

Douglas County on path to revamp VHR rules

Douglas County officials are considering tightening vacation home rental rules at Lake Tahoe before they contemplate allowing them in the valley.

The county doesn't want to be as restrictive as South Lake Tahoe, but realizes more oversight is needed.

Changes started earlier this year with what the county calls "safety inspections" on some of the 480 permitted short-term rentals. This will be done at the time permits are renewed. Prior to this change VHRs were only inspected if there were complaints.

The county will be looking at its fees structure, penalties, what constitutes a violation and other aspects of the ordinance.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: SLT unraveling as each day goes on

By Kathryn Reed

It's hard to know who is in charge of the city of South Lake Tahoe. It could be the firefighters since their chief is acting city manager. Take a look at the agendas since the full time city manager left – more fire related items than usual.

And with this being an election year, it usually bodes well for incumbents to be throwing cash in the direction of fire and police.

It didn't take long for the need for a dedicated city manager to become evident. It also has become crystal clear how the council is not effective.

Lake Tahoe News sent this email to all five South Lake Tahoe City Council members on March 23: "I have never seen a staff report not have someone's name on it as is the case with the cannabis report for (March 27). How is there accountability? Is this a policy individually or as a group you have endorsed? What are your thoughts about it? And the fact that the agenda item regarding TWC says the info won't be ready until (March 27), I've never seen anything like that either. Any comment?"

Here are the responses:

Councilmember Brooke Laine: "I am discouraged by the lack of transparency and also concerned about the lack of respect for our internal processes. Every single staff report I have ever read indicates the author of the report and in fact is signed by the author of the report and further acknowledged by signature of the city manager and/or department head."

Councilmember Tom Davis: *No response.*

Councilmember Jason Collin: *No response.*

Councilmember Austin Sass: *No response.*

Councilmember Wendy David: *No response.*

Usually the person who wrote the report signs it as well as the city manager or the department head.

This isn't the first agenda guffaw since Nancy Kerry left the city manager's office.

City staff scrambled to get the March 20 agenda out on time. Usually it is posted the Thursday afternoon before the Tuesday meeting. It was out Friday. And while that was within the 72-hour time allotment per state law, it did not happen smoothly. On top of that, the cannabis item then had no supporting material, with the two presentations added to the online agenda the morning of the meeting.

During the meeting *Lake Tahoe News* asked Tracy Sheldon, city public information officer, for copies of those presentations. She said she didn't have them. *LTN* said someone does. The dialogue stopped there.

The Brown Act mandates that every member of the public has a right to hard copies of any item before the council. In this case it didn't matter because the topic was put off until 4pm today.

But the issues about last Tuesday's meeting aren't over. On the evening of March 20, I emailed the mayor asking her if there was reportable action from closed session that occurred after that day's regular council meeting.

Her response: "Yes. Reporting out on negotiations. I did not bring home the language of the report out. Susie has it." [That would be a reference to City Clerk Suzie Alessi.]

In other words, Mayor David and presumably the other four electeds just spent about \$1 million a year in perpetuity on employees, but she couldn't remember this fact or how it was divvied up.

Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*: "The City Council approved memorandums of understanding with the following bargaining units: South Lake Tahoe Police Officers Association, Local 39-Admin/Confidential, South Lake Tahoe Police Employees Association, South Lake Tahoe Fire Association, South Lake Tahoe Police Supervisors Association. These memorandums of understanding will be brought to the City Council for

execution during open session on April 3.”

However, what Ember Buckman, human resources analyst for the city, told LTN was, “The city of South Lake Tahoe City Council ratified four MOUs and approved one tentative agreement on March 20.”

Adding to the confusion is that the council on **Jan. 23 had already approved the contracts** with Local 39 and the police officers’ bargaining unit. No one at the city has answered the question as to whether something changed on March 20.

It is actually unusual for any elected body to report what happened regarding negotiations until the labor groups have ratified the agreement.

The topic is on a closed session so the city’s negotiating team can give updates to the electeds. It’s the electeds who give direction to the team – such as agreeing to the cumulative dollar amount to be spent, which union might get more, whether pay would be retroactive and other benefits.

