

Where to sell unwanted stuff online

By Joseph Pisani, AP

If you're cleaning out your closets for the new year, or need some spare cash after the holidays, your old stuff can help fill up your wallet.

A number of websites and apps make it easier to sell used smartphones, furniture and clothes. Here's where to go to sell your unwanted stuff and earn some extra bucks:

Gadgets

If you got the latest tablet or smartphone during the holidays, don't let the old ones go to the forgotten junk drawer. Gazelle and NextWorth will buy your unwanted electronics depending on its condition. Recently, Gazelle was offering \$215 for an iPhone 6s in good condition on Verizon's cellphone network.

Other options include Apple, which will pay you in Apple Store gift cards for some products. And retailers Target and Best Buy will take your electronics online or at some of its stores in exchange for gift cards. You can also try selling unwanted electronics on eBay, which may charge listing fees, or Facebook's recently launched marketplace, which is free, and found within the social media company's app.

Clothing

For women's, men's or children's clothing, there's Poshmark. The company charges \$2.95 for items sold for under \$15 and takes 20 percent for items sold for more than \$15.

With ThredUP, the website will send you a box to fill with brand-name women's or children's clothing that it tries to

sell for you. You can keep 5 percent to as much as 80 percent of the amount an item is sold for, depending on the sell price. At Tradesy, you can list designer bags, shoes and clothing, with Tradesy taking as much as 17.8 percent of the sale price.

You can also selling used clothing on eBay, which may charge some listing fees.

Furniture

For couches, mirrors and other household items, try Craigslist or Facebook marketplace. Some good photos in the listing, and measurements of the items, can help them better attract a buyer. But with those options, only accept cash or online payments such as PayPal, since requests to pay by check can be a sign of a scam.

Gift cards

If you got a gift card over the holidays you know you won't use, you can sell them at a number of sites including CardCash, Cardpool and Giftcard Zen. How much money you get depends on a number of factors, including how likely someone else will want to buy it from the gift card seller. Recently, CardCash was offering \$87 for a \$100 gift card from Target, a 23 percent loss. You can also trying selling it on your own through eBay.

Toys

For unopened toys such as Lego sets or American Doll dresses, try the Brian's Toys website. It will quote you the price it will pay on its site, or download the Brian's Toys app, which lets you scan the toy's barcode for a quote. You can also try eBay, Craigslist or Amazon to sell unwanted toys.

Road Beat: 2017 Kia Cadenza, more luxury



The Kia Cadenza's 2017 model is worth taking a spin.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

It has been more than 2½ years since I last tested the Kia Cadenza and for 2017 it becomes a new generation. While it may look only refreshed, the overhaul was far more extensive as it is marginally longer (0.2 inches), with a half inch longer wheelbase, almost an inch wider and is slightly lower.

The entire body structure has been strengthened (more than 35 percent). While it strongly resembles the prior generation,

several changes were made to improve its overall appearance, including one change that was suggested by my last Road Beat. Even the co-efficient of drag was reduced from 0.29 to 0.28.

Cadenza is a super mid-size car (196L x 74W x 58H inches) with large car interior dimensions with almost 124 cubic feet of cabin and trunk volume. The body is made more beautiful by a change (suggested by the Road Beat) in the rear quarter window. Before it wasn't part of the overall window line but now the lower window line continues in one smooth slightly upward motion to a Hofmeister type kink that intersects the beautiful, continuously downward curving upper window line making the entire cabin look like an expansive coupe. Well done Kia. You can be sure that Kia's CEO who is also Kia's chief design officer, Peter Schreyer, had a huge hand in this change. Also, changed is the upper character line that extends with purpose from the Z shape headlight signatures to the "piano key" styled tail lights. The Kia signature grille comes in two styles with the top of the line getting the "Intaglio" design of vertical faceted blades.

This "tiger nose" grille also is concaved and the body has a tauter look transforming the Cadenza from what was slightly milk-toast to more of an aggressive cat. It has become a truly beautiful, elegant car. This new designed received a continuous line of compliments from many people, even from those driving competing brands. Cadenza has become a glamorous, upscale looker that will impress even non-car aficionados.

Things have changed in the power train department. While the engine is the same Road Beat favorite, 3.3LD0HC, 16 Valve, Direct Injected V-6 that knocks down 290 hp at 6,400 rpm and 253 pounds of twist at 5,200 rpm, those values are actually down by about one percent from the prior rating of the engine. This 3.3L mill happens to be one of the best V-6s in production, and considering its output, smoothness and efficiency, it is perhaps the best V-6 in production.

