the various Portland food carts, or en route to any one of these places on his trusty red Schwinn "Odysseus."

PORTLAND CHAMBER MUSIC TO NIGHTWATCH: HAPPY 30TH BIRTHDAY!

A 30th birthday is a significant event in most lives, and so it will be with Operation Nightwatch. On October 29, ONW turns 30!

We will be celebrating the day with the inauguration of a concert series featuring Portland Chamber Music.

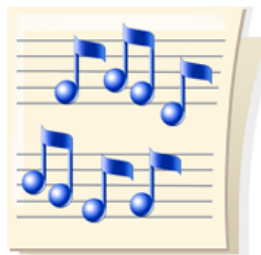
[Portland Chamber Music](#) is itself a non-profit, its mission being "to make economically feasible, mentally ingestible, local art music available throughout Portland." Its repertoire includes both classical and contemporary music, and its vision includes partnering with Operation Nightwatch by providing free music lessons to those who endure the challenges of homelessness.

But while the concert on October 29 will focus on celebrating the Nightwatch birthday, two other concerts will follow in the series later in the year. On January 21, the program will highlight the presentation of our first "Lampighter of the Year" award, to be given to a prominent Portland citizen who has proven to be a particular friend to the homeless. Our April 21 concert will be a joyous musical celebration welcoming spring.

Proceeds from all ticket sales will go to support the work of Operation Nightwatch, the feeding ministry of St. Stephen's Table, and Portland Chamber Music. Series subscriptions may be purchased for \$50; individual concert tickets cost \$20. Student and low-income tickets are also available at \$5.

Tickets can be purchased online by going to brownpapertickets.com. You can avoid service charges by buying directly from us. Just call/text us at 503-220-0438 or [email info@operationnightwatch.org](mailto:info@operationnightwatch.org).

Help us to celebrate our Birthday Bash!



ANNUAL BBQ, SEPTEMBER 17

Put it on your advance calendars:

The annual Nightwatch picnic and BBQ will be held Saturday, September 17, at Colonel Summers Park, SE 17th and Taylor, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please bring a salad, chips, or dessert. We'll provide the hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments and drinks.

Hope to see you there!

CHAPLAIN'S NOTES

Fresh Blueberries

Last night I had my second slice of a blueberry pie that my wife Jean baked on Monday. The berries came from the bush 50 feet away in our front yard. Homegrown. Totally organic. Not even a "buy local" product. We didn't buy 'em. Didn't have to. They were a gift, a gift of that bush. A gift of the living systems of this earth that have been eons in the making. Creation before our very eyes, as are the red robins who have now discovered the fresh fruit.

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) I often marvel that we see creation as though it were some manufactured product. As though it were a car or a piece of furniture where all the construction was done. Because creation is the first subject dealt with in the pre-history sections of the Judeo-Christian scriptures, basically up to about Genesis 12, it sometimes seems like past history over and done with. But it's not. Creation saturates the scriptures from cover to cover. It's first and foremost how we know God.

We've been studying creation at Operation Nightwatch Bible study for months. When we resume our Tuesday evening gatherings on September 13, we'll look at creation themes in the writings of Apostle Paul. We'll look at the wonder of new creation seen in Revelation. These Bible studies have been the greatest fun ever. Because creation never ceases. Neither does the wonder of a blueberry bush that just can't stop creating. Creation... Wow!

Pastor Roger

ONW WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER

Nighthatch welcomes Dr. Curtis Thompson to the Board of Directors. Curtis comes to us with significant experience on nonprofit boards, including Lake Oswego Transitional Shelter Ministry, Portland Center Stage and the Portland Opera. He is a skin pathologist in private practice and volunteer teaches in the Department of Dermatology at OHSU. Curtis lives in Sellwood with his partner, Joe Mitchoff, and he has two college-age children, Abi and Nathan. Curtis is a triathlete and enjoys travel.

