

Sniff, Grr

I wanted a wolf costume.

I wanted to make mischief (of one kind).

I wanted to growl at my mother and chase the dog with a fork.

I was willing to risk no dinner and an early bedtime to do it.

I wanted very much to lift my leg and stare the Wild Things in the eye, and blink not even once, but Summer may as well have pissed in the corner and shit on the floor without so much as offering me the courtesy of a get-acquainted sniff.

Late to arrive, early to leave; summer was rife with slippery talk and cheap rationalizations, screaming matches and broken dishes, and let's also not forget a mass of dulling repetitious deadening obligation. June's incessant soakings left me with wan, sallow greenery, my basil sulked with pinched spinstery leaves and my balcony fell ill to a variety of Shatnery - Star Trek-kish fungi. The soil was fine rich, stenchy stuff; I fed it, watered it - still it glowered, yielding little. My greenery and I pined for numinous summer's searing heat. This was not my garden; this was not my raffish season. There was no place for me to idle, wile, sniff or grr; no place to raise my leg.

One nose-dive after another, Summer sunk, taking on the purple hue of that brief athletic experiment with boxing at my Catholic High School; a time spent in regular study of self-inflicted bruising, both mortal and venial, genuflections all, I recall getting popped in the nose, followed by several hard hits to the skull, the welling of water to my eyes, the ringing in the head and the rising of a natural rage; there were terminal regrets and tired arms that couldn't raise a glass to the lips -- and so it was that the announcement of Sam Weller's death left me feeling punch-drunk and lost. A light in my imagination dimmed, the universe shrunk, Summer got grayer and soggy; it was an unexpected low blow. The nearing anniversary of my Mom's passing only added a sad lilac lilt to the proceedings. (Ma was a sucker for a good bookstore too you see).

After the news, I wiled away many an afternoon, as I'd done for many a moon, paying my respects, wandering the basement's musty stacks - ironic that great literature smells like corked wine. I loved, always have, sauntering through that basement, I happened on "Walking" with Thoreau there and learned what it means to "saunter". It also came to my attention that I should "consider no man happy; until he is dead he is merely fortunate" (Herodotus). Then, during a period of overly prideful unemployment (I, a rash punk) spent my last \$30 (worse than my last \$30, it was my last \$30 left in overdraft) on a magnificent edition of the complete works of ee cummings. I would go there and want it, with a hungry nervous want, running my hands over its creamy pages, rereading favorite lines, counting the pennies in my checkbook, working out the week's meals in my head. I was unemployed, I was hungry, I wanted a book - oh how I wanted that book. I still know that "not even the rain has such tiny hands" and that "Life (who never grows old) is Always beautiful and that Nobody beautiful ever hurries?" - and I remind myself to work without a net once in a while, to stop blowing smoke and pouring whiskey.

I doubt very much that Pioneer Day proceedings made a nod in Sam's general direction, and Salt Lake City felt broken without literate men. Summer is not for the building of character and all these stark reminders of mortality, and a Past means acknowledging time gone by, choices made, good and bad, and being forced to acknowledge all those numbers and events and places and people was much like having a cosmic hand grab me by the scruff of the neck and rub my nose in unpleasantness. It is a point of pride that my father at the age of 80 "still wanted to play baseball like he used to" and it is a point of pride that I, still, want to growl and chase my mother with a fork. My genetics carry a predisposition toward resentment and disregard for the passing of Time. As much as I love the poem, I was not built for going gently into that good night. My Wild Things called me thither to the wild rumpus, away from this leaden Salt Lake City summer and I also had no desire to trip over Pioneer Day parade campers. Summer dragged, more sinned against than sinning. Color me gone.

