

Midnight below the St. Johns Bridge

By Jay Thiemeyer

Toward midnight I take a walk down Baltimore from Lombard inclining to the boat ramp and the slow, coal black Willamette. The day has gone quiet, no one is out that I can see. No raccoons, no cats even. No cars pass except behind me one or two sssss-ing blocks back on Lombard. Nor on the bridge as I approach looking up and out, over the river, finding the point I was told about where they tend to collect themselves shortly before the jump. In tonight's blur of fog the lights on the bridge are like soft glowing yellow balls, stretched in an arching gaze; and the ice as it crystallizes on everything is magical, like seeds sprinkled on the earth.

Staying positive a rewarding role for vendor

BY COLE MERKEL
STAFF WRITER

Brian Schmidt sells Street Roots like a corner newsman at the turn of the 20th century. "Great articles in today's Street Roots, read all about it for a couple quarters!" he yells, waving his bag of papers high above his head. He calls out headlines and lets readers know what the newspaper is about: "Focus on vendors in today's Street Roots!"

"I believe more in excitement and positivity than any kind of depth of reason," Schmidt says, laughing with a deep, authentic trill. "I believe that excitement reveals the truth." Excitement: that one word is the distillation of Brian's life philosophy. "When we really get excited and we're really engaged, we perform and produce at our peak and we're happier."

VENDOR PROFILE Brian Schmidt

For nine months, Schmidt has been selling Street Roots between two locations: Bijou Café on SW 3rd and Pine and at 23 Hoyt in the evenings, a tavern in Northwest Portland. Although the neighborhoods are vastly different — Chinatown and the Alphabet District — Brian doesn't notice much of a difference at the heart of the customers he serves in either location.

"The spirit that people have is always the same," he says. "You have different backgrounds of people, but I think basically people give because they want to give, they want to help out, which is amazing."

When he moved to his location at Bijou, Brian took over the turf of a long-time, retired Street Roots vendor named Colleen. While transitioning into a location of a well-established vendor can sometimes be a difficult experience, Brian said it has been very positive, and he still gets asked about Colleen by her former clients who wish her well.

Schmidt appreciates selling Street Roots because, "It's an opportunity for people to be educated, and even if education isn't always positive, it doesn't mean it's not helpful. Sometimes you have to know

