

Benefit concert to help South Shore woman

Students in the music department at Lake Tahoe Community College are putting on a benefit concert Dec. 14 at 7pm in the Duke Theatre to support a fellow rocker dealing with cancer.

Students in music teacher Eric Hellberg's fall quarter rock ensemble classes will take the stage, performing classic rock n' roll hits, some gospel, country, and a little bit of heavy metal to help raise funds for the Angie Peart Cancer Fund.

Peart, a repeat rock ensemble student and wife of LTCC reprographics/phone operator Bob Peart, has been battling an aggressive form of brain cancer since last year. All proceeds from the concert will go toward helping the Pearts to cover medical and hospital travel costs, and to LTCC's music department.

Suggested donation is \$10.

If you cannot attend the concert but would like to make a donation, contact LTCC Foundation Executive Director Nancy Harrison at 530.541.4660, ext. 245 or Harrison@ltcc.edu.

Vacation rental scams targeting SLT properties

The South Lake Tahoe Police Department is warning potential vacation home renters of an ongoing scam on Craigslist.

These listings may include pictures and a lengthy description

of a real house. Unsuspecting vacationers are paying in advance, usually by check or Western Union wire. The supposed landlord takes receipt of the money and when the victim shows up to the vacation rental, they find that the home is occupied by a permanent resident or that there are other renters in the home.

Other techniques being used are asking unsuspecting renters to deposit money directly into a bank account and then that bank account is closed out. People are also being asked to buy gift cards and provide the card numbers to the scammers.

In an effort to avoid being scammed while renting a vacation home:

- Use a credit card. Never use bank wires, certified checks, Western Union, or any other service where the money is gone forever immediately after you send it.
- Obtain full contact info and verify it by using Google search or the like. If dealing with a person, ask for references, especially full work contact info, and verify that contact info.
- If they always have to call you back, be suspicious. When they call, ask for a phone number where you can immediately call them back. If they don't pick up the phone, watch out. Be aware that many scammers use message services.
- If you are a victim of a vacation rental scam, contact the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100.

Douglas library makes it easy

for book clubs

Douglas County Public Library is helping book clubs.

Book Group in a Bag includes 10 copies of a selected book. Some kits also come with book reviews and discussion questions.

A list of titles is available at the Minden Library and can be found through the library's **online catalog**. Book Group in a Bag kits can be borrowed for six weeks at a time. Check out a kit, distribute the books to your book group, and read together.

The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane.

For more information, call 775.782.9841.

Safety tips for driving in winter weather

As rain, freezing rain and snow is forecast in Northern Nevada, the Nevada Department of Transportation and Nevada Highway Patrol are providing winter driving reminders to help motorists drive more safely.

On average, more than 2,000 crashes occur statewide every year due to unsafe driving in snow, ice and other wet conditions, such as driving too fast for conditions, following too closely, or failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting.

In winter weather, motorists are reminded to drive slowly for conditions and leave space between their vehicle and others.

Wearing a seat belt and focusing on the road are other important driving tips for any type of weather.

Winter driving tips:

- Only travel in winter weather when necessary, leave enough time to safely reach your destination and plan your route to help avoid snowy/icy areas and steep hills.
- Before driving, check weather and road conditions by dialing 511 or clicking on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.
- Share your travel itinerary so others know when to expect you.
- Remove snow and ice from all vehicle windows, mirrors, lights, turn signals and license plates.
- Buckle up.
- Turn on headlights to see and be seen.
- Turn off cruise control.
- Avoid quick starts, stops and fast turns. Accelerate, brake and steer smoothly and gradually.
- Reduce speed. Speed limits are based on normal road and weather conditions, not winter road conditions.
- Do not slam on brakes. Apply steady pressure on ABS-equipped vehicles and pump the brakes if necessary on non-ABS vehicles.
- Always comply with all posted chain requirements.
- If your vehicle has snow tires, install and use them between Oct. 1 and April 30.
- Keep additional distance from other vehicles.

- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment.
- Do not pass without good distance and sight clearance.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas- they may freeze first.
- Maintain a high fuel level.
- If vehicle begins to skid, steer in direction of slide and slowly remove foot from accelerator.
- Be aware of black ice.
- If parked or stuck in snow, leave window slightly cracked for ventilation and make sure vehicle exhaust system is clear of snow.

