All Hail the Demos

By Ron Saroff

Words on stiff vellum in
spikey 18th century script
ink still sturdy
under thick glass.

Multitudes shuffle past in
unbroken reverent silence
children with sticky hands
leave young fingerprints.

All men are created equal
a statement of faith
five words indelible
the promise of one man one vote.

Yet in the beginning
the franchise was gated
open only to the propertied
no flibbertigibbets to vote.

With a creak and groan the gates
opened to all male citizens
sobriety and clean clothes
not required or asked.

By force of arms came the blacks
later uppity females
as the gates still protesting
swung still wider.

Citizens cast your precious ballot
support the candidate of your choice
exercise your Natural Rights
each vote speaks with equal voice.

What if big money equals
passionate resonant speech
eloquent as Patrick Henry
moving as Abraham Lincoln?

The corporation declared a person
campaign cash equals words
the larger the donation
the weightier the vote.

Money the measure of speech
the contract has changed
no longer per capita
the vote now ad valorum.

IN MEMORIAM

John K. Bancroft

Feb. 20, 1917— Aug. 24, 2011

Steadfast in his belief and support of The Working People of the World...

A life lived with Integrity, Honesty and Generosity.

A vendor with presence, and presentation

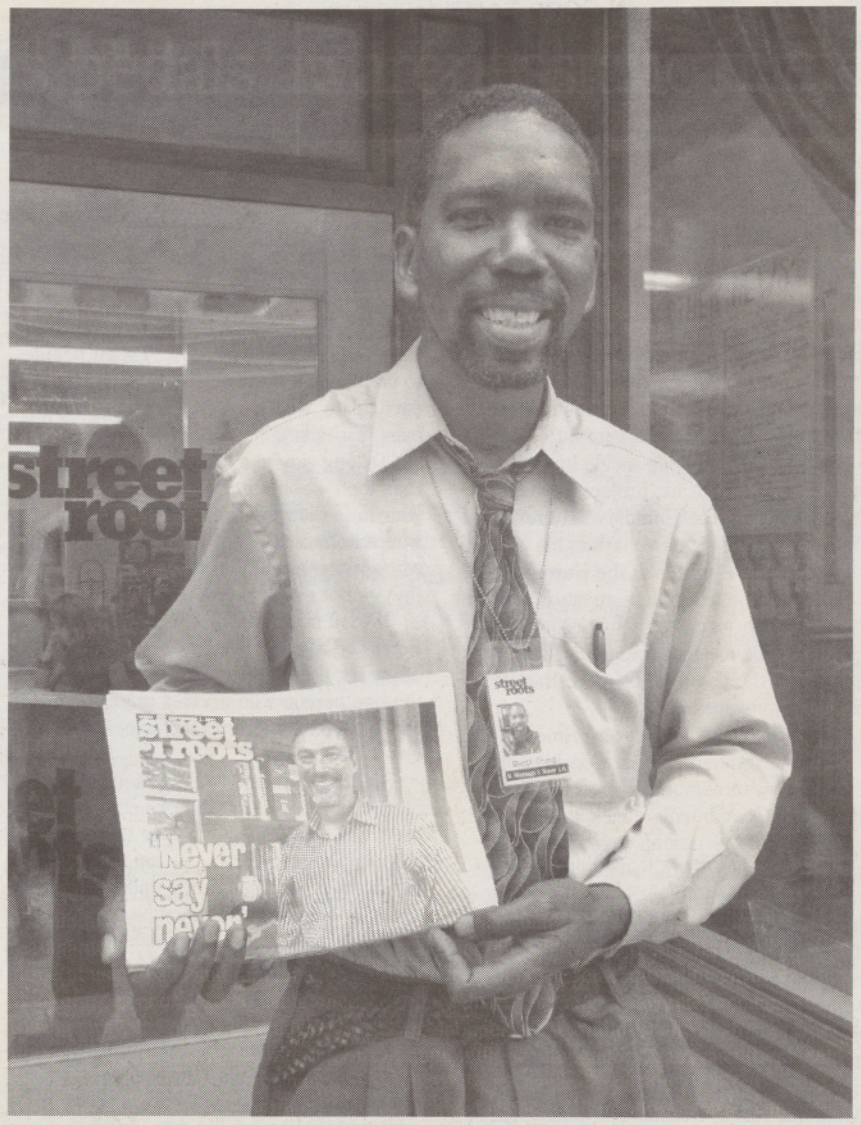
BY COLE MERKEL
STAFF WRITER

Marlon Crump is a self-described Renaissance Man, in that he is able to undertake many challenges and multi-task in order to help others solve their problems.

