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VENDOR PROFILE

Roger Cavett

BY HELEN HILL
STAFF WRITER

In Roger Cavett's initial vendor profile, nearly a decade ago, the first sentence of that interview was "Roger is a people person."

After a decade, Roger is still a people person through and through.

"I like so many people. Half my customers are repeat customers. I'd like to thank all my customers for seeing me through the years," he said. "When you're on a fixed income, that money comes in handy."

Roger leads a fully engaged and busy life. In addition to being a great vendor, he is an avid reader and is taking classes toward a degree in marketing. In addition, he volunteers 30 hours a year for Free Geek, a Portland company that rebuilds computers and donates them to nonprofit organizations. Roger has several computers he's working on refurbishing, thanks to the skills he's learned at Free Geek.

"My goal is to be gainfully employed," he said.

Roger also believes in paying it forward.

"When I make extra money and if I see someone needs money on the street, I give it to them," he said. "Some people call it karma. I don't believe in karma; I believe in God. If you are a good person, it will come back to you."

I asked Roger what has changed for him in the past 10 years.

"I've learned a lot," he said.

"I've learned to take care of myself better. I'm not a spring chicken, but I'm in good shape. You have to be out there because you can meet some

hard people."

He eats garlic every day, as well as organic broccoli and spinach. He also works out when he can.

"I want to be like Jack LaLanne," he said with a laugh. "He was in shape until the day he died."

Roger was born in Wisconsin. His mother was from a Tennessee farm, and she was a wonderful cook, Roger said.

"She could cook anything," he said.

He remembers jam cakes, fried chicken, sweet potato pies and chitlins for the holidays. Other memories of his childhood are not as sweet.

"When I was in elementary school, my school was three blocks away. I was walking to school one morning and it was below zero and my eyes were tearing up, and the tears turned to ice right on my face. At that young age, I remember thinking, if I ever get out of here, I will never come

back."

The family eventually moved to California, where Roger remembers his first Christmas without snow. Later, he raised a family, and now he has seven grandchildren. Through the course of his full life, he's had many jobs, including working for three airlines and at four- and five-star hotels. He's worked for California Polytechnic State University, or Cal Poly, and in City Hall here in Portland when Vera Katz was mayor.

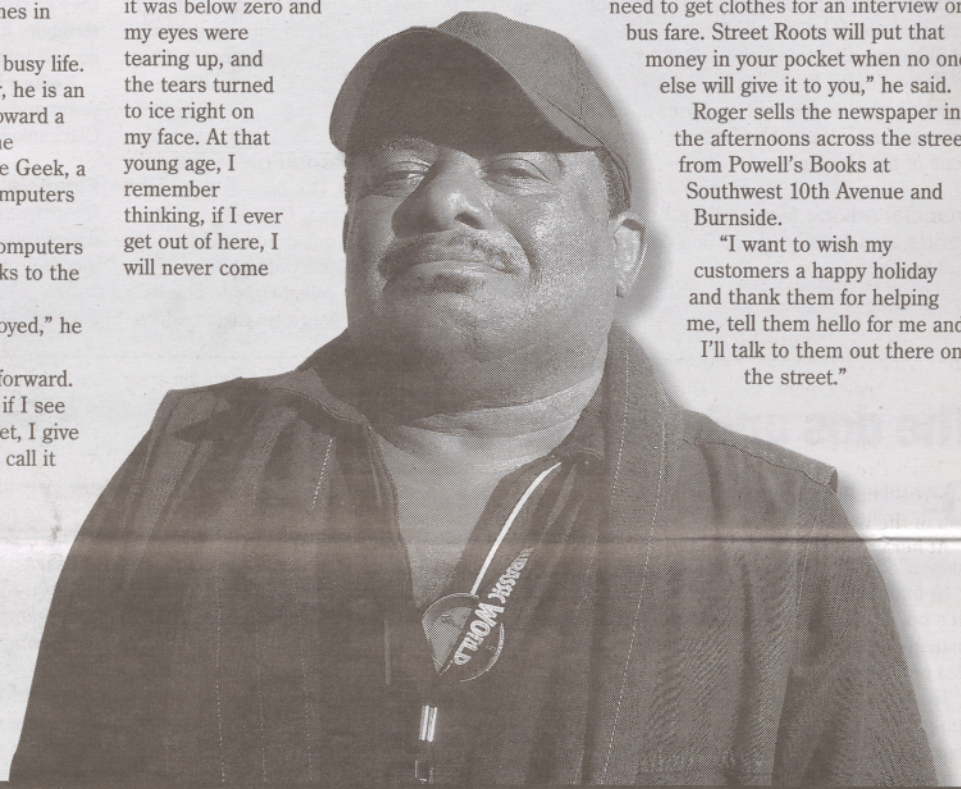
"I talked to Mayor Katz back in the day," he recalled.

