

**Quick to Judge**

By Leo Rhodes

Homelessness is not simple  
It's a job in itself  
Trying to stay out  
Of non-homeless peoples'  
Comfort zones  
Heavy backpacks  
And bags full of clothes  
Blankets  
And other personal belongings  
Seeking a place to rest

Adjusting your daily schedules to  
Meal times, appointments,  
Jobs, transportation,  
Shower and shelter times

Most people  
Don't realize the complexity  
Of survival mode  
Of homelessness  
Under the thick skinned, calloused, stoic  
And sometimes angered homeless person  
There is a human being  
But most people are quick to judge  
A homeless person  
Not knowing their story

**Building real relationships with each sale**

BY COLE MERKEL  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The morning rush hour traffic on Northeast Broadway is almost deafening. Automobiles accelerate toward the I-5 on-ramps at the Rose Quarter, cyclists commute toward the Broadway Bridge on their way downtown and pedestrians move quickly into the Lloyd Center Safeway on Northeast 11th Avenue.

Jim Dienes is not the first Street Roots vendor to call this spot his own, but in recent memory, he is one of the more consistent

**VENDOR PROFILE**

*Jim Dienes*

ones. Dienes started selling at this Safeway in January and is onsite most mornings by 7 a.m., building relationships with the individuals who pass him coming in and out of the store. He says he has twenty or more regular customers and many others who buy from him as they pass through the neighborhood.

"You have a good day!" Jim says to customers leaving the store several times during our conversation. "Good morning!" he says to another, establishing himself as the friendly face outside of Safeway.

Next to the store's entrance, Dienes artfully arranges a transparent, plastic bag of newspapers, Rose City Resource Guides and a Street Roots bumper sticker on his bag. In his hands, he holds his "rain copy," a single issue of the paper, displayed in a plastic bag that he doesn't mind getting wet. "I like conversing with people," he says.

That relationship-oriented attitude has kept Dienes in the street paper business for a long time. Before moving to Portland last summer, Jim spent four years as a vendor at The Denver Voice in Denver, Colo. He moved