I "saunter", Thoreau-style, to and through Holy New York to a familiar brass goat braying hello, a sprawling zaftig maiden dipping her hair in a garden pool and a series of shimmering oils, familiar faces and dreamscapes coloring a day. There is an immense sandwich, a flaccid French horn, an ecstatic giant blue clarinet swaying silent with internal jazz and Lilliputian islanders going about their merry Lilliputian business under a Brobdingnagian melting cello. Claes Oldenburg spins a summery riff. India ink ponies float over cerulean blue men shimmering breathless over pulsing red loves. There are Chagalls, Pygmalion clutches at Galatea, I want to climb into an ocean of silver lightning, called "Tempest", it looks like trees on top of the Metropolitan Museum of Art - would that I could escape the earth, a Baron of the Trees, the slush of my soul begs for it. (See p.2)

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Your feedback is welcome and wanted - any thoughts on how I might improve this newsletter are welcome. I want to hear it all — the good, the bad and the ugly. Questions, concerns, thoughts, experiences, both fair and foul, francis.fecteau@gmail.com

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and delicious in the world of wine.

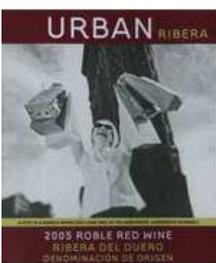
Sniff, Grr

(continued from p.1)

There are fireflies one summer night, blinking lazy and bright against the warm forest green of Central Park and blisters on my feet as I pass Lincoln Center, where sweaty men in suspenders and meaty women in their clinging polyester and bare white legs clutch at one another, shuffling around a makeshift dance-floor to a Duke Ellington tune – who knew people still moved to swaying old love rhythms, who knew they still held one another close and dreamt of love under Lincoln Center stars, scented with Old Spice and perfumed cotton balls tucked in the brassiere. Pygmalion again clutched at Galatea. Yes, even polyester peacocks must mate given a warm summer evening scented with drug store aftershave, warm beer and smashed cigarettes. I nap and doze on a park bench that breezy warm night near a magician who twists balloons into animal shapes for giggling kids below a statue of Alice, the Hare, the Cheshire Cat and the Hatter in Wonderland, mad hatters all. I climb a tree.

There is of course that hurried final afternoon, of blistered feet and sticky skin, New York chafing and clinging as it does. There are last minute visits, farewells to friends, stamping their colors firmly in mind; silver, green and shimmering, to the bluebird in my heart, as I walk down the Upper West side under a sullen gray sky frilled with electric thrusts and haywire light and a New York deluge that soaks me to the bone. Thoughts of nakedness aside had I not the distant worry of a weekend in a New York jail, I may very well have attempted a return to the hotel in a more carefree fashion (common sense wins the day. I wait till the return to my warm hotel bedroom, I liberate myself from the confines of my damp wardrobe and chug cold Champagne like soda pop straight from the bottle - its a thrilling **Grand Cru** number from **Jean Lallement with a blue label/\$65**, and it goes down easy, tickling and bright) but truth is I'd forgot just how sultry and affecting New York's summer rainstorms are - stiff nipples, moist cleavages, clinging cotton and all and under an awning with other awed New Yorkers, I admire the storm's drenching sweetness. Absolution comes with a crack and a boom and summer becomes mine again.

Urban Indeed



Its soft spot, Ribera del Duero is, it's a hot rocky place where seeds find no purchase but sweet grapes do. This is a deep blast of black, jammy fruit, espresso and chocolate notes that have a price-tag defying richness for the mere (\$15) **Urban Ribera del Duero Red 2005**. New vintage, new price, same exceptional depth. A steal.

Raise a Leg

So it was that summer came and went without much notice. -That time of year where one celebrates the bright bounty of summer gardens, where one drinks entirely too much of Italy in one late-into-the-evening sitting, was cut brutally short in a hurried rush of alternating rain and sun. Italy and its flavors resumed for me one night at **Tipica (a Caputo's Joint)** and eased my seasonal angst. Confronted by fresh bufala mozzarella, a lustrous Pesto (I swore it a curative for this flaccid pecker of a summer) and a sultry veal ragout, my evenings joys were framed by this hale and hearty trio of new vintage releases from Piedmont, and so it began, my slow ease into a radiant fall.



