

SLUG MAG

EAT LOCAL



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A black and white photograph of a man riding a bicycle on a dirt trail. The man is wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark shorts, and is looking towards the camera. The trail is surrounded by tall grass and trees. The background shows a hillside with more trees. The overall scene is outdoors and appears to be a recreational activity.

SATURDAY CYCLES

**500 west 230 south
Salt Lake City, UT**

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ABOUT THE COVER: For our 10th annual Eat Local Issue, local artist **Victoria Lee** puts a *SLUG* spin on *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to create a bright, whimsical illustration that showcases the best of Utah’s culinary scene! See more of her artwork on Instagram at [@minjiyang_tattooer](#).

Christian Ledek

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Writer



From juicy street hot dogs to authentic ramen spots, Christian loves it all. His hilarious, tongue-in-cheek food reviews have kept *SLUG* in high spirits over the past year. Read his mouthwatering review of *Big South* food truck on page 10 and check out his comedy on Instagram at [@sea._led!](#)

William Hughes

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Editor



William oversees all of *SLUG*’s music and film reviews and coordinates our monthly *Localized* shows. Their writing voice, which balances cynicism with sincerity, plus their vast knowledge of coffee (see their feature on Idle Hands on page 20) and sports, makes them irreplaceable to the *SLUG* team.

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Relationships, whether personal or professional, take work, communication and understanding. This is even more true when both parties are not only partners in life, but also in the food industry. For Cori Norton and Brice Okubo, food is what initially brought them together. With careers spanning 15 and 20 years, respectively, the pair have worked in restaurants across the Salt Lake Valley and now both run independent food ventures. I sat down with them to chat about all things pie, sushi and making it work in this beautiful but sometimes grueling line of work.

Norton grew up loving food, with a family who cooked every night together. As with many of us wayward restaurant folks, she says, “I’d always loved the idea of creating, but didn’t know what I wanted to do, so ended up in food!” One of her first jobs was as a chef at *The Rose Establishment*. Norton ended up overseeing both the savory cafe dishes and sweet baking sides of the business. Over the years, she also worked at *Rye* under beloved chef **Tommy Nguyen**, *The Day Room* (where *Arlo* is now) and *Post Office Place* — where she met her now-partner Okubo.

Okubo grew up as a Food Network-obsessed, art-loving kid. He started working as a server until, he explains, “I hung around the chefs and bugged them until they’d let me learn to make sushi,” and never looked back. He has worked stints at *Mikado*, *Ginza* and *Sushi Blue*, but Okubo’s longest-standing position is under renowned Japanese chef **Takashi Gibo** at his namesake restaurant, where he’s been for 12 years. He enjoys all facets of culinary creativity, from plating and menu development to the design of the space he’s in and overseeing a team of people in a kitchen.



By Addison Austin-Lou
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Both Norton and Okubo came to their businesses for similar reasons. While at *The Day Room*, Norton began experimenting with pies under the name “Pie Party,” selling to friends and family via Instagram. When the restaurant closed, she dove head first into the pie business. She started at the *Downtown Farmers Market*, refining her recipes and getting a feel for the interest in her product. After five years she had a decision to make: stay at the market or expand into her own brick-and-



Baker Cori Norton and her husband, sushi chef Brice Okubo, blend their love for food with their love for one another.

mortar shop. She purchased a property in April 2024 and officially opened operations in October of the same year. She produces joyous creations such as Passionfruit Pie and Carrot Cake Pie — yes, it actually has bits of carrot cake in it — alongside some delectable savory options. “A pie is a great vessel for experimenting with new ideas and flavors,” she says, and this medium has allowed her to keep creating in a way that is authentic to her.

Okubo’s pop-up *Sunakku*, which means “snack,” also began as a way for him to spread his creative wings and do things he wasn’t able to day-to-day behind the sushi bar. He had already been catering private parties on the side, so the natural progression was an event with even more flexibility and culinary play. Now, in collaboration with his mentor Takashi Gibo and chef **Brendan Kawakami** of *Post Office Place*, Okubo produces weekly omakase events. These are set menus with 12-15 courses and optional wine pairings. One of Okubo’s favorite signature bites is tempura lemon with scallop tartare.

Now, if this sounds like a lot to juggle, it is. Despite this, Norton says, “We are really intentional about having time together. Also, we’re doing something that we love, so it all folds in seamlessly.” They support each other in and out of the kitchen, and are always brainstorming ideas together. Norton describes Okubo as one of her greatest mentors, and the person she trusts most with business decisions. What more could you ask for in a partnership of food and life?

To stay up to date with *Sunakku*’s events, check out their Instagram @*sunakku_slc* or website *popslc.com/omakase*. Keep an eye on *Pie Party*’s exciting new flavors on Instagram at @*piepartybakery* and order from their website *piepartytime.com*.



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BIG SOUTH WILL BLESS SOUTH YOUR SALT LAKE MOUTH

Big South

3359 S Main St, South Salt Lake
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By Christian Ledek • sea.ledek@gmail.com

Photos by Talyn Bezhad

There's a reason why food truck round-ups became a thing and continue to be a thing: variety. When you're looking for a delicious meal, sometimes you don't want to confine yourself to one type of specific cuisine. However, if you're in South Salt Lake and happen to see a food truck that has a line formed before the truck has opened, on a rainy and stormy weekday no less, you should probably get in that line because odds are it's *Big South*.

This home kitchen on the move is proving that soul food doesn't need a permanent address — just four wheels and massive amounts of flavor. The menu includes options that are hearty, indulgent, audacious and oh, so vivacious. Maybe your schedule will work out so that you go on a FFF (Fish Fry Friday). Perhaps you'll be able to snag Wings and Oxtails before they sell out. Or possibly you'll be in line and smell the savory, smoky and sultry Chopped Cheese. The menu is always rotating and always delivering Southern comfort.

