

Original plays to be staged on South Shore

Winners of the inaugural WordWave One-Act Play Contest include new and seasoned playwrights whose work will be performed for the first time in staged readings at the Boathouse Theatre on Oct. 10.

Two winners took the prize: “Compromising Positions,” by Michelle Benson, and “Woman Running Late in a Dress,” by Dallas Woodburn, with an honorable mention going to “Man’s Best Friend” by Rod McFadden.

The WordWave playwriting committee fielded 193 submissions.

The writers will collaborate with the directors and an audience Q& A will be at the end of the performance.

Benson, from Murfreesboro, Tenn., is a recent undergrad from Middle Tennessee State University and this is her first award. Woodburn is a fiction writer, playwright and teacher whose plays have been produced in California and in New York City as part of the Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Competition. McFadden has received awards in national playwriting competitions.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased **online**, or the night of the performances. The event starts at 7:30pm.

WordWave is a three-day festival from Oct. 9-11 at the Tallac Historic Site on the South Shore. This free event will feature oral storytelling, author readings, vendors, panels on craft, a maker’s station and a novel writing camp for kids. Ticketed events include a steampunk ball, workshops, agent sessions and even a hike. The entire schedule is **online**.

Road beat: 2015 Lexus GS 350 – nearly perfect



The Lexus 350 continues to shine in the luxury class.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Lexus has the tagline “In the Pursuit of Perfection.” However, has the refined fourth generation hit the mark yet? In many ways it’s the perfect midsize car wheelbase of 112 inches and length of 190 inches while offering a perfect beam of 72 inches. The result is an interior of mammoth with rear seat leg room that makes transport of limousine proportions. But that only is the beginning.

Starting in the United States in 1993 as the GS 300, it was designed by ItalDesign Giugiaro but was only a modest success, perhaps lagging in performance as it was powered by an inline six of 3.0L and 220 hp. While it might be said the new GS is a super refined step back to its original roots, this fourth generation is a whole different car.



Specifications

Price \$48,600 to about \$58,000.
Destination of \$925

Engine

3.5L DOHC 24 valve
V-6 306 hp @ 6,400
rpm
277 lb.-ft. @ 4,800
rpm

Transmission

Eight speed torque
converter automatic

Configuration

Front engine/rear
wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 112.2

inches

Length 190.7 inches

Width 72.4 inches

Height 57.3 inches

Track (f/r)

62.0/62.6 inches

Ground clearance

5.1 inches

Trunk capacity 14.1
cubic feet

Fuel Capacity 17.4
gallons

Weight 3,726 pounds

GVWR 4,830 pounds

Weight distribution
(f/r) 53/47 percent

Steering lock to
lock 2.2-2.6 turns

Turning circle 34.8
feet

Wheels 19X8 (f)
19X9 (r) inch
alloys

Tires

235/40RX19(f),

265/35X19 (r)

Coefficient of drag
0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 5.78
seconds

50-70 mph 3.11

50-70 mph uphill
4.17 seconds

Top speed Governed
at 142 mph

Fuel economy EPA

rated 29/34/31 mpg
city/highway/combined
Expect 31 mpg
overall in mixed
driving. At 70 mph
on cruise control
two way run 39 mpg
on longer level
highway trips at
legal speeds expect
37 mpg.

In this 2015 issue GS, Lexus saw fit to create the best L'Finnesse front end in their line up with an aggressive snout of a grille that says its one tough customer. It says, power, strength, and polish. Lexus also eliminated unnecessary lines and replaced them with subtle fluidity that has muscles, but a slick sinewy kind of a perfect athletic body that would have instant reactions, reflexes and responses. The smoothness of the rear window line blending into the trunk deck says it all. Coefficient of drag is a low 0.27.

While Lexus offered a 4.3 -4.6L V-8 in the second and third generation, the 3.5L V-6 Lexus GS 350 has found oodles of sublime power with 306hp at 6,400 rpm and 277 pounds of twist at 4,800 rpm which equates to 253 hp at that rpm. Power is sent to the rear wheels via an eight speed super slick automatic tranny. While the 1998 second gen GS400 with its innovative Optitron instrumentation was my favorite Lexus for year years, this new GS350 can now replace it in the midsize sedan category. But it's still hard to beat my favorite Lexes sedan of all which is the super high performance IS350. It's just a bit small for some families.

Performance of this new GS350 is world-class with 0-60 mph is 5.78 seconds. Passing times are also quick with 50-70 mph happening in 3.11 seconds and the same exercise up a six

percent grade only slowing the clocks to 4.17 seconds. Excellent times partially due to its extremely flexible eight speed tranny.

