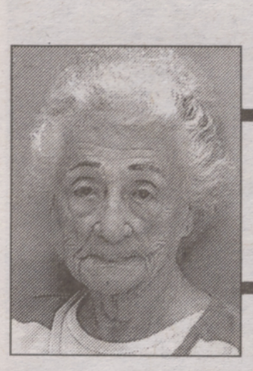
Got a question? The managing editor has all the answers!



ASK THE EDITOR. GO AHEAD!

Midge Leffords

Midge Leffords has been the managing editor with Street Roots for as long as she can remember, so roughly 42 minutes.

Love your paper but what happened to all the poetry?

— Trevor

All the poetry, Trevor? *All of it*?!? In my day, if someone bleated out poetry in the newsroom they were laughed out of the office in a gale of tobacco breath – as they should be! This isn't a poetry book, Trev! This is journalism! Real, hard journalism, with gritty, unpoetic things in it! Judging by your Facebook page you look about 24, 25? Am I right? Tell you what, Trev. Let me buy you a drink, let a few Old Fashioneds loosen you up. Then I'll show you poetry.

That musician on your cover last edition was hot! But my vendor sold his last copy to the guy in front of me. Who was that tall drink of water!

— Silas

Oh, you men. That's all you think about, isn't it. I'll tell you what's a tall drink, a double vodka gimletAfter a hard days work, a few of those are all you need to set a relaxing mood for "Ellen." Some days I can't squeeze the Smirnoff out of the plastic jug fast enough.

You spoke at my PSU class last week, and you only hinted at the "good ole days" of journalism. Can you elaborate?

— Dylan

What do you care? You know what old-school journalism was? A bottle of Wild Turkey in the bottom drawer of a strapping sports editor who knew how to handle the hot lead machine and would show an attractive, impressionable cub reporter what the world had taught him after the paper was put to bed. Those were the days.

I noticed a few mistakes in your paper. Why is that?

— Peacock

You don't know mistakes, sweetheart. True mistakes are gremlins in your memory that never let you forget all those miserable decisions you made back when you still had a chance. It's the despair that shares your pillow at night and stares back at you from the other side of the desk all day long. It's all the wrinkles under your eyes and the tears that ripple across them every morning. It's the litany of failure that only a half-gallon of Dewars and a three-day weekend can drown out. And that's only good for three days. Sometimes three-and-a-half.

I was going to buy one of your papers, but then I saw on Portlandia that you guys don't have a crossword puzzle. Kinda doesn't seem worth it without a puzzle, don't you think?

— Riley

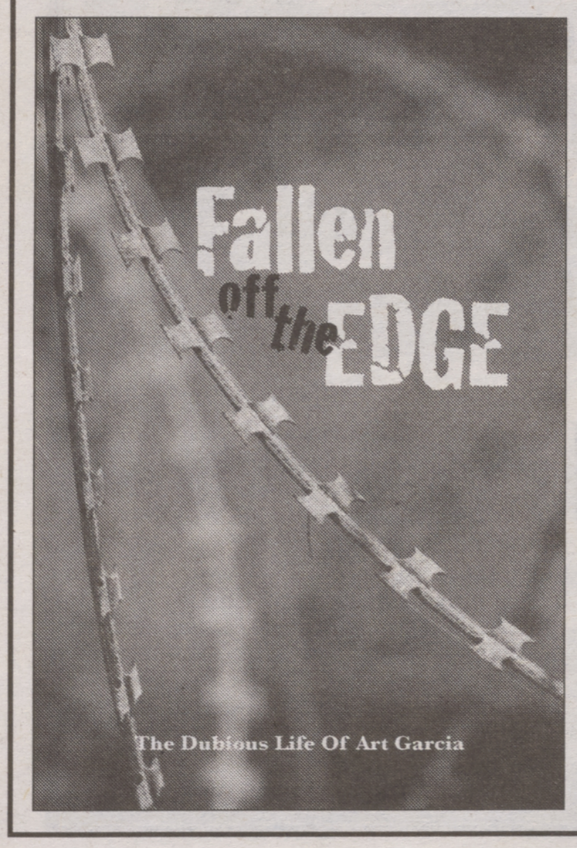
I'll tell you what I think, *Riley*. I think you should stop following the crowd. When I was your age, TV was reserved for big important events, like the moon landing or Truman's funeral. You didn't just sit around, watching whatever you wanted, when you wanted, with a fridge full of microbrews. You stared into the sink and drank Old Grand Dad. And you drank it responsibly – alone, from a coffee mug in case someone dropped by before noon. Keeping up appearances mattered in my day, *Riley*. Lunch was drunk behind wooden doors in dark rooms, not under airy tents in Waterfront Park. You people make me want to puke.

Why does Street Roots need to be so controversial all of the time. Can't you find something nice and peaceful to report on?

— Betty

Nice and peaceful, huh? Oh Betty, you must still believe in something, anything. I have been doing this a very long time honey. Long enough to know that there's nothing nice and peaceful in the news, and if there was we sure the hell wouldn't be running it. Do you think homelessness is nice and peaceful. Maybe on a starry night after a 12-pack of cheap beer. Do you have any idea how hard it is to present this crap every two weeks? The point is, Betty, we're old and jaded and the only time I'm going to be peaceful is once they chuck me in the ground. Until then, this is what you get.

Thanks for your letters, kids. That ought to be enough for one year.



Fallen Off the Edge

A new book by Art Garcia

"Fallen Off the Edge" is a chronicle of one man's experiences after returning from the Vietnam War. Told through the eyes of Street Roots columnist Art Garcia, this book celebrates the major victories born from a series of questionable choices. Art's jocular storytelling takes the reader along with him in and out of the California prison system over the course of 10 years until he found the strength and courage to pull himself up from the fall.

The book is available online at www.blurb.com under searchword Art Garcia.