Check before you go:

- Wipers
- Tires-tread
- Brakes
- Lights
- Battery
- Radiator
- Belts-hoses
- Exhaust-fuel-ignition system
- Heater-defroster
- Thermostat
- Vehicle fluid levels
- Full gasoline tank.

Ski Run working on being a destination for fun

By Kathryn Reed

Neighbors on Ski Run Boulevard have long endeavored to set themselves apart from other areas of South Lake Tahoe. It's a community within a community.

Nice, wide, paved, plowed and lighted sidewalks are inviting to walk on. Even the street itself is wider than many – giving it that feel of a true boulevard. A mix of commercial interests are interspersed up and down the street.

Depending on the time of year banners or plants hang from the light posts. The vibe is friendly and welcoming.

The holiday stroll on Sunday will be the latest event to bring people outside that one street to the neighborhood.

"We feel like the energy is starting to change in South Lake Tahoe, and a lot of young people are interested in making change and being involved," Teresa Bertrand, who owns BioSpirit Massage on Ski Run, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Ski Run plans to have more events like the bike parade a few years ago. Photo/LTN file

This energy spurred the idea for the stroll on Dec. 11. Wanting to gear it toward locals is why it's on a Sunday. It will be from 3:30-5:30pm on both sides of the boulevard between Alder and Tamarack streets. Ski Run will remain open.

Carolers will be singing at various locations – with those in attendance welcome to participate. Santa has cleared his schedule in order to be at Chimayo restaurant between 4:15 and 5:30pm.

Plenty of hot chocolate will help ward off the cold temps – stop by Blue Angel, Chimayo or Nepheles.

Free face painting will take place at Blue Angel. Non-perishable donations for Bread & Broth are being accepted at The Alder Inn.

"We don't really have neighborhood pockets up here outside of Highway 50 where it feels genuinely homey," Jeff Cowen, owner of Blue Angel Café, told *Lake Tahoe News*. He added that events

help introduce people to the street and reminds others what all the area has to offer.

Ski Run activities are overseen by two entities. The business improvement district is operated by those who live or have a business on the boulevard. An assessment pays for the beautification of the area. The Friends of Ski Run have a permit with the city to operate events like the holiday stroll.

The permit can be used by people outside of Ski Run, but those on the street have the first say of approving any activity before city officials weigh in. The non-snowy seasons are easiest for the events because of the amount of traffic the street gets with skiers going to Heavenly.

With those on the street being busy, they are now starting to make a concerted effort to get others to bring events to Ski Run. While there was a big slip-and-slide there this summer, because it was above Pioneer Trail, it did not fall under the umbrella of the Ski Run group. Nonetheless, the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, who brought in the slide, got the blessing of the folks on Ski Run before proceedings.

It's more of these outside the box events the Ski Run activists would like to attract. Traditional events are good, too, like the annual Friday farmers markets in the summer.

The Ski Run folks would like to reduce the 35 mph speed limit to make it even more friendly; that 35 tends to mean people go 40 or 45 mph. Talks have been off and on with the city. Flashing signs might be a compromise to try to get people to slow down.

The group in 2010 launched "on the run" as a slogan; with events like Dogs on the Run incorporating that moniker. The enthusiasm waned a bit and now a resurgence is under way to make Ski Run Boulevard the place to be for locals and visitors.

Gaming regulators to discuss new wagering accounts

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada regulators will discuss allowing the use of wagering accounts for more forms of casino gambling at a special workshop Thursday.

Currently, bettors can use accounts for sports betting and some online games. Among other changes, the proposed regulations would allow people to use wagering accounts to bet on slots, video poker and bingo.

The new regulations are based on changes to gaming law made during the 2015 Nevada Legislature, the same laws that addressed skill-based gaming.

Read the whole story

Truckee Tahoe chorus to put on 2 holiday concerts

The Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus of Sierra College's winter 2016 concert series "Holiday Glow" is Dec. 10-11.

The program features a colorful array of musical styles and traditions depicting the warmth and glow of the holiday season. The 50-voice chorus, now in its 15th year, was founded

by the late Chris Nelson and is currently directed by Susan K. Horst.