And the actual facts about the agreements are usually on an open session agenda, with no reportable action until then. This has a lot to do with who signs first and if there needs to be further negotiations. For example, members of Local 39 initially voted down the contract.

Usually when the vote is taken in open session about labor contracts the fiscal impact to the city is provided at that time. The city has this week to get that together before next week’s regular meeting.

With the difficulty the police department has had with recruiting, boosting the pay was a given.

What isn’t in these agreements is the fact the council last week agreed to fund three new positions for the fire department. The idea is this will help cut back on overtime

which runs about a half million dollars a year. When firefighters lobbied for more employees in 2014 to cut overtime it had little impact – other than to increasing staffing, and therefore the taxpayer burden to these employees in terms of salary, CalPERS and other benefits.

The council chose to increase staffing even though the city is in the middle of a study to assess staffing needs and other concerns of the fire department. The **fire department staffing** has been fluid for years. In part this has to do with internal chaos and in part the Great Recession demanding across the board cuts.

Here are some details about the contracts:

South Lake Tahoe Police Association (Police Employee Unit)

- Term: Oct. 1, 2017 through Dec. 31, 2018.
- City will pay \$250 month in health care not to exceed \$3,000/year.
- Salary increase of 3.5 percent per year.
- Employees will be pay an additional 1 percent to CalPERS.
- 1.5 percent of salaries will go into a non-PERSable 401(a), with city matching dollar-for-dollar up to \$2,000.
- Each represented employee receives a one-time payment of \$1,000.

South Lake Tahoe Firefighters' Association

- Term: Oct. 1, 2017 through Dec. 31, 2018.
- City will pay \$250 month in health care not to exceed \$3,000/year.
- 4.5 percent salary increase per year.

- Employees will pay an additional 1 percent to CalPERS.
- 2 percent of salaries will go into 401(a), with the city matching dollar-for-dollar up to \$3,000.
- Each represented employee receives a one-time payment of \$1,000.
- An increase of eight hours accrued vacation.

South Lake Tahoe International Union of Operating Engineer, Stationary Engineers, Local 39 Administrative & Confidential Association

- Term: Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2018.
- Health reimbursement of \$3,000 a year.
- 3 percent salary increase.
- Employees pay 1 percent more to CalPERS.
- \$2,000 into 401(a).
- 50 percent matching contribution into 401(a) up to a maximum of \$2,500.

South Lake Tahoe Police Officers Association

- Term: Oct. 1, 2017, through Dec. 31, 2018.
- Health reimbursement of \$3,500 a year.
- 2 percent salary increase effective Oct. 1, 2017; 2.5 percent increase effective Jan. 1, 2018.
- Employees paying 1 percent more to CalPERS.
- Lump sum of \$1,500 into 401(a) effective January 2018 (probationary employees excluded); lump sum of \$1,000 into 401(a) effective March 2018; lump sum of 2 percent of base salary into 401(a) effective March 2018; lump sum \$1,000 into

401(a) effective October 2018.

- Dollar-for-dollar matching contribution into 401(a) up to a maximum of \$1,500.
- Vacation accrual increase by eight hours.

South Lake Tahoe Police Supervisors Association (tentative agreement)

- Term: Oct. 1, 2017 through Dec. 31, 2018.
- \$250/month or total \$3,000/year for medical.
- Sworn personnel – 4.5 percent salary increase in exchange for employee's additional 1 percent cost sharing pension contribution.
- Non-sworn personnel – 3.5 percent salary increase in exchange for employee's additional 1 percent cost sharing pension contribution.
- Sworn personnel – 1.5 percent of salary into 401(a); dollar-for-dollar matching contribution into 401(a) up to a maximum of \$2,500.
- Non-sworn personnel – 1 percent of salary into 401(a); dollar-for-dollar matching contribution into 401(a) up to a maximum of \$2,500.
- Additional pay of \$1,000 to each represented employee effective October 2018.

Other:

- Battalion chiefs will get a shift stipend of \$1,512 for additional 24-hour shifts (pro-rated for shifts less than 24 hours); fire chief may approve administrative time off for extra duty assignments more than four hours.

