

November 2024 Volunteer Newsletter



The Spirit Living Within and Around

November 1st is the Celtic New Year, Samhain, which follows the day after Halloween. Pagan cultures believed the day before the New Year was one in which the “air” was thinnest and allowed for the living to intermingle with the deceased. It also allowed for those who have departed but were struggling to make passage to the “underworld” to have a more clear and easily navigated path. Costumes were worn to not reveal your living status so easily that you could be lured ahead of your time with the departed, though if that failed a treat would have been stored in a pocket or trouser lining to bribe a yearning spirit to part ways with yours in the hopes you would be free to wake the next morning.

While Halloween was focused on the dead, Samhain was centered on the living. It was a time created to bring communities together to assess the needs of the group going into the winter with the understanding food would be scarce and many would be struggling. Samhain was also a celebration, or gathering, to share stories, break bread, and “stand tall against the dead” (from the previous evenings travails) and strengthen community ties when it would be needed most.

I find the idea of Halloween and Samhain fitting and poetic in this work we do with Hospice. It is a time in which we stand with a patient and their family in a space existing at end-of-life. Whether you are gently clasping a hand, reminiscing through stories, or simply holding space you are simultaneously making a passage easier and celebrating life. These very things are a treasure filled gift to a person facing uncertainty. The volunteer spirit extends well past the passing of a soul to it’s next life, the very act of your presence is a buffer in a mourning families grief. There is immeasurable comfort to be held by the family that remains in knowing you were there when they needed respite for themselves.

On this day of the Celtic New Year following All Hallows Eve, I thank you and hope your winter harvest is plentiful in both bounty and inner-peace.

Photo Credit to Volunteer, Ron Eby

Picture has been cropped to show incredible detail





Wishing You the Merriest of Birthdays and a Celebration Lasting the Whole Year Through!

- Emily C. November 7
- Christine W. November 10
- Louise E.G. November 26
- Bruce A. November 27



The Dead by Susan Mitchell

At night the dead come down to the river to drink.
They unburden themselves of their fears,
their worries for us. They take out the old photographs.
They pat the lines in our hands and tell our futures,
which are cracked and yellow.
Some dead find their way to our houses.
They go up to the attics.
They read the letters they sent us, insatiable
for signs of their love.
They tell each other stories.
They make so much noise
they wake us
as they did when we were children and they stayed up
drinking all night in the kitchen.



A moment of introspection. A question for yourself:

What small act of kindness was I once shown that I will never forget?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" - Margaret Mead



Welcome Back!!!

Lise C. is a former volunteer rejoining our small but mighty team from Caribou. Lise will be a familiar face at the Aroostook House of Comfort. Please join us in a warm hello when you see her.

"Good Job." It's Worth Saying By Volunteer, Robin Wood

There are a few things that never fail to boost my spirits. One of them is October light shining through fall foliage. Another is when someone tells me I've done something well.

Why should they matter, those overt acknowledgements of admiration or appreciation? Maybe because none of us really knows how we are received by others. We try our best, most of the time. We hope we're doing okay, but many of us are plagued with uncertainty. Self-doubt, given time to propagate, can be overpowering.

I've been a hospice volunteer for two and half years. One of my clients had dementia, so it was hard to know how much affect my visits had. I sang and chatted and read poems. I was a one-woman improv show, and it could be discouraging. I couldn't help wondering, *do my efforts make any difference?*

After my fourth visit, the client's spouse said to me,

"I don't know if anyone's said anything to you, but you're great at this. [*Client*]really perks up when you're here."

I was transformed by the simple comment. To know our endeavors matter...helps a lot. It reminded me that I need to share my admiration for the spouse's never-ending daily efforts in return. Every time. It will never hurt.

And maybe I need to share my appreciation for my own spouse, and my friends, and the cashier at the grocery store, and the gas station attendant who always offers a nice smile and friendly greeting. Maybe we should look for opportunities to spread the wealth of those little boosts every chance we get.

What a nice meal you made. This place looks great. Wow, you've been working hard. You were so kind today. You are so talented. I can tell you put time into that.Thanks - you've made such a difference.

You are not alone. I see you.

Did you know? Our very own volunteer, Robin, has a blog. Click on the link for more of Robin's work: [You'll Never Be Quite the Same - blog \(robincliffordwood.com\)](http://robincliffordwood.com)

It's worth saying out loud.

