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### VENDOR PROFILE

## Damein Awana

BY LEONORA KO  
STAFF WRITER

When Damein Awana sits down in the Street Roots office, he carefully lays his guitar case nearby.

"I'm working for the guitar," Damein said. "I'm trying to be a professional musician, no matter what. If everything in the world goes against me to not do it, at least I'm still trying and playing. I know at the end of my lifetime, I'll have one of the greatest guitars in the world. If no one wanted it hear it, it's not my troubles."

Damein was born in Tacoma, Wash., and grew up in California, with a Hawaiian father and a "mainland" mother.

"I was always playing music since my childhood," he said. "As a kid, everybody had ukuleles and guitars."

When Damein was in high school, his grandmother let him use her garage for jam sessions.

"I went to all the different high schools and got like five, six bands together," Damein said. "Made a little rock 'n' roll orchestra. We wouldn't practice at the same time; too many people. We'd just put the equipment in there, and we'd all take turns and jam with each other."

"Our original concept was to make the best music in the world," Damein said. "Hawaiian music, rock 'n' roll and everything combined, so we had music for everybody to listen to."

High school ended, the bands broke up, and Damein traveled the states, playing music.

Most recently, he was in Hawaii. "Most of my memories are mainland," Damein said. "But I go (to Hawaii) once every so many years and stay on Molokai, Oahu, different islands. (There) I was recording with a bunch of Hawaiians, older men - all of them retired, in their 60s and

70s. We were all doing music video, playing some jazz and everything. These were top-notch players."

Damein plays the electric guitar, creates his own music and tries to avoid song requests.

He explained, "I don't play anyone else's music. I could, but it's not going to be like on the radio because things change, times change, songs change. Songs grow, they develop, the music becomes better. You've got to play music relevant to today."

Damein arrived in Portland in August and began selling Street Roots newspapers in December. He likes to meet and greet people, whether they buy a paper or not.

At the moment, he doesn't play at his newspaper spot: "The weather's not good for (the guitar) now, so it's been in the case. I take it out every now and then, check if rust got on the strings, change the strings. It's kind of warped in the neck, though, because of the

weather, so I'm going to have to have it fixed. Any money I make is going to improve that."

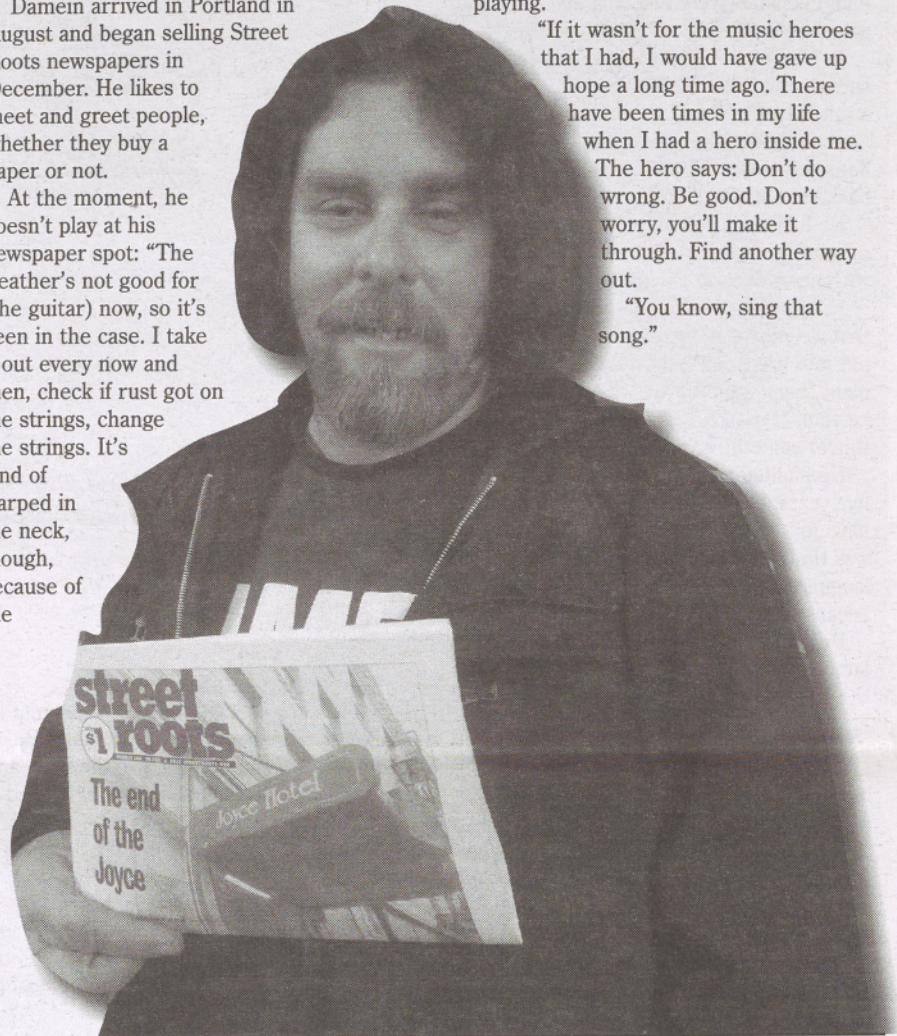
His first Street Roots earnings went toward a memory cable, which records the music he composes on the guitar.

"I got a memory cord on sale for \$40, and I put it on layaway for \$10," Damein said. "(Earnings are) going to go to the guitar. But I might go out and splurge on myself and get a big hamburger or something."

Damein said his goal is to never stop playing.

"If it wasn't for the music heroes that I had, I would have gave up hope a long time ago. There have been times in my life when I had a hero inside me. The hero says: Don't do wrong. Be good. Don't worry, you'll make it through. Find another way out."

"You know, sing that song."



### Answers to puzzles on page 15

5	4	0	0	1	8	2	3	1
8	1	3	2	4	5	0	1	0
2	1	0	0	3	1	8	5	4
0	5	1	3	8	2	1	4	0
1	8	4	5	0	0	3	1	2
3	0	2	1	1	4	5	0	8
0	0	5	1	2	1	4	8	3
4	3	1	8	0	0	1	2	5
1	2	8	4	5	3	0	0	1

X	H	E	I	S	E	B	O	S	V	L	I	E	S	H
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V	O	O	V	B	L	S	T	K	V	E	O	S		
B	D	D	B	N	T	O	N	H	B	E	O	S		
B	V	M	S	O	B	B	V	T	S	B	S	V		
O	I	S	K	K	V	E	R	B	W	B	V			
S	G	S	E	B	V	I	B	V	I	N	H	I		
L	I	B	V	K	E	C	C	E	L	E	M	N		
B	A	G	T	W	M	G	C	H	I	B	O	H	I	
G	V	M	E	S	N	E	O	W	O	J	O	G	V	B
B	N	I	W	C	D	K	E	L	O	S	B	O	H	B

S	S	V	L	T	L	A	T	E	C	L	A	T	S	E	A	S	E
S	E	C	S	L	I	E	N	S	L	I	E	N	S	L	I	E	S
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U	T	A	H	S	W	E	D	E									

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