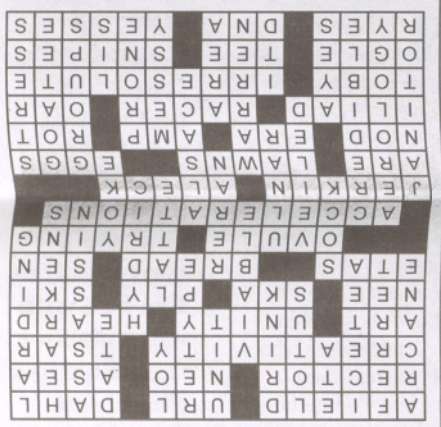
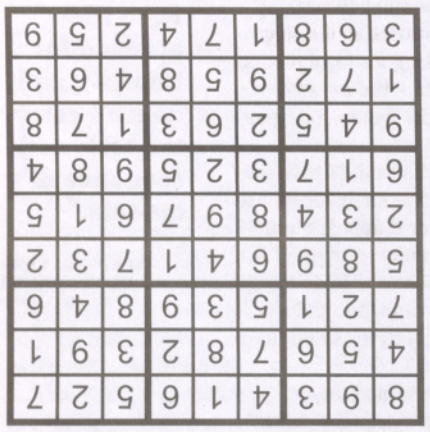
Summer Rain

by Maddy Brown-Clark

The warm summer rain
Falls gently on the land
Washing away the heat
Washing away plans
The steam ascends
To the arms of heaven
And I wander to and fro
From place to place
The warm summer sun
Dries the dewy leaves
Of trees with roots descending
Into quiet ground
That gives birth to dew drops
And the rain falls again
As autumn comes rolling in.

Answers to puzzles on page 15





VENDOR PROFILE
David King

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

David King likes to send gift boxes to his kids.

"I do travel for work," David said. "I'll send them a box full of goodies. Little trinkets. Toys, cap guns, light-up bouncy balls, candy and t-shirts. Gift certificates to one of their favorite places they like going to: Lids. It's a hat store. I don't get it, but they like the straight (hat bill). Everybody wants to be a little gangster."

Until recently, David lived and worked in eastern Texas, site of the United States' second-largest oil field outside of Alaska. One of his jobs was running heavy equipment to build road base for big oil rigs.

"I can knock down piles; I can build square pads; I can dig holes; I can fill holes," he said. "I use an excavator, a bulldozer or a loader. It's good, fun stuff. It's a lot like landscaping. Once you're done with a job, there's a visible difference. Working with machinery is a fun thing to do.

"I come from a slave-driving situation where it's 110 degrees in August. If you don't get out there and put out, you can go home."

Lower oil prices have hit the area's economy hard.

"If the oil fields are bust, there's a lot of desperation," he said.

In June, David and his girlfriend traveled to Seattle, based on the promise of a demolition job.

"My friend from childhood had secured me a spot," he said, "and I actually talked to the boss on the phone. Everything was looking good. When we got there, (my friend) had relapsed. So he was fired and evicted by his landlord and boss – right as we showed up there."

He and his girlfriend went to Olympia, Wash., to stay with some friends. There he made the decision to sober up.

David said he has made good decisions lately. "Sobriety's been the main one. Off the hard drugs."

He and his girlfriend are newly homeless and began selling Street Roots shortly after arriving in early August. They often sell between Starbucks and McDonalds at Northeast Weidler Street and Grand Avenue.

"I met Mike and Regina, a couple of vendors, and they were real nice," David said. "They shared their doorway with us the first night we were here and offered advice. There are good people on the streets."

Working at Street Roots and for a day labor center in Portland is fine for the short term, but David hopes to find a full-time construction job in the long term. He lost his driver's license in Olympia and is working to get a new one from Texas so he can apply for a new job.

"I have to raise enough money to go to the Texas website and reorder my license," David said. "So then, with my skills set (I can work as) a heavy equipment operator. I just need 20 minutes and I can go through a construction site and run everything for them. Show them: 'Look, I can do all this.'"

David, who works to remain positive, reminisced about his good childhood.

"I go back to all the cool things I had done for me as a kid: camping experiences; going to (University of Texas) games at Darrell K. Royal Memorial Stadium in Austin; going on bike rides and stuff. Compare that to the way I've been raising my children, it's nowhere close. Other people are stepping up into their lives and doing things for them."

He and his children have stayed with his parents. Now his children are living with their mother.

David stays in touch with his parents by phone once a week, and he is grateful for all of their help. Everything is working out – that's what I'd like to tell them. And I do tell them that."

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