



May/June 2012



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

[NOTE: Recently I was invited to deliver a "Mission Moment" at the Sunday worship service at Moreland Presbyterian Church. I only had a couple of minutes to try to explain to folks—many of whom didn't know a thing about us—who we were and what we did. This is what I said:]

"Home" is an emotionally-laden word. Just consider the way we use the word "home" in various common phrases:

"There's no place like home."

"Home Sweet Home"

"Home for the holidays"

"Homeward Bound"

Now substitute, if you will, the word, "house:"

"There's no place like [a] house."

"House Sweet House"

"[A] House for the holidays"

"House-ward Bound"

Somehow, those phrases just don't have the same ring to them. The word "house," in contrast to the word, "home," seems rather cold, doesn't it? "Impersonal" is probably the more accurate way to describe it, as the word "home" really carries with it much broader connotations than those

of mere shelter--connotations of things like family, identity, connection, relationships, meaning, rootedness. When we are "home"-sick, for instance, the longing we feel, the missing connection we're grieving, is not really for the wood or brick edifice we have left behind, but rather for all those who mean so much to us from whom we are now so distant.

So consider what it means when we recognize that a person is "home"-less. We think of that person as lacking a roof over his head; we may even think of him as being hungry. Consequently, the way in which so many good, conscience-stricken people typically respond to his needs is by addressing the obvious, getting "that person a hot meal and a roof over his head."

Now, I wouldn't knock those as being *bad* responses. I'd simply say that they are *insufficient* responses. For while that person may be lacking shelter, to acknowledge that he's *home*-less is to recognize he's also lacking so much more.

Those on the streets do not simply suffer from physical needs. They also suffer from social isolation. And they therefore don't cease being *home*-less if all energy is simply dedicated in putting them into a house, but they are left isolated still.

Operation Nightwatch has been serving Portland's homeless since 1981. We don't provide shelter; and while we do hand out food, clothing, socks and blankets to those who need them, that's really incidental to our main task.

We call ours a "ministry of hospitality." We now have three Hospitality Centers in operation—our main one downtown, plus one just off SE 82<sup>nd</sup>, and a Mobile Hospitality Center that can to homeless clusters around the city. Through them, the emphasis is on building connection

and relationships. Benefiting from a wealth of volunteers, we are able to sit down with our guests, share conversation, hear their stories, and simply celebrate the humanity we have in common. We play cards and board games; sometimes we show a movie; we recognize our guests' birthdays; we've had open mic nights and even done karaoke. And while those at first glance may seem to be but trivial things, consider if you're homeless, what chance you would have to play a game, or seen a movie, or have your birthday honored. Our folks may ordinarily be homeless; but taking that word, "home," seriously, what we like to think is that for at least a few hours, a few evenings a week, we are providing them a home.

Not a house, but a *home*.

And does it make a difference?

Well, let me ask you what *you* think: if you were coping with mental illness or an addiction (as a number of our guests are), what would be your incentive to battle them if you felt you were all alone? If you despaired because every day was a struggle, and every attempt you made to advance beyond your circumstances only resulted in a dead end, what would be the point of your even carrying on if you believed no one cared?

One of our guests wrote this about us in review of Nightwatch he posted online: "I enjoy the fact that I can come here, be myself, and accepted as that person, even on my bad days"—which reminds me of Robert Frost's definition of "home:" "Home," Frost said, "is the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in."

Another guest said simply, "Operation Nightwatch saved my life."

Hospitality, you see, has its own way of healing.

**Gary L. Davis**

## FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

At ONW, I get to interact with an array of personalities – that’s one of my favorite parts of the job! I marvel at how each person is unique. It is always fulfilling to go home knowing guests felt at home in our hospitality space and volunteers felt they were providing that hospitality beyond which they ever thought they could.

I have always been on the introverted side of things. While extroverts gain energy from people-interactions, introverts expend it. That explains why I often go home feeling pretty tired after the last light goes out!

But at Nightwatch, I get to see both types. I can sense extroverts like P-- a mile away. Though short in stature, P-- has personality as loud and boisterous as a Boston Redsox fan at Fenway when the Yankees are in town! Sometimes, interacting with P-- can get exhausting, but it remains one of the most fulfilling parts of my job. Since P-- comes to us all the way from Beaverton, his very presence reminds me of the community and sense of friendship we create.

On the other side of the spectrum is J--, the gentle giant. Despite his size, J--’s personality is as friendly as they come. At the Hospitality Center, J quietly inquires about the next movie or outing.

And then there are the volunteers! Many are students from the nearby universities. Others are long-time Nightwatch veterans. Some come from Hands on Portland, an organization that connects volunteers with local non-profit agencies. While some have had no prior experience working with the street population, others have actually have homelessness in their own backgrounds. Recently a group served with us from the University of Iowa School of Social Work. They listened to guests’ stories and engaged them in a way I have never seen from a group of volunteers. They were great!

Whatever brings people to Nightwatch, and whatever their personality, we are blessed with the diversity. Every person is special and deserves to be treated as such.

**James**

## READ ALL ABOUT IT! GARY VAUGHAN PUBLISHES MEMOIR

Gary Vaughan, Operation Nightwatch’s first Executive Director, has just published a memoir. Entitled, *God on Drums: A Journey of Faith*, Gary describes his life from a difficult childhood to his years at Nightwatch.

Bill Cameron, author of *County Line* and *Day One*, says, “In *God on Drums*, Gary Vaughan shares a thought-provoking memoir which connects his early life in San Diego to his work with the homeless on the streets of Portland. The narrative is at times harrowing, but tempered with reflection, moments of comedy, and a deep sense of life’s potential for joy amidst darkness.”

Copies of Gary’s book may be obtained by going online to blurb.com.