No one has said when negotiations will start up again since

these contracts only go through the end of the year.

Opinion: Every day can be Earth Day at Tahoe

By Joanne Marchetta

Earth Day at Lake Tahoe has a special meaning. Working together through the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, more than 50 local, state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector partners are implementing projects and programs to conserve the Tahoe basin's environment and fix past environmental harms.

Public and private organizations have completed more than 500 projects over the last 20 years and that partnership and collaboration continues. Projects are restoring Lake Tahoe's streams and wetlands, reducing storm water pollution from roads and urban areas, fighting invasive species, upgrading bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, improving recreation opportunities, and thinning forests to improve their resilience to drought, bark beetles, and catastrophic wildfire.



Joanne
Marchetta

These projects are helping create a healthier Tahoe watershed. Scientists have said if this public-private partnership wasn't formed more than two decades ago we may have lost the ability to restore the lake to its former splendor. Yet, so many new threats abound for our beautiful mountain home.

As the 48th annual Earth Day approaches this April, let's not lose sight of the importance of individual environmental stewardship. We as private citizens can take important steps for the environment to leave behind a Lake Tahoe that is healthier than we found it.

Earth Day was launched in 1970 to raise awareness about environmental problems and our role in solving them. More than one billion people in 192 countries around the world now participate in Earth Day events each year. Volunteers at Lake Tahoe are again bringing Earth Day events and activities right into our own communities.

South Lake Tahoe Earth Day is scheduled for 10am-3pm at Bijou Community Park on April 28. The annual event is a way for families, friends, and children to learn more about Lake Tahoe's sensitive environment and unique natural beauty and how to help protect it. Tahoe Truckee Earth Day offers similar opportunities for North Shore residents on April 21, from 11am-5pm at the Village at Squaw Valley.

With so many people and nonprofit groups passionate about Lake Tahoe and its environment, there is no shortage of volunteer opportunities for people interested in making a difference.

Clean Tahoe and the city of South Lake Tahoe are recruiting volunteers and "cleanup captains" for neighborhoods around the South Shore for a third annual Spring Cleanup Day from 9am-noon on May 12, followed by a free lunch for volunteers at Bijou Community Park. To get involved, go **online** or call 530.544.4210. Last year, 118 volunteers picked up more than 1,500 pounds of litter.

There are countless other ways to help protect Lake Tahoe's natural resources and environment. The League to Save Lake Tahoe has launched two innovative programs in recent years: Pipe Keepers, in which volunteers monitor storm water outfalls around Tahoe to identify areas with storm water pollution, and Eyes on the Lake, which trains people to identify and report harmful aquatic invasive species like Asian clams, Eurasian watermilfoil, and curlyleaf pondweed so they can be targeted for removal.

There are many simple steps each of us can take to help Lake Tahoe's environment.

Bike, walk, take the bus, or carpool. Reduce, reuse, or recycle items to limit landfill waste. Don't litter. Take care of trash at your home to keep it from wildlife. Garden and landscape with native plants that don't need watering or fertilizer. Replace your old wood stove or fireplace with a more efficient unit to reduce air pollution and remember that rebate programs are available to help reduce the cost. Pick up after your dog to keep its waste from harming other pets, wildlife, and water quality and to preserve a more enjoyable trail experience for others. Install best management practices on your property to reduce erosion and storm water runoff that harms Lake Tahoe's water clarity. Manage vegetation to create defensible space on your property to better protect your home and help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

These are just a few of the things that each of us can do today and every day. Don't fall into the trap of believing that no individual act can make a meaningful difference. Every positive act counts. Please also remember that all TRPA Governing Board meetings are open to the public and livestreamed online, allowing each of us an opportunity to weigh in on many important issues facing Lake Tahoe.

