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ISSUE 447 • VOLUME 37

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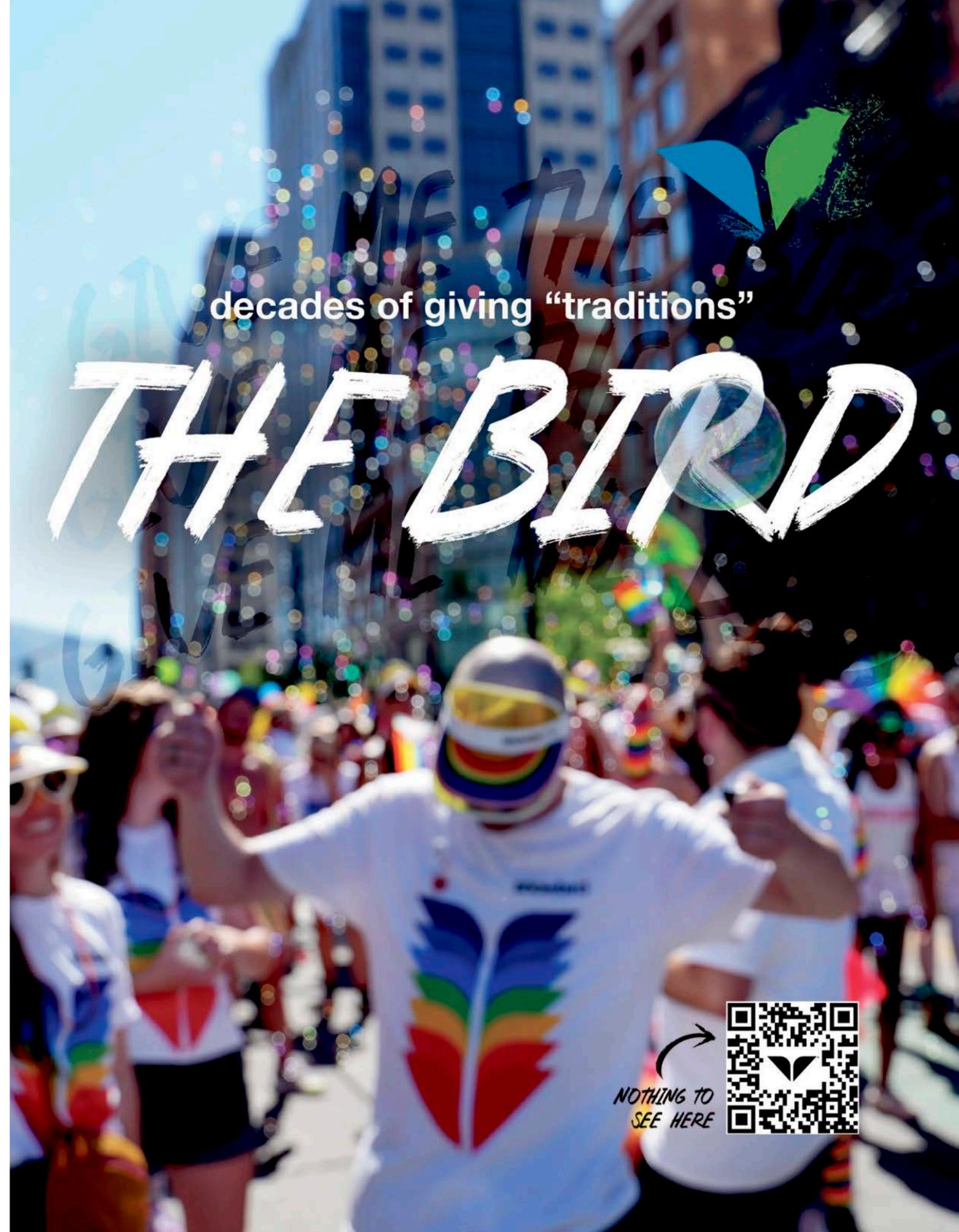
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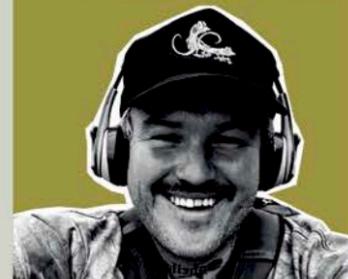
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Gavyn Cundari

Contributor Limelight Contributing Writer



Contributing Writer Gavyn Cundari is a force to be reckoned with. Between being a comedian and bouncer at *Wiseguys* and catching the scoop for *St. George News*, Cundari has a knack for chasing a good story that counts. Check out his interview with local legend Charles Thorpe on pg. 20

Rebekah Shea Parke

Contributor Limelight Contributing Writer



Bold, fierce and ambitious are only a few of the words that best describe Contributing Writer Rebekah Shea Parke. With a history in wordsmithery and poetry, Parke is truly a lightning strike of hidden talent! You can check out some of her work with the Boob Bus interview on pg. 24



Utah Change Makers Issue: All across the Wasatch front, it takes a certain someone with leadership and originality to shake things up — and we got our eye on them! **Colour Maisch** and **Jorge Rojas** have certainly made a splash in the art world at *Material Gallery*. And with help from photographer **Russel Daniels** and SLUG Senior Designer **Joshua Joye**, this cover truly pops! Check out the folks at *Material* on pg. 18.

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INSIDE THE MISSION OF UTAH FILM CENTER

A CONVERSATION WITH MARIAH MELLUS

By Ava Hart | avamariehart4@gmail.com | Photo by Diego Cuevas

The Utah Film Center is an organization dedicated to supporting and promoting independent filmmaking and cinematic experiences throughout the community. Under the leadership of Executive Director Mariah Mellus, the center plays a crucial role in supporting the state's filmmaking success through film festivals, educational programs and community outreach. Mellus' vision and guidance have led the organization to where it is now and where it is headed.

Mellus has been with the Utah Film Center for over 18 years. Before stepping into the Executive Director role she worked in marketing and outreach, development and education programming for the organization. "Over the course of 18 years, I had a lot of different jobs, which I think makes me more qualified for this job than most, just because I've seen it from the ground up," she says.

Now, Mellus oversees strategic initiatives and event planning and keeps up with the changing film ecosystem in Utah, playing a key role in organizing events while ensuring smooth operations. Additionally, she is focused on strategic planning to adapt to changing distribution models and maintain the nonprofit's relevance in the evolving film industry.

Mellus and the film center as a whole focus on creating connections within the film community through various events. Mellus says that the organization is "trying to give people an opportunity to meet with other artists and collaborate on things."

In early February, the Utah Film Center hosted "Science on Screen," a program that combines engaging films with expert-led discussions. Attendees watched an '80s film about robotics and then had the opportunity to meet a man who built a robot. Mellus

shared that events such as "Science on Screen" foster collaboration and a sense of belonging among participants.

Additionally, the organization offers a fiscal sponsorship program that allows filmmakers to apply for grants through a 501(c)(3) organization. This helps artists in storytelling and filmmaking through media education, artist support and film exhibitions.

Currently, the program has 133 films receiving donations and over 200 in production, with a total of more than 500 films having benefited from the sponsorship since its creation. The majority of the films are homegrown stories by local Utah filmmakers.

As Utah celebrates 100 years of filmmaking in the Beehive State, Mellus shared her hopes for the future, not just for the Utah Film Center, but for filmmaking across the state as a whole. She hopes that the center will soon have programming up to six times a week. Currently, it has two to three weekly meetings.

As for Utah filmmaking, Mellus wants to see it step into the spotlight along with major filmmaking states. She said that the state is an amazing place to create films, thanks to its diverse backdrops and versatility. Artists can shoot something in the desert in the afternoon and be in the mountains that night. She believes there's something special about that.

"I want [Utah] to own its legacy of 100 years of filmmaking here and not be known as the place that people

come and make films and then go back to Hollywood and distribute them or sell them," Mellus says. "I want people to feel like they can make their film from start to finish here. We always say we want to export our art, not our artists."

To learn more about the Utah Film Center in their new beautiful location, visit utahfilmcenter.org. There, visitors can find the center's newsletters and explore its programs.

Mariah Mellus' guidance has led the Utah Film Center to where it is now and where it is headed.



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By Devin Oldroyd | @devin.oldroyd@gmail.com

Photo by John Taylor

What started as a creative solution to the challenges within Utah's child welfare system has blossomed into an organization that cultivates community and supports some of Utah's most vulnerable residents. Utah Foster Care is a local non-profit created by the state's Legislature and former **Gov. Mike Leavitt** in 1999. It was born out of the determination to protect and advocate for youth in foster care. Fast forward 27 years, and the organization has recruited and trained more than 16,650 foster families, working with 417 new foster families in 2025 alone, according to Utah Foster Care's 2025 Annual Report.

Utah Foster Care CEO **Nikki MacKay** said they work with foster families to ensure the foster care system can be a "safe place to land" for children. "That's why we do this work," she says. "It's about creating opportunities for people to get involved as foster parents, volunteers, mentors or community partners and to become a safe, steady presence in the lives of kids who need it most."

She has been involved with the organization since its inception, describing the work as "emotionally challenging" and complex. "It feels sacred and deeply meaningful," MacKay says. "It's all of those things woven together." Despite the complexities, the organization's staff is committed to their work. "We're fortunate to have an incredible staff who truly understand the mission and are deeply passionate about what we're trying to accomplish," she says.

Many staff members have an intimate understanding of foster care, as 40% of them are foster parents, MacKay says. Getting more people interested in becoming foster parents is an important part of the organization's mission. "We have teams in all of our offices who are always happy to hop on a phone call, talk with people and answer any questions they have about foster care," MacKay says.

