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VENDOR PROFILE
Kim

BY BIANCA BUTLER
STAFF WRITER

If you've seen Kim selling Street Roots on the corner of Southwest Ninth and Taylor Street, then chances are you've seen her dog, Kobie, as well. The two have been together since Kobie was an 8-week-old puppy, over three years ago.

Around the time she adopted her dog, Kim was able to move into her own apartment thanks to disability assistance and subsidized housing. But before that, she endured a six-year journey through mental illness, addiction and homelessness that she says she couldn't have emerged from all on her own.

Kobie has been a big part of Kim's recovery as she starts to re-engage with the Portland community. With Kobie, Kim remembered, "I started taking care of her and slowly began to take care of myself." Kim had to learn how to train her to be a service dog, as well as makw sure she was happily fed, walked and cleaned. Now, her dog serves as a comfort and a conversation piece when she's out selling papers.

Kim started selling Street Roots six months ago, and building a routine and rapport with the public has also helped with her recovery.

"I can talk to people, learn to look at people in the eye, not be afraid of having a conversation, not be afraid of being judged. It makes a huge difference," she said. She's grateful for the people that remember her name and come by to talk, even if they don't buy a paper. And Kobie is grateful, too – for all the extra treats and attention she gets.

In September, Kim was accepted into the Humanity in Perspective program offered through Oregon Humanities. Students in HIP take two semesters of college coursework in art, philosophy, literature and history, at no cost.

"I love it," said Kim, who is already a painter and a reader of fiction and history. "It's opened my eyes to a lot of things that I thought I knew. It's opened my eyes wider."

One project that Kim will soon complete is an oral history recording of a friend she met in recovery. She's a little bit nervous to sit in the interviewer's chair, but excited for the challenge.

When asked whether she plans to continue her education beyond the HIP program, Kim said one of the roadblocks of being in "the system": you can't receive federally subsidized housing and student loans at the same time.

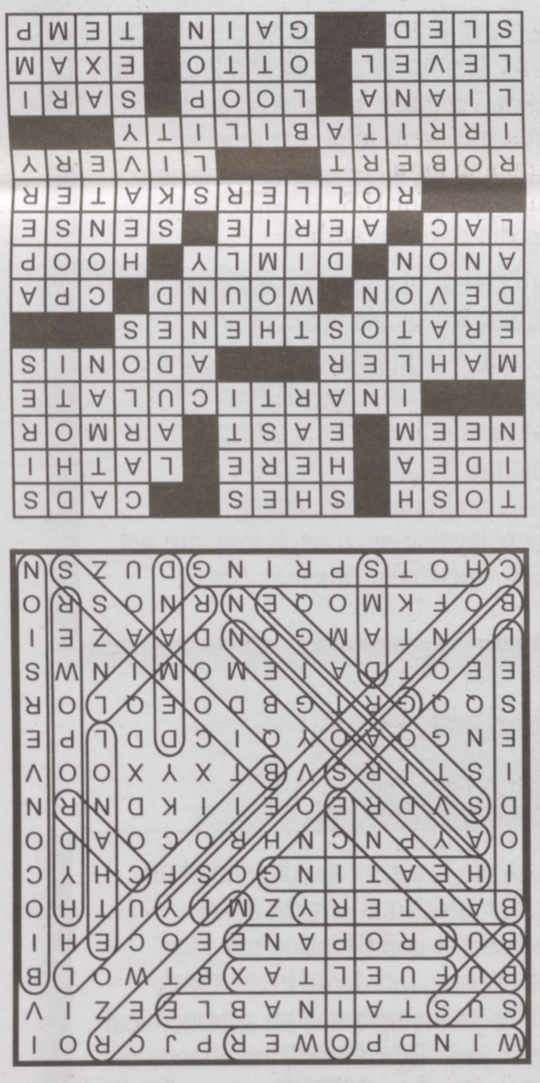
"I want more, and I can do more. I don't know how to go about it," Kim said.

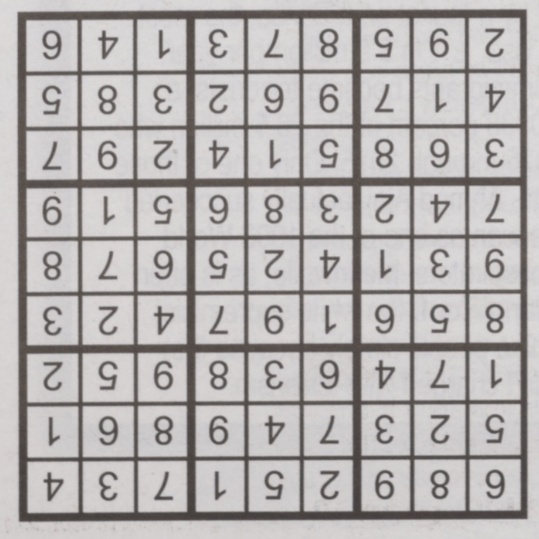
For the time being, exercise and the outdoors help keep her from feeling stuck. She loves doing yoga, and she and Kobie spend a lot of time hiking and walking together.