The Boroli clan are late comers to the Byzantine wine realm that is Piedmont. Heirs to a massive publishing fortune, they decided to make a small fortune from a large one and entered the wine business with a monied vengeance. These new releases of their "entry level" table wines are supple, bright and well defined; **the terrific Boroli "Anna", 2006 (\$15)** is blended from Nebbiolo, Barbera, Cabernet and Merlot. It shows a core of black fruits toned by earthy truffley notes. Minimal oak makes it a fresh addition to the table. The **Boroli "Quattro Fratelli" Barbera 2006 (\$17)** shows a juicy plumpness in its plummy ripe black fruits, this is reflective of a warm, ripe vintage (and a hellofa lot of fun to drink. The **Boroli Barolo 2004 (\$45)** is a brilliant effort; showing a roses and road tar, violets and leather character in a cascade of sweet black cherry and licorice fruit. It will age exceptionally well, but why delay gratification? I am going to save it for a salami-for-dessert chaser this Turkey day.

Go Here, Go Now



No surprise that I have a fondness for underdogs, (even Yankees sometimes feel another's boot heel). Portugal & Austria, the proverbial Rodney Dangerfields of viticulture, see little if any respect and serious consideration. The **Quinto do Crasto Douro Red 2007 (\$15)** an old vine blend of Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz from a sunny hilltop on the Douro River is a Zin-like blast of fun. The **Heidi Schrock Weissburgunder 2007 (\$25)**, is a garter-and-pushup racy explosion of tangerines, minerals and bright fresh citrus. Who knew Pinot Blanc got naughty?

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Comfort Food

We as a species are orally fixated. We adjust the emotions with regular insertions of comforting textures and flavors. Rituals attach themselves and before you know it you are chomping through grilled cheese and tomato soup in a haze of tears wailing at the fundamental unfairness of the Universe, all the while feeling the tug of sentimentality and a “there-there” from the deepest recesses of mother-tinged memory. I too have been expelled from the ice cream aisle at the nearest supermarket for Sins against the Dairy more than once. I am however a creature of impulse with little control and my need for a dependable thrill is critical. If Need and Economy must reconcile, Spain is the inevitable arbiter between my greed and need. New Releases below...



Bodegas Borsao Seleccion Crianza '06 (\$16) A potpourri of black and blue fruits, incense and jasmine that gets fleshy, juicy and sweet on the finish. A blend of Grenache, Cab and Tempranillo.

Bodegas Mano a Mano, “Mano a Mano” '07 (\$10) - a Utah favorite makes its triumphant return. This hails from an old vine source of tempranillo from the high hot plains of La Mancha. Treated to a touch of French oak, its low yield intensity of flavors is tempered by a kiss of French oak on the finish. Its an inky dark wine, with a wonderful array of cherry and dark berry flavors with notes of tobacco and licorice. A steal.



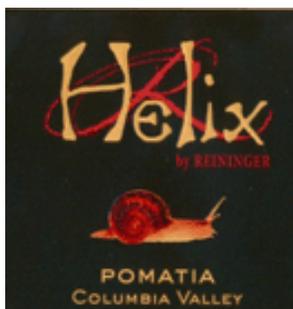
Bodegas Borsao Tres Picos '07 (\$17) always stuns me into a high octane delirium. Declassified fruit from pricey Alto Moncayo single-vineyard bottlings makes for Mind-blowing richness.

Bodegas Volver “Paso a Paso” '08 (\$10) New vintage, here by the truckload. It's a deep, dark, inky, juicy thrill of blackberry fruit and earthy sweet licorice notes. Toasted French oak gives this the extra touch of racy sweetness found only in much more expensive bottlings. Old vine tempranillo from La Mancha. Look too for the equally thrilling white **Paso a Paso Verdejo 2008 (\$10)**



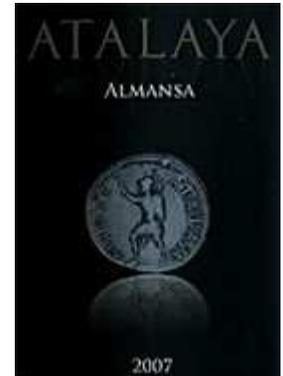
Mischief of One Kind

Magnificent Wine Company “Syrah” 2007 (\$19) - it's a brilliant effort, loaded with flawlessly balanced blackberry fruits, black truffles, black pepper and smoke. This Syrah is loaded with intensity, aromatics and flavor; a value that defies description.



