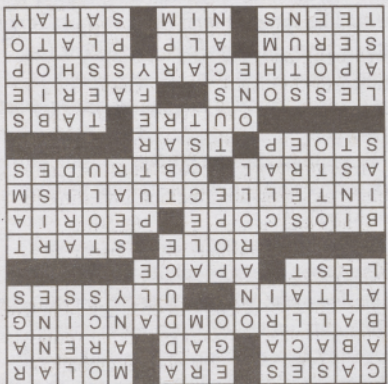


Magna Coffee

by Avendor

I pour my coffee into the cup
of Saint Nicholas
Where it goes down my throat and
like a geyser
Shoots up into my mind and explodes
like fireworks
Giving off bursts of light...
Which travel fervently downward
From my head into my left hand
That commences reflectively
scrawling
These blue ink words onto paper
That becomes a white tablet
of petrified rock
A modern Magna Carta of art
Thrown together by a 40-year-old boy
As if he had nothing better to do
But he didn't, did he?

Answers to puzzles on page 15



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

VENDOR PROFILE

Will Smith

BY SAM BOUMAN
STAFF WRITER

Will Smith sells Street Roots outside of the bustling Target at Southwest 10th Avenue and Taylor Street, a block from the public library, surrounded by the rumble of MAX trains and clanging streetcars. It's not an easy place to sell, given the proximity to other vendors and panhandlers. However, Will, who started selling just before Christmas, has seen his share of good days at the spot and is optimistic that business will grow.

"I like getting to know people and having a conversation," he says.

Aside from the need to get a permanent place to live, his fondness for people is what motivates him every morning when he goes out to his sales spot. He is a low-key presence on the busy corner but has done well enough to afford basic necessities and slowly get to know his customer base, including a few regulars who buy from him every week.

Will was born in South Dakota, but his family moved to the Portland area before he can remember, and he's lived here ever since. Experiencing homelessness in downtown Portland, he has found it difficult to hold down a steady job because of his carpal tunnel syndrome. One job in

particular, at a metal finishing plant, refused to employ him after he went on medical leave because he hadn't been given a qualifying medical release. Despite the availability of welding and blasting jobs that are easier on the wrists, the plant opted to let him go. He has worked as a day laborer through Labor Ready, which placed him in a range of temporary jobs from construction to

warehousing to mopping floors at WinCo. For a while before selling Street Roots, he was panhandling to make ends meet, but he finds that selling the paper not only brings in more money, but people are also far more willing to talk to him. He says he has no plans to quit selling, even after he finds housing.

Will spends his spare time reading fantasy and science fiction novels as well as helping people out when he can.

"There's a saying that the street family have to stick together," he says, "which they do. You are pretty much a family when you're on the streets."



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CORRECTION

Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write to joanne@streetroots.org

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