TTCC, in keeping with its mission to promote a quality choral music curriculum in the schools, established the Truckee Tahoe Youth Chorus three years ago, and they will perform several selections. In addition, this holiday concert series will once again feature a string quintet with local musicians.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$5 children and may be purchased from chorus members, **online** or at the door.

The Dec. 10 show is at 7pm, the Dec. 11 is at 2pm. Both are at the Resort at Squaw Creek.

Tips to fire proof home with holiday decorations

The following are tips from the National Fire Protection Association are designed to keep homes safe during the holiday season:

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant and flame retardant.
- Keep candles away from decorations and other things that can burn. According to the NFPA, two of every five home decoration fires are started by candles, and nearly half of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source. Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not

both.

- Replace any strings of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords don't get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

Road Beat: Mazda 3 six-speed manual shines



The Mazda 3 six-speed manual – sporty is, as sporty does.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

About a year ago the Road Beat tested the 2015 Mazda 3 hatchback with the 2.5L 184 hp inline Skyact four with Mazda's six-speed torque converter auto cog swapper. There was little question, nothing in its class could outperform or outhandle this superb ride. It was the top of its compact class.

When I was given to opportunity to test the same Mazda 3 model (Grand Touring Hatchback S) with a six-speed manual, I jumped at the chance to explore the differences between the two otherwise identical vehicles.

Mazda 3 hatchback is the best looking of all the compact cars and there is some pretty heady competition from Focus, Civic and Elantra. Modeled after the Takeri concept car, Mazda calls the shape following the Kodo styling philosophy. Being a hatchback model, it is about 5 inches shorter at only 176 inches, while still riding on a long 106-wheel base. Width is 71 inches. Co-efficient of drag is 0.28 for the hatchback.



Specifications

Engine

DOHC, 16 valve inline 2.5L
four 184 hp @ 5,700 rpm
185 ft-lb of torque at 3,250
rpm

Transmission

Six Speed torque converter

automatic, with paddle shifters

Six Speed Manual

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 175.6 inches

Width 70.7 inches

Height 57.3 inches

Track (f/r) 61.2/61.4 inches

Ground clearance 6.1 inches

Weight 3,046 pounds

Weight distribution (f/r)
60/40%

Fuel capacity 13.2 gallons

Cargo capacity (rear seats up/down) 20.2/47.1 cubic feet

Steering lock to lock 2.57 turns

Turning circle (curb to curb) 34.78 feet

Turning circle (wall to wall) 37.07 feet

Wheels 18X7 inch alloys

Tires 215/45X18 all season radials

Co-efficient of drag (sedan/hatchback) 0.26/0.28

Performance

0-60 mph 6.98 seconds

50-70 mph 3.95 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 6.12 seconds

Top speed 130 mph

electronically limited
Fuel economy 26/35/29 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 32-33 mpg in rural
country driving and over 38
mpg on a level highway at
legal speeds.

With the 2.5L direct injected Skyactiv four-cylinder power plant turns a compact car into a very high performance economy car. This direct injected, DOHC, 16 valve, locomotive style inline four pumps out 185 hp at a low 5,700 rpm and 184 pounds of twist at an extremely low 3,250 rpm which translates to power down low. With the six speed manual it will scamper from 0-60 mph in 6.98 seconds. Passing performance in simulated 50-70 mph acceleration runs on a level highway and up a steep grade posted numbers of 3.95 and 6.12 seconds respectively. The numbers for the automatic are almost identical with 7.08, 3.91 and 5.74, respectively. The difference in the passing numbers can be explained by the fact that with the manual, only third gear was used while the auto gets to use second and third gears making up some of the losses of the torque converter's slightly less efficient transmission of power although most torque converter's lock up when conditions allow it to.

One more important attribute with this 2.5L powerhouse is its flexibility. You can lollygag around at 1,500 rpm in sixth gear smoothly and then accelerate away with moderate power. Even in fifth gear at 1,500 rpm it will accelerate without complaint up a grade. It will pull strong to about 6,200 rpm when a soft rev limiter stops the fun. It feels more like a muscle car V-8 when in the Mazda 3.

Smoother than warm butter, the manual is a blast to drive. Gearing is well chosen and it is so smooth clutchless up shifting is more the norm. For down shifting, the clutch makes

it easier. Going first to second I also used the clutch as the ratios are much farther apart to keep it smooth. I am sure most drivers will continue to use the light clutch going up and down.