Each plate is around \$17 dollars — sometimes lower, sometimes higher — but never more than \$20. Sure, it might not be sustainable to buy a lunch every day at that price, but don't fret with *Big South* because you get your money's worth with portions AND quality. I was able to get Fish & Grits and two sides (Mac & Cheese and Collard Greens) for \$18. Y'all. I'm not from the South, but one bite and I was saying things like, "yes ma'am," "no sir," "bless your heart" and "fixin' to get some more." Their Fried Catfish is packed with zesty spices and flavor, and when you add



Big South serves Fried Catfish, Candied Yams and Collard Greens.

buttery and creamy grits to it, it's an undefeated flavor combination that only *Big South* knows how to do right.

The Mac & Cheese was thick and creamy too. It's cheesy as can be — the kind of cheesy that will coagulate a little bit (wipes drool from mouth) as it sits on your plate. The Collard Greens had an earthy, smoky flavor with a tiny bit of bitterness to combat the creamy nature of the dish's ensemble. Like I said previously, I was fixin' to get some more, and my friend JT — who claimed *Big South* had the best Southern food in the state — recommended I get some wings.

The Big South Wings (\$18) also came with two sides, and they come in a few different flavors depending on the day. I wanted to try the Big South Sauce, but on the day that I went, the options were BBQ, Lemon or Sweet & Spicy, and ya boy loves his Sweet & Spicy. It's just a reason to go back to try the other flavors because the wings were QUALITY. They weren't overly crispy, yet they had a discernible crunch when I bit into them that was perfect. The flats pulled apart with ease and the bones didn't break. I truly believe whatever flavor you're in the mood for will hit, because the Sweet & Spicy sauce wasn't overpoweringly sweet or spicy. You guessed it: It was Goldilocks, y'all. Just right.

I got the Mac & Cheese again (big whoop, wanna fight about it?!) and the Onion Rings. It was a high-quality onion ring with, yet again, the perfect amount of crunch and flavor. Bada bing, bada boom, *Big South* has the soul food you want to consume.

If you haven't tried this food truck that's slinging the best soul food around these parts, it's about time you did. Consider this an invitation. Better yet, consider this a request: Please go try *Big South*. Yes, you may have to check their Instagram daily to figure out where and when they're open and yes, you may have to sit tight a bit for your order, but you can take comfort — Southern comfort — that it will be 100% worth the wait. Whether it's crispy catfish, fall-off-the-bone wings or rich, velvety mac and cheese, *Big South* is inviting everyone to the cookout for real and authentic soul food.



Damio Huddleston and his daughter Ely Huddleston run the food truck.



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COOKING FROM THE HEART WITH CHRISTIAN GONZALEZ

By Vashti Hansen • hansenvashti@gmail.com || Photos by Nicole Marriner



(From L-R): Blueberry galette, charred vegetables, chimichurri sauce, baby potatoes and shrimp.

Christian Gonzalez distinctly remembers where his passion for food began: around a large family table, sharing delicious meals made by his grandmother. As the family would gather to eat, laughter and a deep sense of love filled the air. Gonzalez, who grew up in Mexico, fondly recalls the moments when his grandmother would visit. In return, he would cook for her — making pancakes with strawberry jam and hotdogs with scrambled eggs. “I am nurturing my grandma as she nurtured me,” he says.

However, it wasn’t until tragedy struck during his teenage years that Gonzalez’s true journey into the culinary arts began. At the age of 15, his mother died in a tragic car accident. In the wake of this loss, Gonzalez threw himself into his passion for food. He discovered that cooking was a way for him to connect with others and share something truly special. “If I make someone’s day by just being me, I feel accomplished,” he says. “This is me telling someone, ‘I love you.’ If people ate good food all the time, animosity would go down. It’s hard to stay pissed off when you have a good meal.”

Over the years, Gonzalez has honed his craft by working at several restaurants around the Salt Lake City area. His relentless drive for perfection is one of the defining aspects of his work. “I am never satisfied. I am always figuring out how to be better. It’s a never-ending search for perfection,” he says. Gonzalez is grateful for the mentors he’s had along the way, and he takes pride in passing on the knowledge he’s gained. “I’ve been lucky enough to work with people who are better than me — people

who have enlightened me. In return, I like to enlighten and nurture others. Working with talented people who’ve taken me under their wing has taught me how to be a better problem solver.”

Having lived in various places across Utah, Gonzalez eventually settled in Salt Lake City to immerse himself in the local culinary scene. He loves everything about Utah — the terrain and this close-knit community of friends who call it home. When it comes to food, Gonzalez has witnessed the Salt Lake food scene evolve over the years. “Before 10 years ago, people would say, ‘Go to Park City for good food,’ but now it’s kind of the opposite. I want to be part of making the food scene in Salt Lake better,” he shares.

After years of working in Salt Lake restaurants, Gonzalez took the leap to start his own catering business. While he handles most of the work on his own, he ensures that his clients feel personally cared for. “If I get double booked, people will help, but I mainly try to do things myself. I prep before I execute so I can do it on my own,” Gonzalez explains. “I break up my work week so I can prep ahead of time and not rush the food. It takes time to make good food. I also love spending time with my fiancée, so preparing in advance gives us time to enjoy each other’s company.”

Gonzalez’s culinary approach is based on technique rather than a specific cuisine. He enjoys experimenting with flavors: “I like to deconstruct flavors I enjoy and create [new] things from that,” he says. While he enjoys a variety of global flavors, his

personal favorite is Asian cuisine. He loves the depth of the spices and the creative freedom it offers, allowing him to experiment and explore new combinations.