She emphasized that people from all walks of life can become foster parents. "One common misconception is that single people can't be foster parents, and that's simply not true," she says. Both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ single people and legally married couples may be foster parents. Additionally, a foster parent may be a homeowner or a renter. It all starts with an initial consultation held at the prospective foster parent's home or at Utah Foster Care's office. From there, prospective foster parents do several hours of training, a background check and a home study. However, a person must be licensed through the State of Utah to become a foster parent.

Utah Foster Care heavily advocates for keeping children connected to their culture. In MacKay's words, that means, when possible, "finding families that represent" the kids they serve. "Sometimes that's about speaking the same language. Sometimes it's about sharing those cultural traditions," she says. "It's recruiting families that match the needs of the kids, and when we can't do that, educating families."

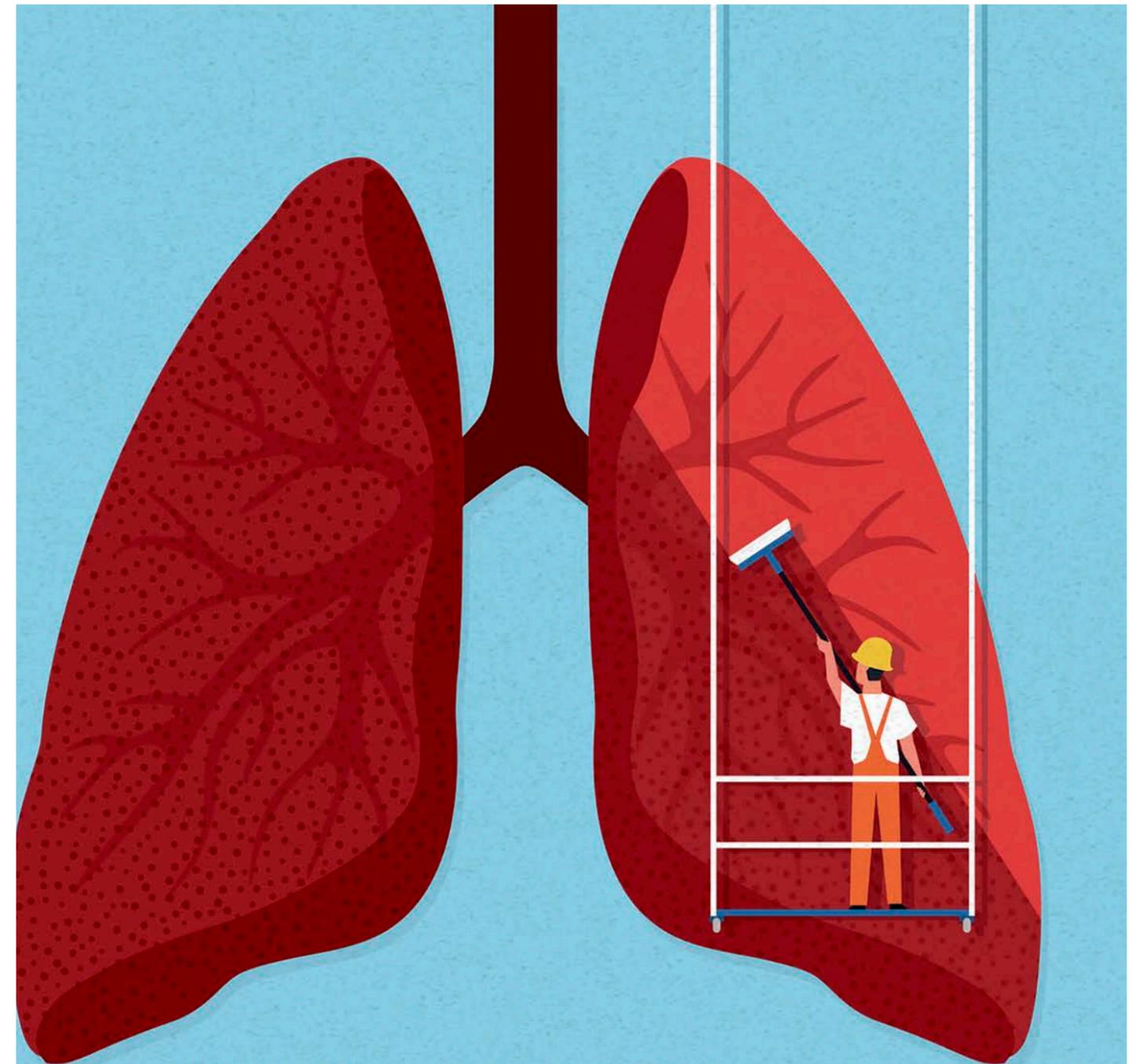
Utah Foster Care is creating a "safe place to land" for children.

BRANDED CONTENT

A resource Utah Foster Care utilizes to do this is "cluster" or support groups. These groups are built to offer community. Sometimes they're organized geographically, and other times based on cultural needs. There are cluster groups for Native American families, for Spanish-speaking families and for families of LGBTQ+ youth.

Utah Foster Care also hosts events for families and youth in foster care throughout the year. "BOSS Bus" sticks out to MacKay. "BOSS" stands for belonging, opportunity, support and success. The event focuses on educating teens in foster care about the workplace and involves several organizations. "Every company opens its doors to the kids and really rolls out the red carpet," she says. "They make them feel important. It's wonderful to see the kids get excited and start to believe they can be anything they want to be."

Utah Foster Care encourages anyone interested to learn more about foster care and what it takes to get involved to visit utahfostercare.org.



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ELEVATE'S MISSION TO MAKE POLITICS

less intimidating ★ more optimistic ★ & impactful

By Carmen ValDez • desertstrategyconsulting@gmail.com

Utah politics can feel inaccessible, and that's deliberate. In an effort to make politics more accessible to the public, Optimistic Political Missionaries, Internet Persons and Senior Partners at Elevate Strategies **Gabi Finlayson** and **Jackie Morgan** create videos breaking down legislation so that all of us can understand the legalese, host meaningful events to talk about how legislation impacts our communities and support local candidates looking to make a difference. Finlayson says, "The process is intentionally difficult to follow, and people disengaging is exactly what allows bad policies and actions to continue."

That disengagement, they argue, allows for several troubling trends that deserve more public attention, especially the steady erosion of local control and attempts to weaken the Utah judiciary in favor of those in power over the public they represent. While state leaders often champion "small government" and local decision-making, that sentiment disappears when cities, counties or judges take actions the legislature doesn't agree with. Bills targeting the courts have been fast-tracked early in this year's legislative session, including proposals to expand the Utah Supreme Court and create an entirely new "constitutional court." The result, Morgan and Finlayson say, is a dangerous conflict of interest: lawmakers passing potentially unconstitutional laws while also reshaping the very system meant to check them. "These aren't short-term decisions, and they have really long-term consequences," Morgan emphasizes.

On top of that are the continued legislative attacks on voting access, immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights and communities of color. While many of these bills may appear small or technical on their own, their cumulative effect is profound, not just in policy but in culture.

"People in power don't just pass laws," Finlayson notes. "They also legitimize narratives. When marginalized communities are constantly targeted by those in power, it gives others permission to discriminate, to have hateful feelings."

For many Utahns, this environment has led to exhaustion, fear and disillusionment. With more than 700 bills already introduced in the first two weeks of the 2026 session, an unprecedented number, it's hard to know where to focus or whether speaking up even matters. Elevate's answer is simple: You don't have to do everything. You just have to do what you can. "Pick one issue. One bill. One action," they suggest. "Follow it. Talk about it. Write one email. That's enough, and it matters."

This philosophy is at the heart of why Elevate exists. Founded by longtime political organizers who returned to Utah believing the state deserves better, the organization works to demystify politics and rebuild civic connection. Their videos, events and online presence are designed to make engagement feel accessible, social and even joyful.

"They make this process hard on purpose," they say. "So we wanted to make it part of people's everyday lives, something digestible, human and hopeful."

Hope, in fact, is their organizing principle. They point to history as proof that change rarely feels inevitable until it suddenly happens — having hope and believing everything will work out, until it does.

Utah, they argue, is uniquely positioned for that kind of shift. It's the youngest state in the country, one of the fastest growing and among the most urbanized Republican states. Young voters, including young Latter-day Saints, are increasingly open to change, making Utah "gettable" in ways many people underestimate.

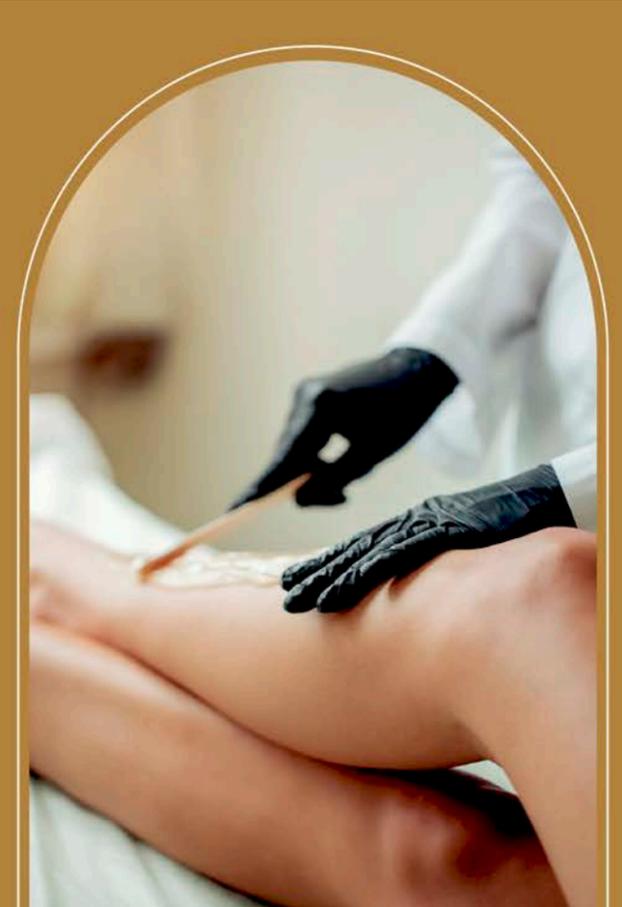
What gives Finlayson and Morgan the most hope, though, is people; it's us. Hundreds of Utahns, many new to politics, are showing up to Elevate events eager to learn, connect and participate. And their advice for staying grounded through it all? Reject the idea that constant anger is a prerequisite for commitment. "You are no less committed if you still find joy," they say. "Community, rest, celebration — those aren't distractions. They're how we stay in the fight."

