

# Rotary putting on music contest for students

South Lake Tahoe Rotary is looking for high school students ages 14-18 to enter into the Rotary District 5190 Youth Instrumental Music contest.

Songs are to be 3-8 minutes in length.

The music contest consists of three rounds (local club contest, area contest and district contest) with the winner of the district contest receiving \$1,000, second \$750 and third \$500. The local contest prizes will be: \$100, \$75 and \$50.

The local contest will take place March 7 at noon at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers. Area contest will take place April 3 at the Brewery Arts Center in Carson City; time TBD. District contest is May 19 at Atlantis Casino in Reno.

Contestants must be available to play at all three.

For more contest rules and entry forms, contact Kevin Sommerfeld at [ksommerfeld@laketahoegc.com](mailto:ksommerfeld@laketahoegc.com).

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## Historical characters of the North Shore

By Pat Dillon, Moonshine Ink

The early years of the white man's exploration and settlement of the Tahoe Basin provided many examples of eccentric characters. The more famous of these, such as Mark Twain and

Pretty Boy Floyd, have been well-documented. I'm intrigued, however, by a lesser-known character from our neighborhood.

James Stewart – alias James McLaughlin – was well known as a timber faller in the late 1800s. It was said he could take down two trees in the time it took lesser men to fall one. He was also known to be a hot-tempered gunslinger when drinking – which he often did.

On Oct. 27, 1874, he mounted his horse at his camp at Lonely Gulch near Rubicon Peak and rode for Tahoe City to quench his thirst. Tying his horse in front of the Grand Central Hotel where Commons Beach is today, he stomped down to the Custom House bar on the wharf. Barkeep Fred A. Scott was serving a few happy regulars, but the bar became quiet at Stewart's entrance and most patrons wandered back up to the Grand Central where they might drink in peace.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Open house at South Lake Tahoe warm room**

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless will host an open house on Feb. 15 from 4-6pm at the seasonal winter shelter at 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe.

The event will honor South Tahoe's faith community for their participation and support of TCH's operations over the past three years.

The coalition is also giving special recognition to faith leaders and organizations who have been deeply involved in the

organization. These leaders include the Rev. Hillary Bittman from Unity at the Lake, the Rev. Robert C. Kelley from Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Mauricio Hurtado of St. Theresa Catholic Church, and Rabbi Evon Yakar from Temple Bat Yam. These organizations have partnered with Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless to raise funds, collect supplies, provide volunteers, promote awareness, and support operations of the Warm Room.

Additionally, an anonymous donor is offering a matching grant of up to \$1,000 for the month of February.

Guests of the open house are encouraged to bring a blanket for those seeking shelter in the Warm Room this season. Donations such as coffee, tea, sugar, creamer, individually wrapped granola bars, toilet paper, Lysol spray, Clorox wipes, hand warmers, and gift cards to local grocery stores are also needed. Financial contributions may be made **online** or mailed to PO Box 13514, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

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## **What might explain the unhappiness epidemic?**

**By Jean Twenge, The Conversation**

We'd all like to be a little happier.

The problem is that much of what determines happiness is outside of our control. Some of us are genetically predisposed to see the world through rose-colored glasses, while others have a generally negative outlook. Bad things happen, to us and in the world. People can be unkind, and jobs can be tedious.

But we do have some control over how we spend our leisure time. That's one reason why it's worth asking which leisure time activities are linked to happiness, and which aren't.

In a new analysis of 1 million U.S. teens, my co-authors and I looked at how teens were spending their free time and which activities correlated with happiness, and which didn't.

We wanted to see if changes in the way teens spend their free time might partially explain a startling drop in teens' happiness after 2012 – and perhaps the decline in adults' happiness since 2000 as well.

### **A possible culprit emerges**

In our study, we analyzed data from a nationally representative survey of eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders that's been conducted annually since 1991.

Every year, teens are asked about their general happiness, in addition to how they spend their time. We found that teens who spent more time seeing their friends in person, exercising, playing sports, attending religious services, reading or even doing homework were happier. However, teens who spent more time on the internet, playing computer games, on social media, texting, using video chat or watching TV were less happy.

In other words, every activity that didn't involve a screen was linked to more happiness, and every activity that involved a screen was linked to less happiness. The differences were considerable: Teens who spent more than five hours a day online were twice as likely to be unhappy as those who spent less than an hour a day.

