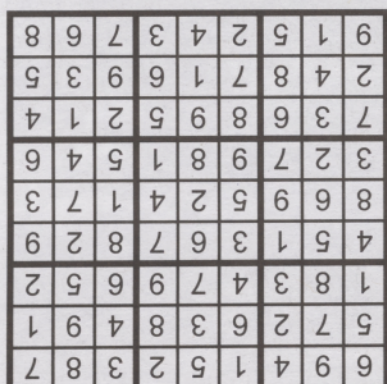
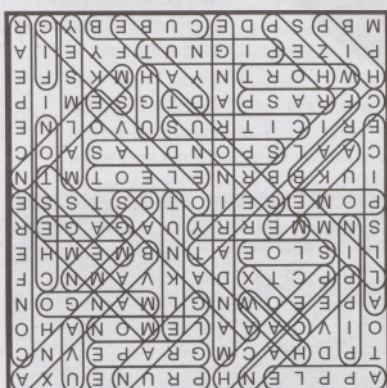


## The Desert

by Daniel Cox

Desolate winds howl throughout obsolete deserts, moving grains of sand on the breeze of time. Gusts of hot air move across the arid landscapes. The sun is hot, but it's a dry heat. Still you sweat as the day grows long.

### Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



## VENDOR PROFILE

D.J.

BY LEONORA KO  
STAFF WRITER

When D.J. sat down for this interview, he recognized the routine.

"I've been a reporter," D.J. said. "I was a newspaper writer back in New Jersey for a small weekly. Circulation was 50,000. I was editor, reporter, everything."

"The pay was terrible, but the experience was amazing. Interviewed the mayor, the police chief, the fire chief. Everybody. It was a very fun job. Got to write with people that I graduated from school with. My family got to read my articles, see my name and hear what I had to say."

D.J. grew up in Kearny, N.J., just outside of New York City. His mother was a homemaker and his father, a computer programmer.

Writing has long been D.J.'s passion.

"I loved the written word," he said. "My favorite author was Tolkien. I read the classics — Shakespeare, studied some of the romantic poets, Keats, Wordsworth and Yeats."

D.J. graduated

with a bachelor's degree in English, but after moving to Florida, he ended up working for A.G. Edwards, a financial securities company.

"I was a financial assistant. A wire operator. Back about 10 years ago, we used to send in the buys and sells from the stock brokers to the main office."

A failed relationship, depression and drugs knocked D.J. off course. At some point, D.J. decided to join Occupy Wall Street in New York City. He then moved on to Occupy Chicago, and when that

ended, he traded his New York City bus ticket for one to Portland.

Without family in the Portland area, D.J. became homeless.

He said he has had writer's block for some time but wondered if he might write about the experience of being homeless.

"I've learned I can exist on the street," he said. "I never thought I could. I was always book smart, but I was never street smart. I really would like to write about the experience of living on the street. How it is. Give a sense of it."

When asked what he felt was important to say, he said quietly: "I'm a person. I'm not somebody that needs to be thrown away." Then in a stronger voice: "I'm not a bad person. A lot of these people on the street are not that either. They're people. People just like everybody else."

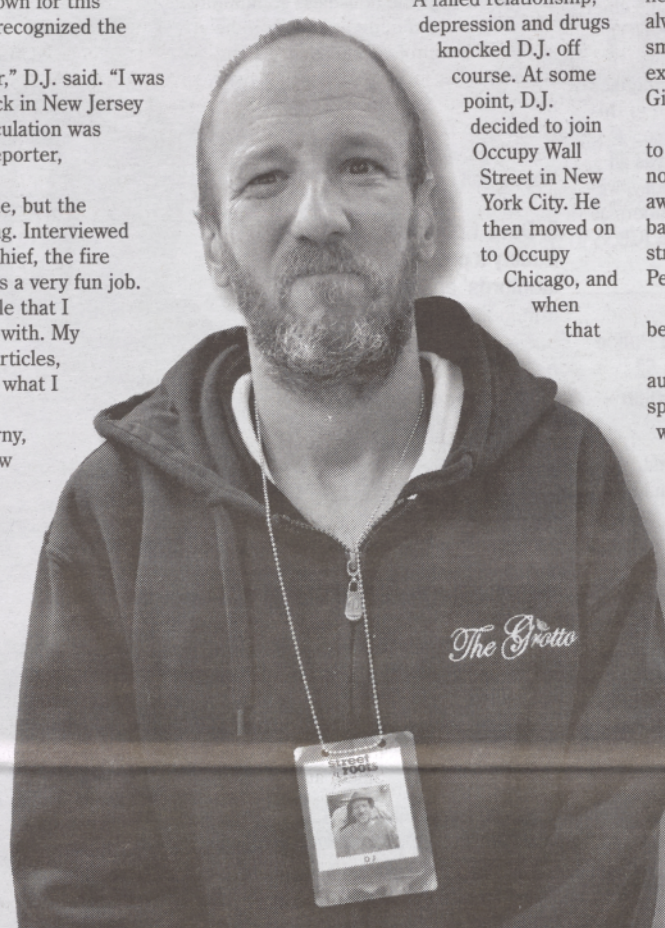
D.J. said working with Street Roots had benefits.

"Like today they have that amazing author, Chris Hedges. He gave a short speech. I was impressed that Street Roots was involved with someone like that and that he would come in and talk to people. I said 'hi.'"

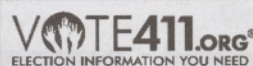
"My dream would be to get back into writing," D.J. mused. "Have a career. Have a family. Have a place where I pay rent and I don't have to worry somebody's going to pull it from under me. Being stable."

D.J. is taking steps toward that dream by selling the Street Roots newspaper and volunteering at Sisters of the Road café.

"I'm grateful that Street Roots gives people a voice — like this vendor profile. I'm able to get some thoughts and words out there."



### NOVEMBER 6, 2018 GENERAL ELECTION



#### Who and What Will You Vote For?

Check out [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) for nonpartisan information on all the candidates and ballot measures that will appear on your ballot.

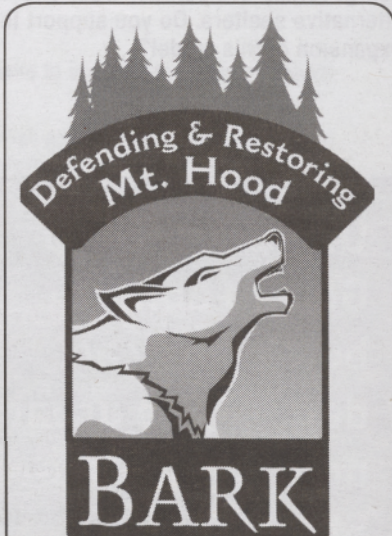
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