We are fortunate to live in a special place and we each have a responsibility to help care for it. Nearly 55,000 people live

in the Tahoe basin and millions more visit to enjoy its natural splendor and outdoor recreation opportunities. Our individual actions collectively have an impact. Let's all work together to leave Lake Tahoe healthier than we found it so future generations are able to enjoy this natural treasure we are fortunate enough to call home.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Ideal female body type getting harder to attain

By Frances Bozsik and Brooke L. Bennett

Day after day, we're bombarded with so many media messages that rarely do we stop to think about what they're telling us to think, do or feel.

Much has been written about the unrealistic beauty standards women have been held to. Female actresses, models and TV personalities are overwhelmingly thin, which has had a detrimental effect on the eating habits and self-esteem of countless women.

But in recent years, we've noticed something else: Media targeting women have featured models who are not only exceedingly thin, but also muscular.

As psychologists who study body image issues, we wanted to test whether women are aware of this trend – and whether they're aspiring for this look themselves.

The body gap grows

By now, most women are probably aware of the discrepancy between their bodies and the impossibly thin women who appear on TV and in magazines.

This disparity was first identified in a 1980 study that compared the body weights of regular American women to prominent media figures, Miss America contestants and Playboy centerfolds. The researchers found that between 1959 and 1978, average female weights in the general population increased, while the women appearing in the media were actually getting thinner.

This matters because, particularly for women, exposure to thinner bodies contributes to body dissatisfaction, which can worsen your mood and lead to lower self-esteem. Those who aspire to this ideal figure can end up engaging in negative behaviors like restrictive eating or purging.

In a 2002 study, researchers exposed women on the island of Fiji to Western television. Before the study, island inhabitants had preferred larger female figures, seeing them as a sign of health. But following the introduction of Western television, the researchers found that women were much more likely to engage in disordered eating behaviors such as vomiting and restrictive dieting, all in a quest to appear thin.

The birth of 'fitspiration' – and a new norm?

While media messages continue to encourage women to change their bodies, the platforms being used to consume media are changing.

In recent years social media use has exploded. On many of these platforms, women are able to choose what content to follow and "like." Social media sites, from Facebook to Instagram, then take this information and feed it into an algorithm, which then influences the content that's advertised and shown to users on their feeds.

One trend that has gained traction is “fitspiration.” These are images and videos that depict women engaged in workouts or poses that highlight particular muscle groups like the abdomen or buttocks.

In promoting muscularity, these images seem to be promoting healthy exercise. But analyses of the text accompanying the images have found that they often include guilt-inducing messages that focus on body image (e.g. “Suck it up now, so you don’t have to suck it in later”).

In fact, one study has shown that an overwhelming percentage (72 percent) of these posts emphasize appearance, rather than health (22 percent).

And it’s an appearance that’s not only muscular, but also thin.

Is this the new ideal?

Our studies sought to answer this question.

In the first, we presented 78 undergraduate female participants with images of Miss USA winners between 1999 and 2013. Because winners are selected annually, they serve as a relevant representation of what is considered attractive. For the study, we depicted the pageant winners from the neck down wearing black two-piece swimsuits. Participants then rated each winner on her level of thinness, muscularity and attractiveness. The ratings demonstrated that the winners became thinner and more muscular over the 15-year span.

In a second study, we wanted to examine whether women had begun to prefer this thin, toned body type.

So we presented 64 undergraduate female participants with two versions of seven different images. One version featured a thin, muscular model. In the other, the muscle tone and definition were digitally removed, leaving the model appearing

to be only thin. Participants viewed these images one by one in random order and were asked to rate them on thinness, muscularity and attractiveness, and to identify how typical they were of images in the media.

Results showed that participants could detect the difference in muscularity among the images and rated all of them as typical of media images. However, they did not clearly identify one type of figure as being more attractive than the other.

In a final portion of this study, we showed participants the pair of images side by side and asked them to identify which they preferred. When presented with the images in this format, participants overwhelmingly chose the thin and muscular image over the thin-only image.

Benign implications, pernicious effects

You might wonder: Isn't it healthy that women are increasingly preferring muscularity?

Studies have examined the impact of viewing thin and toned bodies, and have found that they have a negative impact on the body image of female viewers. Just like the previous studies on media images that promote thinness, seeing thin, muscular women can lead to a negative mood and decreased body satisfaction.