And the belief that every person belongs in this process may be the most radical thing of all. Learn more at elevatecampaignstrategies.com, and follow them at [@elevate_utah](https://twitter.com/elevate_utah).



Photo: Derek Brad

Senior Partners at Elevate Strategies Jackie Morgan (left) and Gabi Finlayson (right) create videos breaking down legislation.



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Michael Farrell is a young, energetic, first-time candidate running for the U.S. House of Representatives in Utah's First Congressional District who wants to be a new, progressive voice for Utah. Farrell realizes that he's a relatively new kid on the block, but don't let that fool you. He's been working hard to build his voice in the community.

In preparation for his campaign, Farrell has held many listening sessions with constituents because one of his top priorities is for his promises on the campaign trail to reflect what he will actually do in office.

Farrell knows that building a grassroots movement takes grit, but he's putting in the work. Farrell believes that once voters get to know him, they'll be drawn to his style of politics and authenticity. He says, "I'm not beholden to special interests like so many candidates, so I can be unapologetically myself."

Farrell's goals revolve around implementing progressive policy priorities, including universal healthcare; parental leave and childcare; abolishing ICE; legalizing marijuana; expanding federal LGBTQ+, reproductive and voter rights; increasing the federal minimum wage; creating affordable housing; and taxing the rich. When asked how he plans to sell a red state like Utah on these blue values, he says it doesn't have to be a question of conservative or liberal. Rather, he wants to appeal to common sense. "I can't convince anyone who supports ICE to abolish it by saying it is bad," Farrell explains. "But I can point out to conservative and MAGA voters that ICE isn't protecting anyone's liberties, including our First or Second Amendment rights."

When advocating for universal healthcare, Farrell knows that making the argument that healthcare is a human right is only part of the message. He understands



MICHAEL FARRELL

FOR UTAH

AN OFFICE OPEN TO ALL

By Braxtyn Birrell || braxtynb101@gmail.com

Photos by Gabriel Kogami



Branded Content: PAID FOR BY MICHAEL FARRELL FOR UTAH



"We are the richest country in the world. We can invest more in our people."

the hidden costs of our existing healthcare system and describes how the vast majority of Utahns will save money through universal healthcare by raising taxes on the rich. "The only folks who won't save money are millionaires and billionaires, and so be it — they should be paying their fair share, anyway," he says. As a tax attorney of 12 years, Farrell is intimately familiar with the way our financial

system works. "We have the money," he says. "We are the richest country in the world. We can invest more in our people." During his time in private practice, he has only seen life

get worse for working-class families, and he is tired of waiting for things to get better. He believes his vision for Congress is the right approach needed for Utahns and is framed by his core belief that "behind every number is a person."

Farrell's office will be open to all. "If I am fortunate and honored enough to earn the votes of Utahns, I don't want to be in office only focusing on raising money to run for re-election like so many politicians do," he says. "I will spend the time I have in office doing something for people and not just campaigning for re-election." He won't be a representative whose constituents call with concerns just for those calls to "go straight into a black hole." He will be a responsive representative. "I want to constantly be attentive to what my constituents need and expect from me," he says.

To support Michael Farrell's campaign, visit michaelforutah.com. You can also sign up to be a volunteer, donate, or help spread the word about his campaign. Farrell's motto in life carries over to his campaign: "Everyone pitching in makes everyone better off."

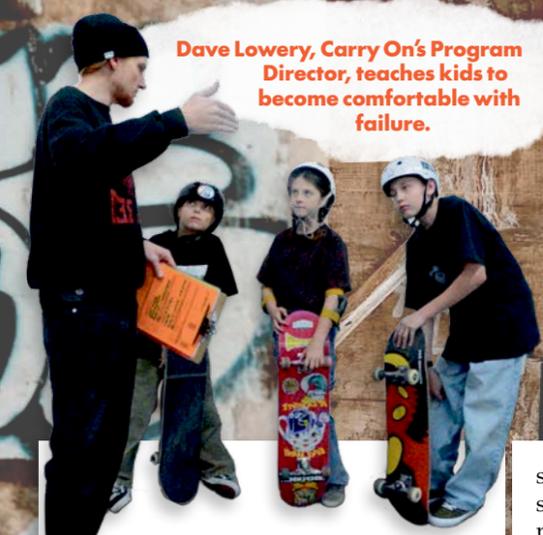


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Dave Lowery, Carry On's Program Director, teaches kids to become comfortable with failure.

CARRY ON : Fail. Fail Again. Fail Better

Josh Allred • jallred22@gmail.com

The clock starts. A dozen kids stand at the edge of a concrete bowl at Carry On's Provo skate facility, boards in hand and staring down a sharp drop. Some are here for their first session, while others have been coming for months. All of them are about to fail.

"Fear. Failure. Fall." Carry On's Program Director **Dave Lowery** calls these the Three Fs — the foundation of everything they teach. "With skateboarding, you live in failure," Lowery says. "You're practicing a trick over and over again, until one day, you land it."

This is not your typical youth sports program. There are no points, no winners and losers, no external outcomes to chase. Carry On, a nonprofit based in Provo and now expanding to South Jordan, uses skateboarding to teach mental resilience, and they're doing it by completely reframing what it means to win.

Executive Director **Cole Parkinson**, whose background is in sports psychology, is deliberate about the choice of sport. "It's independent, not a team — and that's a feature, not a bug," he explains. "There's an identity component: The value of being a 'skateboarder.'"

Skateboarding has always been the outsider sport, the middle finger to establishment culture. But that rebellious DNA is exactly what makes it work for teaching resilience. "We're not gatekeepers," Lowery says. "These kids were often the rejects. Here, they belong."

Unlike team sports, where performance is constantly measured against others,

skateboarding offers something rare: a space where effort directly correlates to progress, where there's no scoreboard to tell you you're losing. You push yourself into what Parkinson calls "stretch zones." And when you fall — not if, but when — you decide whether to get back up.

Each session follows the same rhythm: 25 minutes of skating and 15 minutes in the classroom. During skating, coaches guide students through progressively harder challenges, always framing the goal around the experience itself rather than the trick. "The development is there," Lowery says. "But if we frame everything around landing the trick, we lose the magic."

Then comes the mental skills training. Carry On has developed a curriculum around seven core topics: zones of purpose, dedicated training, thought patterns, confidence, focus and attention, community and motivation. Each class ends with breathing exercises. "We're very preventative," Parkinson emphasizes. "Everyone needs training in these strategies — positive self-talk, stress exposure, building confidence through incremental challenge."

The coaches know every participant's name when they walk through the door. They celebrate the falls as much as the landings. Lowery describes the scene from *The Sandlot* in which Smalls, not knowing how to catch or throw a ball, is taken under Benny's wing and is won over by the group when Smalls sticks his glove in the air and Benny hits one right in, demonstrating that everyone belongs. Lowery shows that clip to all their new coaches.

Parents notice the changes first. Kids who are anxious about trying new things start leaning into discomfort. Kids who strug-

gle with negative self-talk start to catch themselves and reframe their thoughts. The skills don't stay at the skate park.

The program has expanded to include adult classes, which sell out faster than youth sessions. Parents and kids now learn side by side, facing fear together. "Resilience doesn't develop in a vacuum," Lowery notes. "When it's reinforced at home, across generations, that's when it really takes hold."

When you reframe skateboarding around the process instead of the outcome, something shifts. You're not chasing the perfect trick to post on social media. You're building the capacity to fail, fail again and eventually fail better. You learn to fall seven times and get up an eighth.

Carry On is now registering for winter sessions at both their Provo and South Jordan locations. Scholarships are available for families in need, funded by their "Pushing Together" donor club. Visit carryon.org for more details.



Photo: Kevin TK Frantz

Kids who are anxious about trying new things start leaning into discomfort.



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materializing hope AT MATERIAL GALLERY and expression

Artist-run spaces often shape the cultural ecosystems they inhabit, creating room for experimentation, collaboration and access that larger institutions cannot always provide. In Salt Lake City, artists and co-directors **Colour Maisch** and **Jorge Rojas** have built that kind of space through the *Material Gallery* — a project grounded in their own creative practices and long-standing commitment to community engagement. By combining studio production with curatorial work, the pair have positioned their gallery as both an exhibition venue and a collaborative platform supporting artists across disciplines.

Maisch and Rojas have worked alongside one another for nearly 13 years, sharing studio space before establishing their gallery. After being priced out of a former space in the Granary District, they relocated to South Salt Lake and transformed an aging building into studios and a public exhibition site. As practicing artists, they approached the project with an understanding of structural gaps facing creatives. “Being artists, we had really clear ideas about how to work with other artists and how to support them in a really good way — what that would feel like for us,” Maisch says. “We know great people making great work, and we wanted to show that work.”

That philosophy shapes both the artists they represent and the environment they cultivate. Rojas emphasized the importance of creative identity, noting that developing a distinct visual language takes years of experience and experimentation. The gallery prioritizes artists whose work demonstrates strong direction and voice, while also centering cultural diversity within its programming — a curatorial approach that reflects their commitment to representation and visibility.