Looking ahead, Gonzalez is focused on growing his catering business organically and continuing to offer exceptional food to the community. “I look forward to growing my business and letting my work speak for itself,” he says. To learn more or book his services, follow Gonzalez on Instagram at [@decadent_dishes_by_christian](https://www.instagram.com/decadent_dishes_by_christian) or visit his website decadentdishescg.com.



After years of working in SLC restaurants, Christian Gonzalez started his own catering business.



SPIRIT FARM

reconnecting and reclaiming roots

By Angela Garcia • angelagr15@outlook.com



Reconnecting with nature and reclaiming Indigenous practices are what **James** and **Joyce Skeet's** *Spirit Farm* is all about. From climate change to the dismantling of environmental infrastructure to people's need for convenience and ultra-processed foods, the relationship between humanity and nature has deteriorated. But this is not irreparable; much like any couple going through a rough patch, reconciliation is still possible. It is all a matter of opening ourselves up, being vulnerable and listening to the needs of the environment around us.

James and Joyce founded *Spirit Farm* in 2014 in Vanderwagen, New Mexico. A farm that focuses on regenerative agriculture, *Spirit Farm* is a pillar of their community, providing high-quality, nutritious food to combat food insecurity in New Mexico. *Spirit Farm* encourages the community to reconnect with Indigenous practices and ancient farming techniques. James says that most people today "have separated the physical and the spiritual. Indigenous people have never done that; they have kept those two intact."

It's not just the type of food that is grown but *how* it is grown that is important. From a purely analytical lens, regenerative farming is about building up and maintaining nutrients in the soil. But it is so much more than that — it's about working with the land rather than dominating it. We should recognize it as an autonomous entity and give back as much as we take. In doing so, the soil

retains nutrients which makes the food we grow more nutritious.

Joyce recalls the moment this concept finally struck her. Growing up as a Mennonite, Joyce was taught that the land needed to be tamed and controlled. To her, farming was a top-down network. But one day, while collecting amaranth, she decided to take the time to ask for permission from the flowers, and "it was then that I felt such an overwhelming response from the plants. It almost made me cry," says Joyce. "They just really appreciated that I would ask and honor them that way ... We are at one with the plants."

The natural landscape of Utah is arid, so when it comes to growing food, that dryness needs to be taken into account. When it comes to

James and Joyce Skeet founded *Spirit Farm* in 2014 in Vanderwagen, New Mexico.



Photo courtesy of Spirit Farm

implementing regenerative agriculture in not only rural Utah, but in urban areas as well, James says, "We now have to tell people how to regenerate this land that has been colonized ... and to put some of the key players at the table again, which is the Paiutes, the Shoshone, the Goshutes, all these different tribes that have understood how to function within these brittle environments." In practice, that would be harvesting heirloom seeds from corn, beans, squash or any other crop indigenous to Utah, which have a higher nutrient density than other domesticated crops. "It's almost like building a bridge," says **Autumn Gillard**, an Indigenous leader from the Southern Paiute tribe. "It's helping people to understand our method as Native people and how we interact with our traditional landscape."

It should be noted that James and Joyce were planning to come to Utah for a Soil Summit in Cedar City this June. The Soil Summit was a chance for Indigenous people across the region to gather and share farming practices unique to their tribes. However, due to budget cuts from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), it was postponed indefinitely. Rather than letting this get in the way of progress, we should instead be emboldened to take action and support the local and Indigenous farmers in the area. Go to covenantpathways.org and facebook.com/covenantpathways to learn more about *Spirit Farm's* many ongoing projects. When it comes to agriculture, the work doesn't end.

Spirit Farm reminds us that these ancestral practices endure because they work. We must remind ourselves that we are a part of nature, not its master. So here's hoping that more farms implement regenerative practices, and maybe one day we can live in that solar punk world that we all dream of.



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Maybe it was the trickle of nostalgia that made the peacefully laid-to-rest *Training Table*’s cheese fries so tantalizing. Maybe it was the cheesy, oozing warmth of *Pie Hole* that kept you cozy after a messy breakup. Whatever the place or plate might’ve been, there are certain foods that will always have a special space in our hearts. So, join us in a feast of core memories and personal connections — it’s time to feed the soul! Still hungry? Read about six more special eateries on *SLUGMag.com*.

Chubby Baker

When it comes to love in my life, three things immediately come to mind: donuts, reality TV and my wonderful partner. My perfect day is relaxing with my partner, watching reality TV and enjoying my newest donut obsession, *Chubby Baker*. Nothing has made me fall in love quicker than their Ferrero Rocher donut with its perfect fluffy texture and creamy chocolate hazelnut cream, topped with Nutella frosting and Ferrero Rocher candy. *Chubby Baker* has rotating monthly flavors (one of my recent favorites was Cereal Milk) and they have late-night DoorDash available. I’ve enjoyed one of their donuts after a workout class on a Sunday morning with my partner and DoorDashed them late at night while watching some of my favorite reality shows (*Love is Blind*, *The Ultimatum*, *The Valley*, etc.). If you are sleeping on *Chubby Baker*, it’s time to wake up because it just might become one of the loves of your life. —Alegra Zuchowicz

Big Daddy’s Pizza

It was at exactly 1:00 a.m. on a summer night in 2020 when I realized I was hungry. My fridge and cabinets produced hard rigatoni but no pasta sauce, and some unopened yet clearly battered Uncrustables. I had just moved from Chicago with my girlfriend and cat, and found myself caught utterly unaware by the lack of late-night delivery in Salt Lake City. The discovery of *Big Daddy’s* saved me that evening. Their Six Cheese Pizza, composed of mozzarella, parmesan, gouda, feta, cheddar and blue cheese, stunned my palate. I grew up in Wisconsin, and I hadn’t put that many different types of cheeses in my mouth at the same time before. *Big Daddy’s* has a wide and cost-effective menu, with a hearty selection of specialty pies and appetizers, including their delicious Mac & Cheese Bites. You will find everything you need in a pizza during the ungodly hours with this local chain, which has six locations in the Salt Lake Valley and one in Park City. —Kyle Forbush