Since Kim became a Street Roots vendor, she's been hesitant about being profiled in the paper. She doesn't necessarily like to be the center of attention. But since January, the changing political climate has raised her concerns about the availability of the assistance that has helped her get back on her feet.

By sharing her story, she hopes to raise awareness and support for programs that can help other people overcome challenges like the ones she's faced. She puts it best: "I'm very hopeful in my life, but I want people to understand that the help I've gotten from my health care, from disability, has changed my life and it can change other people's lives if they're given a chance."

Answers to Page 15 Puzzles





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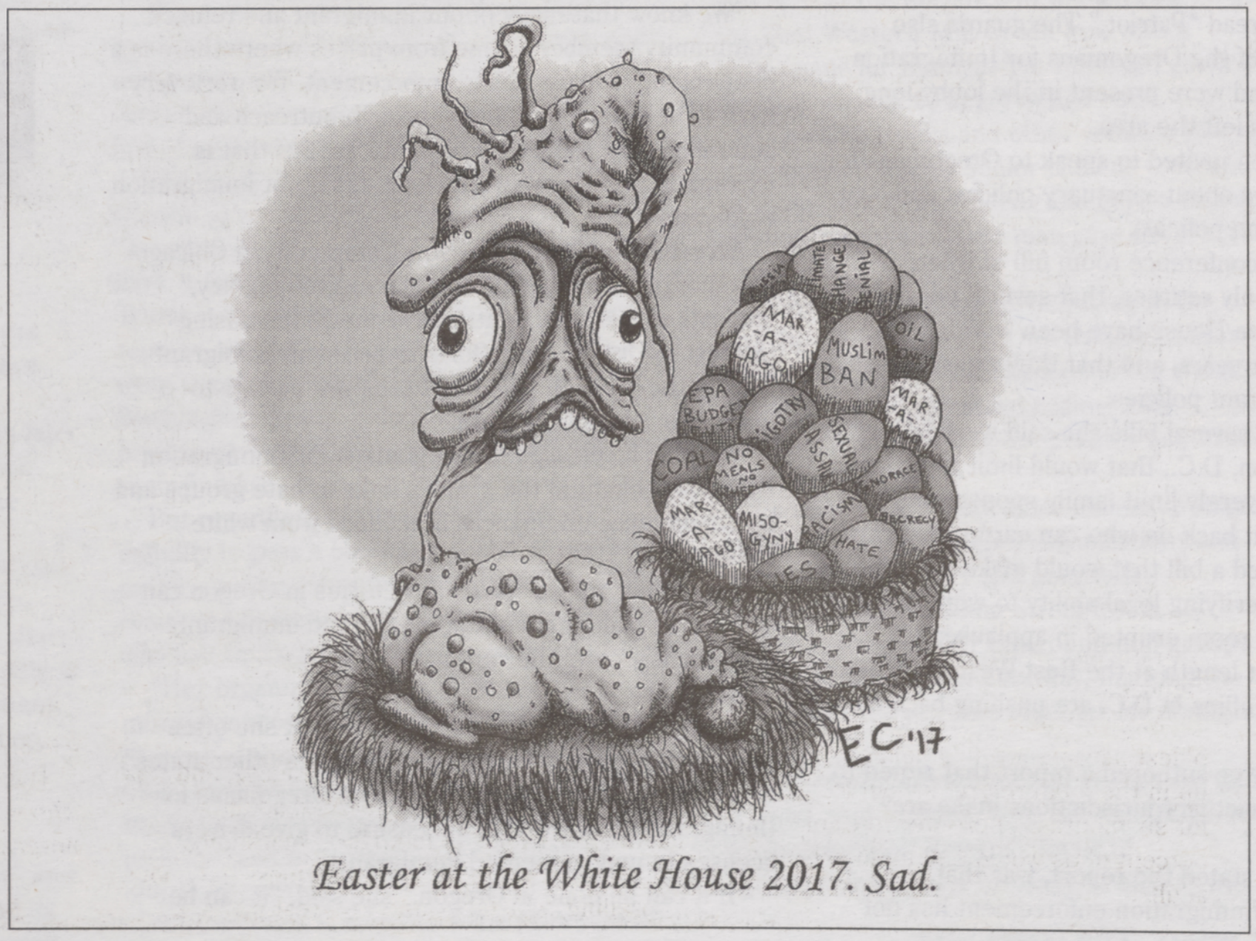
4	3	7	1	5	2	9	8	6

Sheeptoast

by Elizabeth Considine



Easter at the White House 2017. Sad.