

Better days for come what may

by Kenneth T. Nickell

The bitter cold is wasting no time in separating comfortable from crucial. I've walked these rainy roads. Struggled these streets wading along winter's strong with you before. No more. I have given all that strength to those to follow and need to seek out hearts less hollow. Smile when thinking on our past. As I recall we had a blast. Sadly dear the good won't last. I've removed myself, resumed myself, renewed myself. Preserving only a fraction of what you kind ones see. My hopes for us may never be. I'll the need to save the one-tenth four me. Peace and bliss have arms and lips. I'll allow that they may hold or kiss. Doubt and fear and cast aside. Faith and hopes with children's eyes. Widened and peering tearful, waiting for the next surprise.

Answers to Page 15 Puzzles

D O R Y R E N D S S E E K
 A B E T E R O D E E L T S
 L O T H P I N A C O L A D A
 C H I G O E S N I T W I T
 R I S E T S A R S
 A S W E L L S A U T E R N E
 F L Y A S T E R N R E E D
 O O P S I R K T H R U
 O D O R A R D O U R C O T
 L I C E N S E E K E T T L E
 C O O M B U V E A
 M E D I C I S P E N C E R
 A L L F I R E D U P R E N O
 A S I F U R I N E A V A N H
 M I S O C O H O S G E L T

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

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

VENDOR PROFILE Peter Polzer

BY LEONORA KO
STAFF WRITER

Peter Polzer is a people person with a sure sense of salesmanship that is helping him toward a better future. His years as a furniture salesman make selling Street Roots a natural fit. "The main tool to sell Street Roots, in my opinion, is to be genuinely enthusiastic," Peter said. "I look at my job as spreading good cheer, as corny as that may sound. "The other thing I do is: I ask for the sale all the time. But it has to be super concise. You only have a few seconds, and there's a lot you can talk about." Peter described his process of selling the paper to people walking by on the street. "My first month and a half, I was trying to figure out what to say - and I don't think there's any right or wrong answer; it's just something that evolves. I'll say, 'Good morning, sir, do you feel like helping the homeless today and getting yourself a great paper at the same time? Got a brand new Street Roots, only a dollar.'"

Peter said strangers have literally stopped in their tracks when they realized what he was saying. "I think a lot of vendors, who are starting like me, have this assumption that everybody knows what Street Roots is, right? But they don't. There a lot of people that have no idea what you're doing. You're standing there with a pile of papers." Peter adds, "When I ask for the sale, I'm not this jerk bothering people. I don't think I've ever come across that way to people. I'm very careful not to." He said his manners come from his parents. "I was brought up with good parents. I

was very fortunate. My dad was from Austria and my mom was from Germany, and they came here in the '50s. They were really hard-working, decent people, you know? Brought me up to be a please-and-thank-you type of person. My dad was a project manager for a shopping center developer, and my mom was a housewife for the most part, but she was a seamstress by trade."

Things went downhill when Peter started drinking. When he hit rock bottom a year ago, a friend helped him to detox.

Since then, Peter has been clean and sober through his determination and a supportive community. The results have been a world of change.

"I started going to (Alcoholics Anonymous) from the get-go. Got a sponsor, worked the steps," he said.

Peter qualified for a "dry" shelter at Bud Clark

Commons, a building run by the housing agency Home Forward.

"It's a clean and sober environment that provides men with the opportunity to get their lives together," Peter said.

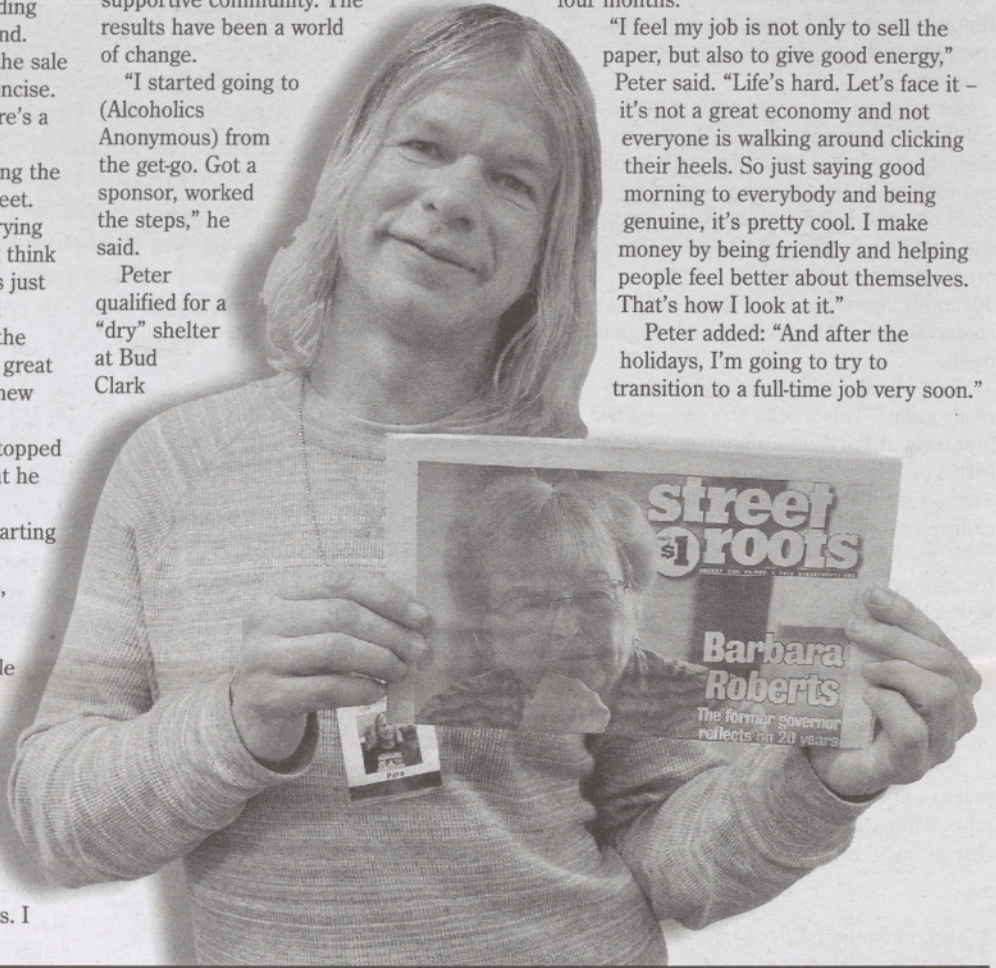
Through his stay at the men's shelter, he connected with Central City Concern, a nonprofit serving the homeless.

"I got hooked up with a Shelter Plus Care voucher through CCC, which put me into an apartment program," he said. "I'm responsible for a third (of the rent) based on how much I make. It's really cool. I've got my own place right now."

Peter has been selling Street Roots for four months.

"I feel my job is not only to sell the paper, but also to give good energy," Peter said. "Life's hard. Let's face it - it's not a great economy and not everyone is walking around clicking their heels. So just saying good morning to everybody and being genuine, it's pretty cool. I make money by being friendly and helping people feel better about themselves. That's how I look at it."

Peter added: "And after the holidays, I'm going to try to transition to a full-time job very soon."



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The GIFT of GIVING

street roots

Street Roots vendor zine, "The Gift of Giving" is on sale now from your friendly neighborhood vendor. Pick one up for the holidays while supplies last!