It is the addition of muscularity to thinness that has this impact; if women see other women who are fit but not thin, then we don't see the same effect.

It seems as though the quest for a toned body adds just one more thing to strive for – another layer of pressure for women. Not only do they need to restrict caloric intake, but they also need to add a muscle-building exercise routine.

Because there's a deceitful aspect of rhetoric surrounding "fitspiration" – with benign implications that it's simply all

about being healthy – we fear that our culture may be in the midst of a more toxic promotion of an ideal female body that only leads to more dissatisfaction.

Frances Bozsik is a doctoral candidate in clinical health psychology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Brooke L. Bennett is a doctoral candidate at University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Hawaii.

A history of loneliness

By Amelia S. Worsley, *The Conversation*

Is loneliness our modern malaise?

Former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy says the most common pathology he saw during his years of service “was not heart disease or diabetes; it was loneliness.”

Chronic loneliness, some say, is like “smoking 15 cigarettes a day.” It “kills more people than obesity.”

Because loneliness is now considered a public health issue – and even an epidemic – people are exploring its causes and trying to find solutions.

While writing a book on the history of how poets wrote about loneliness in the Romantic Period, I discovered that loneliness is a relatively new concept and once had an easy cure. However, as the concept’s meaning has transformed, finding solutions has become harder.

Returning to the origins of the word – and understanding how its meaning has changed through time – gives us a new way to think about modern loneliness, and the ways in which we might

address it.

The dangers of venturing into 'lonelinesses'

Although loneliness may seem like a timeless, universal experience, it seems to have originated in the late 16th century, when it signaled the danger created by being too far from other people.

In early modern Britain, to stray too far from society was to surrender the protections it provided. Distant forests and mountains inspired fear, and a lonely space was a place in which you might meet someone who could do you harm, with no one else around to help.

In order to frighten their congregations out of sin, sermon writers asked people to imagine themselves in "lonelinesses" – places like hell, the grave or the desert.

Yet well into the 17th century, the words "loneliness" and "lonely" rarely appeared in writing. In 1674, the naturalist John Ray compiled a glossary of infrequently used words. He included "loneliness" in his list, defining it as a term used to describe places and people "far from neighbours."

John Milton's 1667 epic poem "Paradise Lost" features one of the first lonely characters in all of British literature: Satan. On his journey to the garden of Eden to tempt Eve, Satan treads "lonely steps" out of hell. But Milton isn't writing about Satan's feelings; instead, he's emphasizing that he's crossing into the ultimate wilderness, a space between hell and Eden where no angel has previously ventured.

Satan describes his loneliness in terms of vulnerability: "From them I go / This uncouth errand sole, and one for all / Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread / Th' unfounded deep."

The dilemma of modern loneliness

Even if we now enjoy the wilderness as a place of adventure and pleasure, the fear of loneliness persists. The problem has simply moved into our cities.

Many are trying to solve it by bringing people physically closer to their neighbors. Studies point to a spike in the number of people who live alone and the breakdown of family and community structures.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has set her sights on “combating” loneliness and appointed a minister of loneliness to do just that in January. There is even a philanthropy called the “Campaign to End Loneliness.”

But the drive to cure loneliness oversimplifies its modern meaning.

In the 17th century, when loneliness was usually relegated to the space outside the city, solving it was easy. It merely required a return to society.

However, loneliness has since moved inward – and has become much harder to cure. Because it’s taken up residence inside minds, even the minds of people living in bustling cities, it can’t always be solved by company.

Modern loneliness isn’t just about being physically removed from other people. Instead, it’s an emotional state of feeling apart from others – without necessarily being so.

Someone surrounded by people, or even accompanied by friends or a lover, can complain of feelings of loneliness. The wilderness is now inside of us.

Populating the wilderness of the mind

The lack of an obvious cure to loneliness is part of the reason why it is considered to be so dangerous today: The abstraction is frightening.

Counterintuitively, however, the secret to dealing with modern loneliness might lie not in trying to make it disappear but in finding ways to dwell within its abstractions, talk through its contradictions and seek out others who feel the same way.

