

Sugar Pine Foundation celebrating 10 years

The Sugar Pine Foundation is celebrating its 10th anniversary on Aug. 14 at the Valhalla Boathouse on the South Shore.

The Sugar Pine Foundation was founded in 2005 to bring back the legendary sugar pines and other white pines. To date, the nonprofit has identified more than 65 sugar pines and three western white pines in the Tahoe area that are resistant to white pine blister rust, a devastating exotic fungus. More than 80,000 seedlings, progeny of the resistant parent trees, have been planted.

Anniversary events include:

2pm – Art show and live mural

4pm -Tahoe History” by the Washoe Tribe Cultural Resource Department

6pm – Giants of the Forest by leading Champion Trees discoverer Michael Taylor

8pm – Live music by the Good Samaritans and Weapon.

Tickets are \$20 **online** or at the door. Children get in free. Food will be sold on site by Tacos Por Favor and summer drinks by Free Bird Cafe. Beer and wine will be sold in the Boathouse after 6pm.

Author Garth Stein part of

inaugural WordWave

Internationally bestselling author Garth Stein, whose book “The Art of Racing in the Rain” has sold more than 4 million copies and been published in 35 languages, will appear at Tahoe WordWave this fall.

WordWave is a three-day festival (Oct. 9-11) on the grounds of Valhalla at the Tallac Historic Site on the South Shore.

Stein’s newest book, “A Sudden Light,” is set in a large historic house in the woods similar to Valhalla’s Grand Hall, the site of WordWave’s Friday night steampunk ball. It will kick off with a Champagne reception with Stein. On that Saturday at 12:30pm, the public is welcome to bring a sack lunch or head to the food truck and join an informal picnic lunch with Stein.

WordWave is a literary mash-up that will feature oral storytelling, theater performances and free readings, panels on craft, yoga, and a novel writing camp for kids. Highlights include a one-act playwriting contest, a Maker’s Station demo with bookbinding, letterpress, drum making, and found poetry and art.

Ticketed events include the steampunk ball, workshops, and a hike.

In addition to the free festival on Saturday, WordWave will offer paid workshops on craft and agent sessions; the entire schedule is online.

Study: Today's young people poorer than most

By Ana Swanson, Washington Post

What are your odds of being a millionaire, do you think? One in 10? One in 50? One in 100?

If you're over 62, your odds of having at least \$1 million in net wealth (your total assets minus your total debt) are relatively achievable – about 1 in 7. But if you are under 40, your odds are low: 1 in 55.

In the last 25 years, the odds that an old person is a millionaire have improved slightly. But for young people, they have gotten much worse.

These figures come from a new paper by economists at the St. Louis Fed's Center for Household Financial Stability, which shows evidence of a growing wealth gap that few people are talking about – the gap between the young and the old.

Read the whole story

Author to talk about Gold Rush icons

Author and Sierra Nevada native Gary Noy is returning to the South Lake Tahoe Library to give a talk titled A Tale of Two Icons.

It is about the sad history of two famous California Gold Rush

symbols – James Marshall, the discoverer of gold at Coloma in 1848, and Sutter's Fort, the frontier castle of John Sutter. Noy will examine how the two individuals who had the most to gain from the Gold Rush, Marshall and Sutter, both died in poverty while yearning to regain their previous glory.

Noy is the author of "Sierra Stories: Tales of Dreamers, Schemers, Bigots and Rogues" and is presently writing a book on the "California Gold Rush", which is scheduled for release in 2016.

There will be a book sale and signing following the free Aug. 12, 6pm talk at the library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Teacher uses outdoors as his classroom

By Moriah Balingit, Washington Post

As a child, Liam McGranaghan was obsessed with nature, bringing home critters he found near his home in Fairfax County, raising frogs and turtles in the yard and once coaxing an injured crow back to health.

In his adult life, his obsession was reduced to a hobby as he embarked on a meandering career that took him from a history degree at Virginia Tech to gigs in the construction business. During a lull in work, he started substitute teaching and discovered his passion. After getting a master's degree in biology, he was hired to teach biology and then environmental science, a career that combined his childhood obsession with his affinity for the classroom.

McGranaghan now teaches environmental science at Loudoun Valley High School, and his unorthodox class gets his teen students into the wild as much as possible. They take field trips in canoes and hike to the woods nearby to study trees and wildlife. Students even suit up in galoshes to wade into a nearby stream to measure its water quality.

Read the whole story

Study: Millennials less likely to leave the nest

By Dionne Searcey, New York Times

During the recession near the end of the last decade, many young adults facing a dreadful job market moved in with their parents to save money.

Now, jobs may be more plentiful and the economy has improved, but many members of the millennial generation have yet to leave the nest, according to a new study. In fact, even more of them are living at home now.

