

EDITORIAL

Just when you thought it was safe to return to the sidewalk

You know, we were just about to give up on writing editorials. That whole economic/social justice thing is exhausting when no one is paying attention.

And then, Christmas came early – or actually a little late. Maybe it was Easter that came early, whatever.

The local Chamber of Commerce clumsily rolled out their plans. Like a big fat machine scene coming a mile away over the horizon – sit-lie had returned!

Like all of you, we find parsing out the square inches of our public sidewalks simply fathomless for entertainment, worth talking about ad nauseam, which is where it tends to go.

Sadly, we had almost given up writing about our favorite subject two years ago when the latest version of the sidewalk management ordinance went into play. Discussions turned to solutions of homelessness and affordable housing. It was so boring.

Thank goodness the issue is getting a revamp, and a right-rounded good one at that! The talk is that folks are going to try to ban all kinds of activities in our city's commons, and we all know that's good business for everyone! Watch out skateboarder kids. You time here is limited.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. If this battle is going to have the savory splendor of sit-lies' past, people will have to step up their game. These arguments won't run in circles all by themselves! City Hall can fill all the potholes it wants, as long as it keeps digging itself deeper when it comes to overregulating downtown foot traffic!

Until then, we'll look for other things to write about, but nothing has quite the visceral zing of arguing the 8-foot versus 10-foot thoroughfare high pedestrian zone delineations, or the subtleties inherent in defining predictable sidewalk topography as it relates to A-boards, sundry business signs and trendy wrought iron butt perches. We know you understand.

So while we wait for the biological waste to hit the fan, we'll continue chucking out the news of the day, although few issues have the same energy as sit-lie. Budgets are lame. Health care is a no-brainer, unless it's fluoride, and then it's a no-brainer no-brainer. Explaining the housing crisis actually takes work and stories of humanity, perseverance and survival are usually best told through sidewalk issues anyway.

So bring on sit-lie – the businesses in pain, the homeless, the dogs, the advocates, the feet and inches of contention, the deserving and the undeserving, the perceptions and reality, the lawyers and civil rights arguments! Summer 2013 is going to be the best sit-lie season yet! We can't wait!

The talk is that folks are going to try to ban all kinds of activities in our city's commons, and we all know that's good business for everyone!

We're red hot potatoes, if I do say so myself

It's official! Street Roots is changing its format to online satire. We've given up on the idea of reporting real news. We've begged and borrowed to fund our journalism department for far too long.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.

Newspapers are changing. Profit margins are down and Street Roots can no longer afford to produce the quality content that readers have come to expect.

With a changing media environment and all of the cheap labor that exists on the Internet, we've decided, who needs quality journalism, anyway? At least the kind where you spel and fact check, talk to actual "news" sources and present an issue in an educated manner.

We're fairly confident that there's a significant amount of access to local news that already exists for free. For example, Byron Beck can cover most of Portland's art and entertainment, bloggers can carry local sports coverage from their garages and government public relations departments will write any hard news that needs to be covered.

Street Roots believes that by making up the news in each edition of the newspaper, we'll actually be able to give a more in-depth look at what's actually happening in Portland.

Local foundations have asked us, "How do you measure the impact that your journalism has?" Our response to that is

simple, "How about measuring the impact not having any local journalism has?"

I'm going to quote myself (I love quoting myself) by saying, "Producing a newspaper every two weeks that actually delivers engaging content while helping more than 400-plus individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty is overrated. We think we could just as easily help people by giving the public a newspaper made up of inconsequential drivel that doesn't actually talk about solutions to problems facing our city. That's why we're really happy to have consultants from the Portland Mercury and The Oregonian helping us change formats."

Please take a gander through our new edition and let us know what you think. If you like what you see, you can show your support with the envelope we've attached in this edition of the newspaper. We're going to need it. It's readers like you that make Street Roots what it is.