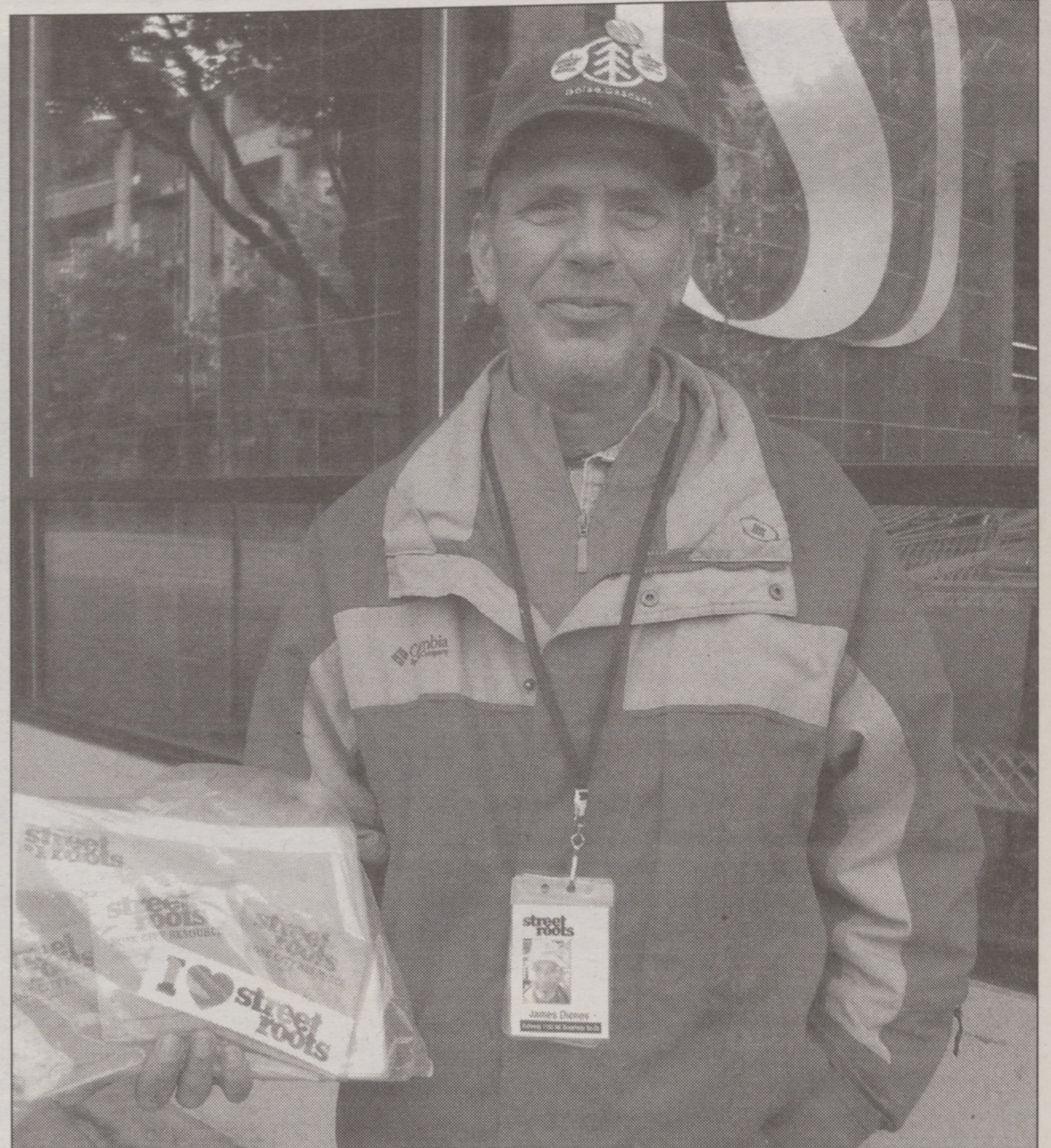


PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

here to attend culinary school at the Culinary Art Institute.

The crowd that frequents the Lloyd Center Safeway is diverse, including a U.S. Postal Service employee stopping for flowers on her way to work, middle class individuals waiting in line at Starbucks for their morning caffeine fix, and people who are homeless on their way downtown.

Jim says he makes his best sales during the lunch hour when students and staffers at Carrington College of Dental Hygiene, and cooks at Buffalo Wild Wings are taking a break.

Jim has formed friendly relationships not only with the Safeway customers, but with the panhandlers who often work next to him

and the other Street Roots vendors in the neighborhood. He and Raymond, the vendor at Pete's Coffee on 14th and Broadway, have a routine morning conversation.

Perched next to a parking lot, Jim has the advantage of being able to sell to people in cars and trucks, though that's rare. He does, however, make a lot of sales to auto-commuters who drive to Safeway and walk in. "I don't go out flying a sign. I don't bum money. I try to make my money honestly."

Ideally, Jim would like to get his culinary degree, a job and an apartment. If his dreams come true, he would like to be a cook somewhere tropical, either at a resort or on a cruise ship. Until then, he is happy building relationships while selling Street Roots.



