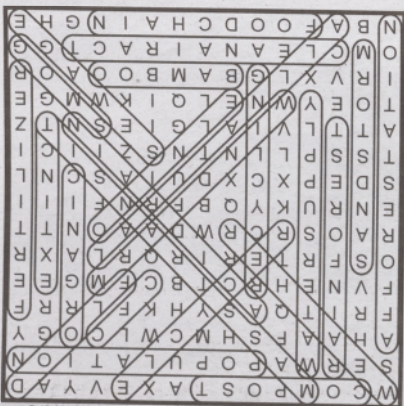
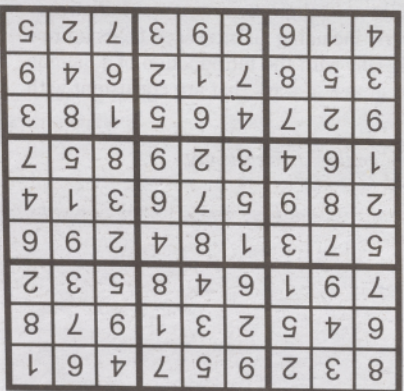
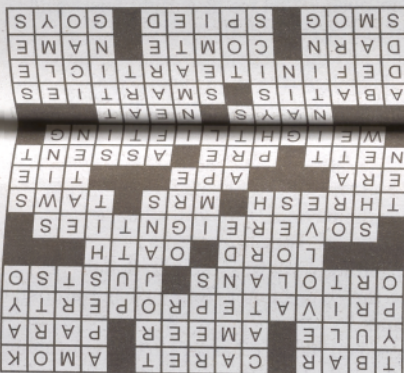


Drinking Tea

by Ricky Duane Wagner

The first cup is so
 Good down my throat
 The second cup breaks
 My state of stillness.
 The third cup goes
 Deep until my soul
 To search for the
 Wisdom and knowledge
 That is so valuable on
 The Streets.
 The fourth cup makes me
 Sweat
 All of the injustice of
 Homelessness vaporizes
 Through my skin and pores.
 The fifth cup of tea
 Lessens the weight
 Of my flesh and bone.
 The sixth cup of tea
 Brings me to encounters
 With the immortals.
 As I finish my
 Sixth cup of tea I can
 Feel the wind blow through
 My body and soul.

Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



VENDOR PROFILE Flash

BY MEGHANN VAN PELT
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Flash, a new Street Roots vendor, will enthusiastically engage you in a conversation about language, philosophy, his favorite authors and a host of other subjects before you finish your first gulp of coffee.

Flash's ambition and curiosity are obvious as he talks about the journey from his small hometown of Forest, Va. out to Bend a few years back.

"I knew that I was bigger than the place I happened to be from," Flash said about his decision to leave home.

"I've always been attracted to the individuality of the Pacific Northwest ... there's always been that intuition of 'I need to move here.'"

One Greyhound ticket later, Flash arrived in Bend where he found a host of jobs, from repairing pallets on a conveyor line and working in a beer factory to raking leaves.

"I never worry about the payoff, the payoff will come," Flash said with a smile as he talked about his variety of work experiences.

This philosophy has held true many times for him.

One notable instance was making money from dumpster diving for cans in a back alley behind a restaurant in Bend.

After collecting cans for some time, Flash was offered a dish washing position by the restaurant's head chef and an opportunity to have

a sustainable income, which he gladly accepted.

Much like his name indicates, Flash is always on the go.

He sought out Portland to expand his job and educational opportunities.

"I'm always asking, 'What can you do now to better yourself?'"

For Flash, this has taken on many forms. He has audited language classes to learn German and basic Gaelic and is currently in pursuit of a third language while continuing to expand his education.

Flash's interest in language was particularly evident in our conversation.

"Language dictates how literally you interpret the world and how imaginatively you interpret the world," he said.

Flash sees the world as an opportunity to invest in his education whenever possible.

When not writing or selling Street Roots, Flash is reading works from Nobel physicist Richard Feynman to favorite authors such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

This adventurer of both land and mind said he is trying to stay put in Portland for a while, though the lure of seeing more of the world is tempting.

"I think Portland, for me, is a great base to do great stuff out of."

I'm going to do the best that I can here but there's a big world out there. There is nothing to compare reading about something to doing something."

Flash can be found selling Street Roots at Southwest 6th Avenue and Taylor Street in downtown Portland.