Fuel economy also benefits from the transmission. EPA rated at 19/29/23 mpg city/highway/combined, the GS averaged 22 mpg in overall fuel economy during 350 miles of aggressive driving, but when you relax and engaged the radar cruise control at 70 mph on a level highway fuel economy rises to a constant 31 mpg, remarkable for a 3,726 pound luxury sporty ride.

If after spending \$50 large for this type of motor vehicle you want more performance and improved fuel economy perhaps you should check out the recent review of the GS 450h. It had slightly improved performance and about 25 percent better fuel economy. But fully loaded it was also about 25 percent more money.

And sporty it is. With driver selectable Adaptive Variable Suspension on my F Sport plus electronic Variable Gear Ratio steering with super quick ratios from 2.6 to 2.2 turns lock to lock and every handling acronym thought of by mankind, this GS should do the twisties like water in a hose. In addition the standard GS gets 18 x 8 inch alloys shod with 235/45 series rubber, but the F Sport adds a huge upgrade to staggered 19 x 9 (front and 19 x 9 inch (rear) alloys plus 235/40 series Summer tires up front and 265/35 tires in the rear. Even the weight distribution is an excellent 53/47 percent. The result is sport car handling that effectively places the GS in the top tier of sporting sedans. Body roll is superbly controlled and the handling is itself is remarkably good and confidence inspiring. If there is any negative its feedback is isolated requiring some attention. Overall the GS is excellent when the road bends.

On the other side of the coin is a perfect balance of ride quality. It is an extremely quiet ride with no extraneous noise, just slippery warm butter smoothness with the engine

spinning a slow 1,800 rpm at 70 mph. It is extremely solid and tight, exactly what you would expect from a sporty luxury ride.

When it comes to safety, the F Sport gets huge 14 inch ventilated front discs and their performance is benchmark stopping in 40-41 feet from 40 mph. It also comes with every conceivable safety acronym ever devised by humans. About the only improvement would be having Jeff Gordon as your chauffeur. That might be a might expensive or maybe unobtainable.

Interiors don't get much better. The gorgeous deep tan leather is superb, and as with the outside the finishes are top quality. Front seats are sublime and rear seating is extremely generous especially considering that its exterior dimensions are of an average midsize sedan.

Instrumentation is complete but about the only knock with the GS is the mouse system used for controlling its sound system. It's distracting and difficult to use. It may keep the radio screen free of fingerprints (good for bank robbers), but it is annoying to use.

Pricing starts at \$48,600 plus \$925 for a first class boat ride from Japan. The F Sport package adds another \$4,825. Just about everything is standard including Bi-Xenon lighting (makes night into day) and navigation, but you can upgrade the already Carnegie Hall concert sound system with a Mark Levinson system for another \$1,380. Blind spot monitoring and auto folding outside mirrors will add \$700. Total package price with a couple of other items was \$57,330. Never thought I would like a V-6 this much in a sporty luxu ride.

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.

Reno's divorce history digitized

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

For much of his life, crooner Frank Sinatra had a notoriously prickly relationship with the press, but when he came to Reno in August of 1951, Old Blue Eyes was downright cheerful.

Apparently, divorce will do that for some guys.

It was a big month and a big year for Reno divorce. Not only was Sinatra "singing for his supper," at the Riverside Hotel as he established residency, actress Rita Hayworth came to town to divorce Prince Aly Khan.

Their stories and hundreds more are told on a **website** developed by Special Collections at the UNR and funded through a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

The collection includes more than 500 photographs, and more than 500 additional items that include oral histories, audio clips, film clips, newspaper articles, magazines, books, divorce ranch ledgers and a variety of other items.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Joey

Sometimes the shelter has lots of big dogs (like two weeks ago), and sometimes we have lots of little dogs – like right now. Joey is one of eight small dogs at the shelter.

He is a 2-year-old Yorkie mix who is just 9 pounds. He is the sweetest little guy, with an easygoing personality. He is good with dogs, kids and doesn't seem to mind sitting cats. He gets the wiggles and is quite playful, but he also loves to be held and petted.

Joey is neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, 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.

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

Storytelling extravaganza rolling into Tahoe

WordWave is a compilation of events that will bring storytellers from across the nation to Lake Tahoe for a three-day literary festival that goes well beyond traditional book readings.

It is Oct. 9-11 at Valhalla on the South Shore. Details about the various events are **online** as is the opportunity to purchase tickets, however some things are free.

