

HOROSCOPE

BY SOUP
CAN SAMSTAFF
PSYCHIC

Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 22) Earth Lamb, you can be quite charming up close, once you get past the all-work-and-no-play crap.

There's some fire in there, and you need to stoke those flames! There's a naked event coming your way. Shave appropriately.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) You hurtin'? Who ain't. Share some sympathy and tea, and remember fondly the good times, so you recognize them when they come around again. Hone your memory today.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Inside of every piece of fruit is a seed. At least that is what they say. If that helps somehow, sweet.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 23) Give five extra minutes to someone you don't really care about. You will learn to care more.

Capricorn (Dec. 24-Jan. 19) An excuse is defined as: to offer an apology or explanation for. But it is also: to pardon, forgive. Let's all make excuses this month and see if that helps.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Great news for all you Metal Tigers, Wood Tigers and Water Rats — this is the year for your wisdom to find fertile ground. Choose your field wisely and wash your hands frequently. Cleanliness is next to starriness, and it's just good common sense.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20) Focus on the corn chowder.

Aries (March 21-April 20) It was the salmon mousse.

(April 21-May 20) Looking at your starry book of life, one word keeps coming up repeatedly. Aspic. Mean anything to you?

Gemini (May 21-June 21) You'll discover something about yourself that you didn't know existed. Better get that doctor's appointment scheduled soon.

Cancer (June 22-July 22) Vote with your liver.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 23) Wipe more, wash less.

Dignity can
be as simple
as 'hello'BY CASSANDRA KOSLEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Maneuvering through the airport illustrates the wide breadth of the general population quite clearly. Among people, one sees all kinds. Some are familiar-looking, some boisterous, some shy.

Alex Briggs is a talker. He requires little prompting to get going, is full of ideas and observations. Much unlike the (thankfully) silent older lady reading Nora Roberts to my right, and the larger, sleeping passenger-pilot to my left. It occurred to me that if Alex Briggs were in either seat beside me this flight, there would be no isolating silence.

Not that our conversation wouldn't be an enjoyable experience. Alex has led a colorful

VENDOR PROFILE
Alex Briggs

life for one still relatively young, and has an easy smile as he tells me stories and his thoughts on the future. Intelligent, on the move — conversation with him is non-stop.

Originally from Denver, he moved to Seattle in his early 20s. A self-proclaimed jack of all trades, Alex has done everything from jail time to security. He's been a painter and stripper of airplane parts, has worked reconstruction for historic homes, and has even put in some office hours.

Working as a guard at the Denver Zoo was his favorite, he tells me, his eyes lighting up as he remembered giraffes who ate out of his hand.

Right now, Alex is working toward getting off the streets. "I don't want to be a lifer," he says, adamant.

On Mother's Day this year he became homeless again. Someone gave him a Street Roots Rose City Resource, and between the social service guide he calls "a lifesaver"



and an ad at Blanchet House, Alex found his way into Street Roots.

"I can't panhandle," Alex tells me. "It's not in my nature to beg. My self-esteem takes a huge hit to have to do it."

Street Roots, he says, has taught him positivity. Like many homeless vendors, Alex appreciates having the opportunity to talk to people, interact with others and create tangible relationships.

"To have people come up and ask me honestly how I'm doing, and share their lives with me," he says, with an intense amount of sincerity, "that's why I love (selling Street Roots). That's the biggest thing."

"Even if it's just to say hello, that gives me back my dignity ... reminds me of my own humanity."

Back at the airport, I think about that. Here, people go at lengths to ignore each other, as an act of tolerance. Yet, on the streets, homeless are often ignored as a

direct act of intolerance. That's a paradox of social behaviors and expectations we seem to let slide.

Recently, Alex was robbed of his backpack and all of his clothes, and it was his customers who helped him out. He is immensely grateful. "I would like to say a very special thanks to my customers for their sympathy, compassion and help."

Nearly all the vendors I know at Street Roots genuinely enjoy the excuse selling the paper gives them to form friendships with others. Good or bad, we are programmed as a species to build our self worth, in large part, on these connections. It is a strong common theme, the idea of community, and one that Street Roots is happy to foster.

"When you sleep under a bridge," Alex emphasizes, "to have a normal person come up and talk to you, it means the whole world, it really does."

CORRECTIONS

Street Roots strives for accuracy, but we're human. Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write in to joanne@streetroots.org

Correction: In the story, "Yoga time" (Street Roots, July 23) the volunteer instructor was inaccurately quoted as saying that she did not want her last name used for fear of "potentially dangerous stalking situations" when inmates are released. This is not the position of this volunteer specifically or Living Yoga in general. In no way did this volunteer or any volunteer at Living Yoga ever express a fear of being stalked.

Vendor letter: Eastside office, JOIN and Street Roots, has it covered

BY MARTIN L. DAVIDSON
STREET ROOTS VENDOR

The reason why I like coming to JOIN is because of the staff and people experiencing homelessness that I have become friends with — especially when they give strawberries. It feels great, it has been a reward for me.

I have been coming to JOIN since 2004 and I enjoy being a volunteer. JOIN did not give up on me while I was incarcerated for six months, and they've watched me turn my life around 180 degrees. That's why I enjoy coming to JOIN.

JOIN also has helped me get my life back on track when we moved from SE 17th to NE 81st Halsey. It was strange to be in a new building. We have a community garden where the homeless can help plant flowers, vegetables and herbs. We also all take turns watering the garden. JOIN has outreach workers who work with their clients. I have an outreach worker, and he has helped me by filling out court papers, helping me with lights, getting me a bed for my place and getting me on a list for a bicycle through Community Cycling Center at NE 18th and Alberta Street.

The nice thing about JOIN is that it is a day center where the homeless can come and relax and earn barter time for their showers, lockers, dog and cat food and laundry vouchers at a local laundromat. And we can pick up our mail there, too. JOIN has a library and a computer lab, and a family room that the kids can play in.

Street Roots opened its doors on Feb. 15 at

the eastside. I was the first Street Roots vendor at that office, and I enjoy selling the papers because I meet all different kinds of people and interact with them. I love the fact that when they hear about Street Roots, they love to read it and see what the homeless people can do to make a living. I also like that the readers support Street Roots paper and what the folks experiencing homelessness can do. They read the articles that vendors and staff write, and the stories, artwork and poems. I love the fact that people give donations toward the paper, and I like to get tips.

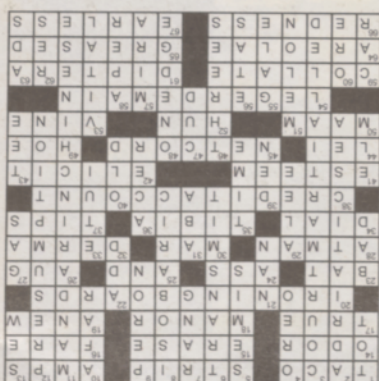
JOIN has someone that comes in to teach a writing class for the women, and there is a writing class on Wednesday and Fridays for the men. What's written stays in the room. The reason why I take the class is so that I can write articles for Street Roots besides just selling papers.

The Job Club meets every Tuesday mornings and we talk about how to write a cover letter, resumes, and conduct proper interviews, and filling out job applications. We also attend job fairs when they are advertised on certain dates.

Some of the people here are learning how to cook Greek cuisine. Classes begin in October for six weeks every Monday night, and I'm on the cuisine planning committee. This is my third year doing the class, and I really am learning a lot. This is my second year as the sous chef. We have the classes at the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church on 31st and NE Glisan. We kick off the class with the Greek Festival in October.

Answers to puzzles on page 16

Crossword



Sudoku

