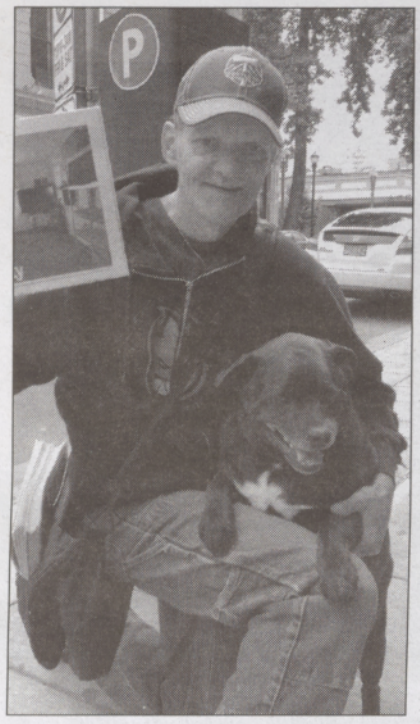

A special thanks in memory of Randy Dog

Hi, this is Rick. Most of you who go to Whole Foods or Powell's probably have seen me and my dog Randy selling Street Roots.

To those who do not know, Randy passed away June 17 of last year from cancer. I am writing this to thank all my customers who supported us over the last two years by buying the paper, and for those who helped me to get his medicine. Because of you guys, he lived another year.

I am deeply grateful for everyone's compassion and support, and feel I have made friends who care more about us, not just the paper, but our well-being, and I feel blessed to meet so many nice people.

As most of you know, I have a new dog, his name is J.J., 3½ years old. He just can't get enough petting and loving. Feel free to stop by at Whole Foods or Powell's and say hi to us.

To those who helped with Randy, I can't name names – there are too many – but you know who you are, and I will always have a special place in my heart for you all.

– Rick and J.J.

HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

National memorial gives pause to reflect on those who died on the streets

Eighty-eight people died on the streets of Multnomah County in 2015. It's the highest number of deaths in one year since 2011 when the Multnomah County Medical Examiner's office began tracking these figures. Altogether, 279 people have died on the streets over the past five years.

These numbers don't include homeless men and women in the Portland area who died indoors, in hospitals or hotel rooms. It only captures those who died outdoors in places such as abandoned buildings and on sidewalks.

Wednesday, Dec. 21, people who passed away while homeless were remembered across the country as part of the annual National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day.

It's unknown how many people pass away each year while experiencing homelessness, either in a shelter or in the emergency room, but it is estimated to be much higher than the annual count.

In this past year, Street Roots lost two vendors. Both were in housing at the time of their death. Shayne came to Street Roots in 2015 looking for a way to earn a little extra money and quickly found a community of friends both with the other vendors and customers. Even while his health deteriorated he made it to his sales location, World Foods Market in Portland's Pearl District, most days last summer, wearing his trademark tank top, bandanna, American flag shorts and a smile.

Mike Holt passed away earlier this month from a heart attack. He came to Street Roots in January on the recommendation of his good friend. He came in weekly for the Friday vendor meeting, always excited to bring his customers the week's news.

PHOTO BY ISRAEL BAYER

"Mike enjoyed selling the Street Roots paper. He always had a smile on his face while he was at work. He was a really nice person overall," said his longtime friend and Street Roots vendor, Arnold Casey. "Mike is already missed by all the neighbors here. Michael, my friend, my brother. Rest in peace. You are remembered."

Operation Nightwatch has held annual memorials for those who have died on Portland's streets long before there was a Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. In staying with our local tradition, we will honor Mike and Shayne on April 17, though we feel their absence every day in the Street Roots vendor community.

– *Cole Merkel, Street Roots Vendor*

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3	6	4	2	9	7	8	1	5
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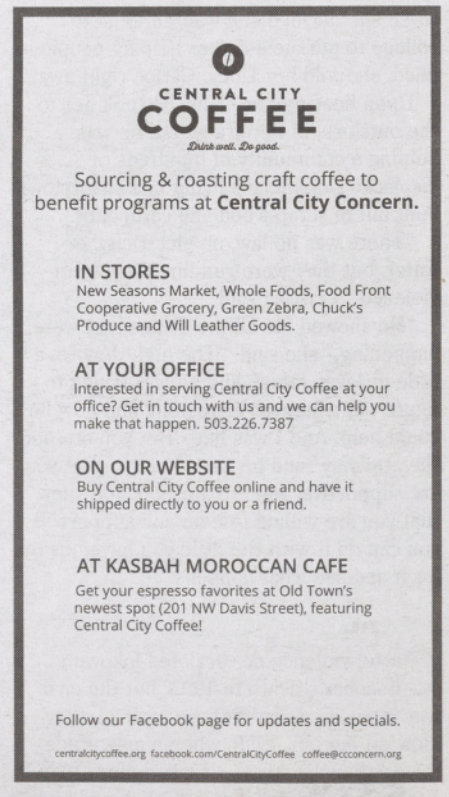
Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



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