Trivia for Fun Sake

- What was the original purpose of the tiny pockets in jeans?
- Who is often credited for creating the words first car?
- Which is the highest grossing R-rated film in North America?
- Mickey Mouse almost went by another name, what was it?
- What animal did Britney Spears famously carry on her shoulders during a performance?
- Which artist painted "Apple Tree"?
- Who was the actor to first portray James Bond?
- What is the signature food dish served at Wimbledon?
- How old are the horses that run in the Kentucky Derby?
- What is the only dog breed that cannot bark?

- The Basenji!
- Three years old
- Strawberries & Cream
- Barry Nelson
- Gustav Klimt (1912)
- a snake
- Mortimer Mouse
- Christ
- The Passion of the
- Karl Benz
- watches
- To store pocket

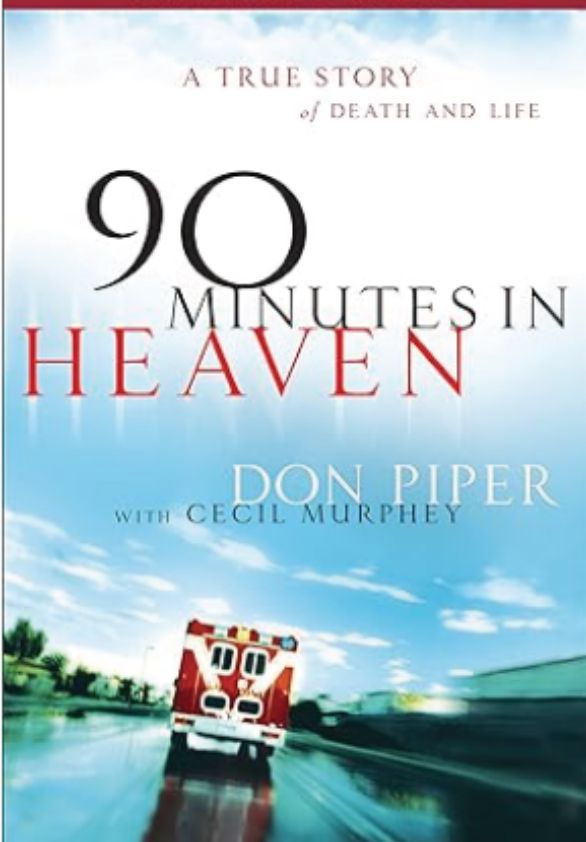
ANSWERS

Odds and Ends

Good Reads: **90 Minutes in Heaven** (256 pages)

By Don Piper & Cecil Murphey

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
OVER 5 MILLION COPIES SOLD



Get a glimpse of heaven

On the way home from a conference, Don Piper's car was crushed by a semi that crossed into his lane. Medical personnel said he died instantly. While his body lay lifeless inside the ruins of his car, Piper experienced the glories of heaven. Ninety minutes after the wreck, while a minister prayed for him, Piper miraculously returned to life on earth with only the memory of inexpressible heavenly bliss. His faith in God was severely tested as he faced an uncertain and grueling recovery.

Now he shares his life-changing story with you, as well as true stories from readers about the effect *90 Minutes in Heaven* has had on their lives.

From the Back Cover

I died on January 18, 1989.

Immediately after I died, I went straight to heaven. While I was in heaven, a Baptist pastor came on the accident scene. Even though he knew I was dead, he rushed to my lifeless body and prayed for me. At least ninety minutes after the EMTs pronounced me dead, God answered that man's prayers. I returned to earth. This is my story.

Recommended by Jane W. (South Portland)

2024 SO FAR

- Volunteer Hours: 3423.3
- CEU Hours: 714.0

*Collective hours among Presque Isle, Brewer/Waterville, & South Portland regions

Upcoming Volunteer Support Meetings:

- Presque Isle/Aroostook: Monday November 11 from 4:30-5:30 via Zoom or in-person in conference room at NLHC office
- Houlton: Wednesday November 6 from 1-2; Houlton Conference Room
- Brewer: Wednesday November 20 from 3-5
- South Portland: Thursday November 21 from 10:30-12:30 Classroom B

PPE/Infectious Disease Guidelines

- Unless requested, masks no longer need to be worn during patient/family interactions or in patient areas; Defer to family/patient wishes
- Mask if you have respiratory symptoms, a known exposure, or in post Covid-19 masking period

Pre-Visit Screening Questions

(Reschedule if your patient answers "yes" to any)

- Fever within the last 24-hours
- New congestion/runny nose
- New cough or sore throat
- New onset diarrhea
- You have been told you have an infectious disease