We humbly, yet very, very, very aggressively ask you today to "Give! Please, for Pete's sake, Give! Give a little, Give a lot, but Give! We couldn't do what we do without you. Oh, oh, it rhymes, rhymes. Why is this paragraph still in quotes you ask? We don't know." It doesn't change anything, does it? We hope not. We do appreciate your support and that's no laughing matter. This isn't even funny anymore? Was it ever? Stop, Israel. (Thinking to myself.) Your last paragraph could easily have been the last.

Thank you for the love! Give! Please ...

LETTERS

Dear Street Roots,

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners in Clackamas we wanted to write and voice our displeasure with Street Roots' advocacy.

I can't believe you would actually advocate for the government to help the poor. The government is the reason why people are poor. Take it from us, we know more than anyone. If Portland would abolish helping the poor, they would all just go away.

The government should only help the poor that actually want to help themselves not be poor anymore.

— BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, CLACKAMAS

Dear Street Roots,

I'm very concerned about Street Roots wanting to help people maintain better dental hygiene, especially the poor. People deserve bad teeth. People with bad teeth wrote the Constitution of the United States of America. Not having health care is about liberty and justice for all. It's about not treading on my water rights. It's about not

having the government control what goes on inside my mouth. Your naive editorials on dental care and fluoride are the reason this country is being destroyed. I come from a long line of people with bad teeth and I'll be goddamned if you take those rights away from me.

— DON'T TREAD ON MY TEETH

Dear Street Roots,

I'm a quasi-anarchist who very much believes in the Second Amendment. I don't believe in taxes. I don't believe in government. I don't believe in deodorant, cars with wheels, toothpaste, or Cheez Whiz. I hate sports. I also hate people. I don't believe in anyone or anything that represents the oppression of kittens. I love dogs too. I like your program, especially helping the poor, even if they are humans, but sometimes I feel like Street Roots is more and more a part of the establishment. I do care though and think you are doing a good job, most of the time.

— SO FAR LEFT I'M RIGHT

Our mission

Street Roots creates income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change.

Street Roots publishes every two weeks, launching on Fridays, and is available exclusively through our street vendors or by subscription. We are proud members of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers.

Street Roots
211 NW Davis St.
Portland, OR 97209
503-228-5657
Fax: 503-227-3117
www.streetroots.org
www.news.streetroots.org

Staff

Executive Director Israel Bayer
israel@streetroots.org

Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl
joanne@streetroots.org

Vendor Coordinator Cole Merkel
cole@streetroots.org

Operations Director Sarah Beecroft
Program Assistant Kara Dimitruk, Jesuit
Volunteer AmeriCorps Member
kara@streetroots.org

Grant Writer Sarah Cloud

Development Assistant Cynthia Kiehl
Reporters Jake Thomas, Alex Zielinski, Robert
Britt, Sue Zalokar

Photographers Leah Nash, Ken Hawkins, Kristina
Wright, Christopher Onstott

Stay connected with us online
through Facebook and Twitter



Board of Directors

Bruce Anderson (Chairman), Michael Anderson (Vice-chairman), Heather Stadick (Treasurer), Eddy Barbosa (Secretary), Rich Rodgers, Brad Taylor, Leo Rhodes, Ken Hawkins, Nora Coon, Darren Alexander

Volunteers

Mary Pacios, Jan Bayer, Ann Erelina, Vinnie Kinsella, Sharron Thompson, Ann-Derrick Gaillot, Art Garcia, Joe Thick, Erin Fenner, Stacey Heath, Taurin Skinner-Macginnis, Amber Bielmann, Bethany Hague, Michelle Holbert, John Lisifka, Rowen Canoles

Street Roots Rose City Resource

Street Roots publishes the Rose City Resource, a comprehensive booklet of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty. To inquire about getting an order of the Rose City Resource for distribution, please write to pdxrosecityresource@gmail.com. Resources are also available online at www.rosecityresource.org.

Vendors

Street Roots vendors buy the newspapers for 25 cents each and sell them for \$1, keeping the 75 cents in profit for themselves. In order to keep the cost low to our vendors, we receive additional support from donations and in-kind contributions.



75¢
goes directly to the vendor
who sold you the paper

25¢
goes toward
printing costs

Vendor orientations are at 1 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Street Roots office.