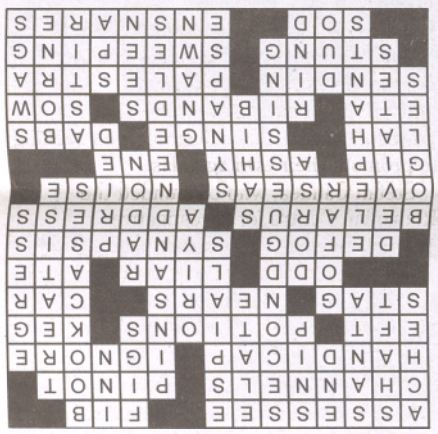
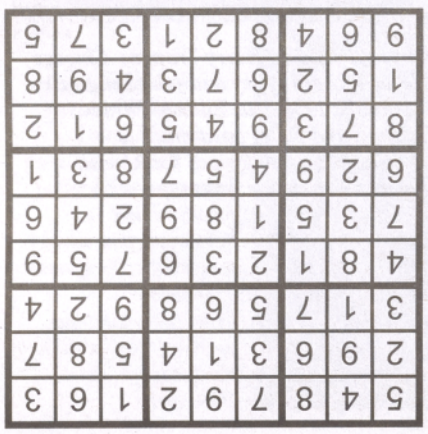
Untitled
by Peter

I never get my hair cut any more. It got real long, but then it stopped getting longer. It's always the same length. My hair is falling out exactly as fast as it is growing. I am in a kind of stasis. Sometimes, I worry about my hair. Maybe it's getting shorter, it's going away. No, it's just as long as before. I am ageless, unmoving, like a rock eroding away very slowly.

Answers to puzzles on page 15





VENDOR PROFILE
Jerrick Harrenstein

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

Jerrick Harrenstein is staying positive, clean and sober.

And he has new apartment keys to show for it.

"I finally stayed in my own place last night, for the first time in a long time," said Jerrick.

"To me that was so humble. That was amazing. My own sense of security, my own place of meditation, and my own place of being – is amazing to me. It's something I can't explain after living on the streets. It's just something that is a blessing that I will forever be grateful for."

He said: "I didn't want to get my hopes up until I actually had the keys in my hand."

"The night before, I slept at the Portland Rescue Mission," said Jerrick. "Before that I was sleeping in the passenger seat of someone's car. And before that, there again I was sleeping at the Rescue Mission. And a long time ago I stayed at City Team Ministries for a few nights. Just different places that helped me out. And before that I slept on the sidewalk on a pallet with a tarp and a sleeping bag. I've slept in doorways up here in downtown. Really had nowhere to go, you know?"

To get housing, Jerrick diligently met every application requirement.

"There were different documents that were misplaced or lost back in 2014 that we had to re-fill out," said Jerrick. "I stayed the course, I did all the documents, I did the footwork. I took some paperwork over to Cascadia (Behavioral Healthcare) and to my other doctors for my disability. I tried to apply myself in every way that I was asked to."

Jerrick is also meeting the requirements of his new housing.

"You can't have any drugs or alcohol whatsoever," he said. "They can give you a random breathalyzer at any time, which is beautiful. I love that because I'm comfortable with that. They can wake me up in the middle of the night, they can come when I'm in the shower, they can come any old time (to test me), and I take great pride in that."

His new home, the Mark O. Hatfield building, has 106 units and is owned by Central City Concern. In addition to housing, CCC provides addiction help and job services in the building. The residents share bathroom, kitchen and social areas but have their own rooms.

Jerrick described his room: "I have a refrigerator. I have a little cot-like bed with a mattress. They gave me a care package that had a sheet, a blanket and some dishes in it and a laundry basket, which is really cool. I can cook some food and stuff. I cooked some macaroni and cheese yesterday."

Jerrick used some of his Street Roots earnings to buy shampoo and deodorant. But more importantly he said Street Roots has "given me a positive attitude. It gives me hope. It keeps me going."

Jerrick said there are a lot of individuals that got him to this point, from organization staff to his friend Dale at church and his AA sponsors.

"They went to bat for me and did a lot of work for me," said Jerrick. "Central City Concern, Home Forward, and my AA group and everybody that's helping me with my recovery. I believe my church (Imago Dei Community) had a lot to do (with it)."

But most of all, it is Jerrick who is responsible and working hard for his success. He now has goals to learn how to use the computer, get a driver's license and reunite with family.

"I go to (AA) meetings every day," said Jerrick. "That keeps me focused on trying to keep a level head and trying to do the right thing every day. The (AA) Big Book has a part in it that really relates to me a lot. It says, 'Being addicted isn't a struggle, staying sober is a struggle.' And it is; it really is.

"But even though things are frustrating and sometimes upsetting, I just want people to know, don't quit, don't give up. Sobriety and recovery is everything.

"I'm grateful for another chance at life."

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