WISH LIST / BLANKET-SOCKS FUND

We finally ran out of socks.

At one time, we had scads of them. But because they weren't in infinite quantity, and demand was constant, we finally ran out.

One of the reasons we ran out is that we changed our distribution policy. It used to be that we rationed the numbers of socks we gave out each night. Only the first ten who fought their way to be first in line got a pair. It often wasn't a pretty site. Besides, it didn't make much sense to reward people just because they were first. Often, it was people who were living in the nearby apartments who showed up first in line just because they knew there were free socks for the taking. Then a guy living in a doorway would straggle in, and because he was late he didn't get socks even though he needed them more.

When people need socks, they need socks. That's why we changed our policy. Now anybody who asks for them gets a pair.

And we ran out. So we need socks. And we always run out of blankets the moment they come in. We can never keep up with that demand. So we need blankets, too.

And if you don't have the socks and blankets themselves to give, you can always donate to our "Blanket/Socks Fund." We'll use your contribution to buy at wholesale the socks and blankets we need.

We just used the Blankets/Socks Fund to buy a couple of crates of socks. Now we've run out of money in the fund, too.

You can see how simple our Wish List is: Socks. Blankets. Funds. (If you make a monetary contribution, please make a note to us that it is for the "Blankets/Socks Fund.")

LIFE AT THE HOSPITALITY CENTER

Here are some notes from our evening log:

"K-- approached me early in the evening and told me that if her hernia did not stop hurting she would want me to call an ambulance for her. She's been toughing through it since, though I may still need to do it at the end of the night; since she is fully conscious, it's her decision, but I will make the call for her if needed." (Cole)

"L-- was very drunk and did not understand the full implications of the term 'permanent.' He asked, 'Can I have a sandwich? Can I just come upstairs for a cup of coffee?' When I responded no to both he asked when he could return. Unfortunately, never. We take harassment seriously and it is a threat serious enough to warrant a permanent exclusion from Operation Nightwatch." (Cole)

"S--, who attends the brown-bag lunch church is full of it! He was dancing, singing praises and laughing hard on the patio. I talked with him for a bit; he was not intoxicated, just high on life. He was interested in Roger's worship service and bible study.



August Outing

"M-- stopped by, showed me a receipt of the little social security money she lives on and brought me a pack of 'energy snacks.' I thanked her and she told me, 'We've got to take care of you; you take care of us so much.'

"Played an intense game of Jenga with B.P., M--, C-- and J--. B-- told me more about his work in biochemistry. He said he used to work in an underground quarantined lab that would become sealed if a virus escaped and all the scientists would be left there to die. He said that happened at CERN in Switzerland a few years ago; the government simply sent a letter to their families informing them of the deaths." (Cole)

"The Starlight Parade took all our guests! This is one of the quietest nights I've experienced in months; I even got to play a few games of Jenga with B--.

"Of course, no evening at this place is complete without a little drama. J-- and C-- were in an argument and C-- tried to get me to get J-- to leave his table. I told them I wouldn't get involved in a petty argument. C-- later told me J-- had threatened him, though not at Nightwatch.

"K-- came in and feigned collapsing on the floor for a dramatic joke. I was next to him in 10 seconds and told him never to do it again. J--, on the other hand did collapse when he was serving coffee, though he was fine. He told me it happens regularly; his doctors say its not a seizure, though he can't come up with any better word to describe it than a 'seizure.'" (Cole)

"Many folks took advantage of acupuncture tonight. I got a chance to get poked toward the end of the night. Many people walked out with huge, relaxed smiles on their faces; I was one of them.

"Johnny said a guy walked off with his jacket tonight. Unfortunately, I can't watch people's clothing items. I told him I was sorry and that I could get him a new jacket, but he was upset and walked away." (Cole)

"Mellow night, which is good since we've got very few volunteers. I considered closing at 10, but it's relaxed enough that we'll be able to start clean up earlier than usual.

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*August
Outing*

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