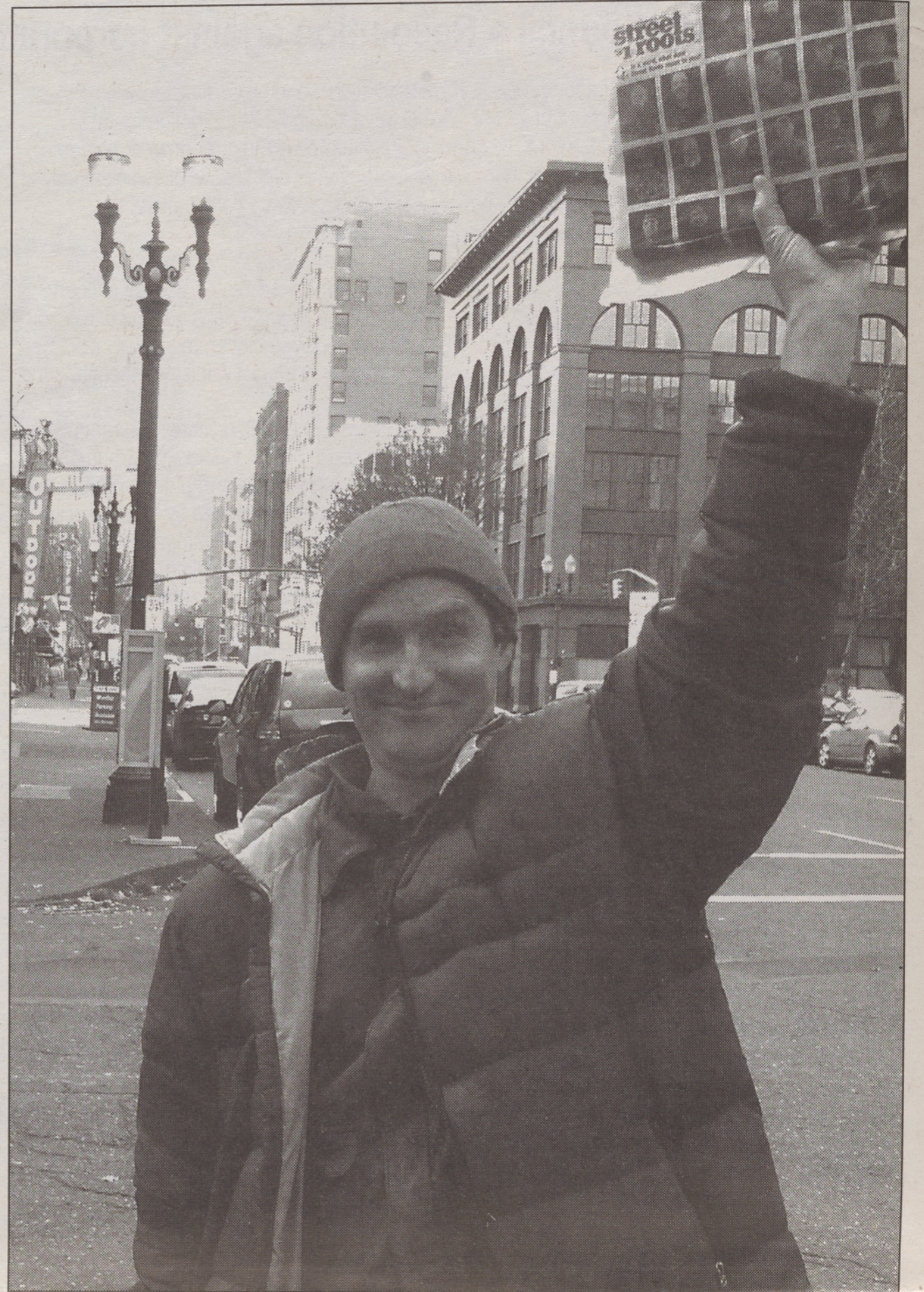


PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

something you don't really like to know in order to improve your contribution in order to help somebody out."

When customers purchase a paper from Schmidt, they may receive more than a paper. If interested, they also get to talk about being positive. "I'm striving to get into motivational speaking, and I not only sell Street Roots, I talk to people about positivity every day because I think that regardless of whether it's your spiritual life or your economic situation or your personal life or your social life, it's always affected by your level of excitement enthusiasm."

Brian's dream is to publish a book on

positive thought and speaking. He has written a rough draft, and now is thinking about the finer points. He says that simplicity and clarity are the avenues toward real positivity.

As our interview draws to a close, Brian goes back to selling papers in his positive newsman fashion, with a smile on his face. "I want to live what I tell people about," he says. "And if I don't have a full grasp on what I tell people and am actually doing it, I don't feel right about telling other people what I do. I have to be living what I'm saying in order to feel right about what I'm saying."

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Answers to puzzles on page 15

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VENDOR WORK ADS

Craig Preston: Labor work, \$12 an hour, please call the Street Roots office to inquire: 503-228-5657

Tibor S.: Available for any labor work around a house. 1-201-539-1888.

Cassidy Morse: Looking for work. Will do most anything, light and heavy. \$10 an hour, four-hour minimum. References supplied. Please call 503-224-5398 or Street Roots at 503-228-5657

CORRECTIONS

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

Vendor Wish List

Donations keep Street Roots and our vendors working by keeping our operating costs low.

- Socks
- Lil Hotties
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- Towels
- First-aid supplies
- TriMet bus tickets/passes
- Printer paper
- Toilet paper



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