Lake Tahoe News asked WordWave founder Kim Wyatt to share what the three-day event is all about. Besides being the force behind the literary event, Wyatt is owner of **Bona Fide Books**, an independent publishing house based in Meyers.



Kim Wyatt

LTN: *How did the concept of WordWave come about?*

Kim Wyatt: I was tabling with Jennifer Basye Sander at the AWP conference in Seattle. There were 10,000 writers there and we talked about how great it would be to have a literary event in South Lake Tahoe. We liked the model of San Francisco's Lit Quake, a weeklong lit event, and wondered if it might be feasible for Tahoe. And we came up with WordWave.

LTN: *What do you hope to achieve by having this three-day festival of story on the South Shore?*

KW: Of course we want people to come out to the Tallac Historic Site and hear great writers. But my personal goal is to highlight the fantastic talent we have in the region. The Sierra Showcase will feature Suzanne Roberts, Michael Makley, June Saraceno from Sierra Nevada College, Michael Branch (High Country News), Ann Marie Brown and Jeremy Evans to name a few. These are writers getting national recognition. And Reno's poet laureate, Gailmarie Pahmeier, will also make an appearance.

LTN: *Do people need to be a writer or voracious reader to enjoy the event?*

KW: No. We didn't want it to feel like an exclusive literary event, so we opened it up to storytellers in general, including plays. We held a playwriting contest, and received entries from around the world. We're excited to launch three new one-act plays on Oct. 10 at the Boathouse Theater – how cool is that? NEA storytelling fellow and Paiute elder Ralph Burns will talk about oral storytelling, and Washoe drummer Ben Rupert will present on drumming. Christian Kiefer (author of "The Animals") will present on songwriting. There is also a novel writing camp for kids, and Maker's Station. So, there is something for everyone – we want to encourage everyone to either tell their story, or at least see the value of storytelling.

LTN: *How did you decide which authors to invite?*

KW: Jennifer suggested Garth Stein, who wrote "The Art of Racing in the Rain," and when we mentioned it to a few people, they were thrilled. He had just published a book about a mansion in the woods, so we decided to have our fundraiser at the Grand Hall with Garth. A local programming committee—me, Bruce Rettig, and Suzanne Roberts—put out a call for abstracts

to regional writers, and we got a great response, which shaped our Sierra Showcase. We decided to round it out with Pam Houston, Gayle Brandeis, and Camille Dungy, because they are great writers and teachers.

LTN: *There is a nice mix of local and internationally known authors-panelists. Do you see this being more than a locals' event?*

KW: Absolutely. I go to writing events all over the country, and nobody else has our lake. It's the perfect site for a writer's getaway. I think WordWave could be an annual event that draws people from all over.

LTN: *Please explain what the Timber Ball–Steampunk in the Woods event is all about.*

KW: The Tall Timber Ball–Steampunk in the Woods is our fundraiser. We wanted to have a really fun, swinging party that was somewhat literary, and steampunk has its roots in Jules Verne. So there is a costume element, and we will be awarding a prize to the best look. Think Edwardian Burner. And rather than sit around banquet tables, we want people to move. So we hired a steampunk DJ who will spin electroswing—just try sitting still!—and the steampunk décor and our “curious” auction will have people talking. And there is a photo booth. Big fun. (You can pick up steampunk garb at Gaia-Licious here in town. They have goggles with wings!)

LTN: *The Makers Station is more hands-on and a different side of storytelling. What will people be able to do here? In this day of writing and reading on electronic devices, why is the history of print important?*

KW: People will be able to create their own books at the Maker's Station. And Ben Rupert will demo drum making, another form of storytelling.

The history of print is important because the book is the most

democratic invention ever created—anyone can get their hands on a book and connect. Books teach us and help us feel less alone. The invention of the printing press radicalized the world, bringing literacy and education to the masses. You really don't want to get me started ...

LTN: *How many submissions did you get for the one-act play competition? How were they whittled down to the winners? How many will be read that Saturday night?*

KW: We received 193 submissions to the one-act play competition, a huge success. Three brand new plays will be premiered on Oct. 10, and at least two of the playwrights will come in for rehearsal.

LTN: *Prices are reasonable – from free to \$100 for the Steampunk. Is the money being raised enough to cover the expenses or are sponsors helping or is there a nonprofit component?*

KW: We were committed from the beginning to have a free event, a public day with great events for readers and writers. Our hope is that the Steampunk Ball will cover expenses, but we have also received a lot of support from the community. We have a great pool of volunteers, with Denise Haerr heading up our hospitality committee. Valhalla Tahoe is our fiscal sponsor, and will receive a percentage of the proceeds.