An analysis of census data by the Pew Research Center has found that 18- to 34-year-olds are less likely to be living apart from family members than they were even during the depths of the recent recession, the worst economic downturn since the 1930s.

Read the whole story

Road beat: Lexus sports car purrs



Lexus understands how to make a sports car for everyday driving. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Lexus has built sporty cars in the past such as the SC300 and SC400 and the second generation SC430. Now Lexus has a serious sports coupe in the guise of the RC350 and the RC-F. My tester is the super high performance F Sport model that comes standard with a rockin', honkin' 5.0L V-8 that cranks out 467 hp at a stratospheric 7,100 rpm. The RC350 uses the IS and GS 3.5L V-6 powerplant with a nothing to sneeze at 306 hp.

Unveiled at the 2013 Tokyo Auto Show, the new RC is based on the excellent IS platform, which happens to be my favorite Lexus. RC-F also borrows the front subframe from the GS

platform as well. It is a sleek fastback two door hardtop design (meaning frameless windows) that has small intricate details like the three rectangular headlights on each side or the front brake cooling ducts along with its massive six pot Brembo sourced brakes. It draws a crowd wherever it goes, even from a distance. People know it's a special car. Coefficient of drag is a moderate 0.33.



Specifications

Price \$43,715-\$75,000

Engine –F Sport

5.0L 32 valve DOHC V-8 467
hp @ 7,100 rpm

389 lb-ft of torque @
4,800-5,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed direct shift
automatic

Configuration

Longitudinal front
engine/RWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 107.5 inches

Length 185.2 inches

Width 72.6 inches

Height 54.7 inches

Track (f/r) 61.2/61.4 inches

Ground clearance 5.1 inches

Fuel capacity 17.4 gallons
Trunk capacity 10.1 cubic
feet
Weight 3,958 pounds
Weight distribution 55/45
Turning circle 35.4feet
Steering lock to lock 2.84
turns
Wheels (f/r) 9X19/10X19
inches
Tires (f/r)
255/35X19/275/30X19
Co-efficient of drag 0.33

Performance

0-60 mph 4.23 seconds
50-70 mph 1.94 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 2.34
seconds
Top speed Electronically
limited at 170 mph
Fuel economy EPA rated at
16/26/19 mpg
city/highway/combined Expect
21-22 mpg rural country
driving, expect 28-29 mpg at
legal speeds on a level
highway.

It rides on a shortened IS wheelbase of 107.5 inches while the body stretches out to 185 inches. Width is a tidy 72.6 inches as it stands almost 55 inches high. It's size could be called large compact.

What makes the RC-F powerplant is the ability to go from Otto cycle to Atkinson cycle. It's like having your cake and eating it too. Atkinson cycle engines use an extremely high compression ratio in the F's case 12.3:1. Most hybrids use

Atkinson cycle engines with super high compression as by holding the intake valve open beyond bottom dead center of the compression stroke, it makes the ratio between the compression stroke and the expansion (power) stroke even greater improving overall engine efficiency. Lexus can do this because of its super trick use of variable valve timing and lift system.

When the engine is cruising down the highway under light loads, it improves fuel economy. If you demand more from the engine room it instantly switches back to a more powerful Otto cycle mode.

In case you are interested this 5.0L monster motor also makes 389 pounds of twist anywhere from 4,800 to 5,600 rpm. How's that for a flat torque curve. Because the curve is flat, it is a good demonstration of how torque with rpm means nearly everything in performance, not just torque. It also demonstrates the extreme efficiency of the F's 5.0L V-8. At 4,800 rpm the V-8 produces 356 hp, but because the V-8 can maintain the same peak volumetric cylinder efficiency at 5,600 rpm it makes 415 hp. Identical torque but an additional 59 hp. Even at peak 467 hp rpm of 7,100, the V-8 is still making 345 pounds of torque. Good stuff.

With the engine supplying power via an eight-speed direct shift tranny which acts like a dual clutch in quickness of shifts, the F will arrive at 60 mph from a standing start in a world class 4.23 seconds. Passing performance is also world class with a 50-70 mph run taking less than two seconds at 1.94 seconds and the same run up a 6 percent grade only slowing that time by 0.4 seconds to 2.34 seconds. The F downright rocks.

Deserving special mention is the exhaust system. Normally all you hear is a muted burble. But get on the gas past about 4,000 rpm and an exhaust bypass opens and to its 7,200 rpm redline it sounds like a NASCAR, not quite as loud but with a better tone. Engineers must have worked hundreds of hours to

produce that perfect V-8 sound. That alone is almost worth the price of admission. When showing the car to a high ranking politician who is also a gear head, he couldn't get enough of that boisterous V-8. Perhaps the best he has heard.

