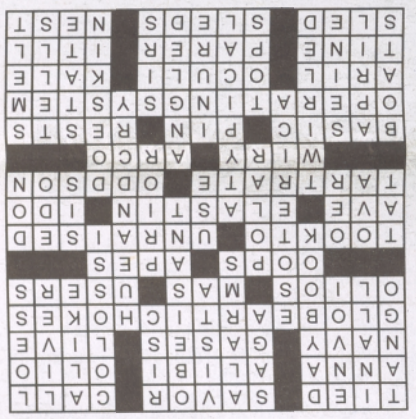
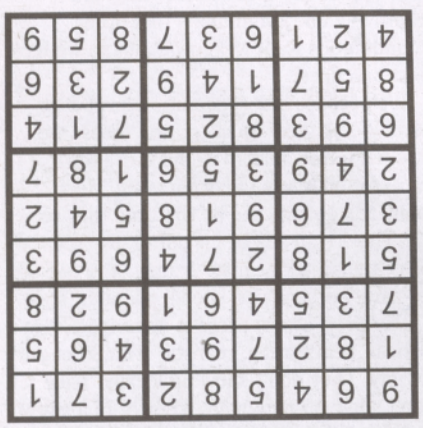
Untitled

By Michone Nettles

The title to this poem is unknown
Topics are in a world of their own.
Like names
Joe Joseph Jimmy James and so forth
Michael Mike Mikey and more
Juan John Johnny for sure.
Jesus "Heyzus"
Richard Dick Rich, Rick Rickey
Donald Don Donny with a dee.
Ronald Ron and Ronny with a B.
Joseph Joe Joey and more
Howard Howie him and them.
David has gone around the corner
With Jack John Johnny and James.
Robert Bob Bobby the same.
Samuel has met Pamela and Pam.
Arthur sees Art, Arturo and Arty.
The topic of this poem is unknown
Topics are in a world of their own

Answers to puzzles on page 15





2016 VENDOR OF THE YEAR: Bettyjo

'Remember that there is hope'

Bettyjo Griffiths was honored Oct. 6 with the 2016 Vendor of the Year Award. She received her award in front of nearly 400 people at the annual Street Roots Family Breakfast at Portland's Sentinel Hotel, where she gave the following speech.

This is by far the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me. I can't believe I am standing in this room and having breakfast with all you fine folks. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to be here with all of us. To our community leaders, thank you for all your hard work you do every day to help and protect us.

I am truly in awe and am overjoyed to receive this award. I have been vending for Street Roots for four years now, and I have to say it's been the best years of my life. When I first came to Street Roots, I had lost everything, and all I had left was a beat-up RV that had to be moved around all the time so that people didn't know we were living in it. I was up super early every morning and back late at night to sleep. I was always in fear that my only home would be taken at any time, worried about a hot meal, warm clothes, a shower, hoping every day that something good would happen, always praying that the good Lord would hear my prayers and send me help.

I wasn't living; I was surviving every moment of every day. I was truly at the lowest point of my life.

One day a friend told me about Street Roots. At first, I didn't think I would be a good vendor. I didn't believe that people would want to buy anything from me. Little by little, I started to like meeting new people, but I was also understanding what Street Roots really stands for. It's not just a means to earn an income – it's far more than that. It's all the hard work, dedication and the desire to believe in something bigger than yourself. To have faith and hope and, most of all, love in your fellow man. That even if you do lose everything and things look and feel hopeless, remember that there is hope. And I thank Street Roots for that.

All these brilliant and dedicated hard-working men and women that produce this amazing paper week after week. All the vendors who write their beautiful poems and true-to-the-heart stories, the volunteers who come and help in the office every day. I am very proud and honored to be a part of all this. Had it not been for Street Roots, I never would be vending in front of the Multnomah County Courthouse. I have met so many awesome, talented, caring people ever.

My customers work in all different places in the courthouse. I think it is so super cool to say my customers are lawyers, judges, DA, family services and on and on. I am so very fortunate to become friends with people who see good in me. Who took a chance to believe in me. To trust me. Like my friend and customer Judy Moyer. Judy has been so good to me. She totally has been amazing to me.

I don't worry anymore about losing my home. Because now I rent a room in my friend's house, and I earn money to pay the rent. It makes me smile to pay the rent. Life today is full of happiness, and I am so grateful for everything I have. I'm only getting better everyday. This whole experience has made me more appreciative, more loving, better understanding of myself and others. So I stand, wave and throw out the peace sign because I'm truly happy and want to share that feeling with others.

Thank you, Street Roots, for the hand up. I would have never experienced all the things I have learned and am still learning. To all my fellow vendors, I am proud to be out there with you.

Thank you for being my brothers and sisters. Life is getting better every day. Thank you.

PHOTO BY ALAN BORRUD

MEET BETTYJO

You can view BettyJo's story on Street Roots' YouTube page, youtube.com/streetrootsvideo.