Our fabulous sponsors include the LTVA, Valhalla Tahoe, the Friends of the Library, the Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, the Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe, Paula Foley, Lennard and Cynthia Brown-Carlson, and Ronda and MJ Schaer and so many more. Organist David Brock is also hosting a fundraiser for WordWave. So we're trying really hard to make it happen and exceed expectations.

LTN: *Do you anticipate this being an annual event? If so, would you mind sharing what might change in coming years?*

KW: Yes, absolutely. We'll have to evaluate after this year and see what people liked, and want more of.

LTN: *Is there anything else you would like to add?*

KW: Just that I am super happy to be able to contribute to the cultural scene in South Lake Tahoe. There is mad talent here that everyone should know about. And that I hope people will come out for WordWave! There is something for every budget and every taste. I just want to get people excited about reading, and about telling their stories—it matters that we do.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Long-distance hiker to give talk at library

Local hiker Jay Bigelow will be at the Minden library on Sept. 22 at 5pm to share his experience through-hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Each year thousands of hikers attempt a through-hike; only about one in four completes the trip.

Bigelow hiked the 2,180 mile trail in 2011 and the 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail in 2012, fulfilling promises he had made to himself when he was still in high school. His wife hiked with him on portions of both trails providing support.

Today the Gardnerville resident hikes five miles a day and takes one or two longer hikes a year.

The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane.

Hip hop dance show benefits TAP

TRIBE-olution will be at MontBleu on Sept. 25 as a fundraiser for Tahoe Arts Project.

The roots of hip hop dance will be explored through African, Brazilian and Asian styles.

The dance group will be performing at South Shore schools earlier in the week.

The Friday performance starts at 7pm. It costs \$15 for adults, \$10 for children. To buy tickets or more info, call 530.542.3632.

‘Death of a Salesman’ auditions at LTCC

The Theater Arts Department at Lake Tahoe Community College is seeking men and women of various ages and types for their upcoming production of the classic American drama, “Death of a Salesman” by Arthur Miller.

Auditions will be Sept. 22 at 7pm in LTCC’s Duke Theatre, inside the Fine Arts building on campus. Performances of the play will take place Nov. 13-22.

This Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play revolves

around the last days of Willy Loman, an aging salesman who is losing his grip on reality and cannot understand how he failed to achieve success and, therefore, happiness. Through a series of soul-searching revelations of the life he has lived with his family and business associates, we discover how his quest for the American Dream kept him blind to the people who truly loved him.

Auditions will consist of readings from the play. Scripts are available on reserve in the Roberta Mason Library at LTCC. Opportunities for light and sound board operators, stage manager, backstage crew, and construction crew are also available.

For more information, call 530.541.4660, ext. 240.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Umbrellabird

The shelter currently has four kittens, including Umbrellabird, a 16-week-old boy who thinks he is a dog.

He loves to play with dogs and prefers them to cats. He was

shy at first because he had a very brave sister named Unicorn, who he depended upon to protect him. Now that she's been adopted, he has come out of his shell and blossomed. His whiskers have even grown back, his sister used to chew them off. He loves to explore and can make a play thing out of anything he finds laying around. He is soft and always warm and will melt in your arms when you pick him up.

Umbrellabird is neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, 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.

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– Karen Kuentz

Do you love your dog more than humans?

By Anna Medaris Miller, U.S. News and World Report

P. Elizabeth Anderson once had a daughter named Grace. Like any parents would, she and her husband cared for her, nurtured her and tried to keep her out of trouble. They took her on vacations and enjoyed her company around the house. "She was my constant companion," says Anderson, a journalist in the District of Columbia.

So when Grace died unexpectedly at age 14, the couple was crushed. But because Grace was a dog, “I was unable to talk to anyone about this immense grief,” says Anderson, who wrote the book “The Powerful Bond between People and Pets: Our Boundless Connections to Companion Animals.”

The depth of Anderson’s devastation surprised her, but it’s common to feel that way after the loss of a dog, says Lori Kogan, associate professor of clinical sciences at Colorado State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Some people feel so sad, in fact, that they wonder if the death of a human companion would have been easier. “People feel guilty because they feel worse when their dog dies than if a family member dies,” Kogan says. “And then they think they’re a bad person.”

But in reality, it’s normal. “There’s a reason you feel that way,” she says. One of them? Unlike the mixed feelings we have toward each other – and that arise after a person’s death – “our relationship with dogs is so uncomplicated,” Kogan says. Some might call it true love.

Read the whole story