



Vallejo Main Street Newsletter

JANUARY - MARCH 2015
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Welcome from VMS President

Thank you for reading the first issue of the Vallejo Main Street newsletter! Our newsletter marks the beginning of a new year for Vallejo Main Street and VMS will be working on several fronts in 2015.

We have a small but dedicated board working hard for the betterment of Downtown Vallejo. At a recent VMS meeting we held a fundraising brainstorming session. In attendance was former founding VMS board member, Tom Bartee, who now sits on the Central Core Restoration Corporation board (CCRC). Tom is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to VMS activi-

ties and goal setting. A special thanks to him for helping us and sharing his ideas.

Topics discussed at the session included:

- Developing and implementing a feasible strategic plan
- Adding members to the Board with specific skillsets such as fundraising and volunteer coordinating
- Working with Downtown merchants to create their own voice
- Supporting venues and co-sponsoring events such as the Haunting of the Downtown and the Children's Easter Egg Hunt and

Scavenger Hunt.

Vallejo Main Street is also in support of the City bringing gigabits of Bandwidth speed to the Downtown. I serve on the Fiber Optic Advisory Team and believe that is will be a "game changer" or the DT and the community of Vallejo. Stay tuned for more news flashes about this City-supported project.

For updates on upcoming events and information and for opportunities to volunteer with VMS, visit www.vallejomainstreet.org. To contribute to the newsletter email ggoins@scrserv.com.

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Antique Shop Holds More than Vintage Treasure



Anyone who has spent time in the Downtown Vallejo has most likely run into Frederick Charles Menard (Fred), proprietor of Indian Alley Antiques. In addition to running his antique shop at 412 Georgia Street, Fred is involved with many downtown groups and happenings.

Fred spearheaded the Light-Up Vallejo project, which includes his Wine Walk fundraising to purchase lights for the trees on Georgia Street, he currently serves on the Vallejo Main Street board and is a member of the Downtown Arts and Entertainment Committee.

Before coming to Vallejo in 2003, Fred worked tirelessly as an activist in support of gay and lesbian rights. Inspired by former San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, in the early 1970's, Fred moved to Oregon and began working for the Phoenix Rising Foundation, an advocacy group that provides support and resources to the LGBT community.

nized workshops, published the newsletter, solicited donations, and coordinated the volunteer program.

In 1984, he created and managed the foundation's thrift store, Out of the Closet, and in 1987 the thrift store received the "Best Coming Out Award from Oregon Magazine.

Early in his career he was befriended by Patsy Swayze, mother of the late actor Patrick Swayze, who encouraged him to follow his passions.

At the foundation, Fred organizes Over the years, Fred has

taken part in many activities that support the LGBT community including: the Gay and Lesbian Rights March on Washington D.C. in 1984 and again in 1993; founded the Gay & Lesbian support group Gay Lesbian Unity (G.L.U.), contributed articles to the *Oregon Gay and Lesbian News*, and served on the Board of Directors for the Cascade Aids Project.

In addition to his LGBT advocacy, Fred also has an interest in the performing arts. Early in his career he was befriended by Patsy Swayze, mother of the late actor Patrick Swayze, who encouraged him to follow his passions.. Which, in part, led him to the theater of performing arts and later cast in several productions including *My Fair Lady*, and *The Music Man*. Fred still keeps a letter written to him from the

late Patsy Swayze, which can be found framed and hanging in his shop.

Today, Fred calls Vallejo his home. You can find him at his antique shop on Georgia Street, which boast a collection of one of a kind collectables, home furnishings, art, and vintage objects. Fred has been described by one shopper as a “Texas Cowboy and a real hoot.”

News Business: Vallejo Brews New Opportunity

We support local businesses and the owners behind the brick and mortar. Each Issue VMS will spotlight a new business that has opened its doors in the downtown area.

Enjoy our latest Q&A with co-founders Kent Fortner and Ryan Gibbons Mare Island Brewing Co.



Why did you choose to open a brewery in Vallejo?

RG: With Vallejo's rich history, it was incredible to us that there wasn't a local pub/beer brand to celebrate its spirit. With Kent and his family already living on Mare Island, it just made perfect sense.

You could have stopped at brewing and selling beer. When and why did you decide to open a pub-like restaurant?

KF: We had a hunch that there was a whole population of folks that, like us, were dying for craft and artisan food and wine. The taproom was always a big part of our plans. We think our beer and the Mare Island Brewing Co. brand has room to grow throughout the bay area and even beyond, but we always felt like there was

a great little cadre of folks here in our city on the water that would come tip a pint if we built a bar and pulled up some seats up to it.

RG: Echoing Kent's response, having the background in restaurant experience, we also felt it was also the best way to showcase our brand while enjoying the view across the strait of Mare Island.

How did you both meet? Who/when did you decide to go into business together?

KF: We met on a crushpad almost a decade ago up in Napa. I had the Mare Island Brewing Co. idea and plan put together about six years ago, but I think it's been two years since Ryan and I officially sat down and realized that he had the brewing knowledge (and the youth!) to help make that MIBC plan a reality.

What is your favorite part about be-



ing a store owner?

RG: I really enjoy being a part of this new wave of change that is bringing back the Vallejo spirit. There is such a strong sense of community here so being the local pub where we see everyone interacting over a tasty local pint all the way from local politicians to local business owners, long time residents and recently new homeowners in Vallejo is really great to be a part of and witness.

What do you love most about Vallejo and Downtown Vallejo in particular?

KF: It's a friendly, artistic population. The historical architecture around town is fantastic. Heck, the history in general is inspiring.

RG: Definitely the art community as well as the strong sense of community that is infectious.

What makes you business special?

KF: Tasty beer.

RG: ...Being able to positively be a reason the community is excited to say the words 'Mare Island' again!

Anything else you would like to add?

KF: I'd like to thank my grandfathers--both were Kansas wheat farmers--for instilling in me a love for agriculture and grains. That said, one was a Baptist teetotaler, and the other a Methodist teetotaler, so they both are likely rolling over in their graves.

RG: I've always read the motto on the sign entering Vallejo that states "The City of Opportunity." We have worked very hard towards embracing some of that potential that everyone seems to talk about that Vallejo obtains.

For further information visit:

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