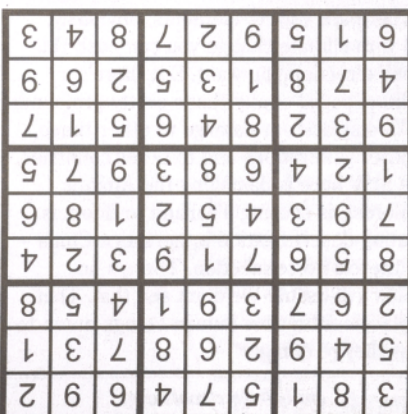
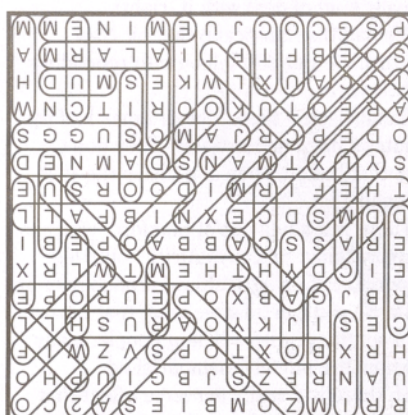
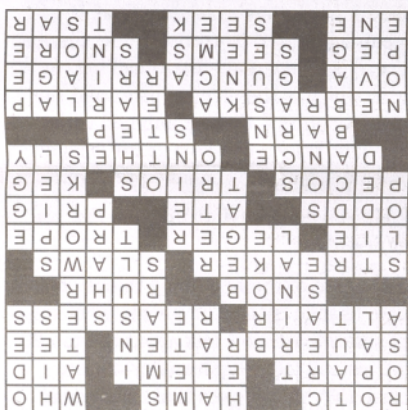


Standing in Harm's Way

by Jaison Kirk

Bouncing off the walls.
Can't sit in my seat.
My blood is boiling
On my way out the door
before my feet hit the floor
Moving ahead, no looking back
Keeping clean, picking up slack.
Waiting on a salty bunch
Seems like they went to lunch
Calling someone out,
Voice raising to a shout
Waiting for warm arms
Just wasting my charms
Adding to the list of harms
Standing in harm's way
Hoping I will be okay
Left with nothing to say
Wake up to a new day
At the end I'll pray
"Have a nice day."

Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



VENDOR PROFILE William Weeks

BY HELEN HILL
STAFF WRITER

"This interview is hard for me," William began, "because I don't think I'm anyone special. It's hard for me to talk about myself."

William Weeks grew up in Roseburg in Southern Oregon. He joined the Navy at age 18 and was shipped off to the Indian Ocean for duty. He was a mess cook on a supply ship. After three years, he returned to Roseburg and lived on the streets.

Later, he worked in the orchards at Harry and David, first as an orchard worker, then as a harvest supervisor. He worked there for eight years while living in a van.

"I am very high functional, but I just feel like I work too hard for my money to give it to someone for rent," he said.

William now stays in a shelter on North Lombard.

"I'm not really a shelter type of person," he said. "I can't be sure I am safe in a shelter downtown, but I feel safe at this shelter. Out on the street, I can find a place where there is solitude. I know when I fall asleep, I won't have things available for people to help themselves to; they would have to wake me up first. It's not like that in shelter. You have a certain place where you

put stuff, and it's not safe."

William said he feels as though he's living between two worlds.

"I don't have a lot of people to talk to because the people inside, once they find out I'm on the streets, they don't want to talk to me, and the people on the street, I have good friends, but sometimes they don't know they should trust me because I don't drink or do drugs. It's always been like that for me."

William has a passion, and that is to get people who aren't on the streets to understand that the people on the streets aren't necessarily who they think they are.

"I have seen a lot of people talk lately about our local homeless," he said. "Some have understanding, but many seem to only want to judge them. There are as many reasons why a person might be homeless as there are homeless. I do agree that there are a lot of undesirable homeless, as there are undesirables in every walk of life. But to blanket judge them is a huge misconception. Not all spend every penny on alcohol or

drugs. So please, can we have a real conversation without so many biases?"

William's desire is to get a conversation going.

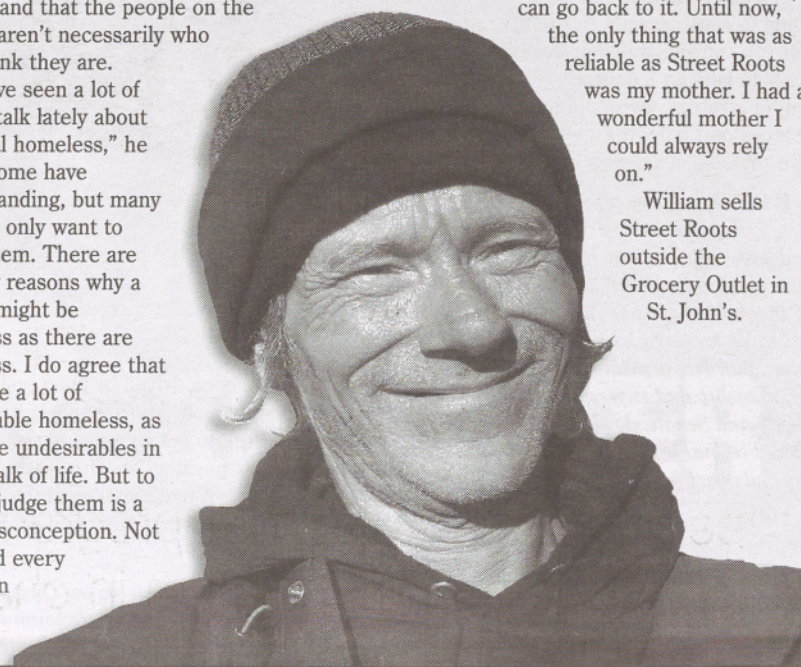
"We are all trying. We are struggling to do the best we can. The most important thing for me is for people to realize I am honest and trustworthy," he said.

"Street Roots is the very first job that I've ever had that I don't see an ending to, if I don't want," he said. "I know that income will always be there no matter what. If I

miss a couple weeks or get sick, I can go back to it. Until now,

the only thing that was as reliable as Street Roots was my mother. I had a wonderful mother I could always rely on."

William sells Street Roots outside the Grocery Outlet in St. John's.



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