Performance has actually improved, probably due to the new super slick eight speed auto cog swapper replacing the prior generation's six-speeder driving the front wheels. Shifts feel quicker and more positive, almost like an automated dual clutch unit. Needless to say, 0-60 mph times are down four tenths of a second to 5.94 seconds and a level 50-70 mph pass is down to 3.15 seconds. That same run up a steep grade required 4.71 seconds a slight increase of about three tenths of a second. The numbers from the prior test were 6.34, 3.20 and 4.42 seconds respectively. The new Cadenza is a very quick vehicle. Any times under six seconds to 60 mph is world class.



Specifications

Price (with destination)
\$32,890 to about \$45,290

Engine

3.3L DOHC, 24 valve V-6 290
hp A 6,400 rpm
253 ft.-lbs. of torque @
5,200 rpm

Transmission

8 speed torque converter
automatic with paddle
shifters

Configuration

Transversely mounted front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 112.4 inches
Length 195.7 inches
Width 73.6 inches
Height 57.9 inches
Track (f/r) 63.1/63.4 inches
Weight (18"/19" wheels)
3,633/3,799 pounds
Ground clearance 5.4 inches
Fuel Capacity 18.5 gallons
Cabin interior volume 107.8
cubic feet
Trunk volume 16.0 cubic feet
Turning circle 37.2 feet
Steering lock to lock 2.71
turns
Wheels (std/opt)
18X7.5/19X8.0 inch alloys
Tires (std/opt)
245/45X18/245/40X19 inch
radials

Performance

0-60 mph 5.94 seconds
50-70 mph 3.15 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 4.71
seconds
Top speed Way beyond sanity
Fuel economy EPA rated at
20/28/23 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 34 mpg in highway
driving at legal speeds and
25-26 mpg overall in
suburban/rural driving.

Fuel economy is also improved marginally. EPA now rates the Cadenza at 20/28/23 mpg city/highway/combined. As usual, my mpg numbers were much higher with a two way 70 mph run on a

level highway returning 34.1 mpg, an improvement of one mpg over my last test helped in part to a slightly reduced cruising rpm from the new tranny. In suburban driving with mostly moderate but with some heavy traffic it averaged 25.2 mpg and overall in 438 miles of driving with almost no time on the open road or the freeway it returned 26.8 mpg. In a 200 mile, round trip from Placerville to Carson City which included almost no freeway, some heavy traffic, climbing over the Sierra twice and 60 percent on windy, two-lane Highway 50, the Cadenza averaged 32.5 mpg. Amazing performance coupled with surprisingly good fuel economy. Fuel capacity remains a large 18.5 gallons making a real highway range of over 600 miles possible, for the Cadenza that is.

Handling is improved because of a slight widening of track of about half an inch to over 63 inches, quicker steering of just 2.71 turns lock to lock and its stiffer body structure. Suspension remains a state of the art four-wheel independent system with wide 245/40 rubber mounted on 19x8 inch alloys. Cadenza goes around corners with good roll control, tracking perfectly where you point it with massive cornering power. There is some understeer, but its mild and the electric power rack has surprisingly good feel and is nicely weighted. Overall Cadenza handles very well with crisp turn-in. It is fun to drive aggressively and it will not disappoint those looking for a real sporty sedan. You have heard of Easy Rider, well this Cadenza is an easy driver.

Ride quality hasn't diminished. Its supple nature absorbs bumps beautifully, while being so well controlled that there is no float and Cadenza is bank vault quiet. It is a smooth mover with the engine spinning just 1,950 rpm at 70 mph, slightly slower than the prior generation. See above.

Braking is strong with large four-wheel discs with all the acronyms and the SX Limited top of the line Cadenza has just about every safety feature you can think down to the surround view monitor. Headlights are very good in low beam, but the

high beams could be stronger.

Another Improvement from the prior generation is the interior. Seating is even more comfortable. Still with super soft Nappa leather, Kia has done a quilt job on the seats giving it a sportier look while adding to their bolstering comfort level. Many high-end sports car like those from Italy use a quilting style in the leather. On the Kia, the pattern is smaller, but it seems to add to the softness of the seats. They do enhance the Kia experience. Already extremely spacious, the sublime rear seating is improved with a bit of additional, already enormous legroom from the longer wheelbase. The trunk is huge at 16 cubic feet.

