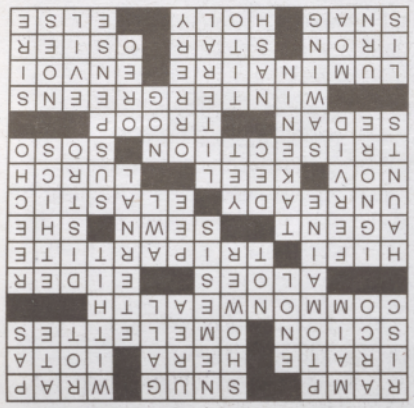
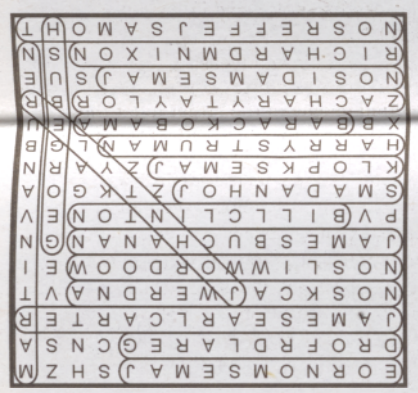
Answers to puzzles on page 15

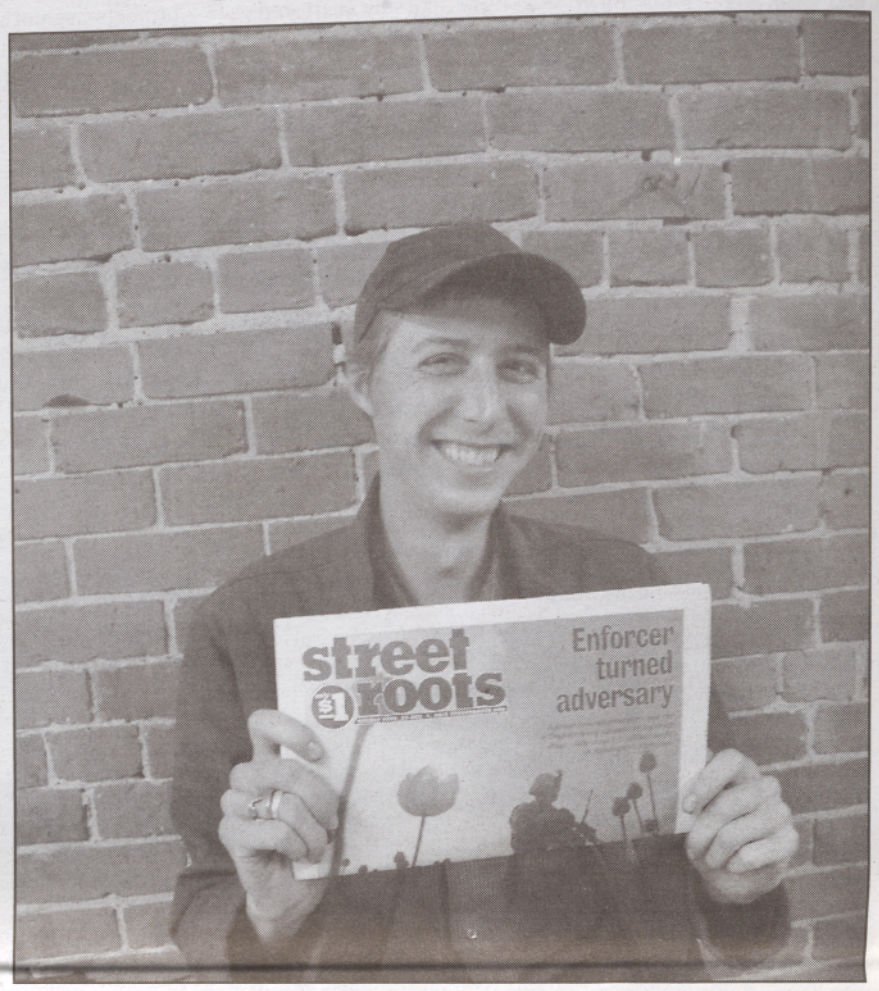
2	5	3	7	4	9	8	1	6
1	9	4	6	8	5	3	2	7
8	6	7	3	1	2	5	4	9
6	3	8	4	9	1	2	7	5
5	4	1	2	7	6	9	3	8
7	2	9	8	5	3	4	6	1
9	1	6	5	2	4	7	8	3
4	7	5	1	3	8	6	9	2
3	8	2	9	6	7	1	5	4





Garret O'Malley: Getting back on my feet

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER



Garret O'Malley was born and raised in Portland. He is 25 years old, smart and hardworking. And he is homeless.