While it's certainly important to pay attention to the structures that have led people (especially elderly, disabled and other vulnerable people) to be physically isolated and therefore unwell, finding ways to destigmatize loneliness is also crucial.

Acknowledging that loneliness is a profoundly human and sometimes incurable experience rather than a mere pathology might allow people – especially lonely people – to find commonality.

In order to look at the “epidemic of loneliness” as more than just an “epidemic of isolation,” it's important to consider why the spaces of different people's minds might feel like wildernesses in the first place.

Everyone experiences loneliness differently, and many find it difficult to describe. As the novelist Joseph Conrad wrote, “Who knows what true loneliness is – not the conventional word but the naked terror? To the lonely themselves it wears a mask.” Learning about the range of ways others experience loneliness could help mitigate the kind of disorientation Conrad describes.

Reading literature can also make the mind feel like less of a wilderness. The books we read need not themselves be about loneliness, though there are lots of examples of these, from “Frankenstein” to “Invisible Man.” Reading allows readers to connect with characters who might also be lonely; but more importantly, it offers a way to make the mind feel as though it is populated.

Literature also offers examples of how to be lonely together. British Romantic poets often copied each other's loneliness

and found it productive and fulfilling.

There are opportunities for community in loneliness when we share it, whether in face-to-face interactions or through text. Though loneliness can be debilitating, it has come a long way from its origins as a synonym for isolation.

As the poet Ocean Vuong wrote, “loneliness is still time spent with the world.”

Amelia S. Worsley is an assistant professor of English at Amherst College.

Letter: Kirkwood workers help at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Kirkwood Mountain Resort hosted its second 2018 Adopt A Day of Nourishment sponsorship dinner on March 19 at St. Theresa Grace Hall. Kirkwood’s guest services crew members Natasha Buffo, Dan Deemer and Richie Monroe traveled all the way from the Kirkwood resort area to arrive at Grace Hall at 3pm to lend their customer service skills and helping hands to the Bread & Broth volunteers.

“Kirkwood is all about community, and our community extends to South Lake,” said Buffo. “Having the opportunity to exchange smiles and appreciation for one another with this part of our community was something very special. The B&B volunteers were welcoming, sweet and also very funny! Those accepting our offering of food were friendly and filled with gratitude. This was a wonderful experience with co-workers/friends and we look

forward to returning again next season.”

This was the first experience volunteering at a B&B dinner for the Kirkwood crew members and they were a joy to have helping from the time they arrived until they finished with the meal’s cleanup and left at 6 o’clock for their drive back to Kirkwood. Kudos to this amazing Kirkwood crew for their generosity and selflessness helping the community’s hungry. Over 100 meals were served thanks to their generosity.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Global tourism predicted to slow after best year ever

By Associated Press

LONDON – The travel and tourism sector is set for a modest slowdown in 2018 as a result of higher oil prices and airfares, a year after it experienced its best year on record, according to a leading global industry body.

In its annual Economic Impact Report, the World Travel and Tourism Council said Thursday that the sector was responsible for the creation of 7 million new jobs worldwide in 2017, or one in five new jobs.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: 2018 Lexus NX 300 F Sport, smooth and slick



The NX 300 F Sport is worth a drive. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Lexus is known for two things among several – fit, finish and smoothness. Of course there are other qualities such as build quality and reliability, but the first thing noticed was the NX's smoothness in motion.

NX comes in many variations, a 200t, a 300h, and in my tester's case, an NX 300 F Sport, a version that comes standard with a sport-tuned suspension, paddle shifters, special metallic trim, and bigger special 18 x 7.5-inch wheels with 225/60 series rubber all season tires and for the real sporting types 235/55 summer tires.

NX is a compact luxu CUV that rides on a 105-inch wheelbase and stretches out just 182 inches. But its width of 74 inches adds some aggressive muscle while it stands a rather stout 65 inches. Its sleekness is created by its huge, flowing Lionizes grille and its window line. It is an attractive ride.