Instrumentation is complete with a large speedo and tach separated by an information center with three fuel computers, perfect for guys like me. It is well done and easy to use. Materials for the dash and doors are mostly soft touch and exude quality. The center stack is easy to use for both the climate and sound system and it is topped by a huge 8-inch color screen for Nav, rear and surround cameras and the sound system.

So, what is the damage? Price of admission for this absolutely loaded Cadenza SXL is \$44,390 plus \$900 for the boat from Ulsan, Korea. But the base premium model stickers for just \$31,990 and that's with leather seating. Quite the deal. For \$3,000 you can add the premium luxury package which gives you things you would want like NAV with the 8-inch screen. So, a nicely equipped unit is more like \$35 large, but that is a bargain when compared to slightly smaller mid-size cars with about the same level of equipment, but not quite the luxury. The Technology model lists for \$38,990 and has nearly everything including the trick front grille, except things like the quilted seats and I must tell you those seats are nice. Any way you slice it, this Cadenza is like a filet mignon among mid-size near luxury rides. About the only thing for improvement would be an all-wheel drive option. As I said

with the newest Hyundais (a sister company to Kia), the Koreans have now out Japanesed the Japanese.

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.

New table games have steep hurdles

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

When it comes to slots, new skill-based games have generated a lot of industry buzz. But in the world of table games, blackjack and baccarat (and to a lesser extent, craps and roulette) continue to dominate, and experts say that won't change anytime soon.

When it comes to games played on green felt, innovation means adding features to existing games or inventing variations of existing casino stalwarts, not creating entirely new concepts.

It's not that no one is trying to develop new games. According to Jonné Brunette, an agent with the Nevada Gaming Control Board, gaming regulators received 19 new game applications in 2016, of which 12 won final approval.

Read the whole story

Star Guide: Poetry contest for star gazers

"The Stars"

The stars reflected on water.

The ones above stood still.

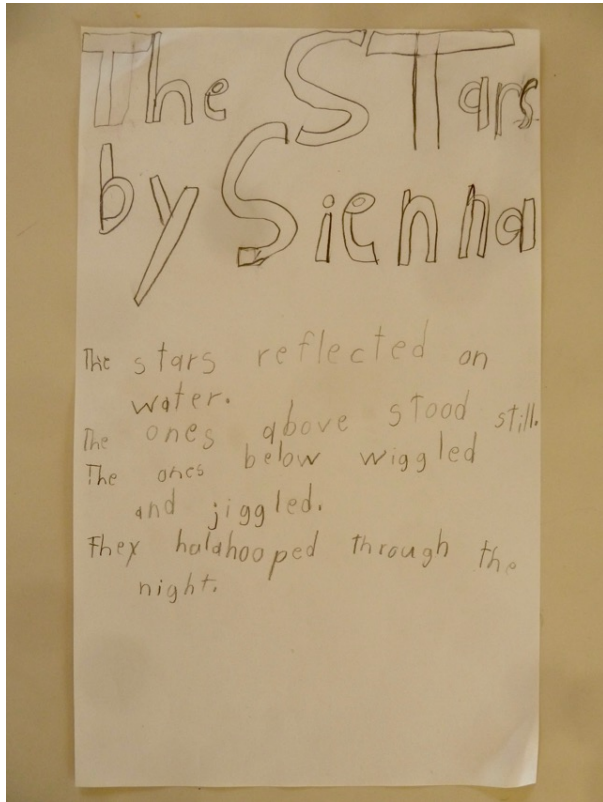
The ones below wiggled and jiggled.

They hulahooped through the night.

– Sienna Larrucea

By Tony Berendsen

This week marks the beginning of the 2017 Astro-Poetry contest and a call for poems. I couldn't think of a better way to announce this year's contest than to share "The Stars" by Sienna Larrucea.



She was a first-grader in Mrs. Fisher's class at Loyalton Elementary in Loyalton last year when she submitted a poem that won first place in the K-2 grade division. Her school webpage proudly displays captioned images of students, with my favorite stating, "learn to love, love to learn ... we rise above." I can't help but think she goes to a really great school.

The astro-poetry contest began seven years ago with the hope of inspiring young minds to think about the Earth as a place within the cosmos and share their thoughts through poetry. The contest is a creative exercise many teachers have adopted for writing classes, and many solo students from elementary to high school, private, public, and home school have entered too. Over the last six years we have received over 1,500 poems.

