

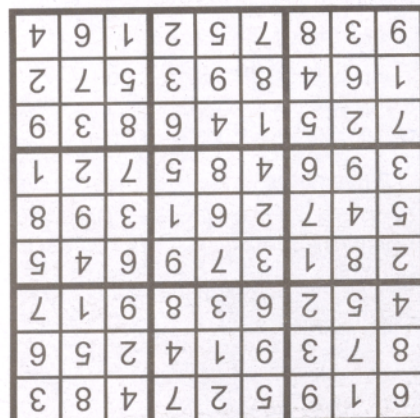
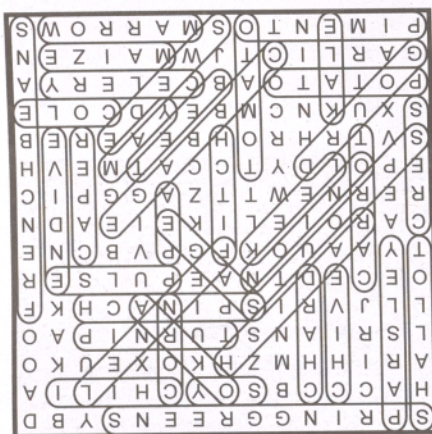
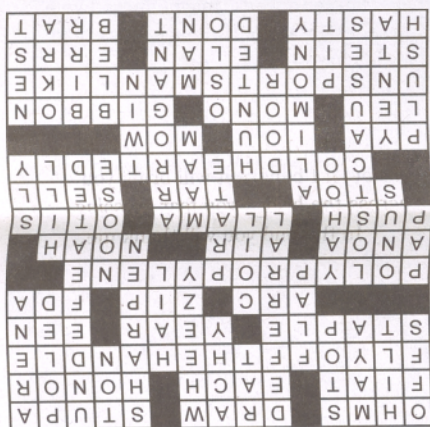
Union

by Teresa Jones

You were lost like I was lost,
free like I was free.
You had no place to go,
nowhere to be.
You drank to the future.
You drank to forget.
You felt like there was no one
you hadn't lied to yet.

Now you're lost like I am lost,
free like I am free.
I wonder are you lonely
when you remember me.

Answers to puzzles on page 15



VENDOR PROFILE

Anna Gibson

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

Anna Gibson has a passion for professional cooking and making her favorite specialties.

"Meats and sweets! But I can make that tofu, you know," Anna said, laughing.

"Being a pastry chef, I just love making those sweets," she said. "I like to do the chemistry with the math and science, and then make it beautiful. It needs to be a good presentation because you eat with your eyes first, but at the same time, it's got to taste good. It takes a lot of patience."

"But I can do other forms where it's fast, like cooking eggs, steaks and everything. And I take great pride."

Anna said she also liked processing meat.

"The boss trusted me to cut rib eyes and New York strips and weigh them just by the touch of the hand. If you mess up on a cut, now you're losing the place money."

Anna was born in Pauls Valley, Okla., and learned about hard work from her stepmother.

"She taught me how to break down wooden fences in the backyard when I was a kid," Anna said. "I got a lot of splinters, but I learned how to work. It wasn't fun, but boy I tell you, I learned the work ethic."

Anna completed her education in the culinary arts program at Platt College in Oklahoma City.

"I still have some loans I need to take care of," Anna said. "But it was still worth it to me to have that experience. I got to do a lot of competitions and won a lot of scholarships."

Anna went on to jobs where she cooked French cuisine, was a master grill operator and assisted the personal chef to a university president. Her favorite job was working as executive pastry chef at East Central University, where she ran the bakery and made specialties that were

sugar-free, gluten-free or vegan.

In October, Anna and her fiancé decided to come to Oregon for the milder weather.

"So maybe it was too impulsive," Anna said. "(In Oklahoma) I had two paychecks from two different jobs I was working. It was irresponsible to put ourselves in this hard position. But we can get back. We are already in the process."

Being on the street is a new experience for Anna.

"There have been a few times I missed the bus and I didn't make it into the shelter," she said. "I had to stay on a piece of wood behind a building, and that just frightened me so much. I don't want to go through that again."

Like many on the street, both Anna and her fiancé had their wallets stolen, which made it hard to apply for

jobs. But she found that Street Roots didn't require identification to become a vendor.

"Thank God they don't do that because a lot of us would be in a pickle," she said. "A lot of us are without our IDs."

The first few days as a vendor were tough, she said.

"At first, I got discouraged and cried the very first day (selling papers)," Anna said. "I got turned down by eight or 10 people ... but then later, I tried again. I started talking to people and getting my confidence up. I started finding my dignity and self-worth."

Anna also has good things to say about Old Town Clinic, a Central City Concern health clinic in the Burnside neighborhood.

"My counselor Megan and my nurses and doctors, they're wonderful to me there,"

Anna said. "I have a whole team of women. They keep me accountable to keep doing good things."

Anna's hard work and help from different organizations have opened up opportunities for a better life.

After leaving her Street Roots interview, she was on her way to a job interview.

"I'm really excited," Anna said. "(I'm applying for)

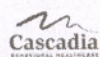
chef and making homemade pastas, gnocchi and things of this nature. But I may even apply for washing dishes for a while because it's a four- to five-star restaurant - even though I'm a certified chef and I did all this formal training. You have to be able to wash dishes to keep the place running and clean whatever you need to clean; that's how it goes. I'm not ashamed of that. I'm happy to do it."



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