While it is difficult for Garret to talk about his current situation, he easily talks about his past jobs: "I started working at 16. I worked in retail management for ten years: nine years with a corporation, one year with a small store. Started as a courtesy clerk, then was night crew, checker, customer service, PIC (Person in Charge), front end manager and was training for assistant manager. I increased sales by 15 percent in four different departments with that store.

"I was constantly tracking store sales, labor and everything else, so I was making decisions based on logistics, based on financial income."

Garret said with enthusiasm, "I liked that project. I really enjoy working."

In his first job, Garret continued to stop shoplifters, even after he was told to stop. "I quit because they were going to fire me for stopping shoplifters," he said, "Which is understandable because I was taking unnecessary risks. You don't know, honestly, when that person's going to turn around and punch you or something. And then that'd be the store's liability. So I fully understood."

In his next job, Garret set up an inventory system and had more responsibilities. But after the company restructured with Amazon, they no longer needed him.

"I've never been without a job for 10 years. It's weird," he says. "All of this is pretty new. This entire situation. Jobless. Homeless. Whole bit. Just hit the streets September 14."

Garret said, "It comes as a shock real fast. You don't realize how close you are... you always expect that next paycheck. You kind of start feeling entitled to it. Once it stops coming, you start scrambling and...."

He breaks down: "It's terrifying. I guess you don't really understand until you're on the streets."

Then Garret pulls himself together, "There we go. Back in control."

The first person Garret met on the streets was vendor Roy Cochran, and Roy introduced him to Street Roots.

Now Garret is selling papers near Rite Aid at Northwest Hoyt Street and NW 10th Avenue. He said, "I like Street Roots. Keeps me busy. Keeps me feeling like I'm at least semi-employed. It's a way for me to still feel my life is in control.

"By working as an independent vendor, I made the money that I needed to get my phone reactivated. Which was a godsend. Now I'm capable of being contacted and have some kind of income coming in. I've done Labor Ready, answered Craiglist gigs. I've gone all the way out to Jewel, Ore. to build a deck. I've applied for dishwasher, security, retail – I mean everything from stock boy to clerk to manager. Everything under the sun, I'm applying for."

The phone is also a way for Garret to keep in touch with his parents and his girlfriend who moved to Florida. Neither is aware Garret is homeless.

"It's the stupid point of pride thing...and I don't want them to worry unduly," said Garrett. "I was raised by my stepdad that when you do a job, you do it right the first time. And you never take anything without paying for it in some way. That to me was a very admirable aspect of him. I have no other way of being."

He said he will tell them, after he gets off the streets.

"Two months that's my goal," said Garret. "Job, apartment and then just work my way up from there. And then see if I can't help other people.

"I hate to see anyone out here, trust me."

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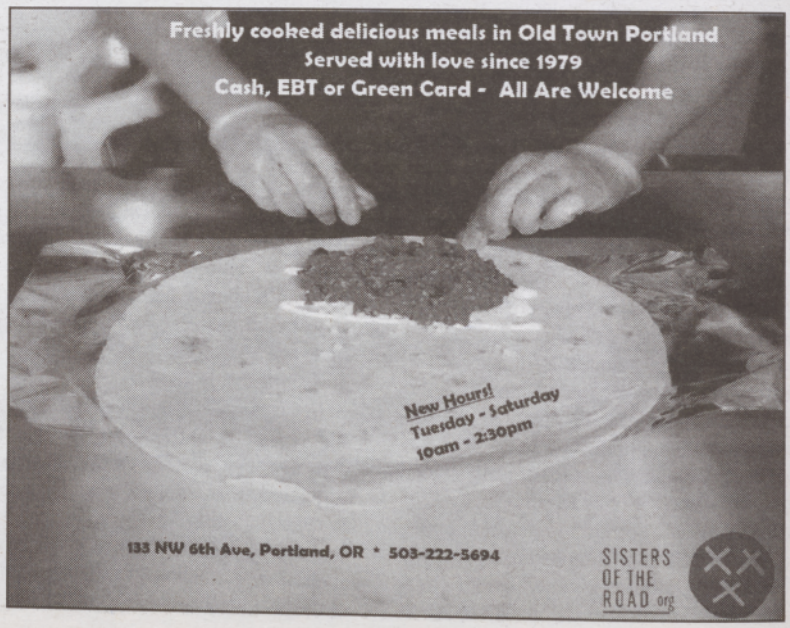
VENDOR WORK ADS

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