Powering the NX 300 is a 2.0L twin scroll turbo intercooled, DOHC, 16 valve inline four-cylinder engine that knocks down 235 large horse which arrive at a low 4,800 rpm and stays there until 5,600 rpm. When you add that to a perfectly flat torque curve that peaks at 258 pounds of twist at an off-idle 1,650 rpm and holds that number until 4,000 rpm.

While most cars have gone to 8 and even 10 speed cog-swappers, the NX still survives on a six speeder which was state of the art just a few years ago but it still performs admirably shoving the AWD NX to 60 mph in just 7.02 seconds. Passing performance is also exemplary with a 50-70 mph simulated passing maneuver requiring a scant 3.38 seconds and the same run uphill slowing that time to just 4.67 seconds.



Specifications

Price \$34,480 to about \$45,000 plus \$925 for destination

Engine

2.0L DOHC 16 Valve
Turbocharged inline four 235
hp @ 4,800-5,600 rpm

258 lb-ft of torque @
1,650-4,000 rpm

Transmission

Six-speed torque converter
automatic

Configuration

Transverse front engine/
FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 104.7 inches

Length 182.3 inches

Width 73.6 inches

Height 64.8 inches

Track (f/r) 61.8/61.8 inches

Ground Clearance 6.9 inches

Weight (fwd/awd) 3,940/4,050
pounds

GVWR (fwd/awd) 5,090/5,200
pounds

Tow capacity 2,000pounds

Fuel Capacity 15.9 gallons

Cargo capacity (second row
up/down) 17.7/54.6 cubic
feet

Wheels (std/opt) 17X7/18X7.5
inches

Tires (std/opt) 225/65X17;
225/60X18; 235/55X18

Steering lock to lock 2.68
turns

Turning circle 37.4 feet

Co-efficient of drag 0.34

Performance

0-60 mph 7.02 seconds

50-70 mph 3.38 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 4.67
seconds

Fuel economy EPA rated
22/27/24 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 28-29 mpg on the
highway at legal speeds and
24-26 mpg in suburban
driving.

Throttle response isn't quite linear as the boost at certain times reflects either a little bit of turbo lag or overboost. Not a problem, but something the sensitive driving might notice.

In my last NX review, which was a hybrid of a combined 194 hp, performance was a little off when compared to the NX 300, but over half a second to 60 mph and by a second and a second and a half in the two passing tests. But fuel economy does suffer by at least 10-15 percent with the turboed 300 which is rated in the EPA tests at 22/27/24 mpg city/highway/combined for the AWD unit.

Reality says the numbers are conservative as the NX averaged 28.5 mpg in a two-way 70 mph highway run if about 20 miles. In an aggressive round trip to Carson City over Echo Summit the NX averaged 26 mpg. Overall expect about 25 mpg as I averaged about 25.4 mpg for the 400 miles of testing. The Hybrid version should average about 5 mpg more.

Handling is what the NX and especially the F Sport is all about. It is amazing how a tall CUV can still negotiate corners at speed, with confidence and whatever. NX has the creds, with Mac struts up front and a double wishbone system in the rear. Track is a wide 62 inches front and rear. The electric power rack is very quick at 2.68 turns lock to lock and a turning circle of 37.4 feet. Wheels and tires are big and meaty turning the NX into a sporting sedan. Beautiful. Even with AWD there was some torque steer under heavy, low speed throttle applications.

And it gives up nothing in ride quality with an uncanny smoothness and ride quality. It absorbs bumps with aplomb and head tossing is kept to a minimum. This NX came with adaptive variable suspension, \$770. Engine speed at 70 mph is a reasonably low 2,200 as outside noise is kept to a Lexus minimum. Nice job, Lexus, considering the AWD model weighs 4,050 with a GVWR of 5,200 pounds giving the NX a big payload of 1,150 pounds.

Safety starts with Lexus Safety System plus which includes Things like lane keep steering assist and automatic high beams. And the Bi-LED headlights are fabulous. All the other safety acronyms are present as well as large four-wheel disc brakes (fronts ventilated).