Dee’s Family Restaurant

There are a lot of things that I don’t like about this country, but there are some things that I absolutely love. Chief among them is the American greasy spoon diner. Since childhood I have celebrated every victory, languished every defeat and pushed through most every hangover in the booth of one of these establishments, and since my move to Salt Lake in 2018, most of those moments have been at *Dee’s Family Restaurant*. This place serves old-fashioned breaded and fried love with a short stack of hotcakes. The waitstaff, who can somehow maintain a smile in the face of the drunken midnight crowd, are some of the kindest and hardest-working people in this valley. It’s too late for me to have been born in *Dee’s*, but I’d like to live and die there, and if they offered catering, they would be at my wedding too. —Cam Elliott

Arempas

Shortly after moving to Utah in 2023, the 2:00 a.m. hunger of my friends and I led us to what seemed like a choice of convenience. The line at *Pie Hole* was too long, so we decided to eat at *Arempas*, the restaurant next door. It was my first time trying a Venezuelan-style empanada and it changed me as a person. Everyone I know has witnessed my fixation on these gluten-free fried pastries and *Arempas* as an establishment. This place has seen the best and worst of my inner circle, including a questionable decision to let a stranger take my contact lenses out of my eyes (don’t worry, he washed his hands) while in line! *Arempas* is a must-try — just as delicious in daylight as it is under neon beer signs. The restaurant boasts an episode on *Diners*, *Drive-Ins*, and *Dives*, and eating an arepa where **Guy Fieri** once did feels truly transcendent. —Liz Kelly

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STRIKING PINK GOLD AT THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

By Alton Barnhart • altonboy2009@gmail.com || Photos by Evan Hancock

Hell is about to freeze over when Editorial Assistant Alton Barnhart goes head-to-head in a man versus food battle at *Arctic Circle*.

Fry sauce might've stationed itself as a Utah idiosyncrasy, next to green JELL-O molds and soaking, but no one quite knows its true origin. So, allow me to paint you a picture of some Utah lore: The year is 1950, when **Don Carlos Edwards** was about to make culinary history. By stirring mayonnaise with ketchup lickity-split, fry sauce was born! This pinkish dip launched his family to new heights, as what was their small refreshment stand during a Pioneer Day celebration snowballed into a 71-restaurant enterprise.

Edwards, MY (step) great-grandfather, put *Arctic Circle* on the map with its early Americana aesthetic. Dishing out over-the-rim milkshakes, cheeseburgers and, of course, fry sauce, the once family-owned fast food joint ran circles around its competition. However, it feels as if the establishment has taken a 180 while disappearing in the shadows of beefier Greek titans like *Crown Burger*. Amplified by the West Coast In-N-Out drawing in the crowd, the public has given *Arctic Circle* the cold shoulder. And you thought the *Crumbl* cookie war was bad...

Does this mean *Arctic Circle* should pack its bags and high-tail out of here? I refuse to think so! My childhood was made of its greasy goodness (that and battery acid from that one time I gnawed into one of their kids' meal Halloween flashlights). After being on a hiatus for almost two decades, I must give *Arctic Circle* its due diligence. So let's remove the rose-tinted shades for an unbi-

ased review of journalistic integrity. Because nothing is sacred — not even family ties.

We'll begin our five-course gut bomb with the picky eater's first choice, the eight-piece Chicken Rings (\$3.99). I've had poultry of all shapes and sizes, predominantly a carnivorous chowdown on some Dino Nuggets. With a little black pepper and a douse of their ranch (which holds a passing #48 on my best ranch dressing list), it's a nibbler, but nothing to cry home about.

Next came their best-seller — the Black Angus Ranch Burger n' Cheddar (\$5.59). Now, I'm not entirely sure what the processing difference is between these patties and all-American beef. However, the proof is in the pudding in taste and texture. The meat has a char-broil, beef jerky tongue-tickle like it was grilled on pappy's skillet in the Appalachias. Combine that with some zest of dill pickles and some all-natural (to a point) squares of cheddar cheese, this is one hearty burger! Plus, it's easy on the wallet in a fast food landscape that's been trimming the value menu fat.

When I ask Chief Marketing Officer **Joe Evans** about the top five best items, he utters the Halibut (\$9.49) without hesitation. It's not that I don't trust the integrity of fish from a landlocked restaurant chain, but do I live off the coast of Maine with my fishmonger pals? Although I might've been wary, a couple of bites into the other white meat was decent. There was a

light ocean brininess, but nothing bad — extra tartar sauce helps immensely. Honestly, I don't see myself ordering this again, but maybe when I fit into the 65-year-old crowd.

After hunkering down from the spring showers and nearly gorging myself on some vibrant Yukon Gold Fries (those little spuds looked like radioactive isotopes), I was a tad unfulfilled. The wow factor of *Arctic Circle* has worn off, but that's not entirely a bad thing. Those suffering from economic blues, who can't kiss the rings of the *Crown* but can't stomach another pass through the Golden Arches, can enjoy a decent meal — one that won't freeze your credit card. So do I think *Arctic Circle* is a barren tundra? Of course not! But do I think it's still a groundbreaking eatery? I hate to say it, but no... Though that won't stop me from snagging a Watermelon Flavor Burst cone once in a while.

Arctic Circle



Burgers, fries, chicken and... halibut? *Arctic Circle*'s top five menu items are up for review.