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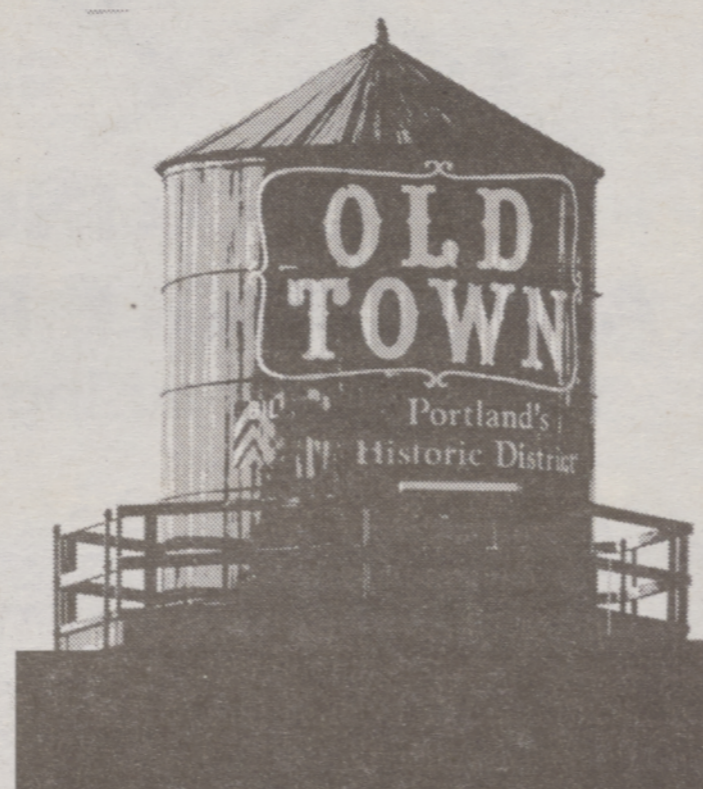
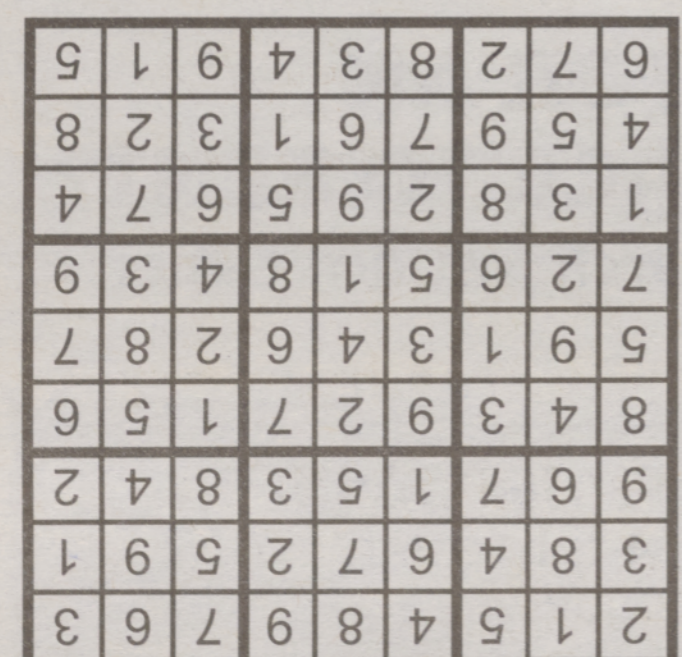
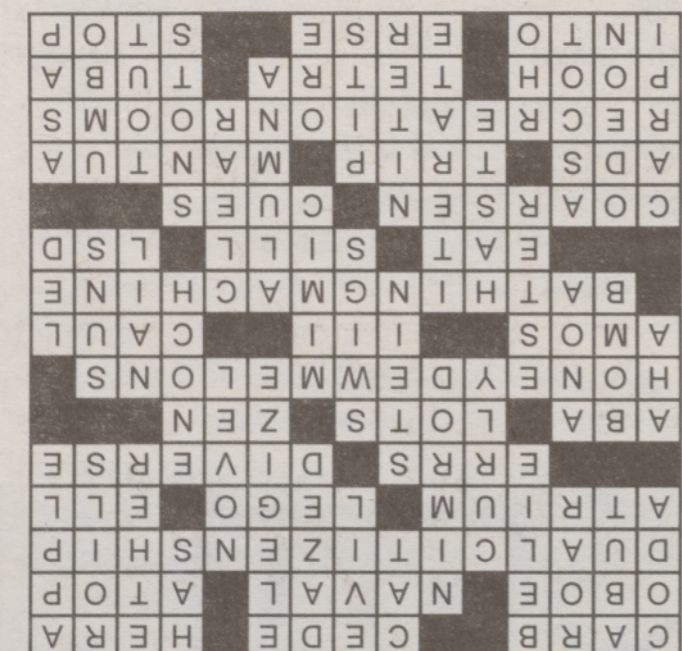
**Vendor Wish List**

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

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

**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



BY LEAH NASH

**Leah Nash Photography Exhibit**

A Different Kind of Normal: Stories of Asperger's Syndrome

Now through June 30

Autism is the fastest growing disability in the U.S. with an economic impact of more than \$90 billion. And according to the Autism Society of Oregon, Oregon state has one of the highest rates of autistic diagnosis in the country.

Photographer Leah Nash spent more than a year focusing on five individuals with Asperger's, exploring the diversity and complexity that exist across the spectrum. However, in the 2013 edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the diagnostic encyclopedia of American psychiatry, the term Asperger's will be discarded altogether, replaced with the broader diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

For more information about i witness gallery or NCP visit  
www.nwcenterforphotography.com  
Leah Nash is available for interviews.