Of course, it might be that unhappy people seek out screen activities. However, a growing number of studies show that most of the causation goes from screen use to unhappiness, not the other way around.

In one experiment, people who were randomly assigned to give up Facebook for a week ended that time happier, less lonely and less depressed than those who continued to use Facebook. In another study, young adults required to give up Facebook for their jobs were happier than those who kept their accounts. In addition, several longitudinal studies show that screen time leads to unhappiness but unhappiness doesn't lead to more screen time.

If you wanted to give advice based on this research, it would be very simple: Put down your phone or tablet and go do something – just about anything – else.

### **It's not just teens**

These links between happiness and time use are worrying news, as the current generation of teens (whom I call "iGen" in my book of the same name) spends more time with screens than any previous generation. Time spent online doubled between 2006 and 2016, and 82 percent of 12th-graders now use social media every day (up from 51 percent in 2008).

Sure enough, teens' happiness suddenly plummeted after 2012 (the year when the majority of Americans owned smartphones). So did teens' self-esteem and their satisfaction with their lives, especially their satisfaction with their friends, the amount of fun they were having, and their lives as a whole. These declines in well-being mirror other studies finding sharp increases in mental health issues among iGen, including in depressive symptoms, major depression, self-harm and suicide. Especially compared to the optimistic and almost relentlessly positive millennials, iGen is markedly less self-assured, and more are depressed.

A similar trend might be occurring for adults: My co-authors and I previously found that adults over age 30 were less happy than they were 15 years ago, and that adults were having sex less frequently. There may be many reasons for these trends,

but adults are also spending more time with screens than they used to. That might mean less face-to-face time with other people, including with their sexual partners. The result: less sex and less happiness.

Although both teen and adult happiness dropped during the years of high unemployment amid the Great Recession (2008-2010), happiness didn't rebound in the years after 2012 when the economy was doing progressively better. Instead, happiness continued to decline as the economy improved, making it unlikely that economic cycles were to blame for lower happiness after 2012.

Growing income inequality could play a role, especially for adults. But if so, one would expect that happiness would have been dropping continuously since the 1980s, when income inequality began to grow. Instead, happiness began to decline around 2000 for adults and around 2012 for teens. Nevertheless, it's possible that concerns about the job market and income inequality reached a tipping point in the early 2000s.

Somewhat surprisingly, we found that teens who didn't use digital media at all were actually a little less happy than those who used digital media a little bit (less than an hour a day). Happiness was then steadily lower with more hours of use. Thus, the happiest teens were those who used digital media, but for a limited amount of time.

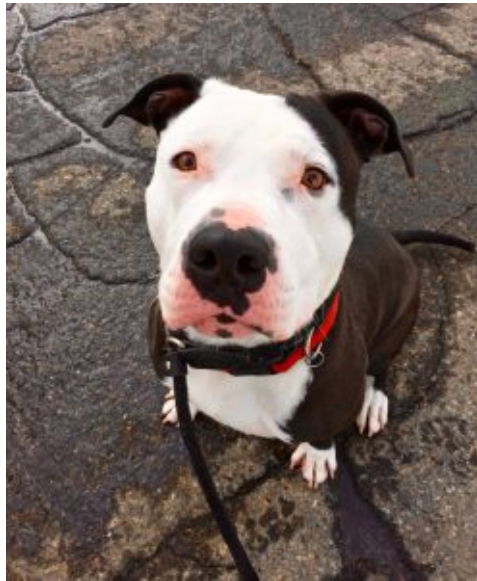
The answer, then, is not to give up technology entirely. Instead, the solution is a familiar adage: everything in moderation. Use your phone for all the cool things it's good for. And then set it down and go do something else.

You might be happier for it.

*Jean Twenge is a professor of psychology at San Diego State University.*

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# Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Nico

Nico is a sweet, very friendly boy who loves to give kisses. He looks serious in this photo, but he's really kind of goofy. Nico is 3-years-old and walks nicely on the leash.

Nico is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with 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**.

# **‘Intense flare-ups’ of dog flu reported**

**By Ashley May, USA Today**

Humans aren't the only ones spreading flu – dogs are, too.

Dog flu or canine influenza is a highly contagious viral infection that packs many of the same nasty symptoms as human flu: fever, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and exhaustion. It was first diagnosed in 2004 and isn't related to human flu. (So, no, you can't catch the flu from your sick pup.)

