

Love and The Mattress Man

By Nancy Drake

It's 5:00 p.m. on Burnside Street.
Cars roar by on their way
Past the noisy intersection
Up the verdant hill to homes
The Mattress Man can only dream of.

He waves gallantly, bounces
His stick sign, back and forth,
Up and down, smiling, nodding
Strumming with the universe
And the traffic's rhythmic pulse.

Down the hill on Burnside Street
Homeless people cluster on corners
Turn their backs to traffic.
They will not be zooming home:
They are home, yet homeless.

When the Mattress Man gets his paycheck
Will he visit his friends down the hill?
Will he buy lunch for the woman
Who found him on the sidewalk, stopped
to talk?
She comes by every day now.

The cars never stop while he
Bounces the sign, nods his head
Waves his free hand.
He will smell of exhaust, but
Their lunch will be excellent.



PHOTO BY ISRAEL BAYER

Vendor joins Street Roots board of directors

BY COLE MERKEL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With three years as a Street Roots vendor under his belt, Darren Alexander has been steadily building on a good thing. He has been selling at the Alberta Food Co-op since summer 2009 and over the past few years, has become a respected ambassador with Street Roots, always selling with a smile on his face, recruiting new vendors and spreading the word about the newspaper and the organization.

Now, Darren brings his perspective to the Street Roots board of directors, joining the nonprofit's leadership in February. A self-described introvert, Alexander hopes to bring his experiences to the organization's governing body as Street Roots moves into a new era.

"In my own unique way I can contribute to just making the paper better. If I have

VENDOR PROFILE Darren Alexander

any ideas, I bring them to the table. As we transition into a new phase of the paper, I want to help make it better."

In his three years with Street Roots, Alexander has witnessed positive change in the newspaper.

"The stories are getting a lot better and people are becoming more receptive to the paper itself," he says. And he sees that receptivity as a great opportunity for growth. "I want to bring it to a point where the community doesn't just see the paper and just say that it's a 'homeless' paper. I hope people get the perception that Street Roots has unique news."

Alexander's joins for a two-year term on

the board, and he joins Leo Rhodes as the second vendor on the 10-person body. He is still trying to figure out all of his responsibilities, but feels like he is fitting in.

"The group is lively," he says with a smile. "Being a new kid on the block makes me feel kind of nervous. It's an entirely new experience for me because I've never been asked to do something like this. To me the paper means dignity and community. I'm basically a shy person, but Street Roots has been a way for me to be a little more extroverted and outgoing."

In his free time, Darren is an avid, "fledgling" writer, often journaling or writing short stories. He is one of the most consistent participants in the weekly Street Roots creative writing workshop. And, on top of his board responsibilities, he can still be found most days selling Street Roots at the Alberta Food Co-op.

We tip our mugs to Coffee Bean International for donating coffee to Street Roots and keeping our vendors warm in the morning! Thank you!

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Answers to puzzles on page 15

S	N	O	K	I	K	D	E	E	D	E	N	S	E	E
I	N	F	A	U	N	A	N	L	U	O	F	E	N	I
A	L	C	A	L	E	C	U	M	E	I	F	I	E	H
D	E	I	N	S	I	D	E	F	I	T	I	N	S	I
A	R	G	A	L	S	T	Y	L	E	A	R	G	A	L
S	S	S	U	G	A	T	E	A	U	G	A	T	E	A
T	E	L	A	V	I	L	V	I	L	G	O	T	E	L
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C	O	E	D	T	Y	R	A	N	T	C	O	E	D	T
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9	2	5	6	7	1	3	8	4
8	7	4	3	9	1	5	2	
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7	5	4	8	1	2	9	3	6
2	8	1	9	6	3	7	4	5
6	9	3	6	5	4	7	8	2
1	4	8	7	6	5	2	6	3
5	9	2	3	8	6	4	1	7
3	6	7	1	2	4	5	9	8

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



www.streetroots.wordpress.com
and Facebook too!

Vendor Wish List

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

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

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



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