CENTRAL CITY concern

Art with Heart Walk!
Thursday, September 5, 2013

Please join us and other nearby agencies that serve the community's most at-risk men, women and children in a celebration of artistic expression!

Stop by our gallery space at 33 NW Broadway and we'll provide a map of all 7+ locations.

Finding strength — inside and out

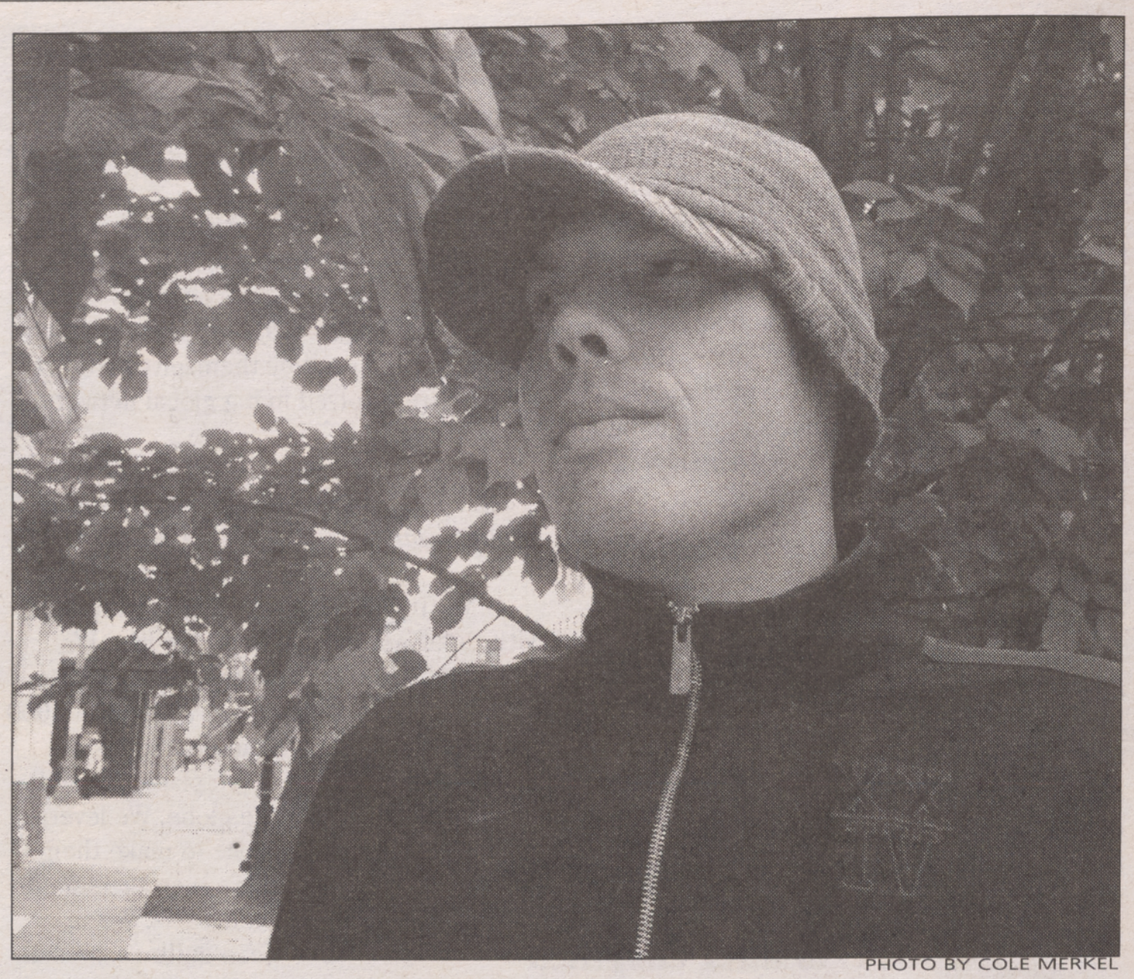

PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

BY ANN-DERRICK GAILLOT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was easy to pick out Lorry Clark when I went to meet him at his old selling spot at Northwest 11th Avenue and Lovejoy Street. A tall man with an easy posture and a big smile, Lorry could look down on the tops of the heads of most of the people who wordlessly passed him by as he greeted them that day. "I'm all smiles and I try to be genuine," he says.

As we sit and talk I ask Lorry the usual questions as he answers in his thick, New York accent. He was born and raised in Syracuse, and has been selling Street Roots in Portland for three months, he says.