By Bianca Hill
b.alex.hill@gmail.com
Photo by Russel Daniels



(L-R) Artists Jorge Rojas and Colour Maisch are bringing a collaborative atmosphere to the art world with *Material Gallery*

The gallery’s name itself reflects these values. Rooted in both the physical and poetic implications of materiality, the title points to shared artistic priorities while symbolizing creative possibility. Rojas described the concept as referring not only to physical mediums but to the idea of something generative. Maisch echoed this perspective through the gallery’s atmosphere, stressing accessibility over exclusivity. “Creating a space that feels welcoming, whether you know a lot about art history or not, was important,” she says. “This is a place where people can come see great work and enjoy it.”

Collaboration has remained central to *Material’s* role within the regional arts landscape. Programming has included multidisciplinary presentations developed with community partners such as **801 Salon**, where performance-driven projects expand-

ed engagement beyond traditional exhibition formats, as well as partnerships with **Torpor House** hosting *Broadsheet* releases that support independent publishing and cross-media exchange. Their space has further served community advocacy through fundraising initiatives benefiting Utah Indigenous Fashion Week, reinforcing a commitment to redistributing visibility and resources across creative sectors. Their upcoming project *Grief Work* exemplifies this evolving model: developed alongside **Molly Heller** of *Heartland Collective*, the exhibition invites artists nationwide to explore grief as a collective experience rather than an individual event, generating nearly 200 submissions and incorporating performance-based programming alongside gallery presentation. Together, these partnerships position the gallery not simply as a venue, but as connective infrastructure within Salt Lake City’s artistic network.

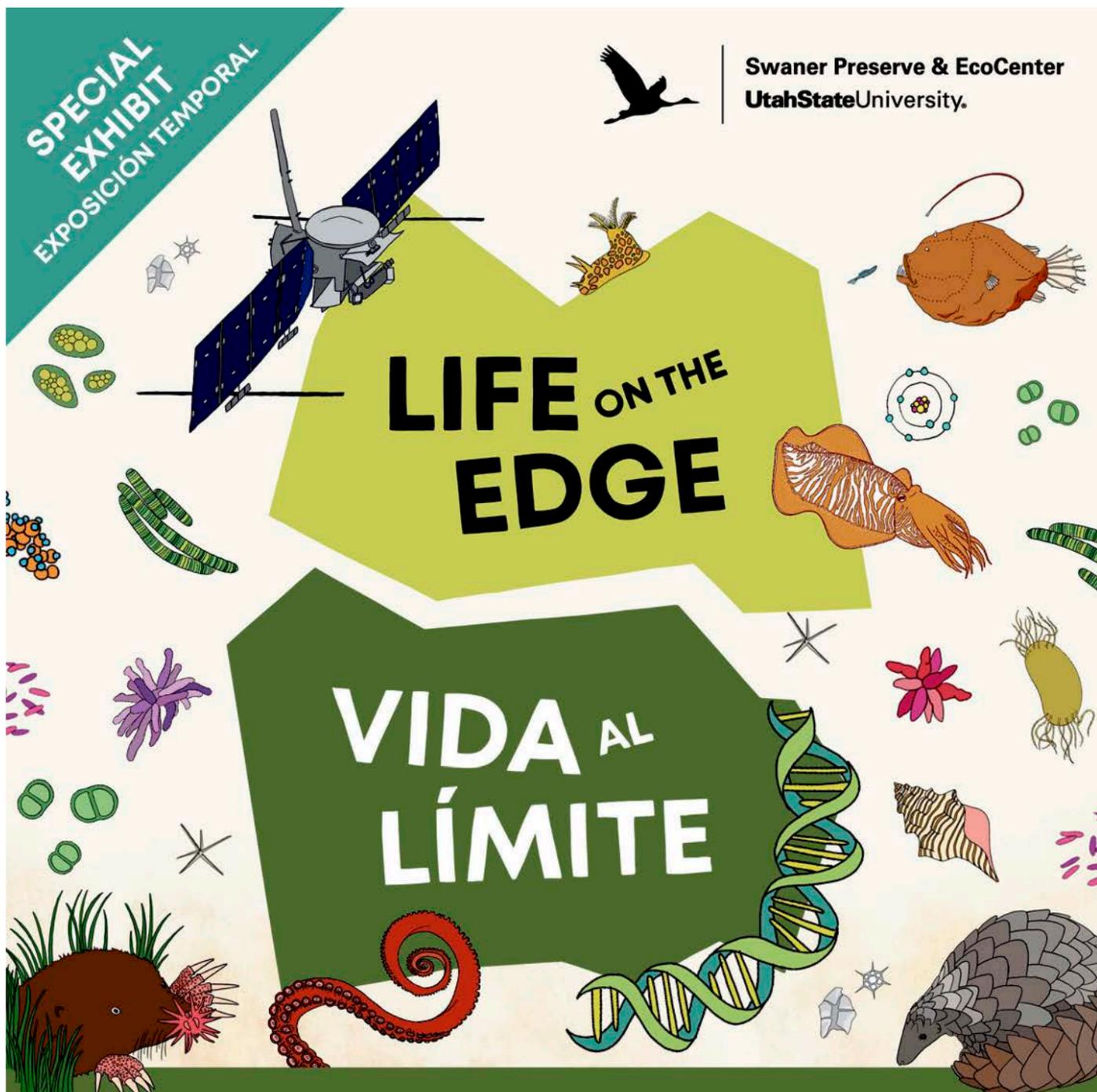
Maisch noted the constant balance between presenting meaningful work and maintaining financial sustainability, particularly given their decision to remain independent rather than nonprofit in order to avoid external censorship and retain curatorial autonomy. Yet financial considerations also inform their accessibility strategies. Rojas described encouraging artists to provide lower-cost works alongside institutional-level pieces, helping cultivate new collectors and broaden participation in the arts economy. “Part of our work is building a culture of collecting art,” he says, adding that the gallery’s success includes placing works in regional museums and public collections.

You can keep up with upcoming inspirations on Instagram [@material_contemporary](#) or visiting [materialart-gallery.com](#). The *Grief Work* exhibition takes place March 6 through April 10.

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SPACE & FADERS

CHARLES THORPE'S CREATIVE CAMPUS

By: Gavyn Cundari • cundarigavyn@gmail.com

Charles Thorpe has spent more than two decades working behind the scenes in live music. If you've gone to a concert in Utah over the past 20 years, chances are Thorpe and his company, *Anchor Stage Management*, played a role in making it happen. More recently, Thorpe has expanded his role in the local music scene with *Space and Faders*, a multi-use musicians' playground designed to support artists at every stage of the creative process.

A typical interview starts with a handshake, a few how-do-you-dos and pressing record. This one started with a



Photo: Roberto Valdez

For over two decades, Charles Thorpe has been showcasing the best of music to Salt Lake City.

three-hour tour. Walk the hallways of *Space and Faders*, and you'll see they are covered floor to ceiling with signed concert posters. "You're walking through my résumé," Thorpe says.

After years of working in stage management, Thorpe founded *Anchor Stage Management* in 2007 and now helps produce more than 350 shows annually throughout Utah. When I asked what his role was at *Anchor*, Thorpe laughed. "For my clients, I'm Tylene. For artists, I'm gravity."

In 2020, as venues went dark during the pandemic, Thorpe moved forward with plans for *Space and Faders*, a project he had been considering for years. The former industrial building in South Salt Lake, which he now owns, was converted into studio space, rehearsal rooms and multiple creative areas. "You can write, rehearse, record, shoot the album cover and shoot the music video here," Thorpe says. "You can do it all in a day if you have the gumption."

The setup of *Space and Faders* resembles a music building on a college campus — if that college were run by someone in band T-shirts and Vans instead of cardigans and Florsheims. Each room has its own purpose, with some meant for seasoned musicians, while others cater to students working alongside teachers. Thorpe is currently building out bigger spaces to accommodate larger production needs and classes.

For Thorpe, the space wasn't intended to be music-exclusive. "Music was always going to be the foundation, but I really wanted to have a platform for any kind of art," he says. Podcasting, voiceover work, photography, performance art — the goal is access. "I really just want people to have a place to come that's not their house."

Affordability remains a priority, especially for beginners and artists without deep pockets. "Everyone should have the access that anybody else has," Thorpe says. Unlike studios that operate with waitlists and exclusivity, he takes pride in lowering barriers. "If you're going to take someone's money, they should feel good about giving it to you."

"After the pandemic," Thorpe says, "people got weird and didn't want to talk to each other." *Space and Faders* was designed as a facilitator. Thorpe says, "I wanted it to be a melting pot of people creating just for creation's sake."

Thorpe is quick to point out that his role in the space does not come from being a musician himself. It comes from watching and learning the ins and outs of the music industry for decades. "The first thing I tell any band is to make the band an LLC and treat it like a business," he says. "So many bands fall apart because they might be great artistically, but the business side of things can easily ruin their relationship with one another." After years of seeing bands on tour succeed and implode, he views himself as a stepping stone for younger artists, offering guidance rather than artistic direction.

For younger or aspiring creatives out there, there's something to study in the way Thorpe operates: the risk-taking, the forward thinking, the willingness to invest in ideas and follow through.

For booking, rehearsal space information and upcoming events, visit spaceandfaders.com and follow him on Instagram @spaceandfadersllc.

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(L-R) Guitarist Matt Wiley, bassist Darren Watts, lead singer Nicholas Bat and drummer Charles Bogus rain hellfire as the hardcore band Gracemaker.



GRACEMAKER

By Emma Anderson • anderson.emmaly@gmail.com || Photos by Logan Sorenson

Let's rock this joint! *Kilby Court* isn't ready for the hardcore hellstorm that's about to be unleashed! Join us for *SLUG Localized* on Thursday, March 19 to see heavy-hitters **Gracemaker** and **Nadezhda**, with **Macana** as our haymaker opener. Be there or be square, dweebs!