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I don't want to talk too much about myself, but I worked in countless third-wave coffee shops for about seven years. The third-wave movement is defined by sourcing higher quality coffee and providing more payment for coffee farmers. From working at shops that served as an extension for local roasteries to shops that sourced their coffee from across the country, I've sampled hundreds, maybe thousands, of coffees — and Idle Hands immediately placed themselves as a favorite of mine from the first time I tried their coffee beans at *Loki Coffee*. Now that I am a writer and editor, I thought it was my responsibility to dip back into my previous coffee career to shine a light on a roaster that is lifting up Salt Lake's coffee scene with incredible coffee, sustainability and social impact efforts.

Ricky Dyson created Idle Hands alongside **Adrian Bradshaw Tezjan** and **Peter Jones**. Dyson and Tezjan are both Australian and were brought to Utah through Campos Coffee, one of Sydney's premiere third-wave coffee companies. Shortly after Campos' expansion to the U.S., the brand was acquired by Dutch giant JDE Peet's, founders of Peet's Coffee. With that acquisition, the Campos brand pulled back to their original Australian market, leaving Dyson and Tezjan without jobs. Jones, a local barista and friend, pitched them the idea of starting their own roastery with the equipment left by Campos. "I said hell no, multiple times," says Dyson, "but Pete convinced us that it would be a really good idea. Turns out he [was] correct. It's been really good." By November 2021, the three roasters had their secondhand equipment moved into a warehouse and adopted their fingers-crossed logo. "It's the symbol for good luck. When you find yourself wanting luck, it's 'fingers crossed this works out,'" says Dyson.

The Cup of Excellence program became an integral aspect of Idle Hands. Ran by the nonprofit Alliance for Coffee Excellence (ACE), the Cup of Excellence sources exceptional coffee and auctions them off to roasters. As described by the ACE

IDLE HANDS ROASTERY



By **wphughes** • **william@slugmag.com**
Photos by **John Taylor**



(From L-R): Ricky Dyson and Adrian Bradshaw Tezjan co-founded Idle Hands with Peter Jones (not pictured).

website: "These auctions have allowed exemplary coffee farmers, whether award winning or not, to realize a greater financial price for their coffees." Jones recently joined the ACE board earlier this year and serves as an international jury member for the Cup of Excellence, lending his experience toward judging the coffees that are submitted to the program. "The jury [is made up] from different markets all across the world. So it's not just me being like, 'This is the best coffee,'" says Dyson. Idle Hands also participates in the auctions that take place after the final judging, purchasing unique and high-quality coffee that they roast in small batches, which gives the local coffee community the chance to experience award-winning coffee.

Beyond working with national organizations to highlight excellent coffee, Idle Hands works tirelessly to give back to the original coffee growers, an effort that is sorely needed in the national coffee trade. For context, the average price per pound of coffee paid to farmers since 2014 has "plummeted by 70% and now dance[s] around \$1 per pound. Every pound a farmer sells, and every cup we drink, pushes a farmer deeper into poverty and despair," writes **Dean Cycon** for *Trellis*. When I ask Dyson about pricing transparency, especially within higher-end coffee he says, "As of 2025, we know our entire value stream, which is pretty cool and special. And don't get me wrong — we're really, really privileged. Not everyone has that same opportunity, but it does take a lot of time and investment that we've put into knowing our value stream ... We know we can sell this coffee for this much, therefore we can pay this producer more than they're asking." I cannot stress how rare this is, not only when it comes to smaller coffee roasters, but among all coffee businesses. It's not often that a company will explore their pricing and choose to give more money back to their supplier.

You can find Idle Hands beans served at *Loki Coffee* in the 9th South neighborhood, at *Harvest* in Park City and on their website idlehandsroasting.com.

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ODD BALLS

PUTTING THE FUN IN FUNGI

By Parly Scott • parlysue@gmail.com



Photo: Kevin TK Frantz

Backcountry skier Jon Carter created vegan, gluten-free protein balls in two flavors: cherry (left) and lemon (right).



After moving to Utah from Minnesota in 2010 to cross-country ski and be closer to the mountains, **Jon Carter** got tired of all the so-called “healthy energy bars” out there. He wasn’t familiar with their long list of ingredients, so he set off on a mission to find something more unique.

“I listened to a podcast about functional mushrooms and then I just dove into research for myself,” he says. “I knew there had to be a good one for energy.” Carter ordered some Cordyceps supplements and began to test them out on himself, giving up caffeine in his life. “I could already feel the difference only two weeks in and I learned that it helps bring your body’s natural energy levels into balance — basically just giving you that level of balanced energy throughout the day,” he says.

In 2021, after testing different ways to work with the mushrooms, Carter was diagnosed with stage three testicular cancer. He learned that the next step for him would be chemotherapy, but he continued to take the mushrooms during his treatments.

“I ended up seeing that other testicular cancer patients who were in a phase three clinical trial were using Cordyceps mushrooms as an infusion, and it was having such good success [that] they were moving into the next phase of the trial,” he says. “I was about to do this thing with Cordyceps anyway, and then I got diagnosed, and now [I thought] Cordyceps might actually treat my disease.”

He promised himself that when he got through his treatments, he would continue forward with the research and use it to introduce people to mushrooms in a fun way. Thus, Odd Balls: A Funguy Blend was born. “I waited too long to do something about my testicular cancer. Something was going on, and I didn’t act on it ... So if I could do something to inform people and help them, I wanted to do it,” he says.

Carter says the name “Odd Balls” came from his sister as a way to help people stay informed and get checked out to stay healthy. “It’s real simple: if you’ve got an odd

ball, bump or lump, [call] it odd today, meaning if it’s odd to you, get it checked.” After figuring out the name and the shape of the product, it was full steam ahead for Carter to start selling to family and friends and trying to get the word out any way he could.

