

Beat Me

By Kat

Beat me
To a bloody pulp
It's okay, I won't fight back
It's just a little pain,
Right?

Rape me,
It's okay,
Been there, done that.
Blame me
For all the pain you caused me
It's alright
I deserved it anyways,
Right?
Hate me,
Because I hurt you so much.
Beat me,
Because I won't put up a fight
Kill me,
The cars won't stop
Because I deserve it anyways,
Right?

Staying positive, rain or shine

BY COLE MERKEL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Waking up to sell Street Roots day in and day out is hard work. Vendors have to brave the elements — seemingly endless rain in the winter, unrelenting sun in the summer. They are required to regularly explain the paper's mission to new customers and have to wear emotional armor to endure the constant uncertainty about when their next sale will come.

Jason Hutchcroft, who has been a vendor

VENDOR PROFILE
Jason Hutchcroft

on and off for more than a year, knows the ups and downs of selling well, and says he has become a stronger person for the experience.

"I don't like being ignored or looked down on because I'm homeless," says the 36-year-old. "I assume that's how people are looking at me sometimes, but I could be wrong. I probably am wrong. Sometimes people look at me with a glare that's not really friendly looking. But I've gotten a lot thicker skin because of it. For me to be able to do this, it's a necessity to have that thicker skin or else it's going to drive me crazy."

Still, Jason is at heart a very sensitive and kind man: A caring father, a compassionate partner to his long-time girlfriend, and clean and sober after struggling with addiction for the better part of two decades. He says that several factors have been integral in helping him stay sober: having a job, the possibility of getting into housing and spending time with his 9-year-old daughter.

Most of the time Jason's customer interactions are fulfilling, especially since establishing his own location: Pioneer Place

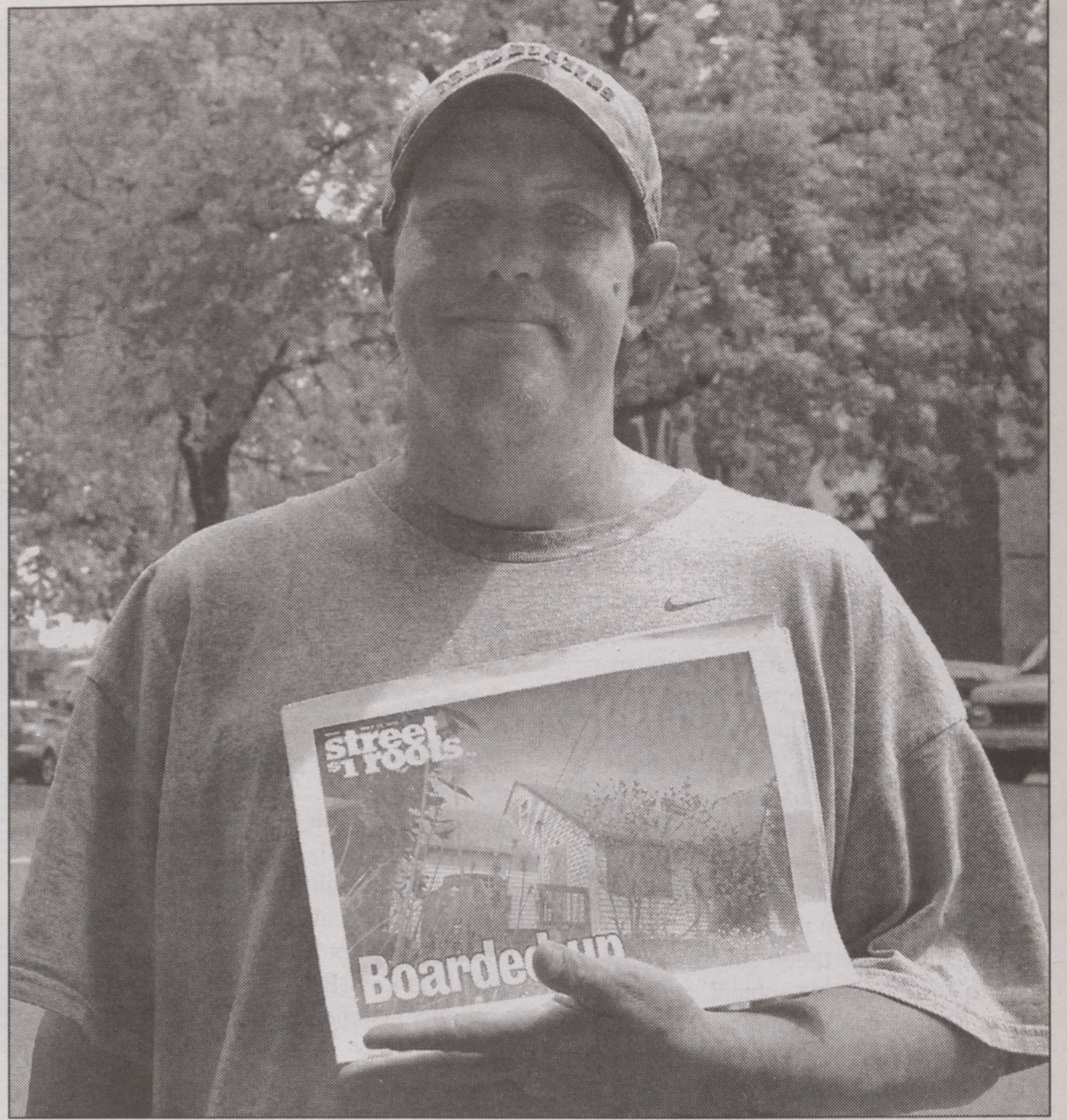


PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

at SW 5th and Taylor. "I like the positive interactions," he says with an authentic smile. "I like the money because it's helping me provide for myself with everything but rent, and I like the fact that it gives me a little bit of pride to sell a paper, to offer a product, to be able to say I've got a job."

Hard work is something Jason has always valued. While he would ideally be driving a truck or working in a warehouse (careers in which he has nearly 10 years of experience), he is glad to be selling Street Roots for the time being.

"It makes me feel good about myself to know that I'm working and contributing to society," he says. And he takes his sales seriously.

"My strength when I'm selling papers is that I'm very polite. As long as someone

looks at me and says, 'No, thank you,' I will tell every single one of them to have a nice day. I'm friendly and I smile."

Jason has a lot of regular customers; his relationship is so good with a few that they will even buy him lunch with a paper. One of the greater challenges he encounters is explaining the newspaper to people who are not from the Portland area.

"If I am talking to someone on the weekends whom I don't know, I'll ask if they would like to help the homeless." This, he says, usually gets a positive response.

In his free time, Jason is a fan of pretty much any sport, though he is partial to the Timbers and Trail Blazers. He loves music and his favorite bands are Alkaline Trio and Atmosphere.



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Answers to puzzles on page 15

Y	I	R	E	M	E	T	S	S	E	R	D
S	T	S	C	A	R	P	S	I	N	E	R
A	T	E	N	D	S	E	N	O	O	R	A
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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
- Shaving razors

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

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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.

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www.nwcenterforphotography.com. Leah Nash is available for interviews.