I have read all of the poems submitted. It's one of the many selfish things I cherish. The poems are from young minds imagining adventures in space, or honoring the beauty seen on a dark starry night, but some of them, like Sienna's poem, capture the youthful curiosity we have all experienced. It is that curiosity carried and nurtured through life that tends to reward our society with the great minds of scientists, doctors, and engineers that shape our future.

The contest rules are simple. All poems must be astronomy related, original, not longer than 20 lines, and only one entry per student. Poems are submitted by email to

poems@tahoestartours.com. Include: name, address, phone number, school, and teacher's name. Submit poems in pdf or jpeg only. Poems must be received by midnight April 15 to be considered.

Poems are judged in three divisions: K-2, 3-6, and 7-12 grades. Winning poems will be announced on April 19 by email, and an award ceremony will be April 22 at the Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum in Reno. Each winning poet receives a certificate and the opportunity to read their poem during the ceremony.

The winning poets also receive prizes. Celestron provides first and second place prizes of telescopes and binoculars for each division and Tahoe Star Tours provides tickets to the Dark Skies Cosmoarium at Northstar for third place. Poets need not be present to win.

I believe we are all poets in some way. Most of us don't take the time to write down the amazing moments we experience in life, but the few that do, and the few that decide to share with others document our humanity. I'm so excited to read the poems.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775. 232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Money Matters: How to spend tax returns

By Rick Gross

More than 110 million Americans collected a tax refund – worth

an average of just under \$3,000 – after filing their 2015 tax returns, according to statistics released by the Internal Revenue Service.



Rick Gross

If you're one of the many Americans who expect to receive a financial windfall this year, what do you plan to do with the money? It's tempting to treat yourself to a new TV or a pricey vacation. However, if you refrain from spending your refund impulsively, the money presents an opportunity to treat yourself to additional financial security.

Here are five ways to extend the benefits of any refund you receive this year or in the future:

1. Give your retirement savings a boost

While your refund may not seem like a large sum compared to the amount you need to live the life you want in retirement, every dollar you put aside matters. Keep in mind that the money will have a chance to grow, particularly if you are several years or even decades from retirement.

This year, think about using your refund to “max out” your contributions to an individual retirement account. Individuals age 50 or older can set aside \$6,500 per year in an IRA while those under 50 can save up to \$5,500 annually. You may be able to deduct your IRA contributions if you qualify, which may help reduce your 2017 tax bill. You can also put your refund to work in a Roth IRA, potentially qualifying you for tax-free withdrawals in retirement.

2. Save for another long-term goal

If you are saving money for a down payment on a home, a home improvement, or higher education needs, your refund can make a big difference. Consider using your tax refund to establish a separate savings account, or invest the money in its own investment vehicle. Keeping your goal-specific savings separate from your day-to-day accounts will help you focus on reaching the goal because you'll be less tempted to spend the money elsewhere.

3. Expand your rainy day fund

A basic rule of thumb is for you to have at least three-to-six months of income set aside in an emergency fund. This is money that should be left in cash (such as a savings account or a money market fund) in the event an unexpected financial need occurs. A tax refund is a great way to bolster your rainy day fund if it's lacking.

4. Focus on being financially independent

If you have any credit card debt, consider first using your refund to reduce this costly form of borrowing. After that debt is eliminated, you may want to focus on tackling any outstanding student loan balances. If you're fortunate enough to have your consumer debts paid off, think about making an additional mortgage payment. Many Americans make it a goal to pay off their home before they retire, and several lump sum payments can help make this goal more attainable for you.

5. Adjust your tax withholding

If you tend to receive a sizable tax refund each year, a better approach may be to reduce the tax withheld from your paycheck. Rather than giving the IRS a "tax-free loan" while you wait for a big refund, keeping the money may make more sense for you. Apply the extra cash you'll receive in each paycheck toward your most important goals, such as retirement

or a child's education. Adjusting your withholding may affect your tax situation, so talk to your tax advisor before making a change.

You want to use your refund where it will have the greatest positive impact on your financial situation. If you need help weighing competing priorities, talk with a financial professional who can give you an objective perspective on how to best divvy up your refund.

Rick Gross is a financial advisor and private wealth advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services Inc. in South Lake Tahoe.

Tips for clearing snow from roofs

South Lake Tahoe's Building Division is providing the following information to assist homeowners and commercial property owners in assessing potential hazardous conditions due to the snow load on their properties.