At the intersection of heavy catharsis and spirited, creative spunk lies Gracemaker, a four-piece outfit of Utah hardcore veterans who seek to continually expand not only their musical exploration but positionality within the local scenes they occupy.

Founding members **Matt Wiley** (guitar) and **Nicholas Bat** (vocals) were familiar with each other from a distance from social overlap in the local music scene for nearly two decades before starting a project together. "Batty just reached out to me randomly," Wiley says. It wasn't long before bassist **Darren Watts**, a friend of Bat through work, signed on. (Watts coined the band's name, inspired by a piece of drum hardware that looked akin to a *Skyrim*-esque weapon with which to bludgeon someone.)

Gracemaker now features **Charles Bogus** behind the kit, who had come to know Wiley over a decade prior when Wiley was a member of the hardcore band **Starvst**. While a musical collaboration between the two never came to light at the time, Bogus posted that he was in search of a band to play drums in, while Gracemaker was serendipitously seeking the right percussionist to round out the lineup.

Gracemaker's bandcamp bio summarizes the ethos of the group as "a collaborative effort between friends as a means to push

not only themselves as musicians but what they could bring to the table bending multiple genres and influences." After years of playing in bands shoehorned into the hardcore genre, the members of Gracemaker embrace the thrill and challenge of going beyond genre. "For this [band], anything's on the table... not limiting ourselves to anything has been freeing," Bat says. "[It's] sometimes frustrating but very fun and silly at the same time... when you have all these goofy ideas like, 'there should be a samba breakdown,'" he adds with a laugh.

A key aspect of this approach is the utilization of varied instruments in both recordings and live performances. Bat played the tambourine between screams when I first saw them live, and Bogus tells me the group is headed on a Southern Utah songwriting retreat with an arsenal of instruments — including a trumpet and mandolin — in tow. Saxophone solos, an established horn section and keys all come up in the brainstorm of what might be in their future releases. To sample the genre-bending stew boiling in the cauldron that is Gracemaker, listen to "Charm," a track which the members agree serves as a summation of their sound.

This openness to the new and unconventional creates the necessary push out of the collective comfort zone. "We have parts that are jazz-leaning a little bit," explains Wiley.

"We're doing things outside of what you would normally hear in a hardcore band [like] any of us have been in before... you don't know how people are going to react to that sort of thing." Gracemaker embraces the uncomfortable, using it to push its members to grow to new heights. "I think we all push each other to do things to the best of our ability... everybody is pushing you to be the best at what you do," Wiley says.

A collaborative, authentic and analog approach to songwriting allows Gracemaker to weave unique musical webs informed by each member's ideas, but never dominated by any one. "When it's a collective thing, it's way more powerful," Wiley says.

For Gracemaker, music is more than just an opportunity to flex creative muscles and have fun — it's a necessary part of who they are. "If I go too long without [making music], it has a negative impact on everything in my life...I have to do it," Bogus says. Wiley echoes this sense of necessity, emphasizing how the surrounding community creates a lifeline for many. "The community around [music] has been so important to me that it makes me, even now — being old and married and paying a mortgage ... going to shows and having a band play a song that connects with you is the best thing there is."

NADEZHDA



(Clockwise from top) Guitarists Derek Ballard and Kai Cox, vocalist Brighton Ballard, bassist Erika Bird and drummer Trey Bird make up the hardcore band Nadezhda.

**Editor's note: Within a minute of pausing the interview, we were passed by a man who very intentionally paused to cropdust the table VERY loudly.*

Since the release of their debut record, *Battery*, just over two years ago, the heavy grunge group Nadezhda have proven themselves as a tour de force in the Salt Lake underground hardcore scene that the members have grown up and come to know each other — and themselves — in. Due to the five-piece being two couples, they jokingly refer to themselves as "hardcore's Fleetwood Mac." Guitarist **Derek Ballard**, a lifelong **Nirvana** enthusiast, alongside partner and vocalist **Brighton Ballard**, sought to start a project wherein the sounds of grunge met the intensity and conviction of hardcore. Fellow guitarist, longtime friend and **Despite Despair** bandmate **Kai Cox** was on board with the concept, along with drummer **Trey Bird**, who played previously in **Problem Daughter**. The only missing piece was soon found in Trey's partner, **Erika Bird**, the group's bassist (whom he has known for over two decades adorably).

Beneath the surface layer of Nadezhda's high-energy catchiness is a powerful battle cry for class consciousness. Any room they play is filled with a raw, collective catharsis felt strongly by the audience members who resonate with the message they put

out. It's a message of rage at the inequitable systems we exist under — "All of us are held down by the same conditions," says Brighton — but it's a message of hope nonetheless. The band's namesake is **Nadezhda Krupskaya** — wife of **Vladimir Lenin** and revolutionary Bolshevik leader, educator and political theorist — but that given first name directly translates to "hope." "Even if there's not a '10 years from now,' there is a hope for the now and the present," says Brighton. She adds that the shared joy of shows helps to cultivate that hope for the moment. Derek expresses that participation in arts and culture pushes forth the fight for a better world, and Kai adds, "There's always something somebody can do. You can't solve every problem at once, but you can move it an inch."

There's also a contagious joy and a passion in every Nadezhda set. "We just love playing," says Derek, adding that having the means to play music is a great privilege, and that the anticipation of a practice session or show is what gets them all through the work day.

Visual art is a strong component of the Nadezhda brand, thanks to Derek and Trey's work as graphic designers and Erika's work in production and prop design. Derek and Brighton also screenprint all Nadezhda merch — Trey says it's the first time he's ever worn his own band's merch — and believe

in the significance of visual art and physical and print media. "Design and music for me have always been intertwined," says Derek, who, similarly to Trey, got into design through album art. "The power in print is that it lives outside of an algorithm," Derek says. "It can't be controlled. That's why physical releases are really important to [us]."

Nadezhda now lives the dream of many local Salt Lake City bands, seeing their name on the *Kilby Block Party* lineup. Each member describes the way they struggled to keep it together after seeing the email. They mention **Show Me the Body** and **Die Spitz** as artists they're particularly excited to share the stage with. The flipside of that excitement is anxiety: "The nightmares have started," jokes Brighton. Only time will tell if Nadezhda follows their Woodstock '99-inspired concept of a nu-metal medley cover set on the *KBP* stage.

Nadezhda fans can also look forward to the release of a once-EP that's now looking to be closer to a full-length record. Kai jokingly refers to the record's musical direction as "**Danzig** meets **Bee Gees**," but it's certain Nadezhda could deliver a gutpunch of a record melding those influences.

Catch Nadezhda at *SLUG Localized* on March 19, at *Kilby Block Party* this Spring and at your next corporate mixer or team-building exercise if you reach out to them on LinkedIn.

Breasts, Botox and Saving Lives:

Boob Bus

By Rebekah Shea Parke • parkerebekah@gmail.com || Photos by Carly Duke

Whether it's a fun drink while getting your steps in or squeezing in your root touch-up, we're all well-versed in our own brand of self-care. Preventive healthcare, however, often falls to the bottom of the list, especially when it requires time off work, a hospital and a willingness to confront the unknown. With a bus and inspiring conviction, **Rena Vanzo** seeks to address the elephant in the room — or more, the breasts: Utahns aren't getting mammograms.

As a professional geneticist, Vanzo faced this reality shortly after completing her first mammogram. Though her results were healthy, the experience felt rushed and incomplete. "It wasn't really an educational experience," she recalls. "I was just kind of in the door, out the door."

That absence felt heavier given her history; her grandmother, **Doris Jean**, survived breast cancer, and her great-aunt died of it at just 39. The disconnect pushed her to search for a better way, where she uncovered a sobering truth. "Women should be screened every year once they turn 40... Utah's well below the national average, and we're in the bottom five," she says. "So I thought, 'Wow, what if I could create this kind of experience for people that's a little bit more educational... and a little bit more fun?'"

That idea became the Boob Bus: a fully accredited, insurance-accepting, mobile mammography clinic wrapped in pink and white, named after

her grandmother (we love you, Doris) and designed from the inside out to feel warm, playful, and safe. Once inside, you're greeted by passionate employees and a welcoming environment that puts you at ease. An assortment of inclusive boob pillows and cheeky pink-bra wallpaper offers comfort while you wait. You're provided a plush robe, warmed especially for you, and may even decide to refresh your Botox as one of many additional services. The experience is framed to welcome a wide variety of people, making space for care that feels inviting to everyone. Framed as its own type of "treat yourself" day, The Boob Bus seeks to redefine what it means to check an annual mammogram off the to-do list. As Vanzo puts it, "our vision is a world where no woman misses her annual mammogram. We don't want people to think they're an inconvenience... This is a service. And I feel like that is the way health care should be."

A service on wheels for good reason, The Boob Bus doesn't travel just for Insta-worthy photos, but to make preventive healthcare accessible to people whose lives don't easily accommodate a hospital visit.



An assortment of inclusive boob pillows and cheeky pink-bra wallpaper offers comfort while you wait for your mammogram.

As Vanzo puts it, "More and more you're seeing other things become do at home, do it yourself... I think that as a community, we need to be investing in these sorts of things so that women — all people — access health care how it best suits their situation." That reality includes rural geography, but also long workdays, child-care, transportation and simply a chunk of time many can't afford to lose. Still, accessibility alone isn't enough if fear keeps people from stepping inside. The experience, Vanzo knows, is "as emotional as it is clinical," especially for those who admit to their fear. She reminds them it's never too late for your first mammogram. By making space for conversation, education and updated pinch-free technology, the Boob Bus helps dismantle those fears. The response speaks for itself: "We survey everybody who's done [a mammogram], and 90% of women say it was way easier than they expected," Vanzo happily reports.

With all respect to **Fergie**, it's time we truly care for our lovely lady lumps. With hereditary cancer screening and modern mammogram technology more easily brought to us than ever before, preventive care becomes less intimidating — and harder to ignore.

