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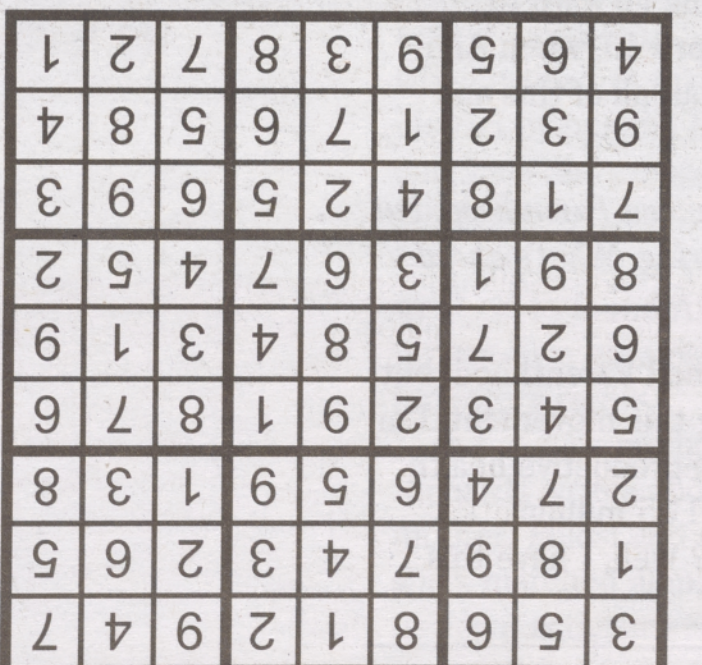
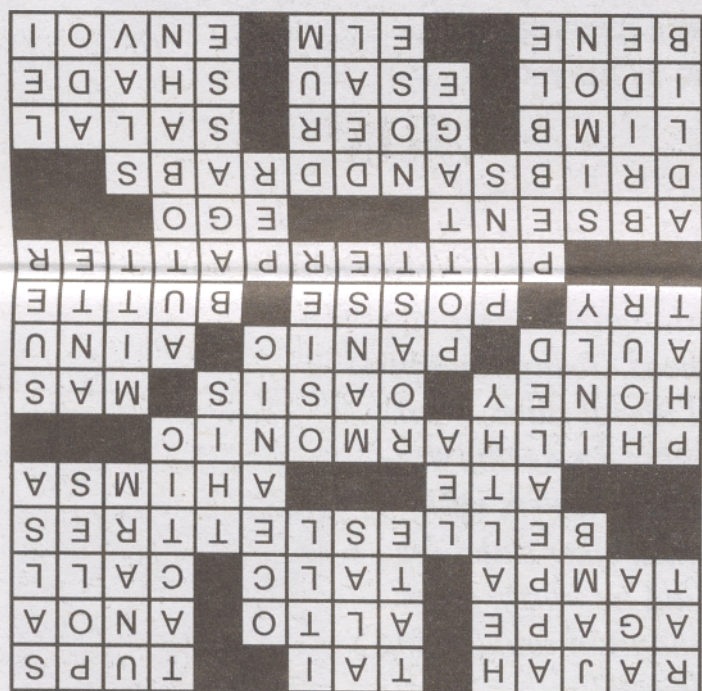
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Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



VENDOR PROFILE

Ron Sanford

BY CLAIRE RISCHIOTTO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On a Thursday morning, Ron Sanford begins his shift as a Street Roots vendor with a smile and a stack of newspapers. For a chilly, wintry Portland day, Ron is sensibly dressed in a plaid jacket, light-wash jeans and a cherry red and white Street Roots knit hat. Through his gravelly rock 'n' roll almost Dustin Hoffman-like voice, Ron reveals his journey from struggling with addiction as a homeless street drummer to a housed Street Roots vendor and writer.

Ron, 50, says he's grateful for the chance to start a new occupation with Street Roots after he quit drumming: "I'd always liked reading and writing as a kid - and journalism. And I never thought I really had the opportunity to get into that field."

For the past seven years, Ron has been a Street Roots vendor and writer, and in this time, he has "grown a lot," from being sober for six years to finding housing a few years ago.

Entering the journalism field wasn't what the Las Vegas native envisioned for his career.

He wanted to be a drummer. But traumatic childhood injuries turned into chronic daily pain in his neck and wrist, and playing the drums intensified his pain. To soothe his aching pains, Ron medicated with alcohol. Homeless and with no insurance, Ron moved to Oregon, seeking a solution for his health care. Here he received health insurance to treat his pain and alcoholism.

And after moving to Portland, he continued to play drums on the street. But he reached a breaking point. Then he heard about Street Roots from a vendor. Street Roots allowed Ron to work without

putting stress on his
body. He says it
just requires
being yourself
and being
friendly to



customers.

Ron is proud to say he has not only sold papers as a vendor, but he has also had his work published in *Street Roots*.

"I write poetry," he said. "I've been published here a lot. I'm honored to say that. (I've) had dozens of poems published through here."

Another of Ron's accomplishments has been finding housing after experiencing homelessness for more than 10 years. Once again, a Street Roots vendor directed Ron to the proper resources, this time for an apartment. After three years on Home Forward's waitlist, he was able to move into an apartment. While Ron has more on his personal goal list, he's grateful for his apartment, working at Street Roots and sobriety.

Overall, Ron explains that second chances are important to the community because when addicts recover, not only does the person benefit, but it betters society as a whole.

"You always have a second chance. As long as God gives you another day, there's still hope," he said. "If you're still alive, there's hope. Begin to make choices that will better your life and others. It's a win-win when we're all happy. When people recover, there's less crime and arguments and fighting and I think drugs. ...

They're not the source of all evil – drugs and alcohol – but they do cause a lot of problems. I'm glad to be clean and sober."

Sheeptoast

by Elizabeth Considine