Yet it is not a gas-guzzler. EPA says expect 16/25/19 mpg city/highway/combined, but my tester did much better. Overall it averaged about 22 mpg and in a round trip to South Lake Tahoe the F averaged 24.3 mpg with the upslope trip averaged 21.1 mpg. Even better is a two way highway run averaging 28.8 mpg at 70 mph with the engine spinning just 1,750 rpm. That is remarkable fuel economy. Perhaps the V-6 version might return a couple more mpg.

As sports cars go, the F is a bit heavy at 3,958 pounds, a couple of hundred more than the V-6 and 400 pounds more than the IS350. Weight distribution is also not perfect at 55/45 percent front to rear (with acceleration weight transfer 52/48 is ideal). But not to worry., the F gets the best of suspensions, double wishbone up front and a trick multilink system in the rear with gas filled shocks and coils at all four corners plus large stab bars at both ends. Guiding the F is an adjustable speed sensitive electric power rack that is a quick 2.84 turns lock to lock and a curb to curb turning circle of 35 feet. And then there are the huge 19 inch alloy wheels (9 inches wide up front and 10 inches wide in the rear) shod with super low profile 255/35 in front and 275/35 series in the rear with either specially designed Bridgestone Potenza or Michelin Pilot Sports, my two favorite sport tires.



There is more room in the back seat than expected.

At seven- to eight-tenths driving it simple straightens out the twistiest roads. Body roll is almost non-existent. It simply goes where pointed. Understeer even considering the big engine up front is minimal at that aggressive pace. Turn in is extremely quick. It is confidence inspiring. It never got even close to complaining. And with that kind of prodigious power using the throttle to rotate the F was sublime.

Obviously the ride is firm, tighter than an IS. But it feels like a 12 inch thick bank vault wrapped in a half a foot of super dense foam. It was solid but never harsh. It was superbly controlled but never jarring. It was quite supple and compliant. This is a superb road car, made for Grand Touring. If there were a negative, it is tire noise on coarse roads.

GT cars like the F are inherently safer. First are the giant incredible brakes, four-wheel ventilated rotors of 15 and 14 inches in diameter. Brembo makes them and the aforementioned six pot calipers. While they don't cost a dime, they stop in one. Thirty-eight feet from 40 mph. Of course it has every electronic safety aid know to humankind and a few that will be incorporated into the International Space Station over the next few months (that might be a stretch). Besides its torque sensing differential (Torsen), it also has a torque vectoring differential available as well.

There are four drive modes, eco (are you kidding me?), normal

where I spent most of my time, sport and sport plus. Sport modes remap the tranny holding it in gear too long. On the track it would be great, but in normal, driving normal is where to be. Trust me, if you gotta go, even in normal there are only a handful of cars and a few drivers that will be able to match the F, especially with some driving skill.

Inside are sublime leather seats that lock you in. Perfect. The IP centers on a large tach with a digital speedo inside. The mouse system is a pad instead and much easier to use than the traditional mouse. Everything is of the highest quality with soft touch leather almost every, except for the carbon fiber.

As a two plus two, most people would think the rear seating is throwaway. Not so. While getting in and out might look difficult, it's easier than it looks. I got back there and it was actually usable with good outward visibility and a very comfortable seat. My brother also spent about 20 minutes back there with a 12-year-old boy and both enjoyed the ride. The trunk is over 10 cubic feet well shaped and has a pass through.

Pricing for the Radical Coupe 350 starts at \$42,790 for RWD and for AWD (only in the 350) add \$2,235. The F starts and ends at \$62,400 plus options. While 19 inch wheels are standard, if you want them hand polished add \$1,500. Pass. Leather over Nuluxe is \$800, buy it. The NAV plus the Mark Levinson sound system adds \$2,840, your choice. The gorgeous Ultrasonic Blue Mica paint adds %95. There are six other colors, all really shiny. Premium package adds heated and ventilated seats, carbon fiber interior, BSM, rear cross traffic alert, those triple beam LED headlamps and a bunch more, \$,400. The moon roof is \$1,100 and my skin doctor says no. With the \$925 shipping from Tahara, Japan, my tester totaled \$74,580. If you consider the competition and Lexus quality, it's well priced and quite the GT.

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.

Tahoe ball field to be named after fallen deputy

The North Tahoe Public Utility District has partnered with the Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association to rename ball field No. 2 in the North Tahoe Regional Park "Placer County Detective Mike Davis Jr. Field."

Davis was killed while on duty on Oct. 24, 2014. He had been an employee at the North Tahoe Event Center and a volunteer firefighter with the North Tahoe Fire District prior to becoming a deputy. He moved to Kings Beach as a teenager.

On Aug. 22 the Placer County Sheriff's Office, Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association, and the 1035 Foundation will dedicate the field and play a benefit softball game. The community is invited to attend the dedication ceremony and the game.

Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association will come together for an annual work day each year to assist with maintenance of the field and host an annual fundraiser/charity game or tournament. In addition, the PCDSA has purchased a new scoreboard for the field with the new name and a plaque will be installed at the field remembering Davis.

