

### Nameless Day

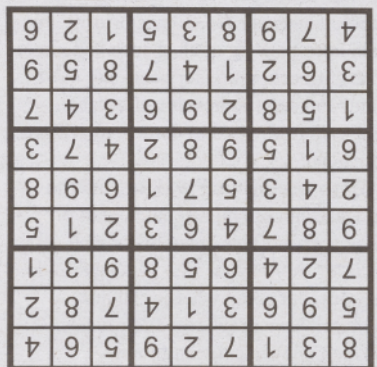
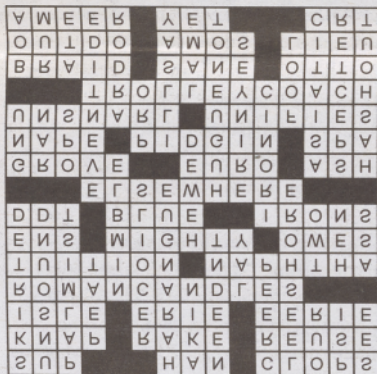
by Daniel Cox

On this nameless day  
 The funeral procession  
 For tomorrow was way into session  
 The paid mourners and host alike  
 Were wailing and sobbing in unison.  
 Dressed in sack cloth and ashen faces,  
 Moved in the sad beat of the drum.  
 The demise of tomorrow set in stone.  
 Tomorrow will never come.

### CLARIFICATION

A passage in our Feb. 6 story, "A fresh new start," unintentionally implies that the East African All-Stars, a group of Somali American teens who have created their own basketball league, is a project of IRCO. It is a project of the Somali American Council of Oregon.

Answers to puzzles on page 15



## VENDOR PROFILE

### Charles and Aileen

BY AARON VON REYN  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Chances are, if you've been out to St. Johns on the weekends, you've run into Aileen or Charles at their selling spots two blocks apart on North Lombard. Whether it's a soggy Saturday farmers' market or a lazy, sunny Sunday, you'll be greeted by the warmth and positivity of these two vendors. And of course you can't miss One-Eyed Jack, their "aggressively happy" charmer of a dog who often sports a Street Roots vest fashioned by Aileen herself.

Although they sell in close proximity, these two have very different styles and demeanors. Charles, who describes himself as quiet, might be secretly singing a triumphant song in his head. Aileen, on the other hand, can rattle off a list of names of all the people she's met in her time working in the neighborhood, clearly enjoying socializing and chatting with customers and passersby alike. "We joke sometimes that I'm his voicebox," Aileen says with a chuckle.

A self-described "jack of all trades, master of none," Aileen says she chooses to express herself in myriad ways, from the embellishments and alterations of her clothes to the personalized jewelry she made for Jack. And of course, her notebook of drawings and poetry is always close at hand for when inspiration strikes.

Aileen and Charles began selling the paper shortly after relocating to Portland from Salem a few months ago. Since meeting through a common friend five years ago, Charles and Aileen have been companions who have bonded through joys as well as past trauma.

"If it wasn't for Charles and Jack, I don't know how I'd survive staying out some days," Aileen says. These two seem to have found

the sweet spot after relocating from a less-active section of the Woodlawn neighborhood. Aileen cites "all the interesting people" in St. Johns as a perk of the trade, as well as the autonomy that comes with selling the paper.

Comparing it with past work, Aileen proudly says that now "I'm the authority figure." This control over their work, coupled with their involvement in the community at Dignity Village, has led to a newfound stability uncommon in their respective pasts. Perhaps their greatest peace of mind comes from their strong relationship. "Charles has been the most stable person in my life," Aileen says. "I don't know how I got so lucky."



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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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