“I think the name kind of brings some humor into something serious. Sadly, cancer in young adults is rising ... You feel good, or you think you’re good — or it’s scary — but it’s easy to put something off, and if I can help just one other person not put off [going to the doctor] as long as I did, then I’ll think we’ve been successful,” Carter says.

Carter works closely with nonprofits such as *Survivor Wellness* here in Salt Lake City, donating products to them to share his Odd Balls with other cancer patients to help with their energy levels while they are going through treatments.

“*Survivor Wellness* has these beautiful houses in the Avenues that are kind of like sanctuaries, where cancer patients can go and connect with other people going through the same thing,” he says. “I like to donate to them so that the patients can have snacks that aren’t pumped full of additives that taste good — and would hopefully help empower them physically as well.”

The product, with two different flavor options of lemon and cherry, is made with a blend of mushrooms and aims to provide balanced energy and mental clarity using Cordyceps and Lion’s mane extracts. They are gluten-free and vegan and are available in local shops, including *The Neighborhood Hive* and *Skimo Co*, and at oddballsfunguy.com.



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What's In My Fridge?

By Mike Brown • mgb90210@gmail.com

Over the several years that I have written for *SLUG*, I have often pondered (and sometimes printed) a thought that goes as follows: I REALLY, REALLY FUCKING HOPE MY LANDLORD DOESN'T READ THIS. This article is no exception. It's not as bad as when I flooded my bathroom a few months ago by trying to warm up an adult toy in my sink, rendering some water damage in the apartment below me (that was a fun one to explain to the landlord) but still, you get the point.

My fridge is technically my landlord's fridge because it was here when I moved in. I basically pay rent on my fridge. But being the daring penman that I am, I am unabashed to tell you what's in my fridge. Although when I die, I do not want people to go through a couple of things. My browser history and my fridge are two of those things.

First off, it's a nice fridge. It's big and silver like a giant can of Coors Light. Plenty of room to hang the shitty pictures kids draw, if I had any kids that I knew of. And it does exactly what a fridge is supposed to do, which is keeping things cold, like the other side of a pillow. I love my fridge.

As for what's in it? A bunch of old food I'm not gonna finish. I know this is wasteful and that there are starving children in Magna, but I'm not going to lie — there's a lot of garbage in there. There's some old lettuce and an old lime, lots of old condiment packets (mostly soy sauce and fire sauce from Del Taco), an ice pack for my back, some bloodworms that I feed my frogs that I love, and a really old expired beer that I intend to give to company if anyone ever actually comes over.



Mike Brown's fridge is a mysterious portal to a world full of milk, condiment packages, bloodworms, expired beer and leftover UberEats.

But no one really comes over to my place, and that's not a complaint — it's by design. I don't want the outside world to see how I live and where I crank it.

Sometimes there's milk in my fridge. And speaking of milk, I need to settle a debate: Is it just for psychopaths? Like, if you just drink milk straight, are you a monster? Bad guy villains always seem to be drinking milk in the movie picture shows. But I find a nice chug of 2% fresh off the carton to be super refreshing. I also eat a lot of Pasta Roni and milk is a key ingredient.

I mentioned that there are a lot of leftovers I won't eat in there, but this is mostly due to the fact that now you can finance UberEats meals. This seems like a bad idea and a blatant statement of the desperation of our generation. But with a finance plan for overpriced delivery food, I feel like I should space out the eating process, I guess.

I also have a Brita water filter pitcher thingy and candy. I eat a lot of candy, and I like to keep it in the fridge — even my Skittles and Red Vines, but especially my chocolate and cookies. I don't know why but candy tastes better when it's cold. In the summer time there's always popsicles and ice cream in there, too. As you can see, I have my own food pyramid I subscribe to for a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Now I should use this writing assignment as a reason to clean my fridge. But honestly, I'm not going to. After doing my own research, once again from YouTube University, I learned that cold air kills germs — or at least freezes them and slows them down so they don't move around your immune system as fast. So basically you don't ever really have to clean your fridge. Think that's fake news? Wake up, sheeple.

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LOCALIZED
The Lingo

(From L-R) The Lingo is Joe Pedersen (keys), Adam Borgione (vocals), Alex Millet (bass) and Bridger Croxford (drums). Not pictured: Sam Morrison.

On Tuesday, May 20, come to *Kilby Court* to set out on a mind voyage with local psychedelic rock bands **The Lingo** and **Sad Cowboy** at *SLUG Magazine's Localized* show. **Lit'l Grim** will kick off the evening's festivities with a killer opening set. *SLUG Localized* is sponsored by *Riso Geist* and tickets are only \$5! Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and music starts at 8:00 p.m.

By Joe Roberts
joeroberts256@gmail.com

To call The Lingo a throwback to the '60s and '70s would be an almost-accurate misnomer. While the local psych/surf five-piece certainly draws noticeable inspiration from forerunners like **The Doors**, **The Velvet Underground** and **Buffalo Springfield**, they actually belong to a broader community of musicians who have kept the spirit of groovy, psychedelic rock alive through the decades since Woodstock. This community includes other modern-day bands like **Babe Rainbow**, **levitation room** and **Holy Wave**. As The Lingo's lead guitarist and vocalist, **Adam Borgione**, tells me during our interview at *Salt Lake Coffee Break*, "We're still out here. It still exists. It's a contemporary thing."

The Lingo first took its current form in 2022, but Borgione and the band's mustachioed bassist, **Alex Millet**, have been friends for a very long time. "I've known this guy since we were 10 years old," Millet says, pointing a thumb at Borgione. Later in life, the two moved to Seattle together, and that's where they began to collaborate musically. "He already played the guitar and inspired me to pick up the bass. We had some friends in Seattle who we started making music with and then we separated for a few years. When I moved back to Salt Lake City, we moved in together and started pursuing music pretty rigorously. From

there, we've gone through a couple iterations of band members." The Lingo now consists of Borgione, Millet, **Joe Pedersen** on keys, **Sam Morrison** on rhythm guitar and **Bridger Croxford** on drums.