"If they made a movie about my life it would be a mini-series," says Marlon, whose life's work has spanned stage acting to volunteering and political activism. His true passion, though, is writing.

When it comes to writing, Marlon likens himself to an artist. He says, "I really, really, really am very serious about writing, and I do my absolute best to make sure the story – even if it's one sentence – is perfect." Marlon approaches this art form with the same motivated, down-to-earth passion that he employs in all projects he undertakes.

VENDOR PROFILE
Marlon Crump



Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Marlon lived in San Francisco for several years and began writing for POOR Magazine and the POOR News Network after being subjected to a San Francisco Police Department racial profiling incident in December 2004. "Hotel Voices," the publication in which Marlon detailed this experience, later became a play.

In 2007, Marlon says represented himself in court against the San Francisco Police Department and succeeded in independently litigating the case to a higher court. That experience inspired him to co-found the Revolutionary Legal Advocacy Project in order to help others navigate the court system. The organization was successful, though it became difficult to manage without a law degree.

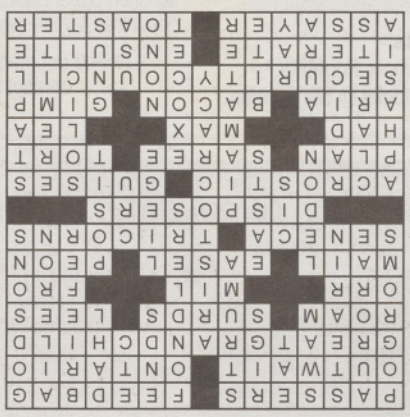
"There's a high demand once people start seeing it become effective to want to handle their cases," Marlon says. "It's fair to say a real lawyer can't even handle too many cases, so they have have legal teams advisers, paralegals."

Currently, Marlon is working on a book review of a biography of Shawn Michaels, the professional wrestler. Crump admires the two-sided picture this account paints because, he says, "It kind of speaks volumes to a person's struggle to where the world sees a person who performs very well in the ring, but the world doesn't really see the inside of that person, their struggles and the demons that they really had to struggle with and they had to cope with on an everyday basis, the hard work involved and having to balance both worlds in terms of their own humility and their own humanity and dignity." He sees a parallel between the way individuals perceived Michaels' performance in the ring and the way they read his writing.

"A lot of people may read a few lines or paraphrases or quotes, and they don't really know what it really takes to paint a detailed picture of whatever the subject matter content is at hand," Marlon says.

Most days, Marlon can be found selling Street Roots at Laughing Planet Café on Mississippi Avenue wearing a pressed dress shirt and tie. "Presentation is the key," he says. "And the more a person loves themselves and takes themselves seriously chances are the people you come across will do the same as well."

Answers to Sept. 2 puzzle



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Laura Owens: Available for domestic-type work, cleaning, dog walking, etc. Please call Steet Roots, 503-228-5657 and leave a message for Laura regarding work ad.

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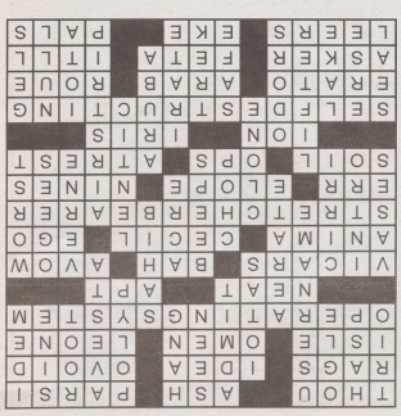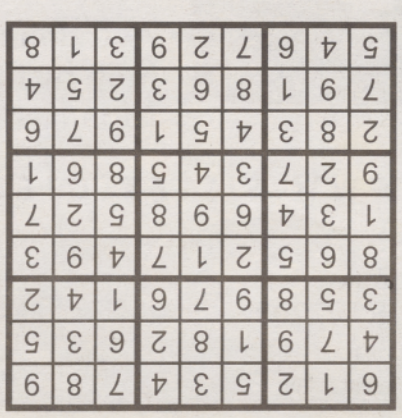
Answers to puzzles on page 15