Helix “Pomatia”, Reininger Winery, 2005 (\$20), this new release is gorgeous, lengthy and bright, loaded with soft supple plummy fruits, tinged with cocoa and earthy notes & framed with a kiss of toasty French oak that brings its spicy fruit characters to bear. It's a blend of single vineyard barrels from the parent winery's (Reininger) most expensive varietal bottlings.

Bodegas Atalaya “Almansa” 2007 (\$16) is a debut bottling of Monastrell & Garnacha Tintorera by those nice folks from Bodegas El Nido (Yes, the Clio people) it's a high altitude old vine source, and it shows such suave and supple cling in its blueberry preserve fruits and mineral notes that it tastes like something far more expensive. This has a supple length of finish that can only come from perfect extraction framed with a subtle stroke of French oak.



A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

I read it long ago and I read it every now and again as a reminder, much for the same reason that I keep a Menorah (my Jewishness is merely honorary), I need beacons to the necessity of gratitude for small things, such as a clean well-lighted place to ward off the darkness and in my case, a well turned, thoughtful wine that will warm the room and warm my thoughts. Judd's Hill fills that spot for me. Decent, generous people that put a certain opulence in the bottle year after year and now, the **Judd's Hill Napa Valley Cabernet 2005 (\$27)** and the **Judd's Hill Napa Merlot (\$21.99)** show a Bordeaux complexity and depth of concentration that are nothing short of stunning (and exceptionally food friendly !)



JUDD'S HILL
NAPA VALLEY

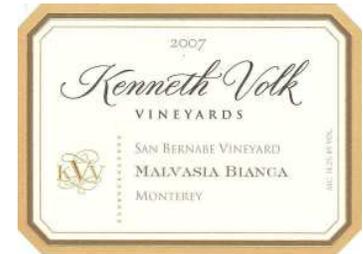
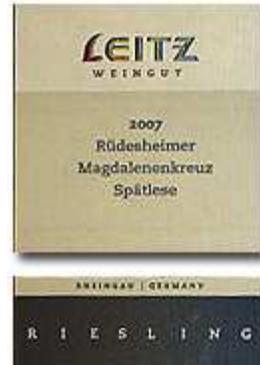
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Hot Supper, Waiting The Turkey Matters

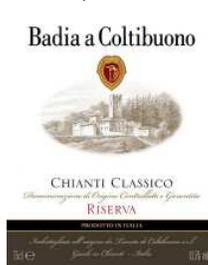


They make amazing wines, year after year, and much like Van Morrison, only devoted fans notice. Attention must be paid. The **Honig Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc '08 (\$13)** is a benchmark, stainless steel ferment followed by extended lees time results in a wine with exceptional textural notes, bright fresh acidity and length down the center of the palate, fresh melon and sweet herb characters play all day long. The accolades have been rolling in—no less than Robert Parker “consistently one of the finest Sauvignons made in California”. The **Honig Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon '08 (\$31)** is the DEAL of the appellation with its incredibly rich concentrated fresh cassis fruit. Winemaker Kristin Belair’s latest releases are her best yet. These are stunning wines, responsibly farmed (sustainable) and made with a most un-Napa like sense of restraint without losing its sense of sunny, fresh opulence. Napa really is capable of Value-its called Honig.



God bless the stalwart souls that man the downtown wine store (255 South 300 East); they really do take the Turkey, seriously enough to be selective about which wines will receive the prestigious “Turkey” sticker. They are the only store to apply this selectivity for your benefit. That said, these two, wearers of the “Turkey”, will make an exceptional match for your holiday grub. The **Josef Leitz Rudesheimer Magdalenenkreuz Spatlese 2008 (\$20)** shows thrilling acidity (a surprise in Spatlese) it has minimal sweetness but a range of juicy pineapple, pear and cherry notes, all in a low alcohol effort. Should you want to pump up the octane, the **Kenneth Volk Malvasia Bianca 2007 (\$15)** is a juicy aromatic treat, spicy and floral like fresh jasmine, ginger, baking spice and honey-suckle, the palate is bone dry, yet rich and textured on the palate. Gorgeous fresh, stainless steel only, no Malolactic fermentation.