When I ask about the band's name, Borgione explains that it's a reference to the unique way the group's members speak between themselves. "We have our own little weird dialect we use with one another, especially me. I'm always saying weird stuff." At this, the other band members nod and chuckle knowingly before Borgione continues, "And yeah, you either get 'the lingo' or you don't."

This concept of the band, as the incarnation of a strange vernacular you have to vibe with instead of intellectualize, carries through in their music. Borgione writes songs that evoke visceral mind-trips instead of imparting coherent lyrical ideas, so The Lingo's music is more about the experience than any message. "I don't know what I write about," he admits with a laugh. "It's usually just something psychedelic, something trippy, something universal, something about the human condition."

Here, Millet concurs with his friend. "Our sets are about imbuing emotion or a feeling." The band accomplishes this by experimenting with dynamics, cranking the reverb as high as it will go and melding elements from diverse genres into kaleido-

scopic soundscapes. As Millet tells me, "We try to fuse groove elements with psych, surf and some country."

"Yeah, that's true. We throw in some cunch," Borgione jumps in, treating me to one of the infamous Borgione-isms he alluded to earlier.

Thus far, The Lingo has only released a few singles and a music video, but they've been spending the last year refining their process and honing in on their sound, and they have big plans for the coming year. "Right now, we're really just trying to get an album put together," Borgione says. The title, track-list and release date for this album are all still up in the air. Nevertheless, The Lingo is actively recording material at *Sunspell Records*, which Borgione affectionately refers to as "Joe's Zone" because Pedersen, The Lingo's keyboardist, co-founded the studio with **Wren Kennedy**.

Whether you're a dyed-in-the-wool hippie who actually remembers the '60s or a zoomer seeking a gateway drug to old-school music, follow The Lingo on Instagram at [@thelingoband](https://www.instagram.com/thelingoband) to get updated when they release their debut album. And in the meantime, come experience the band's psychedelic, genre-bending live set at the *Localized* show on May 20 at *Kilby Court*.



(From L-R) Tanner Waite and Siah Collins play lead and rhythm guitar for Sad Cowboy.

Photo: Jess Gruneisen

By Joe Roberts
joeroberts256@gmail.com

Sometimes a band is greater than the sum of its individual members, and musicians can push each other to greater creative heights through collaboration. At least that's what **Tanner Waite** and **Siah Collins** believe. These two are the primary songwriters for the psychedelic indie rock band Sad Cowboy, but until recently, Waite helmed a psych-surf band called **Casio Ghost** and Collins was the frontman for an earlier Sad Cowboy lineup.

Waite and Collins have been friends since high school and each played in the other's bands. And while Casio Ghost and Sad Cowboy initially had distinct sounds and lyrical themes, both bands eventually developed a very similar style due to cross-pollination. So in late 2024, Collins and Waite decided to combine efforts under the Sad Cowboy moniker. "We just realized the styles were starting to mesh," Waite says during our interview at *Salt Lake Coffee Break*. "So we were like, 'Fuck it. Why not do all of this as one record and make it one band?'"

Collins hums his assent while sipping coffee, then states, "Sad Cowboy is Tanner and I both letting go of projects we had full autonomy to write for by ourselves and making it a collaborative effort."

And though this merger took the name of Collins' old band, Collins emphasizes that Sad Cowboy evolved as a result. "The band that was Sad Cowboy doesn't exist anymore in the same way that Casio Ghost doesn't exist anymore," he says.

The outcome is a band that blends beach goth's danceability, country's twang and punk's vigor. Sad Cowboy now features Collins on rhythm guitar, Waite on lead guitar, **Peter LaBarge** on keys and **Brady Flores** on bass. The group is also gigging and recording with drummer **Allen James**. These members all contribute unique material to the band's songs and provide vocals as needed.

One thing I find especially wholesome about Collins' and Waite's dynamic is that, when I ask what they want Sad Cowboy to accomplish, each leads by mentioning the other's strengths and how those strengths empower the band as a whole. "Something I've always admired about Siah's writing is it really brings a vibe," Waite says. "Siah is able to write songs that are so catchy. They get people dancing. Bringing that to a live show so people have a good time is what this band is about."

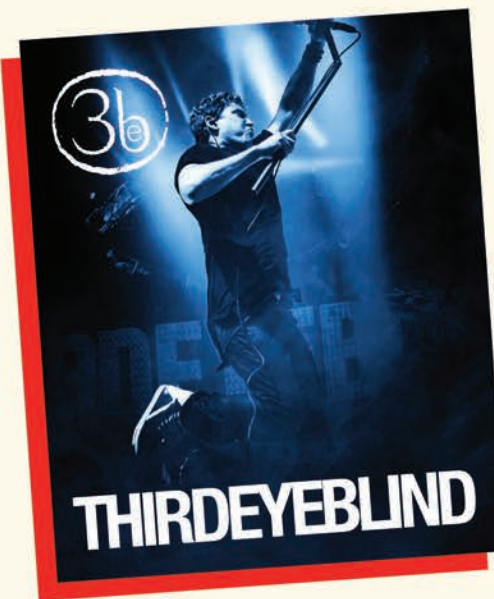
"And something that I appreciate in Tanner's writing is that, when I hear what he has to say, I feel understood," Collins adds. "I resonate with what he's writing

about. My favorite songs have always made me feel a little less alone in the world. It's all about creating that energy."

