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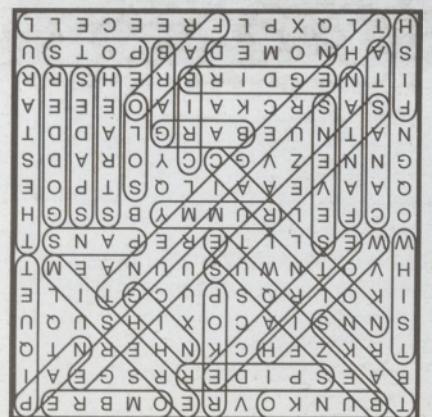
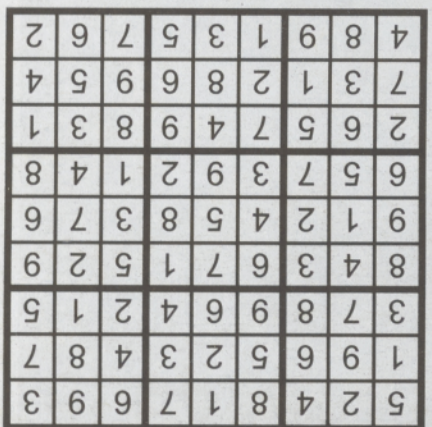
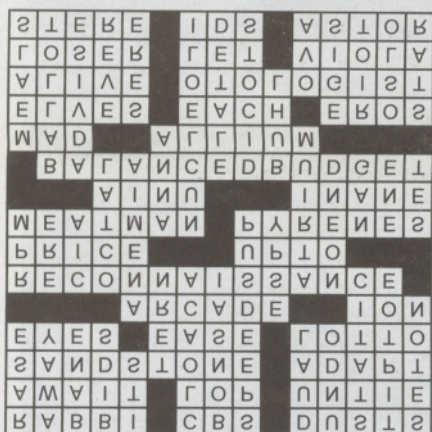


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VENDOR PROFILE

Barbie

BY AARON VON REYN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Upon meeting Barbie she could be mistaken for shy, with her low voice and curious smile. But once she gets to talking, she's a wealth of fascinating stories of her travels and of her life.

Her prolific train hopping has taken her back and forth from California to Oregon and beyond. She hopes it will soon include a move to Arkansas with her son and a jaunt down to California next month for her daughter's birthday. For now, she's making her mark in the City of Roses and working to save up for the trek.

Barbie started selling Street Roots about a month ago. As is her way, she hops around a few spots in town, from in front of the Nordstrom department store downtown to the Hollywood District and New Seasons in Northeast. She prefers the eastside locations, especially the low-key vibe outside of New Seasons. "They're cool, period."

In addition to vending, she's also been involved with the Women's Self Defense Class, handing out fliers around town. One of her missions brings to mind a story about finding a book in a pile of trash. "It's hard to find a book that I like. So, usually books just come to me."

In this case it was "Rolling Nowhere," a book about a young man's travels train

hopping, tales that echo some experiences of Barbie's. Themes of destiny and happy accidents permeate many of Barbie's stories, such as the times she's lucked out and caught just the right train to get her where she was going.

Besides her knack for catching rides, Barbie is also an exceptionally talented artist. Poetry, graffiti, tattoos – Barbie has to think a while about what kind of art she doesn't make. "I do everything. I'm kind of like a goddess," she says with a

chuckle.

One need only take a look at her tattoos to get an idea of her ability. Her left arm is covered with her earliest work and served as a sort of a scratchpad for her later pieces. Perhaps the most captivating of all is the writing going down her forearm in long intricate script. Reminiscent of many of Barbie's stories, the tattoo contains a message that can be seen from two different perspectives. "It says 'struggle' and if you flip it over, it says 'strength.'"



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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.