So book your annual appointment at www.theboobbus.com, and when making sure you're in tiptop shape, please don't skip the nips!



The Boob Bus is a fully mobile mammography clinic wrapped in pink and white, named after Rena Vanzo's grandmother.



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GETTING HYPED FOR HYPHAFEST

By Cam Elliott • cameronchelliott@gmail.com || Photos courtesy: Hal Jean

Making something from nothing is hard, while making people collaborate can be even harder. But somehow, Hal Jean has done both.

Jean is the founder of *HyphaFest*, a Salt Lake City-based music festival that is already making huge waves even in its infancy. "Utah is a little bit of a dry spot for all-ages venues, so Hypha [focuses on] how we have more neat underground shows and concerts in Salt Lake," Jean says.

Jean tells me that *HyphaFest* was born of a mission that is closely followed by Jean's production company, Hypha. The mission, according to Jean, is to "run sound out of cool and unique places," a mission that she based on Boise's *Duck Club*, which brings unique sounds from across the world to venues across Boise. "Venue" in this use is a loose term that could mean donut shop, grocery store or anywhere that audio equipment can be hooked up and music can be enjoyed.

Jean makes no secret about the difficulties of making live music happen, as many artists can attest to. "In this economy, it's [becoming] harder and harder to run an independent live music venue, so this guerilla approach lends itself not only financially to smaller up-and-coming artists, but also lends itself well to the aesthetic we as a city have, being able to make rad shows happen," she says.

Last year's maiden voyage of *HyphaFest* was hosted at the Utah Arts Alliance's historic Art Castle. They welcomed an impressive lineup of 22 killer indie and alternative acts who all had to share one theme in their performances: bravery. "I felt like if I was going to do a festival, I wanted it to have a greater purpose, to not just showcase a pool of artists but also to showcase and facilitate a space where artists are encouraged to try new things," Jean says. "[We wanted] brave actions to be done publicly, and everyone gets to cheer each other on for it, instead of feeling self-conscious or that doing something brave is frowned upon."

Jean made it clear that *HyphaFest* is not just a place for performers to come and show what they have; she says it is a place where artists can show up, try new things and feel supported by the audience and other artists. It's not about doing what is tried-and-true, but it's about doing what is just true.

When asked about the future of the festival, Jean says she hopes it can continue the mission of the very first festival. She says, "I would like to see it nurture this fundamental idea of collective bravery." Jean continues, "What that looks like moving forward will be a discovery process for me. Each year I do this festival, I will continue to discover and uncover different elements about an event that facilitates that... but ultimately in ten years I think it would be really neat if Salt Lake City felt like a spot where other cities are like, 'Have you heard of the crazy things Salt Lake is doing?'"

Jean wasn't able to reveal too much about this year's festival as much of it is still in the works, but it is clear with as much passion and innovation that is going towards it, you won't want to miss it. Check out the details of last year's *HyphaFest* and stay tuned for details on this year at hyphaproductions.com. Stay brave, Salt Lake City!



Founder of HyphaFest Hal Jean is making collaborative art as the way to the future for SLC's music venues.

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Caputo's

It Takes a Village to Create a Salt Lake Staple

By Sean Rinn • rinnsean@gmail.com

Photo by John Barkiple

Caputo's Market & Deli is a dynasty that has ruled in Salt Lake City, but not with an iron fist cutting backroom deals and screwing people over like most corporations in 2026. *Caputo's* established an earnest care for their convictions, craft and community onto multiple generations. Starting from his do-it-yourself farming Greek grandmother immigrating to Utah in the 1940s to his gregarious father **Tony** opening *Caputo's* in 1997, **Matt Caputo's** devotion was instilled by his family early.

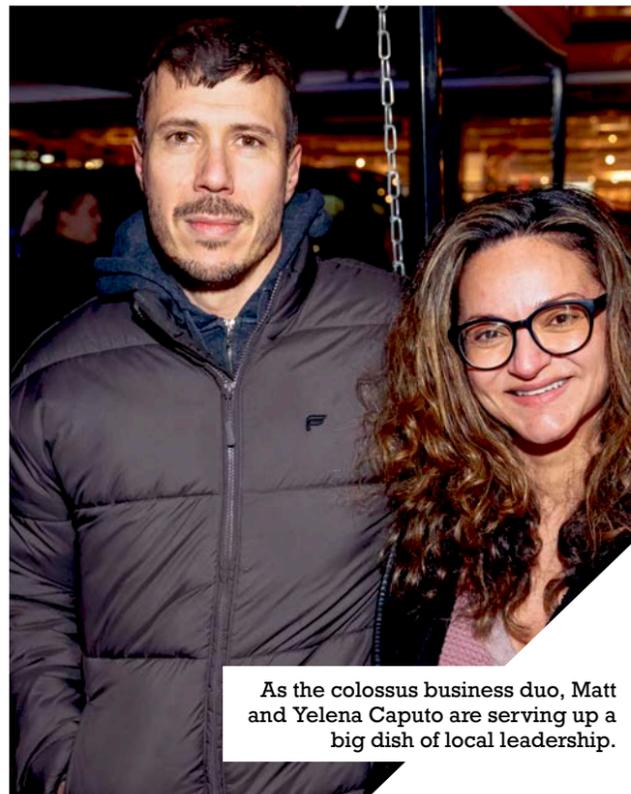
The current CEO of *Caputo's* reminisces on how his father not only helped prepare him to run the business through an apprenticeship requiring a demonstration of both passion and competence for the business, but how he cared about people. "I don't have his charisma, but I do have that care for people and community in my heart," Matt says. He remembers how his dad could befriend anyone, make the underdog in the room feel included and make his workers feel special. They loved him for it.

When protestors gathered across the street at Pioneer Park to express outrage toward the ICE killings in Minnesota, showing support for what he deemed a worthy cause was easy for Matt. He followed his father's example. *Caputo's* offered snacks to protestors, even joining in with their own sign that said: "Free food and drinks for protestors — NO ICE."

Initially, his gesture was met with complaints, negative reviews and the threat of losing customers. Then, the community reciprocated the same love *Caputo's* has shown over the years. Comments lamenting the positive effect *Caputo's* has had on people flooded in, along with over 500 five-star reviews to combat the earlier backlash, highlighting an already successful year for the mom-and-pop business.

This is not the first time they've stamped their name on their beliefs, as they passed out snacks for protests around the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Since its inception, *Caputo's* has established a culture that operates more like a family working together than a traditional business full of individuals clocking in and out. "Our position in the community definitely was started by my father," Matt says. He says that everyone's favorite part of coming to work was to hang out with Tony prior to his death in 2021.

Now, Matt has a new favorite part about clocking in: "My work gives me an incredible sense of purpose that I think is uncommon in a lot of retail industries. I feel really blessed that I feel that in my life and I feel it from my work specifically," he says. *Caputo's* mission is "to fight to preserve the food traditions of our collective ancestors," which is accomplished each day as they fight against a broken American food system that favors factory farming, corporate interests and private equity over giving the consumer the best edible product. Matt explained his favorite prod-



As the colossus business duo, Matt and Yelena Caputo are serving up a big dish of local leadership.

ucts in-store right now, which included their homemade Sofi Award-winning chocolate (*Caputo's Wild Jurua*), their wholesale sardines and Alpage cheese made by a 500-year-old technique, gushing over the incredible craftsmanship.

The only way a business can succeed for as long as *Caputo's* has, especially in the cutthroat food industry, is by having a strong cultural foundation. "This isn't just what we do. This is who we are," Matt says, highlighting the dedication and love woven into the fabric of their business. The care for the human element inside and outside their walls, exemplified by giving their staff a path to a specialized career rather than just some side gig or dead-end job, is further evidence of their commitment to the community.

It's no accident *Caputo's* has become a staple in Salt Lake City and it will be no accident when the same is true another generation from now. Stop by at 314 W. Broadway, Salt Lake City, UT Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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THE BORDERLANDS CONFERENCE

THE DIVIDE WHERE WE COME TOGETHER

By **Angela Garcia** • angelagr15@outlook.com

Photo courtesy of University of Utah, Department of English

Literature is one of the great tools of humanity. It is a form of communication that reminds us that tragedy and beauty exist simultaneously. For novelist and University of Utah professor **Michael Mejia**, these stories bring healing to an unnatural divide. The *Borderlands Conference* celebrates Latino and Chicano stories by bringing together a diverse lineup of authors. This year will feature notable writers like **Anthony Cody, Edgar Garcia, Raquel Gutierrez** and **Clyo Mendoza**.

The idea for the *Borderlands Conference* came in 2016 when a reading was held as part of a national movement of writers speaking out against anti-immigration rhetoric. Mejia recounts how one of the readers at that event, poet **Natalie Scenters-Zapico**, explained how little is actually known about the border community, despite people voicing strong opinions regarding immigration. That comment inspired him to host the first *Borderlands Conference* at the University of Utah and invite Latino writers across the diaspora to share stories about their lived experiences as people from either side of the border. The intent was to inform people about the realities of the borderland community, through different perspectives and storytelling

styles like fiction, non-fiction, poetry and more. Mejia says, “The focus of our conversations have been about the borderlands. Both the sort of traditional conflict and agitation that occurs at the border ... the border as an open wound. The place where there are these sorts of unresolved violences, but that’s a space that also has this great potential for healing and creativity.”

It is no question that with the current political climate stories like these are needed now more than ever. “I have no doubt that our attendees will have plenty to say about not just what this current administration has done to make immigrants’ lives harder and less safe, but thinking about ways that we as a community, both locally and nationally, can try to counter that,” Mejia says. Mejia explains that the conference allows perspectives from both sides of the border to hone in on not just political and societal issues but also the art made around the border. “It’s always been just a super fascinating conversation. There’s a very different perspective on Mexican lives in the US than there are in Mexico.”

