

Out of Luck?

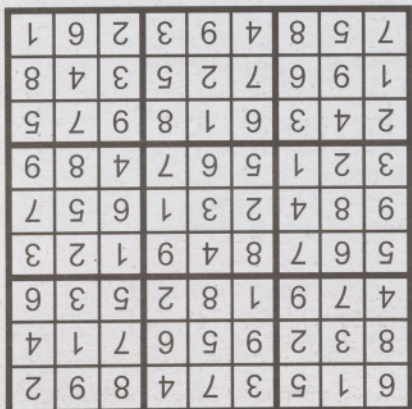
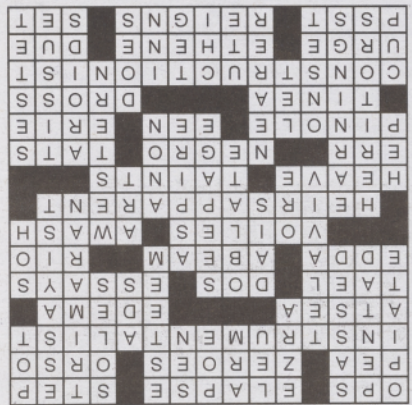
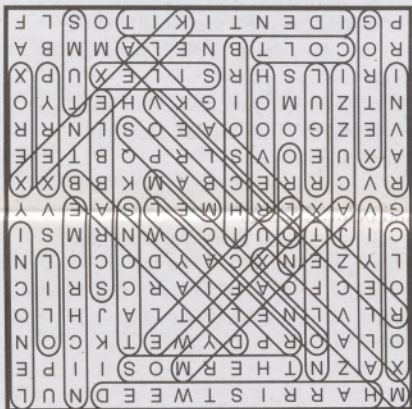
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Answers to puzzles on page 15



VENDOR PROFILE Arnold Casey

BY CHRISTINE MENGES
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Arnold Casey has called many places home. A self-proclaimed “Army brat,” he moved around a lot as a kid while his dad served in the Navy. The second of nine children, Casey spent most of his childhood raising his siblings while his father was away and his mother struggled with an alcohol addiction.

Although Casey has lived all around the U.S., the Alaska wilderness in particular feels like home to him. A Native American, (Aleut and Haida tribes), Casey has explored the Pacific Northwest coast, mostly during his years as an instructor with the program Tribal Journeys. From 1996 to 2004, he worked with this program, taking Native American youths on canoe trips to show them the ways of their ancestors.

A few years later, Casey found himself in Seattle, working with Real Change, a program similar to Street Roots. But after a while, he decided to move back to Portland. One reason is, having recently turned 55 and becoming a recipient of Supplemental Security Income, it’s easier for him to obtain housing here. But there’s a simpler reason, as well.

“I’m back down here because I enjoy Portland. It’s a beautiful place. There’s like a spiritual nourishment here,” he said.

Casey says he finds this nourishment all over the city. He finds it when he eats and volunteers at Sisters of the Road. He finds it when he uses the services of Portland Rescue Mission, Transition Projects and The Red Door. He finds it when he walks to the waterfront to watch birds, eagles and

occasional fish in the water.

For all the people and organizations that have helped him, Casey wants to express his gratitude.

“I try to familiarize myself with the people that are there. I always give thanks and let them know it’s a blessing for their time and the effort that they put into providing us with food and shelter,” Casey said.

Working with Street Roots has exposed Casey to a sense of community he hasn’t experienced before. He spent some time by the Safeway at Southwest 10th Avenue and Jefferson Street before leaving for Seattle three years ago. Since he’s been back, many of his usual