Flat and low pitched roofs, most often found on industrial buildings, are at greatest risk of buckling under heavy snow and ice accumulations. Lower roofs, where snow accumulates from higher roof areas are also vulnerable to damage and collapse. Also, some commercial properties have sections dedicated to the storage and display of seasonal merchandise protected only by light-weight, corrugated metal roofs that are likely not able to sustain excess snow loads. Air-inflated structures that protect athletic fields or similar facilities may be susceptible to increased roof loads imposed by accumulated snow.



Now is the time to clear roofs of snow while there is a break in the weather.
Photo/LTN

Tips for removing snow and ice from roofs and other areas:

- Use a snow rake for pitched roofs (available at most hardware stores) to remove snow from your roof.
- Start from the edge and work your way into the roof.
- Try to shave the snow down to a 2 or 3 inches on the roof instead of scraping the roof clean, which will risk damage to your shingles or other roof covering.
- Keep in mind that any metal tool could conduct electricity if it touches a power line.
- Metal tools will do more damage to your roof.
- Shovel snow from flat roofs throwing the snow over the side away from the building.
- Most plastic shovels are better, except for the ones with curved blades—those too will do some damage to your roof.
- Remove large icicles carefully if they're hanging over doorways and walkways. Consider knocking down icicles through windows using a broom stick.
- Wear protective headgear and goggles when performing any

of these tasks.

- Consider hiring professionals to do the job. The combination of heights plus ice makes this one of the more dangerous house chores.
- If you don't hire professionals, at least have someone outside with you in case anything does go wrong.
- Keep gutters and drains clean, free of ice and snow and keep downspouts clean at ground level.
- Don't use electric heating devices like hair dryers or heat guns to remove snow and ice.
- Don't use open-flame devices to remove snow and ice.

How to recognize potentially hazardous snow load on roofs:

- Sagging roofs
- Severe roof leaks
- Cracked or split wood members
- Bends or ripples in supports
- Cracks in walls or masonry
- Sheared off screws from steel frames
- Sprinkler heads that have dropped down below ceiling tiles
- Doors that pop open
- Doors or windows that are difficult to open
- Bowed utility pipes or conduit attached at ceiling
- Creaking, cracking or popping sounds.

– *City of South Lake Tahoe*

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Louie

Louie is a 6-year-old Labrador mix who will do well in just about any household.

He is a low- to medium-energy dog who loves to go for walks and car rides, and snuggle on the sofa. He is calm, gentle, quiet, affectionate, and playful. He didn't seem to know any commands when he first arrived at the shelter, but he is very food-motivated and has learned sit and down, although stay will take a little more time. He walks very nicely on a short leash, and gets along well with dogs he has met.

Louie is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter. (Probably due to the weather, very few animals at the shelter have found new homes in the past week – please

consider adopting your new best friend this week when the weather has cleared.)

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Tiny houses outlawed where they are most needed

By Maegan Carberry, Salon

While America might be known for its philosophy of expansion, a growing number of citizens are diligently trying to reverse-engineer Manifest Destiny. Much of the focus on people who opt to live in tiny houses is written by gawkers who focus on their chic designs, radical downsizing, and feasibility.

However, living tiny is literally about as close to a grassroots movement as one can get, and proponents are actively engaged in advocacy with local governments to realize their vision of decentralizing materialism. With a groundbreaking proposal to amend the International Residence Code – which is the model code for the majority of residential construction in the United States – submitted by movement leaders last fall, 2017 might be the year that sets up this niche market to go mainstream.

“Tiny House communities or pocket neighborhoods provide the opportunity for closer human connections, sharing and intentional communities, and a release from the ‘work to live’

trap so many of us are ensnared in,” says Cy Englert, who administers the popular online group Tiny House Community.

Read the whole story

Free weekly movies at Minden library

Starting in February, the Minden Library will be showing movies every Saturday at 10:30am in the meeting room for free.

These movies are geared toward adults and teens (rated PG to PG-13). Free coffee and treats will be available.

February’s theme is romantic award-winning films:

- Feb. 4: “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” (not rated)
- Feb. 11: “Chocolat” (PG-13)
- Feb. 18: “Barefoot in the Park” (not rated)
- Feb. 25: “Casablanca” (PG)

The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane.

Train schedules return

engagement to Tahoe

The Bay Area band Train is becoming a regular headliner at the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series.

The group will be back on July 9 at 7:30pm.

Opening will be O.A.R. and Natasha Bedingfield.

Train last played in **Stateline in 2015.**