Change Is Coming

By Ron Sanford

Status quo is a misnomer
The Earth doesn't stand still
Sounds oxymoronic to me
Are we still on the campaign trail?

Times are getting tighter
Jobs are scarce to find
Administrative we we we
Still machines are outsourcing us.

Sanctimonious pop
The issues are the same
Special interests are on both sides
The speeches come off trite to me.

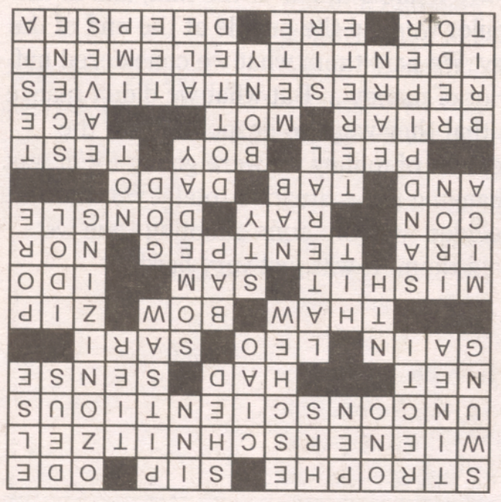
Cutting social services
What's going on locally
Funding is a top priority
That's what affects me personally.

Change is coming like it or not
Budget cuts are on the way
Exactly what kind of job will work?
No bid contracts will rule the day.

Rah, rah, rah rah rah

Equal work means equal pay
May the best man win
That's what they all say!

Answers to puzzles on page 15



8	6	2	1	7	9	5	3	4
9	4	3	8	2	5	7	1	6
1	7	5	3	4	6	2	9	8
5	3	6	9	1	4	8	7	2
7	8	9	6	3	2	1	4	5
2	1	4	5	8	7	9	6	3
6	9	8	7	5	3	4	2	1
4	5	7	2	6	1	3	8	9
3	2	1	4	9	8	6	5	7

A big smile and big goals ahead

BY ANN DERRICK GAILLOT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Michelle Sapp has bright eyes and an open face that smile easily. She is an adept conversationalist who speaks with a bouncy Texas lilt, who loves to talk to new people, who loves to read. Who loves to joke around, relax, have people sign, write and draw in a notebook she calls her yearbook. Who has a genuine, contagious energy and enthusiasm for life. She radiates all of this positivity and goodwill even when she is exhausted from a long night without sleep and a long day waiting in various lines for access to the most basic of human needs.

VENDOR PROFILE
Michelle Sapp

PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

Michelle, like many women, is currently experiencing homelessness and poverty. But through hard emotional and spiritual work that she keeps on the inside, she has been able to maintain her strong vivacious spirit, her love of life, and her determination and belief in herself.

A Fort Worth native who has been in the Pacific Northwest for the past 15 years, Michelle started selling Street Roots six-months ago after moving from Vancouver to Portland, where she found the resources for single women experiencing homelessness and poverty to be more abundant. Besides the practical reasons, Michelle also just loves the city and the people.

"I tell people, in the South, everybody waves at you 'cause that's the proper thing to do," she says. "But up here, when they wave at you they actually wanna see how you're doing, you know, I like that."

An admittedly talkative and social person, Michelle's love of life and others helped her settle right into the Portland lifestyle. However, despite her love of socializing, Michelle at first found it hard to take to selling Street Roots.

"You get worn out. It's hard sometimes because you get rejection," she says. "And I've done telemarketing work, and over the phone rejection is one thing, but when you have face-to-face rejection it daps into my self-esteem a little bit... You don't want to be out there with people looking at you funny or treating you different." However, over the course of a few months Michelle learned to ignore the fear of rejection that often kept her from going out to sell the paper, thanks to the help of a few kind customers. "When I'm able to have people that really enjoy the paper come by for me and they're like, 'Oh, I love this paper. Thank you so much for being out here,'" she beams. "It's like wow! Cool!"

Over the past two months, Michelle has taken anew to selling the paper and now dedicates herself to it daily as she would to any other job, helping build up her self-esteem and connect more easily with the people while she sells.

"I show people, and say, 'Hey, how was your day at work?' 'How's your day?' I'm like, 'My work day's going great!' I'm actually working and that makes me feel more confident in myself."

Building such self-confidence is no easy feat for anyone, never mind the hundreds of thousands of American women experiencing homelessness who every day must cope with the financial and emotional stresses of poverty as well as the constant threat of street harassment, violence and sexual assault. In order to stay safe from harm, Michelle remains constantly vigilant and sticks with a male partner or in a group. Additionally, Michelle must protect herself from what she calls others' "negativity," namely hopelessness, anger, and general ill will.

Looking forward, Michelle aims to continue to push herself as a saleswoman, eventually claiming a turf of her own and building a clientele of regular buyers. In the coming weeks, Michelle also intends to take and complete the 15-hour Rent Well tenant education program provided by Housing Connections, her next step at getting into a permanent home. Though there are many hard steps ahead to securing the life she wants for herself, Michelle is determined to put her all into each and every one, undaunted by the big goals she has set for herself. Michelle is her own biggest cheerleader, but, as with all of us, it is the random moments of kindness and human connection that get her back on track when the world and life seem bleak. If you pass Michelle selling Street Roots downtown, share a kind word with her. Indeed, her enthusiastic response and warm smile will brighten your day and perhaps even strengthen your belief in the power and resilience of the human spirit.

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 WORK ADS

Work Wanted
Dog walker; House cleaner; Care giver. Dog lover who is honest, sober and reliable. Rate: Private treaty. Eileen V. (message) 503-228-5657

Have a favorite vendor? Let us know. We like to hear about the team's work, and we'll pass along the good word!