Funiculi, Funicula



If I am singing of Italy during this opulent fall, its as a thank you for the late season generous sun. Granted I did not get my blistering summer, but these wines have reminded me that a sunny disposition is a year round gift. The **Fattoria Selvapiana Chianti Bucerchiale 2006 (\$29)** would cure a lovesick Neapolitan Sailor of his ills (listen to Core N’Grato - you will see this is not an easy exercise) but this is compelling wine. It shows aromas of expensive leather, roses, fresh raspberries and a beguiling warmth, there’s lots of this usually rare gem this time around. Seek it out. Tasted next to the **Badia a Coltibuono Chianti Classico 2007 (\$26)** it illustrates the terroir of two gorgeous Chianti towns; Rufina and Gaiole. It’s a brilliant contrast, the warmth of Rufina next to the lively bright red fruits of Gaiole. Further east, Giacomo di Neri and his Prada Sneakers shine their generous light with new releases, primary among them is the finest Tuscan Rosso I’ve ever tasted. The **Casanova di Neri Rosso di Montalcino 2007 (\$27)** is a plush, warm and powerful expression of Montalcinese power; rife with ripe red raspberry fruits, espresso notes and new leather, this is a brilliant introduction to the finest producer in this historic region. The **Tenuta Sant’Antonio Monti Garbi Ripassa 2004 (\$19.99)** is a phenomenal value in Ripassa. “Ripassa” refers to a process where younger wine is fermented atop the skins and pressings of a much richer wine, Amarone. It maintains the freshness of young valpolicella while giving it a rich expansive mouthfeel. Tenuta Sant’Antonio wines are half the price of their Veneto competitors. Keep an eye out for their exuberant **Tenuta Sant’Antonio Valpolicella (\$12)** and their utterly stunning **Amarone '05 (\$50)** too.

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Holiday Treats



308 West 300 South
(801) 531 - TONY

Learn, Eat, Drink Caputo's holiday storm of sweet goodness is at the ready. Shelves are stocked and ready with everything from local artisan honey to new limited editions from Utah's premiere chocolatier **Amano** to pink sea salts from far off shores. Now is the time, prime the palate.

Cristiano Creminelli takes on the guise of Santa Claus once a year when his limited edition **Creminelli "White Truffle Salami" (about \$50)** arrives-it is an extravagantly profound expression of the Salumiere's art. Whole shaved white truffle and purebred pig. Yes Virginia, there is a Salami Claus, his name is Cristiano. Limited run, get it now. Also not to be missed? **Golden Star White Jasmine Sparkling Tea (\$9.95)**. Normally I don't like encouraging non-alcoholic behavior, but I love tea and this is fine jasmine made sparkling, with a traditional fermentation much like champagne, using a rare variety of jasmine silver needle tea (found only in Fujian Province, China), raw cane sugar and water. This is a fragrant and aromatic delight, one that brings to mind jasmine blossoms made perfect on the neck of a loved one. This is a treat to keep at the ready year-round for an all purpose refresher.

Cheap Holiday Dates

DECEMBER 1st

Focused Tasting; "The Shelves"

Come wander, eat and drink while Matt Caputo spins the stories behind the byzantine Arcanum on the shelves; everything from cookies baked in a one room pastry shop in Tuscany to pink sea salts from far off tropical shores. Chef Kreisel of Tipica will prepare appetizers highlighting these fabulous foods, There will be special discounts & promotions for attendees

Class: \$25 Wine: \$15

DECEMBER 8th - World Cheese

Focused Tasting; "Burgundy and Latour"

Learn how to dazzle your holiday gathering with a new found supernatural ability to make music in the mouths of your guests... there are simple rules to pairing cheese and wine and the Caputo's Cheese Cave holds all the secrets. **Special Feature with the wines of Maison Louis Latour!!!!**

