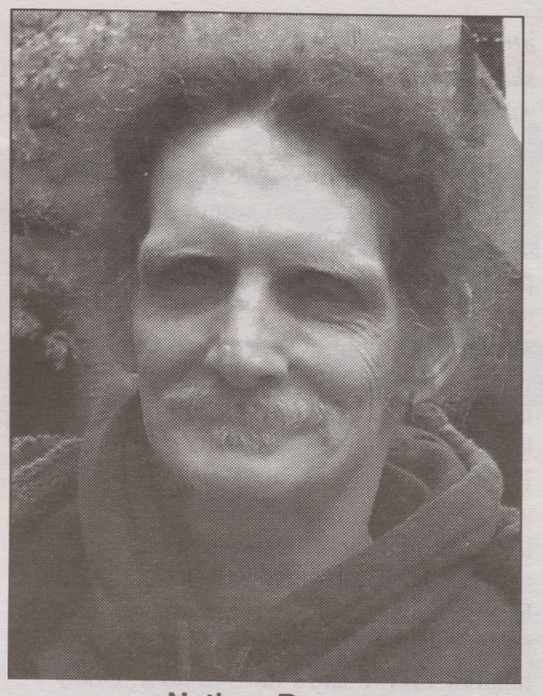

Nathan Roper

Street Roots is sad to report that one of our vendors, Nathan Roper, passed away Thursday, June 29. Nathan died at a Portland hospital after suffering a heart attack. He was 52 years old.

Nathan was a long-time artist and poet who lived on the streets and had a hard life. He sold the newspaper for the past two years at several locations, but mostly at Northwest 21st Avenue and Lovejoy Street.

In a recent Street Roots vendor profile, Roper said, "I always had an artist's soul."

Several of his works were published in Street Roots.

"Nathan was a gifted artist, a talented writer and a friend to many," says Vendor Coordinator Cole Merkel. "A kind and gentle soul, Nathan's ability to overcome adversity in life while keeping a positive attitude was inspiring, and certainly will be remembered by me for years to come. He was an incredible member of the Street Roots family and he will be sorely missed by all of us."

A Starr shines at Fifth and Main

BY COLE MERKEL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Southwest Fifth Avenue bus mall pulsates with urban life: MAX trains head south toward their turn-around at Portland State, police and fire sirens blare as emergency calls are answered in the downtown core, buses burn biodiesel and professionals in ties file in and out of the local and federal office buildings. Here, at the intersection of Fifth and Main, outside Seattle's Best Coffee, William

