

EDITORIAL

Looking to pick up a lighter load

Enough already! Are we right? After years of wars, torture, global warming and unfettered corporate greed, we now have a worldwide nuclear disaster with no end in sight. Thanks, Mother Nature! And we thought we had it bad with homelessness and poverty. In hindsight, kinda feels like we dodged a bullet! But seriously, times are tough. You don't hear people saying "no worries" nearly as often, these days. It would simply be irresponsible.

We thought the country was ready to embrace civic duty and old-fashioned volunteerism. Come to find out that, as a nation, we were wasting billions of dollars engaging volunteers to build houses, keep charities operating, and supporting basic government operations.

Times are so tough; in fact, that we thought about ditching the whole poverty angle and switching to a more focused cause we might actually be able to win. But we couldn't think of any. Literacy, maybe, but then have you noticed our copyediting? Exactly — we haven't either.

Then we thought maybe we could get behind the Humane Society's campaign to "End Petlessness" because obviously we aren't getting jack shit done on

homelessness. Then we thought, that's a lot of pets, maybe in 10 years it could be done.

On a larger level, we thought the country was ready to embrace civic duty and old-fashioned volunteerism. Street Roots even bolstered its volunteer base this past year to include more people at all levels of the organization. Come to find out that, as a nation, we were wasting billions of dollars engaging volunteers to build houses, keep charities operating, and supporting basic government operations — and did you hear what Planned Parenthood was doing? Appalling, helping teens like that.

Fortunately, Congress will keep us from making that mistake again.

We thought the U.S. didn't need, want or could afford any more wars. Could we have been more wrong? So glad we could deliver hand made bombs to Tripoli. It's what we must do for peace these days. It's a hard job, but someone has to do it.

We even considered that, maybe, we were out of touch, but quickly laughed it off.

We thought, the hell with it, let's buy some animal outfits (see page 5), get hammered and pop some Vicadin — watch the whole thing go to shit and have the Willamette Week and Oregonian come after us like a pack of wild dogs. Maybe even the good people of the world (Democrats) will tell us we need counseling. Like we didn't already know that. Ever work these hours, in a place like this? Didn't think so.

Hmm... what else?

So the world is a complicated place. It's hard to sift through the news cycle. It's even harder to write for the news cycle, on the news cycle, during your cycle. The hardest is finishing this goddamned editorial. Seven minutes.... 120 words to go ... just gotta find an easy cause everyone cares about.

But that will have to wait, I think that's my bus coming. I'm going to have to go now. It was a pleasure meeting you too. Look me up on Facebook. Great, great. Have fun!

Ah, done...

STREET ROOTS' EDITORIAL BOARD

The views expressed in the editorials in Street Roots are the consensus of members of the editorial board and contributing volunteers.

Have a laugh on us, and keep supporting SR!



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at streetroots@hotmail.com.

Welcome to the third annual April Fools edition of the newspaper. The April First edition of the paper is a time when we can take a step back and make funnies about everyone in the city, including Street Roots. In a time when a barrage of mostly bad news in the world weighs heavy on people's hearts and minds we hope to deliver you a laugh or two or three.

By creating a satirical version of the newspaper and the events of the day we are able to take ourselves less seriously while also raising important points about the city we all love to live in.

It's also a time when SR kicks off its Spring Fund Drive. In each edition of the newspaper you will find an envelope attached — asking you to support SR in the work we do.

For many loyal readers and supporters — you already know what we do and how important it is to support an organization like SR. All of us at SR, including the many vendors selling rain or shine, thank you for it.

For people just being turned on to SR, or have come on board in the past few months, the newspaper, and vendor program are key components in being able to help hundreds of people experiencing homelessness and poverty with an income, while educating thousands more on important issues facing our community.

In a time when it is becoming harder and harder to obtain critical and original news around Portland and the world — street newspapers serve a very important role in a community.

On one hand, relationships are built and people's lives are changed. On the other hand, you receive award-winning journalism and commentary, and voices from the community that you are simply not going to find anywhere else.

We thank you for your support and appreciate your readership. We hope this spring you will find it in your hearts to keep the SR newspaper and vendor program strong and vibrant. Without you, none of this is possible.

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the newspaper, and had a laugh on us. Keep coming back for more. You won't be disappointed.

LETTERS

Street Roots partners a concern for activists

I'm really concerned about the leadership of the organization after realizing that you're partnering with groups like the Portland Police Bureau to have a column in the newspaper.

As a dedicated anarchist, I believe the quickest way to overcoming oppression and capitalism is to alienate all institutions working with people experiencing homelessness — including shelters, affordable housing groups, and others.

I've suspected SR of being sell-outs for a long time, but after reading the newspaper over the past few months, me and my friends are convinced of it now.

From now on, I will be supporting vendors, and still reading the newspaper, but I will be encouraging all my friends to join a silent protest of SR leadership.

MASKED MAN
NE Portland

After moving here from the Midwest, and taking several classes at Portland State University on Marxism and starting to understand the relationship between capitalism and poverty — I'm convinced that the model Street Roots is using is counterproductive to a people's led revolution.

Over the past several weekends I've gotten to know many people on the streets and have become an expert on understanding what homeless people need and want in our community. In my opinion, it starts with overthrowing the government.

I think your publication is a tool that actually allows people on the streets to make money through capitalism, and your advocacy should be called out.

I thought you should know that I will be personally leading a Friday night discussion at a local coffee shop about ways to start

another homeless paper in Portland.

It's my hope that the new publication will be Marxist focused, free and will actually allow people on the streets to understand what they actually need.

I'm hoping the publication will come out sometime in April, and will run until at least summer break when I will have to go with friends traveling around Europe to better understand how socialism works there. When I get back, I will continue working with people on the streets at least until finals, and then spring break next year. Hopefully by then, a people-led revolution will have occurred and all of this will be a moot point.

Power to the people!

WEEKEND WARRIOR
SW Portland

It's become clear to me over the past year that SR has become poverty pimps and are way too close to powerful institutions in Portland.

The idea that you would somehow try to work with a broken system to help homeless people is appalling.

MAD AT THE WORLD
NW Portland

I wanted to write and say why don't you do more for the community. I find many of the articles really informing, and have come to respect that you're covering many important topics. I love the vendors. Still, it's not enough, and if you worked harder, or possibly smarter than maybe Portland would have a decent street newspaper week in and week out.

MIXED MESSAGES
Downtown Portland

CONTACT YOUR CITY COUNCIL

Sam Adams Mayor 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 340, 97204 (503) 823-4120 mayorsam@portlandoregon.gov	Amanda Fritz 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 220, 97204 (503)823-3008 amanda@portlandoregon.gov	Dan Saltzman 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 230, 97204 (503)823-4151 dan@portlandoregon.gov	Nick Fish 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 240, 97204 (503)823-3589 nick@portlandoregon.gov	Randy Leonard 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 210, 97204 (503)823-4682 randy@portlandoregon.gov
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