But soon our conversation turns to Lorry's real passion: keeping healthy and

VENDOR PROFILE
Lorry Clark

fit, and training for Mixed Martial Arts, or MMA, a full-contact fighting sport. For the past four months he has committed himself to eating clean, no sugar, no white bread when he can, and drinking a lot of water, so that his body can be in top condition when he is finally able to train and compete. After he pays for his prepaid phone, the rest of the money Lorry earns from Street Roots goes to buying fresh, nutrient-rich foods that often are not available at feeds around town. "You need lean protein," he says. "You need complex carbs to take care of yourself while you're out here."

Lorry gets creative, too, when it comes to his physical training. Carrying his 75-pound backpack around town helps him strengthen his core, he says. The six-plus miles he walks every day with the pack helps him with his endurance and stamina. After our interview he shows me his one of his calves, large and chiseled. I can see he was not exaggerating.

Despite the great care and pride Lorry takes in his body, he must still struggle with the effects of sleeping only a couple of hours at a time each night when he must be vigilant against violence on the streets. Lorry has seen much violence over his lifetime, he says, and has had to adapt to survive.

"I'm a boy named Lorry. I learned to fight at a young age," he tells me with a laugh. As he sees it, MMA is a positive outlet in which he can be successful physically, spiritually, and financially. When his savings permit, he hopes to join a local gym and train with a professional coach.

Part of Lorry's plan for success includes getting back into the service industry, where his people skills and natural charm are a valuable asset.

"I waited tables 11 years, from coast to coast," he tells me with one of his trademark smiles. But before he can be considered for such a job, Lorry must first save up enough money for his food handlers permit, a bus pass and work clothes. "People don't understand. I'm not selling for drug money. I'm not an alcoholic, but people look at you like you are ... I do this so I can accomplish something."

In addition to splitting his time between his spots at Northwest 11th Avenue and Lovejoy Street and Northwest 10th Avenue and Jefferson Street, Lorry also has a new spot the People's Co-Op at Southeast 21st Avenue and Tibbetts where he has become popular with the regulars.

Perception versus reality is something that is at the forefront of Lorry's mind when he's selling. There are good days when Lorry gets the same smiles he gives in return, when he makes enough money to buy healthful foods, when he meets a new friend or has a good conversation with a kind stranger. However, there are bad days too, he says, when he spends all day receiving the glares and sneers from passersby, when he does not make any money at all. Through it all he remains upbeat, focused and kind. "My biggest concern is that people know I'm not doing this for fun, I'm not doing this because I'm unemployable, I'm doing this so I can get a job," he says. "I don't enjoy waking up every morning putting blisters on my feet so I can try to make a dollar. I'm trying to get back to the real world. And the thing is you can help people. You can go out and help your fellow man. Isn't that what America's about?"

Before we shake hands and depart, Lorry leaves me with one of his trademark adages, "There's an old saying out East, respect all and fear none. I'll give people respect, but I'm not scared of anybody," he tells me, and then laughs. "Except my mom!"

We House PDX

Transition Projects

Vendors are regular contributors to Street Roots content, as columnists, poets and artists. Look for your favorite vendor's writings in each edition of the paper.

Answers to puzzles on page 15

S	E	I	D	O	O	L	B		O	H	C	E
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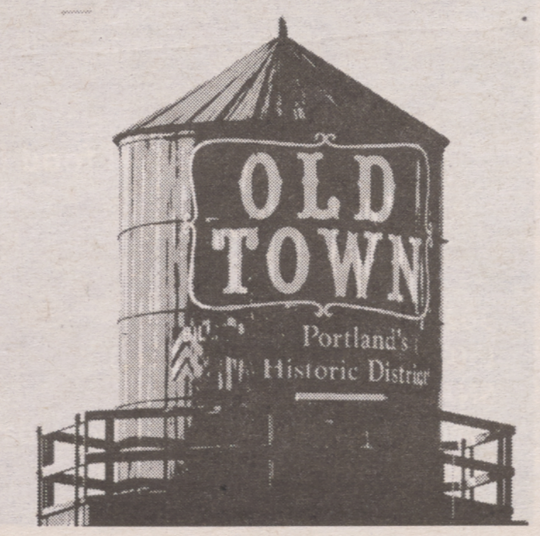
3	8	9	1	6	4	7	2	5

VENDOR WORK ADS

A helping hand, inside or out, reasonable rates. Larry Montgomery. 503-875-6487

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

Need a worker? Can do almost anything, light or heavy. References supplied. $10 an hour, four-hour min. Ask for Cassidy Morse, 503-228-5657 (SR office), or 503-875-6504 (cell).



Find out more about Street Roots at www.streetroots.org

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