For Mejia, the borderlands signify “a place of meeting — in which a variety of different ways of describing and thinking about the world and experience come together ... the scholarly, the creative, the poet, the experimental, the more conventional.” He finds it important that people are able to engage in these conversations in ways that best illustrate their worldview and



University of Utah professor and novelist **Michael Mejia** is bringing creativity together at the *Borderlands Conference*.

cultivate a culture of exchange — a back and forth of ideas, similar to the traveling between the border. “Just as it’s been an educational experience for me, I wanted it to be an educational experience for our audiences, for Salt Lake generally.”

The main thing Mejia wants audiences to take away from the *Borderlands Conference* is that “Latino stories are American stories, and if we want to value American stories then we should be valuing Latino stories.” By giving Latino voices a platform to express themselves, the history and connections between North America and Latin America become more prominent and can inform people’s understanding of border culture and what it means to exist at the edge of an imaginary divide. The *Borderlands Conference* reminds us that the land we currently live on was once part of Mexico and that even before Mexico and the U.S. were nations they were just one large piece of land. The connection still exists despite the divide certain rhetoric would lead us to believe, and by understanding that we can find new ways to move forward.

The *Borderlands Conference* takes place March 19 and 20. The event will include readings from influential Latino writers and also a Q&A for both English and Spanish speakers.

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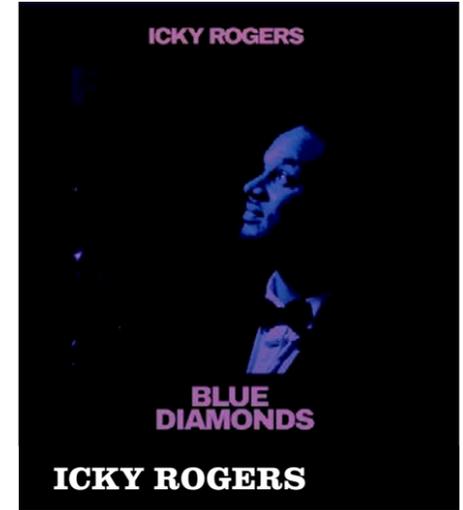
AEON AUGUST
 “Alien Song”
 Self-Released
 Street: 10.25.2025
 Aeon August = Future Islands + Mitski

The subject of UFOs and alien abductions is a coffee table curiosity of mine. I won’t initiate that conversation, but brother you can bet I’ll ride that bull for eight seconds. The latest contribution to the zeitgeist of extraterrestrial lore is Aeon August’s “Alien Song,” an intriguing narrative of an apparently “true” story of alien abduction. I’ll be honest, at my initial glance at the AI-generated artwork, I didn’t “want to believe.” However, I do like the song. **Tetra** (lead vocals) has this cool **Lana Del Rey** eerie blues vocal thing going, which nestles comfortably into the anti-gravity propulsion of rhythm and synth by producer **Marc Jones**. The closing line: “everything we know is absolute... nonsense,” is well-timed in its delivery. It’s giving *Coast to Coast AM* reruns in a smokey Winnebago all the way to Barstow vibes, and I’m here for it. —*Cole Stocker*



CLAY PIGEONS
 “Methadone (DEMO)”
 Alchemy Records
 Street: 01.06.2026
 Clay Pigeons = Deftones + vocal tone of The Bloodhound Gang

On my initial listen to “Methadone,” I wasn’t too sure how I felt about the sort of monotone vocals that switch back and forth throughout the entire track, but it grew on me very fast. They fit incredibly well for about 90% of the track. However as the track progresses, the instrumental starts building and Clay Pigeons gives us an unexpected, but welcome melodic solo out of almost nowhere, and they keep the energy up with everything. As for the vocals, I was hoping to hear some more raw emotion come out in the vocals as the track progressed. I do, of course, love just how raw and rough “Methadone” sounds. It brings me back to the good ol’ days of seeking out and finding whatever demo tapes I would get my grubby little hands on, just to hear the raw, unfiltered talent of up-and-coming artists. —*Skyler Montalvo*



ICKY ROGERS
 “Blue Diamonds”
 Self-Released
 Street: 12.05.2025
 Icky Rogers = Sam Cooke + Teddy Swims + Dick Zimmerman

Either you love jazz, or just the mere mention of it triggers a visceral reaction and a bad aftertaste. Be not afraid — Icky Rogers brings a jazzy hit that has even the biggest non-believers involuntarily tapping their feet to the beat. Whether you leap into a musical montage of releasing inhibitions in underground speak-easies or even if it’s preferred playing on repeat during a creative hyper-focus session, “Blue Diamonds” delivers exactly what one hopes for from a new and tasty jazz single. Spicy brass instruments come through with an unexpected kick, building heat in the back of your throat, balanced by the buttery, smooth and sultry flavor of a seasoned, soulful voice. Tracks like this introduce real flavor to an acoustic, fry-sauce-loving population by expanding our palate in a way the local scene needs. “Blue Diamonds” is a satisfying testament to Rogers’ effortless skill, leaving us satiated, impressed and expectantly hungry for more “Icky jazz.” —*Rebekah Shea Parke*



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March 2026

The Fruit Within the Seed

By Nichole Huntsman • nicholehuntsman@gmail.com

Do we scatter our seeds randomly around our feet or plant with precious care?

ARIES: —♈
Seer's Premonition

The fire is burning at the bottom of the well — heed the voices. Down the stone stairwell and into the ancient byway of life, there's your hermit playing with light and shadow. Rough visions stream across stone walls, written by the prophet's holy hand.

TAURUS: —♉
Give it Away

On the wall, your treasure rested. Now, there's a nail-marked scar to the heart. You must loosen the cords and unbind the backing. With care, subdue your quiet part. It will be better left for the taking, as a monument of your life's long art.

GEMINI: —♊
Enter the Tent

Impossible, but you're not surprised as the jester tips his head, sending the whole court in search of the view, inverted and confused. If they expect a clown, then play them one: a bluff, a toss and a fake or two.

CANCER: —♋
Natural Born

Go through the archive, back to the catalogued beginning. Find the shape of the first form, where the wild cast gave original life. Divine action in the release. Recombination of brilliance, strung by the Fates. "Here," God said. And you made them your own.

LEO: —♌
Days Return

Feel the itch of spring, see sunlight creeping across blinded walls. All four walls grow closer. Oh, to run with hair loose toward the pillage of summer, to bask in autumnal rays. But still, these last days of winter cling to early weeks of March. Come, Spring, with all your glory! Set me free from this heavy curse!

VIRGO: —♍
Slipping Words

Your labor was not in vain. Nor was the reach of the arm to the beloved, offering what you've saved for this moment. Remember the misfit and misapplied, the days when order seemed exhausted into senselessness. But now, the words no longer fight the

tongue. They are tipped and readied toward the truth.

LIBRA: —♎
Light Caught in Silver

Ah, the open space, the far and distant view. One for now to take away, one for the separate two. You sit with tabula rasa and precious moments that glow for you. The uncharted past twins future lengths; will it be the one, the you or the two?

SCORPIO: —♏
Pure Intention

Hearted oaths and commitments will be honored. The Divine walks us through. As destiny leans toward your ear, listen clearly and listen true. The world has its rulers, its hours and its seasons. But the hearer can only be you.

SAGITTARIUS: —♐
Runaway and Prose

This dream might be eclectic. The world won't mind what it is you do. People need dreamers streaking naked, running the sky like me and you. We need gamblers throwing their chips into the fire of good cause and rule. Turn around and spin the world, pulling the pulse of red and blue.

CAPRICORN: —♑
Reclamations and Returns

What one has left behind, another has found anew — dropped behind a wagon's tracks, for a river crossing of blue. Take back what's left from time's despair. Find the bits of the end renewed. Rebirth life for the abandoned and find a space for something new.

AQUARIUS: —♒
Cutting the Noise

A rush of light streams through, loosening the loop-hole in the law, born of what could be or not, holding hands with the future for the future's sake. Hope is there in the difference applied, a new treatment and an alternative take.

PISCES: —♓
Sword of the Paladin

The Jedi Master here is you. You saw the sight and you knew the thing. You gave heed and followed through. Now the day has turned its face to show a bruise of a softer hue. Make haste and wear your armour well; the hill climb will soon be through.





Utah Change Maker: Nate Drew From Lost Art Tattoo

By Mike Brown • mgb90210@gmail.com

For the Utah Change Makers issue this month, I chose to interview Nate Drew, the founder of *Lost Art Tattoo* and the *Salt Lake Tattoo Convention*. We talked for over two hours over several beers. Over the course of the interview, Drew divulged several stories that were both entertaining and intriguing, but shall not be printed for the sake of my word count (and because there may be some pending legal ramifications). Honestly, the best stories I've ever heard in my life are ones I can't print for similar reasons, but that's kind of what makes those stories so great. In some ways, it makes those memories between friends more intimate.

We all know about the *Salt Lake Tattoo Convention* and its massive success. Drew's been letting me help out the last couple of years by driving a party bus for the artists during the weekend. Several of the out-of-state artists, without me prompting or giving them a handy, have told me that it's one of their favorite conventions to participate in.

So I wanted to know more about the history of *Lost Art* and Drew's background. It turns out it would make an awesome Lifetime TV movie. Aside from having to redact nearly half the interview like it was the Epstein files, here's what I learned about Drew.

First off, Drew was voted least likely to succeed by his high school. He didn't really say if that was lack of motivation to succeed or a blatant exposure to the failure of our current academic system. He comes from a family of prominent artists, some of whom Drew said were kind of pretentious, whereas Drew was fueled with rock and teen angst, which I can relate to.

Nate somehow made it into an art school in Virginia and while driving past a tattoo shop one day with his chick at the time saw a help wanted sign outside of a tattoo shop, and thus the journey began.