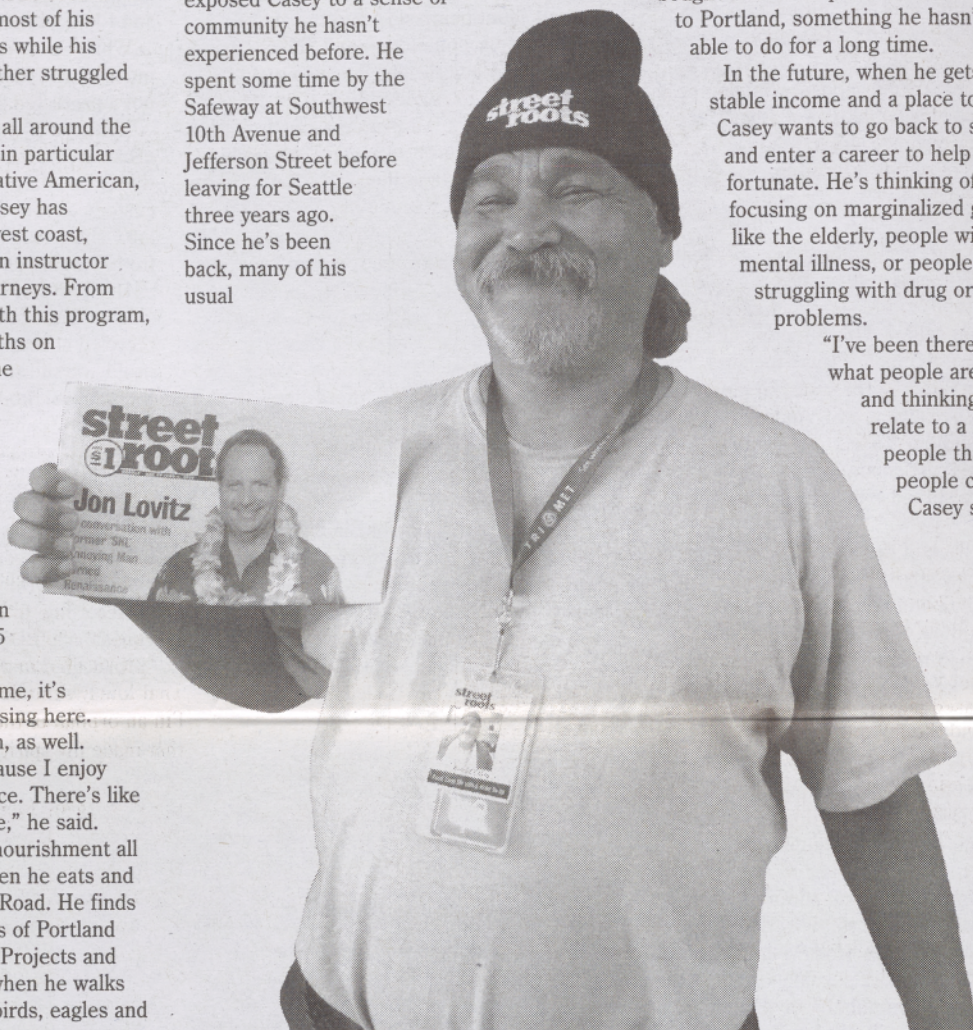
customers there remembered him and have been asking him where he went.

Casey also feels a connection with many of the vendors he’s met. A few years ago, he was able to introduce someone else to the vendor program when the two met in line for a soup kitchen. Four years later, the man Casey met is still selling papers and now has a place to stay.

Casey plans to reconnect with his older sister in July to celebrate her birthday. He bought a round-trip ticket for her to come to Portland, something he hasn’t been able to do for a long time.

In the future, when he gets a stable income and a place to live, Casey wants to go back to school and enter a career to help the less fortunate. He’s thinking of focusing on marginalized groups like the elderly, people with mental illness, or people struggling with drug or alcohol problems.

“I’ve been there. I know what people are feeling and thinking. I can relate to a lot of people that some people can’t,” Casey said.




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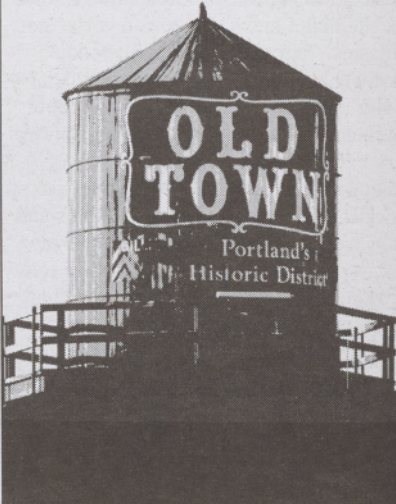

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