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## [The Handcar Regatta: Hell Yeah, Brother](#)

September 29, 2008 – 7:43 pm

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The bottom line is that I didn't run into anyone at yesterday's [Handcar Regatta](#) who was lukewarm about the absolutely awesome craziness going on all around them. No one said, "Oh, yeah, this is OK." No one said, "I guess this is all right."

No, everyone I talked to pretty much gushed gleefully that the Handcar Regatta is the most amazingly cool thing that Santa Rosa has seen in years and years. And you know what? It's hard to argue with them.

All around Railroad Square, at any given time, some beautifully strange thing was happening, and it was often hard to decide what to watch. What about the music stage, where seven different bands hammered away on mandolins, harps, and xylophones for people dancing in bunny ears and kilts? Or the medicine man stage, where "Dr. Solar" performed cool tricks all day long? Or the enormous marching band that wandered through the crowd? Or the railroad tracks themselves, where every few minutes or so a bizarre mechanical contraption came hurtling down the tracks to wild applause?

There's a great *Bohemian* article written by Gretchen, [which you can read by clicking here](#), about the genesis of the Handcar

Regatta; pay attention especially to the part where Spring Maxfield talks about how good ideas, hard work and cooperative support get the job done where official committees and feasibility studies can't. Almost

everything great in Santa Rosa happens this way. Not only does a do-it-yourself method offer events like the Handcar Regatta an organic appeal, but if another great depression is indeed on the way, it'll be the way we'll have to do things for a while.

Ultimately, what I loved most about the Handcar Regatta was seeing so many creative and artistic people I know from different strains of our community all participating in the same event. There's been a ripple of incredible creativity going on around here for some while now. The Handcar Regatta brought all the small ripples together and turned them, for one day at least, into a tidal wave. And no one left uninspired to do it again.

**More photos below. See you next year!**























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