Inside are great seats covered in what I thought was leather, but wasn't, it was a Lexus' material called NuLuxe. It fooled me. The steering wheel is leather. While instrumentation is complete, the center stack protrudes a bit into the cabin and the sound system. But the system is controlled by a mouse system. Ever wish for rat poison? Buttons and round knobs are much easier to use and manipulate, never mind being more accurate.

NX's sleek shape does put at average for interior volume with a cargo capacity of 55 cubes behind the front chairs and 18 cubes behind the second row, still voluminous enough to do serious damage at your local Home Depot or Lowe's.

Base price for this NX 300 AWD F Sport is \$39,775 plus \$995 for the boat suite from its Fukuoka, Japan assembly plant or \$40,770 with the F Sport package adding an additional \$2,685.

Nav and the Premium sound system adds another \$1,800 and the LED headlights with auto high beam plus some other safety stuff will add \$1,515. Other items including the \$595 for the premium Transonic Blue Mica paint added about \$3,350 bring the total sticker to \$50,325.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Burner event at Sierra-at-Tahoe

Burners will be on skis at the fifth annual Burner Ski Day on March 31 at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The event is family friendly and for all ages.

Slopeside activities on the main plaza are free, and include a playa finest fashion show, art, theme camps, and live music. Mountain activities for all levels will include Burner Mass Descents and Human Slaloms in full Burner style attire.

For more info, go **online**.

Plant lilies for a summer garden

By Melinda Myers

Lilies add long-lasting color and fragrance to flower gardens and summer bouquets. These stately flowers provide vertical interest and blend nicely with other perennials. And best of

all, with very little care, you'll be enjoying them for years to come.

Plant different types of lilies to extend your enjoyment from early summer into fall. The colorful and often fragrant blossoms add elegance to any bouquet and are long-lasting in a vase.

Start off the summer with Asiatic lilies. These compact plants have upward or outward facing blooms, and though they are not fragrant, they do come in bright colors that will light up your early summer garden. All are hardy in zones 4 to 9.



Kaveri lilies bloom mid-summer and enliven gardens with their golden yellow petals painted with tangerine and burgundy. Photo/Longfield-Gardens.com

The next lilies to bloom are LA Hybrids. These trumpet-shaped lilies are a cross between fragrant Easter lilies (*Lilium longiflorum*) and colorful Asiatics. Choose from an array of rich colors including cream, pink, yellow, orange and red. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

The dainty blossoms of turk's cap lilies open in early summer. Also known as Martagon lilies, these flowers have recurved petals and look like they are dangling from an upside-down

candelabra. Hardy in zones 3 to 9, these lilies prefer partially shaded gardens and woodland edges.

Trumpet lilies steal the show in midsummer. Like their close relative the Easter lily, these big, outward-facing blossoms have long trumpets and are wonderfully fragrant. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

Another group of midsummer lilies are the Oriental-Asiatic (OA) hybrids. These have the compact height and outward facing flowers of Asiatics and the larger flowers and heady fragrance of Orientals. Look for the variety Kaveri, which has golden yellow petals touched with tangerine and burgundy. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

Species lilies have downward facing flowers with reflexed petals and extra-long stamens. Bloom times vary. Lady Alice (*Lilium henryi*) and coral lilies (*Lilium pumilum*) flower a full month before tiger lilies (*Lilium lancifolium*). The latter are treasured for their big orange flowers and prominent black spots. Over time, tiger lilies form impressive clumps, with towering, 4-foot stems. Hardy in zones 3 to 9.

Oriental-Trumpet (OT) lilies are hybrids with fragrant, upward-facing flowers that can measure 9" across. Colors range from maroon and rose pink through gold and cream. The cool yellow flowers of Yelloween make this OT lily a favorite among florists. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

The lily season ends with a bang, when the Oriental lilies begin to bloom. These big, open-faced flowers have a spicy fragrance that can perfume an entire garden. A wide range of colors, including the popular variety Stargazer, invites lots of creative pairings in the garden and in a vase. Hardy in zones 5 to 9.

Now is the time to order your lily bulbs. The earlier you shop the more choices you'll have. Lily bulbs planted this spring will flower this summer and return to bloom again for years to

come.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts the Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.