

Candlelight vigil for sex workers

At 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17 on the south side of the Park Blocks in downtown Portland, a candlelight vigil will be held to remember those who died from violence while working in the sex trade.

The annual vigil, hosted by Sex Workers Outreach Coalition (SWOC) and Sex Workers Outreach Project Portland, is one of more than 40 events worldwide commemorating International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.

Sex workers face more violence in the United States than anywhere else in the world. This year, 41 sex workers have been murdered nationally – 17 were black and 12 were trans women, according to data compiled by Sex Workers Outreach Project, USA.

Much of this violence is the result of sex trade criminalization, said Katlyn Tracy, an advocate at SWOC.

The vigil is open to allies and to those wishing to remember a sex worker who has passed.

Hot chocolate, candles and hand warmers will be provided, and participants are welcome to bring a photograph and will be given the opportunity to share their memories.

"This day is about people we've lost, but it's also about celebrating the lives of sex workers while they're still here," said Tracy.

The vigil will be followed by a celebration of life at 6 p.m. at 209 SW Fourth Ave., where attendees can enjoy food and drink while getting raucous and planning a future free of violence and stigma.

Answers to puzzles on page 15



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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VENDOR PROFILE Brent B. Lusted

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

Some of Brent B. Lusted's most cherished memories come from when he was 12 years old and living in England.

"I was born and raised in Salem," Brent said. "(My dad) was a doctor, and he moved our whole family to England for a year. We saw all these castles, old cathedrals and the coast."

The family also skied in nearby Austria.

"I was raised skiing Mount Hood and Hoodoo," Brent said. "We'd wake up in this tiny town called Kitzbühel, and the bells of the church would start ringing. We'd pack up and go up on the tram, and the view from up there, it was magic."

The family continued to move throughout the United States, and Brent played several school sports. In 12th grade was editor of his high school newspaper.

"Shortly after I graduated from high school in 1978, I discovered cocaine," Brent said, his voice faltering. "That controlled me for the next 20 years. That, drinking and I had a little stint with heroin. So I went the wrong way."

Even so, Brent went to college for a few years and assembled solar water heaters for a living.

He drove to Oregon but found no jobs and ended up homeless in Los Angeles.

Brent eventually landed in court but spoke up for himself. He said he told the judge: "I'm not a bad person. I don't go around thieving. I don't hurt anybody. I make my money to support my habit. Your honor, I just have a drug problem."

The judge sent him to a three-month residential rehab program near Acton, Calif.

"It was a really good program, and I

never did illegal drugs after that," Brent said. "But I started drinking again six months later. And I went into another decade of mess. It's been a long road."

Along the way, Brent was sent to prison for skipping parole.

"I ended up being the editor of the prison newsletter," he said. "I was in the library every day, learning word processing on the computer and putting together a biweekly six-page newsletter. I got good at it. It was a pretty neat job."

The prison released Brent on Skid Row in Los Angeles.

"I did better in that jail than after I got out," he said.

Little changed until he had a major heart attack in front of a 7-Eleven. A hospital put two stents and a defibrillator in Brent's heart. He got counseling and three weeks' housing to recuperate, and he reconnected with family in Oregon.

Unfortunately, he is homeless again.

"Drinking has been my major

downfall," he said.

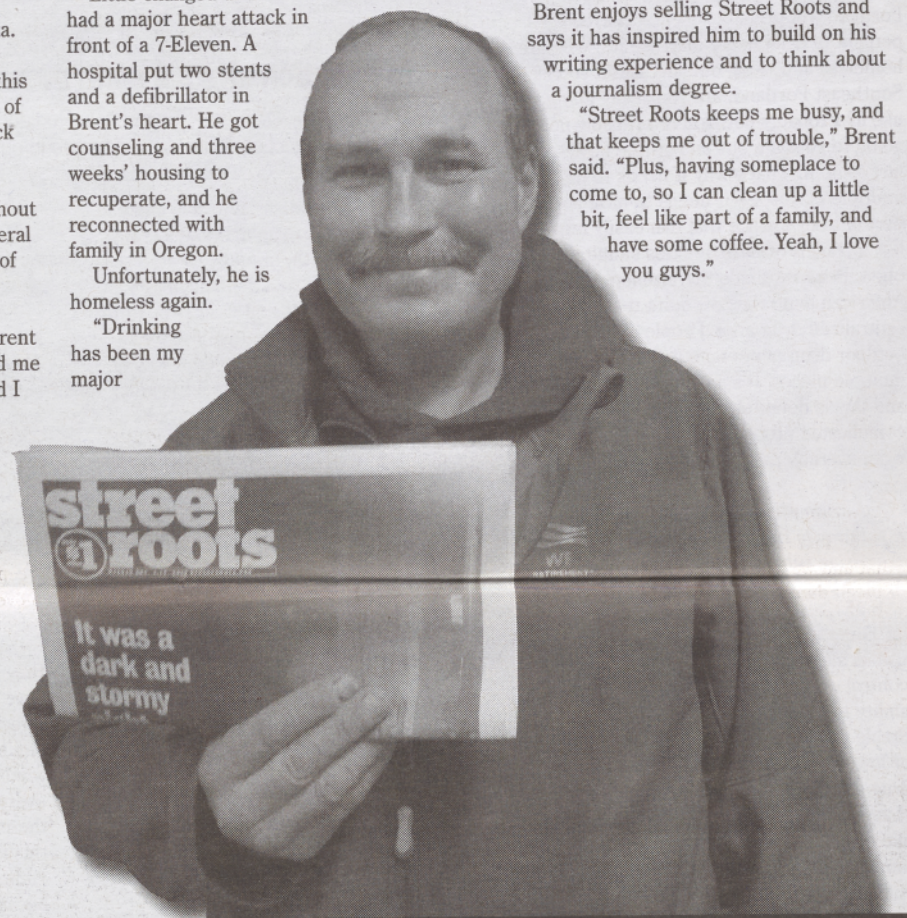
Brent said he tried to enter rehab treatment in Portland but was refused because of his heart condition.

He met an ally at Legacy Emanuel Hospital, who worked with the CareOregon Community Care Teams program. The program seeks people who have higher levels of hospital use that might be reduced with a little help.

"I have a wonderful, wonderful social worker named Becky Wilkinson, and she's on my side," Brent said. "I've been to almost every hospital in Portland. She's trying to line me up with some housing, trying to get me off the street. She just has a heart of gold."

Brent enjoys selling Street Roots and says it has inspired him to build on his writing experience and to think about a journalism degree.

"Street Roots keeps me busy, and that keeps me out of trouble," Brent said. "Plus, having someplace to come to, so I can clean up a little bit, feel like part of a family, and have some coffee. Yeah, I love you guys."

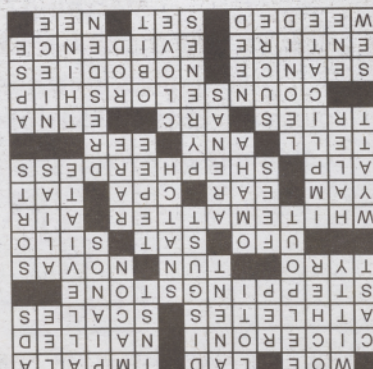


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