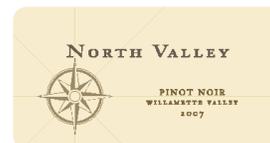
Class: \$25 Wine: \$15

Easy Love, \$20

So it is with hard times, dollars don't stretch as far as we'd like and Love as in all times, is never easy (nor is it always cheap). I love Pinot Noir, I've always loved it (thinking myself a hairy iteration of Ronald Coleman in "Talk of the Town") its an emotional wine. When good its irresistible, when bad its pinched mean and aggressively offensive. Well...hard times come again no more. Three Pinot Noirs, three different stunning appellations, three different brilliant winemakers working within their favored oeuvre, all for a measly \$20. Tight times aside I'd tin-cup it to keep myself in these three. Live large spend small.



W.H. Smith is a legend, he put Cult Cabernet on the map with his iconic LaJota wines, and then, one day, as he likes to say, "I wanted something I could drink now. Got tired of waiting for it." The **W.H. Smith Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2007 (\$20)** is the entry level of his stunning single vineyard releases. It show brilliant clarity and varietal definition, flashing fresh red fruits buttressed by sweet tea spices. Another bargain by way of Utah's Small Winery Exemption.



Tony Soter and winemaker James Carville (and the Utah Small Winery Exemption) have turned in a prizewinning effort with their **Soter, North Valley Pinot Noir 2007 (\$20)** 2007 was tough in the Willamette (I personally tasted through a number of washed out wimps) this, on the other hand shows no green character whatsoever, but a thrilling range of fresh red fruits, cedar and spicebox. Soter makes utterly thrilling single vineyard wines, but making a great Pinot for cheap, requires art AND skill. Here it is.

Keep an eye on Joey Wagner, the upcoming **Belle Glos Meiommi Pinot Noir 2008 (\$20)** switches to a 3 appellation blend that takes the remaining single vineyard fruit from their famed waxtop single-vineyard bottlings, Los Alturas (Central Coast), Clark & Telephone, and Taylor Lane (Sonoma Coast) and blends them into a magnificent, richly textured, expressive mouthful of plump, juicy Pinot Noir fruit in Wagner's hands-off style. Each of the Single-Vineyards contributes a fascinating layer of complexity to this entry level Pinot Noir. It will quickly become Utah's most popular Pinot Noir, at a price well below national retail. As always Caymus' sacrifice to support the restaurateur is your delicious gain.

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Worthy Wine Events - Holidays are Here



Pago + Atrea e Saracina
Food e Wine Tasting

Join us for a casual and intimate event to celebrate food and wine with California wine legend John Fetzer, owner of Atrea and Saracina. Chef Mike, Emily and I recently returned from harvest at Atrea and Saracina this past October. It was my second visit to John Fetzer's vineyards and each time I return with increased respect for what he crafts. His wines feature a sense of place that is reflective of how the majority of the grapes are grown: biodynamic and organic.

Featuring an assortment of Pago Starters + Four Atrea e Saracina offerings:
Atrea "The Choir" Whites, Saracina Sauvignon Blanc, Saracina Pinot Noir, Atrea "Old Soul" Red

Thursday December 3rd, 2009
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

\$15 per person for food + \$40 for Wine pairings = \$55 (+ tax + 18% Gratuity)

RSVP scott@pagoslc.com by November 29th. Space is limited.
(A credit card will be held for the reservation.)

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Join us for a special
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH
6PM - 8PM

WAH SO
An Asian Grill

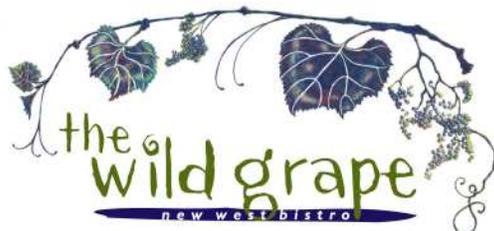


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December 2nd, 2009 / 6:30 pm
Meet & Greet With John Fetzer
Saracina Vineyards

Food \$35 Optional Wine Pairings \$30

481 E South Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84111 / (801) 746-5565

The best of the best wine stores;
Park City /1550 Snowcreek Drive / 435-615-8538
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(about 1600 South, 300 West) / 801-412-9972