While tattooing in Virginia his brother was an art professor at the *University of Utah*. His brother was getting hitched out here so Nate had to come out for the wedding, where his brother told him to bring his tattoo gear because there were art students who wanted to get tattooed.

This was around '95 or '96, and there were really only three tattoo shops in Salt Lake at the time: *Suzu M's*, *Southern Thunder* and *ASI*. The tattoo culture back then wasn't the same as it is now, where everyone and their dog has ink done. While Drew was



As one of the godfathers of SLC's tattoo scene, artist Nate Drew continues his craft at *Lost Art Tattoo*.

Photo by Brent Landes

out here, he landed a guest spot at *ASI* alongside **Rich D** who was working there at the time, later becoming the owner and founder of *Big Deluxe*.

Drew saw an opportunity while he was out here. Turns out there were a lot of young kids who liked hardcore music and drinking Mountain Dew (some may have called them straight edge) who wanted large tattoos that Drew was capable of doing.

Drew opened *Lost Art* around '97, and I believe that's about when Rich D opened *Big Deluxe*. Different artists with different styles for sure, but

Drew has always had a strong respect for Rich D. And regardless of any tattoo politics, Drew and Rich really opened the doors for artists in this city to open their own shops. Drew refused to take credit for this take when I told him that, but I stand by it.

And that's a guy who was voted least likely to succeed in high school. Obviously, Drew has his own ethos and opinions on how things should be done and based on his success it's hard to argue with them. Some of those are "don't fall for gimmicks" and "it's okay to fuck around and find out." But the biggest one is respect.



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DAILY CALENDAR



It's your lucky month! Check out these shows, and scan the QR code for even more events on our daily calendar!

Friday Mar, 6

Nekrogoblikon
— Metro Music Hall
Salt Lake City Tattoo
Expo 2026 — Salt Palace
Convention Center
Warm Veins,
Gracemaker,
Anonymous & Vape
Plug — Aces High Saloon

Saturday Mar, 7

Colony House — The
Commonwealth Room
El George Harris
— Eccles Theater
Sebastian Bach
— The Depot
Stateside — The Pearl
on Main
THE EMO NIGHT
TOUR
— Metro Music Hall

Sunday Mar, 8

Blackwater Holylight
— Aces High Saloon
KBP Local Highlight
— Kilby Court

Tuesday Mar, 10

redveil
— Soundwell
Siamese w/ Cabal
— Kilby Court
Zara Larsson — The Union

Wednesday Mar, 11

Katya — The Complex
SIAMESE — Kilby Court
Peaches
— Metro Music Hall

Thursday Mar, 12

Bad Time Records Tour
— The Beehive
The Caraways
— The Urban Lounge
The Funks, Hoodoo
Mama & Harvest of
Ash — Aces High Saloon

Friday Mar, 13

HARRY STYLES
DANCE NIGHT
— Metro Music Hall

Bad Bad Hats
— Kilby Court
Four Stroke Baron
— The Beehive
Hawthorne Heights
— The Depot
Intranced, Blood Star &
Stench Descent
— Aces High Saloon
Jeff Dunham Artificial
Intelligence
— Maverik Center
Moondough
— The DLC at Quarters
Nine Inch Nails
— Delta Center
RudyWade — Kilby Court
The Last Gang
— The Beehive

Saturday Mar, 14

Fire in the Mountains
— Aces High Saloon
Indigo De Souza
— Soundwell
Last Dinosaurs
— Velour Live Music Gallery
Sappho After Dark
— Metro Music Hall
VAL/IN/TIME
— SLC PUB

Sunday Mar, 15

Lala Lala w/ lots of
hands — Kilby Court

Spiritual Cramp
— Kilby Court
The Mighty Sequoyah
— Velour Live Music Gallery

Monday Mar, 16

GRIZZ CLL
— The Urban Lounge
Testament — The Complex

Wednesday Mar, 18

Advance Base
— 3hive Record Lounge
Craft Lake City
Application Support
— Salt Lake Public Library

Thursday Mar, 19

SLUG Localized
— Kilby Court

Friday Mar, 20

All Your Friends
— Metro Music Hall
BOYS LIKE GIRLS
— The Union
Dead Floyd
— The State Room
Gravehuffer,
Grindscape & Vicious
Souls — Aces High Saloon
The Lucha Project
— Metro Music Hall
The Thing w/ Mopsy
— Kilby Court

The Warped Band
— The Urban Lounge
Trey Kennedy
— Eccles Theater

Saturday Mar, 21

Broadway Rave
— Metro Music Hall
Dream, Ivory
— Kilby Court
John Mulaney
— Eccles Theater
Opal in Sky
— The Pearl on Main

Tuesday Mar, 24

Hadestown
— Eccles Theater
The Sloppy Boys
— The DLC at Quarters

Wednesday Mar, 25

DROOK — Kilby Court
Quarters w/ Porch
Light — Kilby Court
Victor Jones
— Velour Live Music Gallery
Ashnikko — The Union
War on Women
— The Beehive

Friday Mar, 27

Ally Nicholas
— The Beehive
Slaughter To Prevail
— The Complex

The Psychodelics
— Kilby Court
Turnpike Troubadours
— Maverik Center

Saturday Mar, 28

Yaotl, Antebellum &
Mormon Tabernacle
Fire — Aces High Saloon
Machine Girl
— The Depot
NINI COCO
— Metro Music Hall
runo plum — Kilby Court

Sunday Mar, 29

EIDOLA
— Metro Music Hall
West 22nd — The Complex

Monday Mar, 30

Belair Lip Bombs w/
dust — Kilby Court
Dear Maryanne
— Kilby Court

Tuesday Mar, 31

Howling Giant,
Insomniac & Blood Star
— Aces High Saloon
MX Lonely
— The DLC at Quarters
Sticky Fingers
— The Union

Wednesday Apr, 1

Ulrika Spacek
— The DLC at Quarters

Thursday Apr, 2

bbno\$ — The Union

Friday Apr, 3

Lucy Darling
— Eccles Theater

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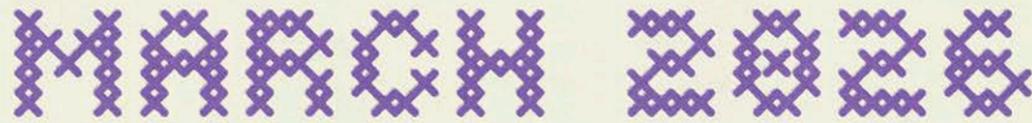
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PRESENTS

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3.4 Alex Sampson | Soundwell **3.6 BENEÉ** | The Complex **3.13 The Strumbellas**
| The Complex **3.13 Steinza** | Soundwell **3.14 Indigo De Souza** | Soundwell
3.19 ARIES | Soundwell **3.20 Jonah Kagen** | The Complex **3.20 ALEXSUCKS**
| Soundwell **3.25 JMSN** | Soundwell **3.27 Landon Conrath** | Soundwell
3.27 Yellow Days | The Complex **3.28 Machine Girl** | The Depot **3.28**
The Wonder Years | The Complex **3.28 LANY** | The Delta Center
3.29 West 22nd | The Complex **3.29 Billie Marten** | Soundwell



KILBY COURT

3.3 Stella Standingbear | **3.4 The Technicolors** | **3.5 Jamie Fine** | **3.6 ME ND ADAM**
3.7 KBP Local Highlight: Nadezhda, Gonk, Starr67, Chalk | **3.9 Clinton Kane** | **3.11**
Matt Pryor | **3.12 RudyWade** | **3.13 Bad Bad Hats** | **3.14 Spiritual Cramp** **3.15 Lala**
Lala | **3.17 Nep** | **3.18 Yesterday Erased** | **3.20 The Thing** | **3.21 Dream, Ivory** | **3.22**
Devin Kennedy | **3.23 Lily Seabird** | **3.24 DROOK** | **3.25 QUARTERS** | **3.26 The Psycodelics**
3.27 runo plum | **3.29 Dear Maryanne** **3.30 The Belair Lip Bombs + dust**



METRO MUSIC HALL

3.5 Nekrogoblikon | **3.6 The Emo Night Tour** | **3.7 The Browning** | **3.11 Peaches**
3.12 DISCO ALWAYS: Harry Styles Dance Night | **3.13 Sappho After Dark- Noche de**
Lucha **3.19 The Lucha Project: Co-Ed Death Battle - Wrestling and Live Music** | **3.20 All**
Your Friends: The Indie Party! | **3.21 Broadway Rave** | **3.25 POPSCENE Presents:**
VANDELUX | **3.27 NINI COCO of RuPaul's Drag Race 18** | **3.28 Eidola** | **3.29 The Menzingers**
4.2 Hot! Take Burlesque Presents: Rock-A-Burly | **4.4 Metalachi** | **4.17 Ty Segall**



URBAN LOUNGE

3.2 Capstan | **3.5 Corb Lund** | **3.6 FREE SHOW: Musor Single Release** | **3.12 Modern**
Speed | **3.14 Timecop1983** | **3.15 GRIZZ CLL** | **3.17 Pixie and the The Partygrass Boys:**
St. Patty's Day Party! | **3.18 Dark Divine** | **3.19 The Warped Band** | **3.20 Clay Street**
Unit **3.21 CRIMEWAVE: A POST-PUNK & DARKWAVE PARTY** | **3.23 Band Of Skulls** |
3.25 Night Cap | **3.26 Grieves** | **3.28 KUAA Presents: Tokyo Tea Room** | **3.29 Pity**
Party (Girls Club) **3.31 Dark Tranquillity & Soen** | **4.2 Vixtrot** | **4.3 Koffin Kats** | **4.4**
Javi Celebration of Life | **4.8 Theoretical Blonde**

BLUE GENE'S

MONDAY: Magic The Gathering | **TUESDAY:** Trivia | **WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY:** Karaoke



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