After all these years, Roger continues to praise the work of Street Roots.

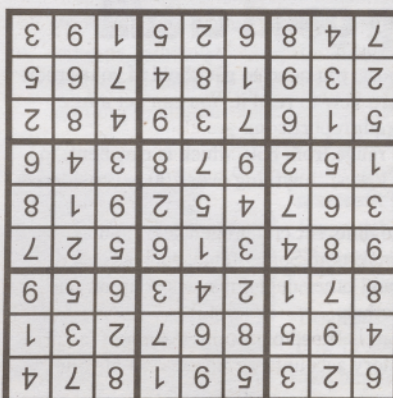
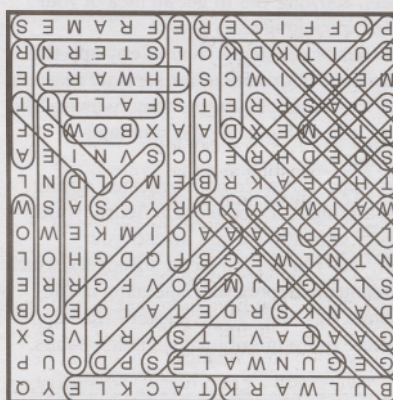
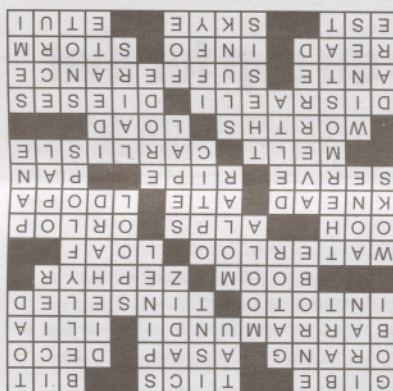
"Street Roots gives you a leg up. Say you are in between jobs, say you are looking for a job, you don't have money, maybe you need to get clothes for an interview or bus fare. Street Roots will put that money in your pocket when no one else will give it to you," he said.

Roger sells the newspaper in the afternoons across the street from Powell's Books at Southwest 10th Avenue and Burnside.

"I want to wish my customers a happy holiday and thank them for helping me, tell them hello for me and I'll talk to them out there on the street."



Answers to Page 15 Puzzles

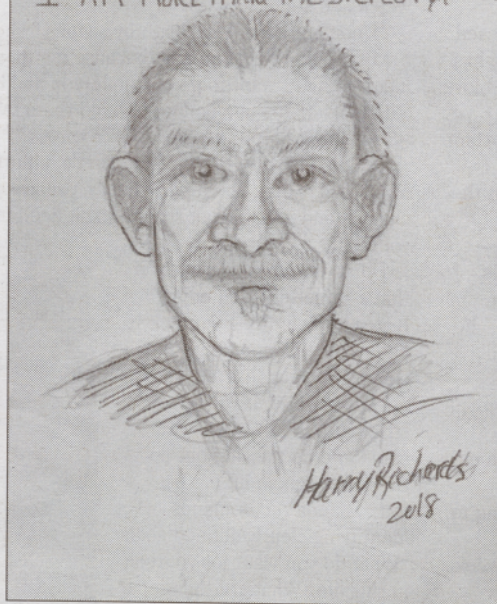


Street Roots 2018 Holiday zine "I Am"

Support our vendors and their creativity this holiday season by purchasing our annual zine, "I Am."

Each zine contains poetry, short stories and art by Street Roots vendors. Pick up your special edition for just \$4 starting Thursday, Nov. 23.

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