State infrastructure funding fair in Truckee

The California Water Resources Control Board, along with five partner agencies, will host a free California Financing Coordinating Committee Funding Fair on Aug. 5 in Truckee.

The event is an opportunity for public works and local government representatives to obtain information on funding currently available for California infrastructure projects. Project categories include, but are not limited to: drinking water; wastewater; solid waste; water quality; water supply; water conservation; energy efficiency; flood management; community facilities; streets and highways; and emergency response vehicles.

The fair will be from 8am-3pm at the Truckee Town Hall's council chambers, 10183 Truckee Airport Road.

The CFCC was formed in 1998 and is made up of six funding members: State Water Board; California Department of Water Resources; California Department of Housing and Community Development; U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development; U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation; and the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank.

These funding fairs provide one-stop shopping for those looking for infrastructure funding in California.

The Truckee funding fair is one of six to happen this year. The schedule and registration are available **online**.

High rollers: Dealers describe special treatment, abuse

By Michael Melia, AP

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — One high roller requests a refrigerator full of bananas that he squeezes and throws as he gambles. Another urinates against a wall. Other high-stakes players described by a pit manager at Mohegan Sun, one of the world's largest casinos, throw chairs, scream at dealers and expect rules to be bent at the tables.

In the increasing competition for the biggest spenders, casinos are known to pull out all the stops with comped hotel rooms, meals and rebates for a percentage of their losses. But some dealers say efforts to satisfy and retain the players — known as “whales” — go much further, with casinos tolerating abuse and extending courtesies that test the integrity of the games.

“All men are created equal except in the casino,” Glen Costales, the pit manager, said at a hearing before a tribal gaming commission in May. Transcripts of the hearing were obtained by the Associated Press. “If it’s a premium player, he gets away with a lot more than the five-dollar player would get away with.”

Costales was testifying in support of a pit boss, Maria DeGiacomo, who was fired this year after the casino accused her of colluding with a high roller by allowing late bets at a blackjack table. DeGiacomo and other employees say dealers frequently grant similar requests from top players.

The player, Matthew Menchetti, was a regular who lost as much as \$50,000 on visits to Mohegan Sun, and a lifetime total of more than \$1 million. Casino security flagged his play as suspicious in February and asked state police to arrest him and two dealers, but the detective concluded DeGiacomo and another dealer apparently took it upon themselves to keep Menchetti happy and playing, according to a police report, and no charges were filed.

His attorney, John Strafacci, said Menchetti is seeking to have his name cleared by the gaming commission since state police cleared him of wrongdoing. He said what his client was doing was normal for players of his caliber.

Mohegan Sun's president, Raymond Pineault, said its termination of the dealers involved and its ejection of the player demonstrate it does not tolerate any bending of the rules.

Shane Kaufmann, a vice president for a branch of the Transport Workers Union in Las Vegas, which represents several thousand casino dealers, said rules are frequently ignored at high-stakes tables.

"The casinos pretend they have rules that are set in stone, like going into a bank or dealing with a police station. Are they supposed to allow late bets? Absolutely not. Do they do it all the time? All the time," said Kaufmann, a dealer who sees plenty of crude behavior himself. "The abuse, the screaming, the cheating, the sexual harassment. Throwing things around. It's worse all the time."

Gaming commissions enforce the rules at casinos across the country, but the level of scrutiny can vary by jurisdiction. Dealers say state inspectors in Atlantic City, N.J., for one, have a reputation for toughness. In Connecticut, the state does not have any oversight of table games at Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, where the tribes that own the casinos also control

their own gaming commissions.

Costales, who described the banana squeezer and public urinator without revealing their names in his testimony, said such outrageous behavior is tolerated more these days because of growing competition than when he joined the business three decades ago.

Menchetti, who also was testifying in support of DeGiacomo, told the gaming commission that when he said he'd forgotten to post a bet, DeGiacomo and others generally made accommodations. He said the intention was never to steal – at most, it prolonged his stay at the table – but he expected special treatment, given his level of play, according to the transcript of the hearing.

“It’s no different in my mind than me calling my host and asking him for an extra 2,500 points on my account so I can go purchase something at a Lux, Bond & Green,” he said, referring to a jewelry store.

DeGiacomo said Menchetti did not do anything close to cheating and the two of them became victims of selective enforcement because certain bosses did not like either of them.

DeGiacomo, who is still fighting her dismissal, said rules shifted depending on the player and pit bosses were encouraged to keep high rollers happy. She testified during her hearing: “I have to make sure that we get our money, which we did, every time he played. There’s maybe two times he won.”

As part of the state police investigation, the detective interviewed several dealers who said Menchetti would hit the table, curse and yell at them. They told the detective that in cases where he or other high rollers asked to post a late bet or for other considerations, they would defer to a superior.