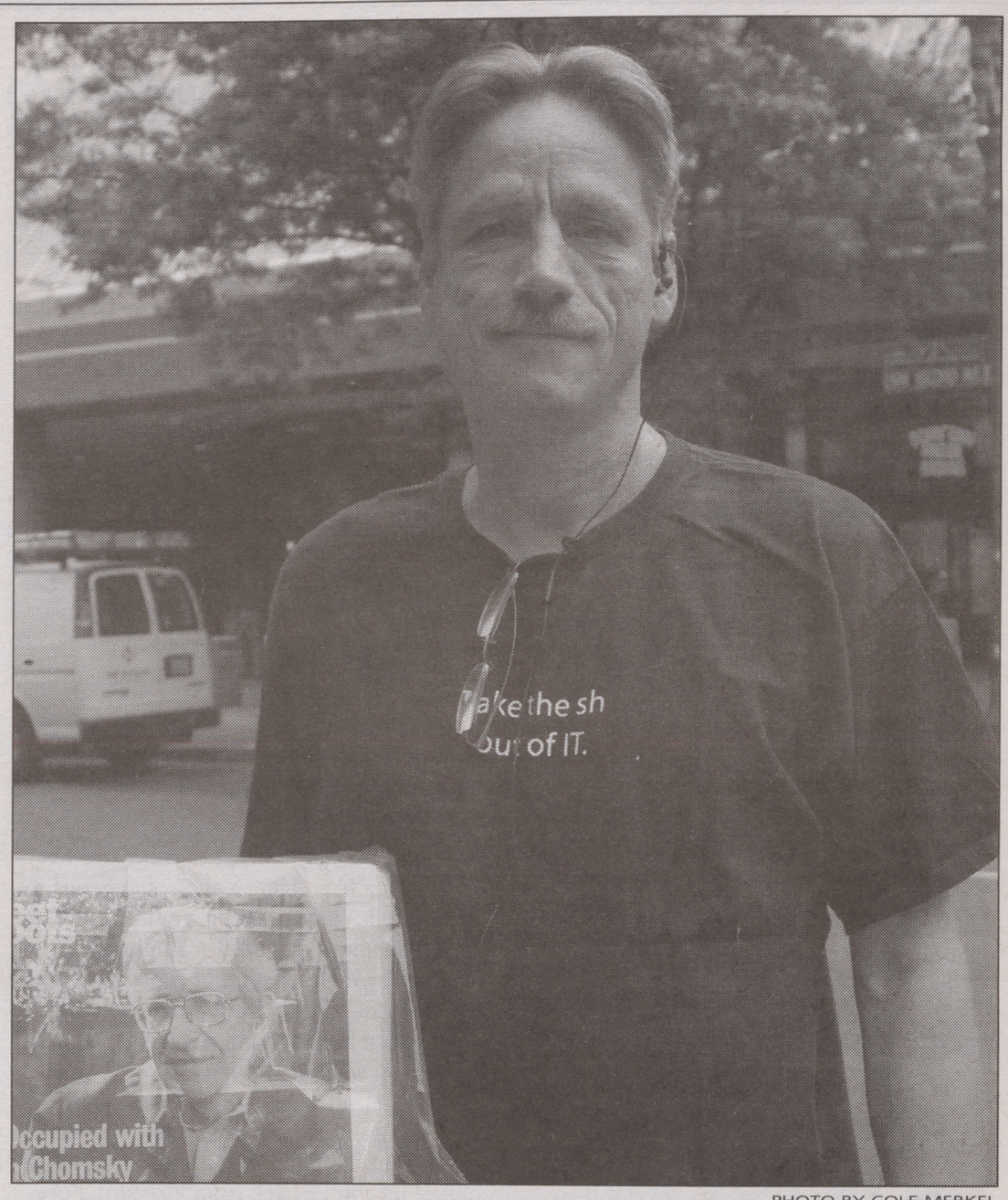

PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

VENDOR PROFILE
William Starr

Starr's face has become almost as familiar to passersby as the compassionate gaze from the statue of Portlandia, who watches over his turf.

William has been a Street Roots vendor since 2007, and while he has worked at several different turf locations over the past few years, including a few Starbucks locations, this spot has always been his favorite. "This is my business and self-employment," he says. "I smile on and keep smiling. I keep happy because I know it's essential to keep my business running."

An entrepreneur at heart, William gets caught in a conundrum a few minutes into our interview. "Want to make a few bucks?" a local businessman William knows asks. William looks at me, I tell him it's fine to leave, and he follows the man down the street. Five minutes later, he emerges from a parking garage pushing a food cart and helps the man set it up.

"Dammit, Jim," William says when he gets back breathless from the workout. He uses the Star Trek line as his personal mantra. "Star Trek broke the ice for everything," William says. "Flat screen TVs, flip phones, Bluetooth communication." He admits he's a big fan of the show but he won't go so far as to call himself a Trekkie.

After several stints of homelessness, William is now in stable, long-term housing downtown. He is now seeking a long-term substance treatment program. In the past 18 months, since he most recently got inside, he has really begun to turn his life around. "I contribute that to myself and keeping myself healthy," William says.

Outside of this downtown location, William also sells at the Saturday Market on weekends, where most of his customers are market vendors. He has built a strong enough relationship with other vendors that several trust him to watch their booths while they take a break or go to the bank to exchange money.

"I talk to people and they talk to me. I smile a lot and they start to get to know me really well. Someone even recently gave me a coffee card for a free cup of coffee over here." He has developed a large group of regular custsomers, mostly from the courthouse and City Hall.

William, like the vendor program altogether, embodies the "hand up, not a hand out" philosophy behind Street Roots - and Portland in general. But that ideal seldom comes into vision more clearly than at the corner of Fifth and Main, when Williams is selling the paper, and Portlandia, anchored by her towering trident, reaches out to offer a hand to all who care to accept it.

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Answers to puzzles on page 15

F	R	E	S	■	D	N	E	O	N	■	S	A	R	E
L	A	R	U	■	E	A	G	L	A	■	R	E	E	V
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7	6	8	4	9	5	2	3	1
5	4	2	7	3	1	8	9	6
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8	7	5	1	6	2	3	4	9
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2	5	6	9	4	7	1	8	3
3	9	1	2	5	8	7	6	4
4	8	7	6	1	3	9	5	2

CENTRAL CITY concern
Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Hooper Detox & Sobering
Monday, Sept 10th
4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
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Commemorative coins to the first 400 people!
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CORRECTIONS

Street Roots strives for accuracy, but we're human. So we also strive to correct errors in our paper whenever possible. Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write to joanne@streetroots.org

VENDOR WORK ADS

Dependable, mature person interested in assisting ethical and safe person(s) with house sitting, pet care, plant care, yard work, laundry, organizational projects, etc. Please call 503-228-5657 and leave your contact information, preferably a name and email address. References available upon request.

Vendor Wish List

Donations keep Street Roots and our vendors working by keeping our operating costs low.

- Paper cups
- Hygiene items
- Towels
- First-aid supplies
- TriMet bus tickets/passes
- Printer paper
- Shaving razors

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