

Our Guardian Angel

Dear *Downhome*; It was my brother's 50th birthday, so his two daughters and son decided to have a surprise party for him in Fogo, Newfoundland. My brother is the baby of 11 kids.

My husband and I left London, Ontario on October 3, 2010, thinking we had lots of time because the party wasn't until the 9th. We arrived at North Sydney on Monday night, the 4th, hoping to cross the next day. When we got to the ticket booth for a loading pass, the lady asked if we had a booking. We said no and asked when the next available opening was. She said October 21!

The reason for the backlog was that one ferry was on dry dock and one was broke down. We were told to call every hour to see if there were any changes or cancellations.

We slept in the car that night. The next night we got a room. At 7 a.m. on October 6, I went down to the lobby to use the phone (the one in our room didn't work). While I was on the phone with Marine Atlantic, two policemen came in. We got to talking and I told them my story and that time was running out for us to make my brother's birthday party. They offered me to park our car where they park, where it would be safe, and my husband and I could walk on the ferry. Then we could take the bus from Port aux Basques.

Then a gentleman came in for a coffee. The policemen told him our story and he said he was having the same problem. He had a booking but it was delayed for a couple of days. The policemen suggested he might be able to help us out, and when he heard our plan to leave our car behind and take the bus across Newfoundland, the man – who we then found out was a trucker – offered to take our car across the ferry in his trailer for free. And he would even deliver our car to Grand Falls-Windsor!

So we loaded our car into the trailer, exchanged phone numbers with the trucker, and walked onto the ferry at 6 p.m. that evening. Once on board, my husband (who is not a Newfoundlander) said, "Do you realize what I just did? I just gave my car to a total stranger." I said, "You can trust him. He's a Newfie."

We arrived in Port aux Basques, but before we could take the bus in the morning, the driver called from North Sydney to say he was crossing the next day and if we stayed in Port aux Basques for the night we could get our car instead of the bus. Our guardian angel arrived at our hotel at 3 p.m. and instead of unloading our car, he offered us a lift in the cab of his truck all the way to Lewisporte Junction. "I have to drive across Newfoundland anyway, so you can ride with me," he said.

Though he didn't want payment, we thanked him with a bottle of rum and a few dollars when we got to Lewisporte Junction. Our sister, who lives in Lewisporte, met us there, and brought with her a few family members who wanted to meet our guardian angel. His name is Alfred Pike and he is the owner of Five Star Moving in Conception Bay South, Newfoundland.

We made it to my brother's party. He was really surprised and everyone had a good time.

Audrey Oake & Mal Knight
London, Ontario

Thank you, Audrey, for sharing that "moving" story about your guardian angel experience. Here is the photo you sent, taken at Lewisporte Junction on October 8, 2010: (left to right) Mal Knight, Alfred Pike, Audrey Oake. Read on for another letter about business owners in Newfoundland and Labrador who go beyond the norms of customer service.

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