## CHAPLAIN’S NOTES: “Spring Showers”

*“Listen to the rhythm of the falling rain...”*

Eons ago, there was young band called “The Cascades”. They recorded “Rhythm of the Rain” with the above lyrics in late 1962, just about the time I got my driver’s license at the age of 16. By mid-1963, the song was a huge international hit. Little did I know then that I would one day live in view of the Cascade Range or that falling rain would be a factor of daily life as often it is here.

Rain affects the lives of our guests. So does sunshine. They are not alone. We feel it too. But it rains elsewhere besides downtown Portland or on the awning of the Mobile Hospitality Center. It rains in our hearts and souls. It rains in our spirits, some days more than others. Rain doesn’t always mean sadness. Sometimes there are tears of joy. Recently, several of our guests at Operation Nightwatch Sunday Worship have shared a few quiet little showers with me. They were moved by worship, the good news of Christ, the life-affirming celebration of being recognized and known, of being cared about and prayed about by name. Rain showers of moist eyes expressed

the relief of a burden lifted quietly in confidence for the first time. I guess you could say I do what I do because of the rain. Listen to the rhythm... It’s beautiful.

*--Pastor Roger*

## NIGHTWATCH NOW FOUND ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, PINTEREST

Whether you like online social media on not typically depends on what generation you belong to. The younger you are, the greater the likelihood is that you find Facebook, Twitter, and their offshoots your favorite ways to communicate.

However, such social media sites can also be great tools for organizations such as ours. For one thing, they enable us to get our message to those younger groups that are using them all the time. For another, they can deliver the most up-to-date information we have about ourselves about what’s going on. (Consider that the “Arab Spring” demonstrators knew how to be most effective by being constantly tuned in to Twitter.)

So if you would like to plug into a more in-depth, up-to-the-minute picture of our activities, follow us on one of these outlets:

**FACEBOOK** (“Operation Nightwatch Portland): Facebook puts life into what you read here by offering pictures, links to related articles, and alerts to upcoming events.

**TWITTER** (@Nightwatch): If U prefer shorter articles, or the latest about Nitewatch, subscribe to R Twitter feed: @Nightwatch. 140 characters. As short as this.

**PINTEREST** (Operation Nightwatch): Pinterest is like an online scrapbook. On it, we



“pin” not only great pictures from Nightwatch itself, but relevant art, photos, and designs from around the Web.

## THE SPIRITUAL RETREAT LIVES ON! (AND OTHER OUTING NEWS)

Since 1998 we have been taking our guests on a 3-day spiritual retreat every June at Camp Adams outside Molalla. The retreat was largely possible due to the generosity of the camp, which donated the space.

This year we received notice that the camp would no longer be able to provide its facilities for free. The retreat looked like it was going to be in jeopardy, but a number of good folks came forward to meet our expenses. The retreat *will* happen, June 4-6!

We would therefore like to thank our donors: Roberta Taussig, Warren and Joyce Aney, David Becker, Jim and Sheila Nichols, Melissa Bensink, St. Stephen's Episcopal Parish, Greg and Becky Mowe, Meg Kaczyk, Jan Indermill, Roger and Jean Fuchs, and Jeremy Marks.

As for our other outings for the year, we still lack sponsors for three of them. If you would like to help see them happen by taking on a sponsorship (or a shared sponsorship), please let us know!

MONTH	OUTING	SPONSORS
January	Shopping Spree	Leah Hollingshead
February	Bowling	Al Bowen
March	Oregon Zoo	David Groff
April	Miniature Golf	David Slocum
May	Mt. Hood	Leah Hollingshead
June	Spiritual Retreat	Tim & Mary Shamrell
July	Mount St. Helens	Kenneth & Frances Grillo
August	Cape Lookout State Park	Madeline Grimm
September	Corn Maze (\$175)	
October	OMSI (\$200)	
November	Camp Adams Day Trip	Gary & Mary Fischer
December	Christmas lights (\$175)	

### WISH LIST

Blankets / sleeping bags  
Razors  
Combs  
Travel-size toothpaste  
Neosporin

### Memorial Service



## JUST IN TIME FOR THE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN: WE'VE MADE ONLINE GIVING EASY!

The Nightwatch Annual Fundraising Campaign is upon us, making this an important time as we seek to raise the support for our work in the coming year.

And just in time, we have developed a way to make online giving easier.

Did you know that about 83% of people have made purchases or charitable contributions online? It's not a new phenomenon anymore. Online transactions are now as secure as those done over-the-counter, and they provide a very large convenience factor.

And we now have a site that is more convenient than ever. We have broken with PayPal and subscribed to the services of Network for Good, a non-profit that assists other non-profits with fundraising resources.

Unlike our old PayPal site, our new one requires no passwords or previously established accounts. Your credit card information will suffice.

Furthermore, the new site allows you to make these choices:

Do you want to give on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, semi-annually)?

Do you want to have your contribution go to a special Nightwatch fund (e.g. blankets/socks, Mobile Hospitality Center, outings)?

Would you like to make a contribution in someone's memory or honor?

You will receive an immediate acknowledgement that your donation has been received, as well as a receipt for your tax records.

And security is guaranteed.

We'll be sending out more information about accessing this site during the Annual Campaign, but if you would like to visit it now, go to our Web site at [www.operationnightwatch.org](http://www.operationnightwatch.org) and click the "DonateNow" button.

### MEMORIAL THANKS

We would like to thank Carl and Christfriede Lawson for their gift to Operation Nightwatch in memory of Marcus Walker.

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*Serving at the SE  
Hospitality Center*

*Hospitality Center 1432 SW 13<sup>th</sup>, Portland 97201;  
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**OPERATION NIGHTWATCH**

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