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## Fun in Downtown Vallejo - A Little Blob of Sunshine etc. ...by Marc Garman

A Little Blob of Sunshine etc.

from the Leader of the Angry Mob that Took over Vallejo  
A fun night in Downtown?

By Marc Garman  
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I had a fun evening in downtown Vallejo last night. Now, don't accuse Yours Truly of suddenly turning into some sorta Pollyanna Lemon Drop or anything. I'm still as cynical and dour as ever. And no, I haven't been drinking.

But I have to admit it. Downtown Vallejo was pretty swingin' Saturday night. I can't believe I just said that, but seeing folks packed into the opening of Rar Farmer's Koham Press bookstore at 628 Marin Street for a celebration followed by a cozy and quirky Open Mic jaunt at the Artist's Hub in the Oddfellows building around the corner was a really fun evening and a kinda buzz that's been absent until recently. It's those damn Artists, Bohemiac types and generally Weirdos. Yup.

Now Old Timey Vallejoans, I know what some of you are thinking:

We need industry dammit. Welding and riveting. Building things and hitting diesel things with hammers and whatnot. Not these self important imported artsy Freakballs.

But let us not underestimate the power of Freakballs as a catalyst for change. I've seen it happen before. Take Hayes Valley, my old San Francisco neighborhood. Now, if you've been there recently, you might have noticed that the place is too cool for it's own damn good. Pricey and Precious. So much so, that I feel my Mastercard quivering in fear when I walk past the swanky boutiques that now populate the old hood. Eight Bucks for a piece of chocolate to eat while looking swell in your \$300 jeans is just too friggin' much. But it didn't used to be that way. I remember the gritty Hayes Valley crawling with prostitutes and crime when I kinda landed there in '93. A few years later I opened a retail store and lived illegally in the back room to save expenses getting it started. Other small business owners struggled to make a go of it. And artists too. Slowly things started to change and business got steady, and then got good.

Now, I'm not saying that downtown Vallejo is going to turn into Hayes Valley or Walnut Creek, or anything like that. Good. When places get so pricey and precious that they price out the people who made things groove originally, they lose the

soul and rhythm that made them special in the first place. No, we probably don't have to worry about that any time soon in V-Town. If anything we have too much soul coupled with a healthy dollop of cultural anarchy, sprinkled with political corruption and entrenched backwards thinking. But from chaos, beautiful disorder can spring forth and give rise to unexpected things. It's OK to smack me now. Not going all happy here. I'm also still down with riveting, and diesel things and whatnot as long as they are in the right places. But what's happening downtown also feels like the right thing in the right place at the right time. We have a small independent bookstore, galleries springing up like weeds, artist lofts, creatives trickling in from the mid west and right coast as well as SF. And don't forget the Steam Punks. The Empress is still pushing hard and soon there will be a BREWPUB on the waterfront. And, yes. It could all go horribly wrong and tumbleweeds could reign supreme again. But only if you sit on your ASS and stare at the jumbo TV because you're afraid that downtown Vallejo is icky. This is the sorta entrenched backwards provincial thinking I'm urging YOU (you know who you are) to avoid. There were 100+ people in downtown Vallejo chatting and laughing and supporting the change. It felt good. Don't underestimate the power of mob critical mass.

Anyhow, I think that's my little Blob of Sunshine for now. Here are a few photos of the festivities and a schedule of upcoming events at the Artist's Hub! Do check it out.

And I now return to my regularly scheduled activities, and will try to find someone to piss off.

See the schedule of Upcoming Events at the Artist's Hub in Downtown Vallejo [HERE](#)

A few snappies: