

Salt Lake City Ghost Tours offers
Halloween alternative to spook alley/corn maze
By Rosemarie Howard

Have you heard the legend of the purple lady who haunts the Rio Grande Café located in the Utah Historical Society Building? Did you know that the Capitol Theater on 200 South 50 West in Salt Lake City has a mischievous ghost named George?

If these stories sound intriguing and you are looking for a Halloween activity that is not a spook alley or a corn maze, then look no further than the Salt Lake City Ghost Tours. The focus of the tour is on telling the stories of historical downtown Salt Lake City sites and the haunts that linger in them. It's advertised as "spooky fun for the whole family".

Salt Lake City Ghost Tours is the brainchild of Kristen Clay, an actress/storyteller/teacher who currently resides in Layton, UT. After living in a variety of places around the world, Clay returned to her birthplace a few months ago and began to study the stories of historical Utah. As she interviewed merchants and residents of Salt Lake City the expected number of pioneer and immigrant stories of hardship and survival came up, but she also found an abundance of ghost stories.

A small portion of the stories and ghost lore Clay unearthed has been molded into a script that some of Utah's best storytellers perform as they guide a busload of ghost-seeking tourists to many of the 18 downtown Salt Lake City historical sites that harbor haunts.

After the tour premiered Friday, October 11, several participants responded to the question, "What did you like about the experience?"

"I liked the way the storyteller told about how the mother threw the kids off the balcony," said ten-year-old McCall Modersitzki, referring to the story told at the Shilo Inn.

"It was really nice to get a historical feel for Salt Lake, instead of just seeing the commercial side," remarked 16-year-old Larry Macfarlane. "The storytellers seemed good at catering to all the age groups on the bus."

Aaron Beck had just two words for his experience: "The best!" His sisters, fourteen-year-old Caitlin Beck and ten-year-old, Lauren, agreed that the storytellers really "got into the feeling of the story" and helped them "imagine it in your mind." A twenty-one-year old sister who chose to remain nameless thought it was a great idea for a date.

The eight storytellers who alternate as tour guides include: Laurie Allen, Kristen Clay, Cherie Davis, Anatasia Froget, Mark Gollaher, Tony Hardman, Suzanne Hudson, and Nanette Watts, all members of the Utah Storytelling Guild.

Remaining dates for the Salt Lake City Ghost Tours are Friday and Saturday, October 18, 19; 25, 26, at 7:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, October 18-31, November 1-2, there will be two tours each evening at 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. The bus leaves the Utah Historical Society Building at the times noted above, so plan to be on it at that time. Participants bringing a canned good for the Utah Food Bank will receive \$2 off the regular ticket price. For ticket information or to make reservations call: 801-603-1441 or e-mail: storytours@aol.com.