Farewell, Randy-boy

Many of you probably have seen me and my dog the past two years selling Street Roots at Whole Foods and Powell's Bookstore. I am saddened to tell you Randy was laid to rest June 17 due to health issues.

Randy loved to go to work because usually someone would give him a treat. I lost my best friend that day. He gave me nine years of happiness I will never forget.

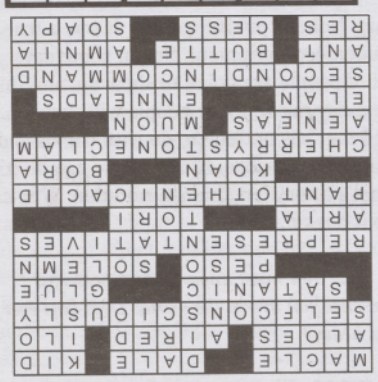
I would like to thank Street Roots. It's because of you we met people so nice who really cared about Randy. Some helped with his medicine and vet bills, for which I am so grateful. Without you guys, Randy would not have made it this long. I have never met people so nice and caring, so I thank all of you, especially Laura and others who gave their time and money to help even though they have a busy life.

I know Randy touched a lot of lives and made me a better person. I thank God for allowing me to love again and meet so many awesome people. Randy may be gone, but he will always be with us in our hearts. So, thank you Street Roots and all of my customers who are helping me during this time. Rest in peace, Randy-boy. Daddy loves you.

– Rick Phillips

Answers to puzzles on page 15

8	5	1	6	2	3	7	9	4
7	6	2	1	8	4	9	5	3
9	3	4	5	6	7	2	1	8
5	1	7	9	3	6	8	4	2
3	9	6	8	4	2	1	7	5
2	4	8	7	1	5	3	6	9
1	8	5	2	9	6	4	3	7
6	2	3	4	7	1	5	8	9
4	7	9	3	5	8	6	2	1



VENDOR PROFILE

Brian Castor

BY LEONORA KO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Brian Castor is houseless and a model neighbor.

"I keep my roll military-tight, so everything is straight and even. Both me and my girl have OCD," Brian says. "So everything is clean. We make sure we're washed. We make sure our stuff's washed and everything is neat, organized, put away. We keep a garbage bag; we have a broom. I carry it with me. I use it everywhere."

Brian laughs and says, "I like sweeping. It's good Zen."

He has known his housed neighbors for four years.

"We have really nice neighbors. They really like us. I build relationships with communities, so I always sweep, I pick up trash, and I always make sure their stuff is safe. When my block becomes a nicer, quieter block, then the people that live there are happy."

"I'm obsessive-compulsive," Brian says, laughing again. "I'm unmedicated, so I'm doing it completely on meditation and perspective. It's emotionally taxing. When I'm (on the street), I don't have issues. I didn't think it would ever be true of someone like me because I come from privilege. I never struggled."

It is difficult for Brian to talk about his personal life, but he feels he owes something to the readers. In his early 20s, Brian had a young family and a big house and was a partner in a successful trucking company in Maine. Then his wife died of leukemia when his daughter was 3 years old. A drunken driver killed his daughter when she was 17.

"I wanted to die," Brian says softly. "I was raised Catholic so I can't kill myself." Instead, he ballooned to 500 pounds, and his doctors told him that within five years, he would be dead.

"I had to really look at myself as a person, what I wanted to do. And I decided the way I was living wasn't full of anything important," says Brian. "So I walked away from my life. I literally packed a bag, walked out the front door and joined Occupy New York."

He followed the Occupy movement across the country until he ended up in Portland.

Brian says being outside "is hard. I landed here five years ago, and I was 500 pounds. I'm 250 now; I've lost a whole me. I'm healthier, stronger. I've got issues, but the struggle has made me stronger."

Brian notices some people in the Pearl "go out of their way to not see me or my wife – and we're knitting or playing cards. Or we're reading, listening to music. Sometimes they're more aggressive about their disdain at us. And I get it."

Brian wants the public to know: "The houseless community is full of all different types of people, but the key is that we're people. The sad thing is that there are just a lot of us.

"Some people in my community, they walk around and they don't say anything to anybody all day sometimes. They don't get touched. They don't get any positive feedback, any interactions that are worth talking about. That can happen for days, weeks, months."

He says that to help the houseless, "you can reach out to them and say, 'What's happening with you?' And then let them speak. Let them have a place to interact, to rejoin humanity."

Brian recently began selling Street Roots at Northwest 10th Avenue and Everett Street, in front of Ben and Jerry's and Cupcake Jones.

"I consider it aroma therapy," he says. "It's the smell of cupcakes and ice cream, and it makes me super happy. I don't need to eat it. I can just sit there and smell it. And then I have a big grin on my face, and it helps me interact with all the different customers that walk by."

Brian calls himself a Christian Buddhist.

"I find kind things to say to every single person that walks by. I don't care if they don't buy the paper. I've got a lot of people that say that was the nicest thing that somebody said to them all day. And they were grateful, very grateful for that.

"And that makes me happy because I don't get a chance to have positive interactions with people in the Pearl very often. But now I do, every day. Well, except for Sundays. That's church. Even God had one day of rest. I go to church with my wife."

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