This new iteration of Sad Cowboy is coming out swinging with a wealth of fresh music. "We've just finished tracking everything for 18 songs," Collins says. "We have two pairs of singles, each with an A and B side. One will come out in April. The two songs on that are called 'Reno' and 'Howdy at the Bar.' We'll probably release the second set in May. We'll then release a seven-song EP, probably this summer. Then we'll have a 12-song album." The band is self-producing this music instead of working with a traditional studio, but they've enlisted local sound engineers **Chase Ford** and **Denney Fuller** to assist with production.

On a related note, any fans of the old Sad Cowboy or Casio Ghost should be warned that their old music may disappear from streaming services soon. "If people like the stuff that's currently up, they should listen while they can," Waite says as our interview wraps up. "I think it's all coming down."

To be among the first to know when Sad Cowboy releases their new tunes, follow them on Instagram at @sadcowboyband. And if you can't wait to hear what they've been cooking up, don't miss their live set at the *Localized* show on May 20.



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PRESENTS

MAY 2025

Chloe Moriondo - 5.1 Soundwell | Hippo Campus - 5.6 The Complex | Matt Hansen - 5.7 Soundwell
nothing, nowhere - 5.7 The Complex | Anees - 5.10 The Complex | Trixie Mattel's Solid Pink Disco - 5.10 The Complex
Kilby Block Party After Party: Magdena Bay - 5.15 The Complex | Beach Bunny - 5.20 The Depot
Orion Sun - 5.20 The Complex | Hippie Sabotage - 5.22 The Complex | Lights - 5.23 Soundwell
Sara Kays - 5.24 Soundwell | Rachel Chinouiri - 5.25 Soundwell
The Kiffness - 5.27 Soundwell | Lord Huron - 5.31 Sandy Amphitheater

KILBY BLOCK PARTY 5.15 - 5.18 Utah State Fairpark
New Order, Beach House, Weezer, Justice & more!

KILBY COURT

BabyJake 5.1
Teen Mortgage 5.2
Nicole Canaan + Boyfriend Sushi Town + The What-Nots 5.3
Cansisco + Flowerhouse + Dogpaw 5.4
Alix Page 5.6
Ethan Tasch 5.7
Kaytlin Numbers + Sunhills + Anna Beck 5.8
* Kilby Block Party Kick Off Party: Wilbere + Lonely Heights + Anyone Awake + Lovingly Clad 5.9
GUARDIN 5.10
Liam Lars + Sasha Haydn + Grace Wawro 5.11
Miya Folick 5.12
Jane Remover - SOLD OUT 5.13
Your Neighbors 5.14
The Fall Of Troy - LOW TICKETS 5.17
The Toxhards 5.19
SLUG Localized: The Lingo + Sad Cowboy + Lit'l Grim 5.20
Mallrat - LOW TICKETS 5.21
RAYNES - LOW TICKETS 5.22
BLOOD CLUB 5.24
One Step Closer 5.25
Calico + Merakirozes + Mudshark 5.26
Bleacher Babe 5.27
SPYHOP Presents: Stage Fright + Miss Margaret + Dunk Tank 5.28
Breakup Shoes 5.29
widowdusk + camp ghost + gapyear 5.30
Reyna Tropical 5.31

METRO MUSIC HALL

Foxy Shazam 5.2
Viva La Diva: Once Upon A Diva 5.3
Viva La Diva: Once Upon A Diva 5.4
Buzzcocks 5.6
Versus Me 5.7
80's New Wave Night feat. In The Wave 5.8
Viva La Diva: Once Upon A Diva 5.9
Viva La Diva: Once Upon A Diva 5.10
Black Pistol Fire 5.12
Sharon Van Etter - LOW TICKETS 5.13
* Kilby Block Party After Party: The Emo Night Tour 5.15
* Kilby Block Party After Party: The Lemon Twigs 5.16
* Kilby Block Party After Party: Tennis 5.17
* Kilby Block Party After Party: Nation Of Language 5.18
King Niko + Media Queen + Psyche's Cypher 5.22
The Lucha Project Goth Beach Party: Live Music + Wrestling! 5.23
Dreamer Isoma 5.24
Daft Disko: A French House & Disco Party 5.24
Tesseract 5.27
Napalm Death + Melvins - LOW TICKETS 5.29
Broadway Rave 5.30
Steel & Seduction: A Heavy Metal 5.31
Burlesque & Drag Sacrilegious Showcase 5.31
Rivers Of Nihil 6.1
Lords Of Acid + Little Miss Nasty 6.3
Ringo Deathstarr 6.5

URBAN LOUNGE

L.S. Dunes - LOW TICKETS 5.2
Circa Waves + Friday Pilots Club - LOW TICKETS 5.3
Tribulation + Unto Others 5.4
Fur Foxen's Pink Party + VadaWave + Bellagrace 5.8
Magic Sword 5.9
Thornhill - LOW TICKETS 5.10
Deep Sea Diver - LOW TICKETS 5.12
Peter Bjorn and John 5.13
* Kilby Block Party Local Kick Off Party: Bad Luck Brigade + Lapdog + Mopsy + 4PLAY 5.14
* Kilby Block Party After Party: Momma 5.16
* Kilby Block Party After Party: George Clanton 5.17
* Kilby Block Party After Party: SPELLING + Barrie 5.18
White Denim 5.19
LOUYAH 5.22
Fuzz Evil 5.23
John Mark McMillan + Citizens 5.24
Glory Trip + Undressed + Love Audrey 5.28
Bombargo 5.29
New Constellations 5.30
YARN 6.5
FREAK-QUENCY PRIDE: Mango & Ginger, Spaz, Natalia, Saloame 6.6
Pink Pony Club: Chappell Roan Dance Party / Sapphic Night 6.7
KRCL Presents: Barrington Levy 6.8
The Detroit Cobras 6.11
Joni Mitchell Tribute 6.12
DECADES FEST! 6.14



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SLUG CAT



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