But here is where it gets interesting, the automatic returns the better fuel economy. EPA numbers also reflect the better automatic fuel economy with the manual getting numbers of 28/35/29 mpg versus the auto's 28/38/32 mpg city/highway/combined numbers. As usual, the real world numbers for the manual are much better with an overall number of 32-33 mpg. The auto version returned one to two mpg better. During a two way run with the cruise control set at 70 mph it averaged 38.5 mpg versus the automatic's highway number of 43.4 mpg. My Lake Tahoe round trip number averaged 35.5 mpg versus the auto number of 38.6 mpg. Why the difference? First the automatic had Mazda's i-Eloop system which takes a load off the alternator (maybe adding a half to a full mpg), but more important is the lower engine rpm (taller overall gearing) of the automatic. The automatic turns just 2,000 rpm at 70 mph whereas this manual spins at 2,500 rpm. If there are any negative which plagues almost all compact cars it is the small 13.2-gallon fuel tank. It seems that all Japanese compacts must use the same fuel tank vendor as almost all have a capacity of 13.2 gallons.

During highway cruising the automatic's torque converter "locks up" and acts just like a manual as the torque converter is effectively bypassed. In fact, these new super high efficiency torque converters usually lock up in the top five gears in a six speed auto. That's why the auto gets returns more mpg. Perhaps the ultimate tranny would be a dual clutch automated manual, but for now the Mazda torque converter auto is more than fine, it is excellent.

Handling is another department where the Mazda excels. It out handles every other compact save maybe a Focus ST or RS, a VW GTI or a Honda Si which are specially designed for the

performance/handling minded and priced accordingly. Mazda's state of the art four-wheel independent suspension is first rate, ditto for the super quick (2.6 turns lock to lock) electric power rack, its wide 61-inch track, 18X7 inch alloys shod with 215/45 rubber all with harmonious tuning do the dancing and this Mazda does dance. It would be disqualified from Dancing with the Stars as a ringer for sure. It is an absolute pleasure when the road bends, inspiring confidence. That's why Mazda 3's and Miata's are so popular in the racing circuit.

Ride quality is as said before, firm supple. Personally, it is a perfect blend. It is quiet on all but the coarsest roads when some road noise will intrude into the cabin. Even though the engine spins 2,500 rpm at 70 mph it is still extremely quiet and smooth only speaking when spoken to (getting into the throttle).

Braking is superb from the four-wheel discs (front ventilated) with all the acronyms. By the time you read this the 2017s will be out and will have ActivSense emergency braking as well as every other safety acronym now available with this current Mazda 3. Headlights are very good.

Inside is a typical fantastic interior all done in standard leather in the Grand Touring model with contrasting red stitching. They give you long haul comfort. The instrument panel is designed for sporty driving with a big central tach using the lower right hand quadrant for a large digital speedo readout. The GT version also comes with a convenient standard heads-up display. This is a very high quality interior but the sound system needs work as does the TFT display stuck on top of the center dash. It is just plain hard to use. Nav is also standard in the GT.

Rear seating is good for two and with the seats folded there are over 47 cubes of cargo volume for your monthly trip to Home Depot or camping out.

Pricing has remained almost constant from the 2015 model with this top of the line GT model whose only option was the surcharge for the Soul Red Metallic paint (\$300) stickered at \$25,745 plus \$835 for the boat from Hofu, Japan. My recommendation would be to spend about a grand more and buy the automatic and forget the go faster paint (This Mazda has plenty of "soul" without the \$300 paint and besides any color as long as it's shiny is OK with me). If shifting is your bag, then this is your best compact ride right here. The auto will get you a few more mpgs and is just as quick This is the compact car I would buy.

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.

Deadline approaching for overseas military mail

To people serving in the military overseas receive packages on time, it is best to ship holiday gifts no later than Dec. 9.

For other international destinations, it's best to have the mail on its way by Dec. 10.

Here are the military deadlines from the U.S. Postal Service for most destinations:

Dec. 7 – Retail ground

Dec. 9 – Priority mail packages

Dec. 9 – First class cards and letters

Dec. 16 – Priority mail express military service

Domestic deadlines:

Dec. 15 – USPS retail ground

Dec. 20 – First class cards and letters

Dec. 21 – Priority mail packages

Dec. 23 – Express service.