**[Read the whole story](#)**

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# **Road Beat: 2017 Lexus 300h – fabulous execution**





The 2017 Lexus 300h makes one rethink opinion about hybrids.  
Photos/Larry Weitzman

**By Larry Weitzman**

Most of my readers know that I am not a fan of hybrids, but recent experiences may be changing my mind. The coup de grace may have been rendered by the new Lexus 300h, which offered unparalleled quiet, comfort, performance and fuel economy in a luxurious package for well under \$50,000.

And this was a completely loaded vehicle right down to the splendid Mark Levinson sound system and the luxury suite for the boat ride from its Fukuoka, Japan, manufacturing plant.

Even my brother who owns a competing Q50 Infiniti made the remark he thought for him the Lexus was not just a better car overall, but considered trading his Q for this ride.

Lexus L'Finesse design is taking hold as this was a beautiful vehicle. I finally get the front-end design. It's the first

Lexus sedan that looked pretty from the front. The rest of the design is conservative with excellent proportions and lines. It is a big midsize with a longish 111-inch wheelbase and a length of 193 inches, but it's narrower width of 72 inches makes the 300h extremely manageable. It stands a reasonable 57-inches tall.

It's quiet comes partially from its hybrid power system. In other words, during much of the drive, the Lexus runs pure electric. The main engine is the venerable but re-tweaked 2.5L DOHC, 16 valve Atkinson cycle engine, which puts out 156 hp at 5,700 rpm and an equal amount of twist peaking at a lower 4,500 rpm. While not much info is given about the electric aspect of the drive train, one can deduce that maximum hp available from the electric motor is 44 hp giving the combine output off 200 hp. May not sound like much, but it performs like it has at least 250 hp or more as evidenced by the numbers.



### **Specifications**

**Price** \$42,795 to near \$49,999

### **Engine**

2.5L DOHC, 16 valve inline four cylinder 156 hp @ 5,700 rpm

156 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,500 rpm

Maximum Electric motor

output 44 hp

Combined power output 200 hp

### **Transmission**

CVT

### **Configuration**

Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

### **Dimensions**

Wheelbase 111.0 inches

Length 193.3 inches

Width 71.7 inches

Height 57.1 inches

Weight 3,682 pounds

Weight distribution (f/r)

59/41 percent

GVWR 4,740 pounds

EPA passenger volume 100.1 cubic feet

Trunk capacity 12.1 cubic feet

Fuel capacity 17.2 gallons

Wheels 17X7 inch alloys

Tires 215/55RX17 all season

Steering lock to lock 2.9 turns

Turning circle 37.4 feet

Co-efficient of drag 0.27

### **Performance**

0-60 mph 6.63 seconds

50-70 mph 3.73 seconds

50-70 mph 4.93 seconds

Top speed Governed at 112 mph

Fuel economy EPA rated at 40/39/40 mpg city/highway/combined.

Expect 36 mpg in rural

country driving and 42.2 mpg on a level highway at 70 mph (two-way run).

Zero to 60 mph arrives in a scant 6.63 seconds. That is very quick. Passing performance numbers are equally as telling as a 50-70 mph simulated pass was timed at 3.73 seconds and the same run up a steep grade only slowed that number by just over a second to 4.93 seconds. This thing flies. Good thing it doesn't have wings. And it's no light weight either, tipping the scales at 3,682 pounds.

So, it runs like a scalded dog at full tilt boogie, so you would think it goes through fuel like a 747 on takeoff (a slight exaggeration?). EPA rates the 300h at 40/39/40 mpg city/highway/combined, but it does a little better. At 70 mph on cruise control, the Lexus averaged 42.2 mpg and in my round trip to Carson City over the Sierra, which included plenty of aggressive driving, the 300h averaged 40.4 mpg for the round trip and 47.2 mpg for the trip from Carson City to Placerville. Overall fuel economy in aggressive rural driving the fuel economy averaged 35 mpg as there was less regen time for the battery and less EV time, but the 300h will EV under very light throttle pressure to about 55-60 mph.

Steering was quick and light, just 2.9 turns lock to lock. MacPherson struts are in all four corners and it is set up to offer more comfort than a track vehicle. Wheels 17 x 7 inch alloys shod with 215/55 rubber, not exactly what are known as meats. Track is wide at 63/62 inches front and rear. So, you wouldn't expect to see Mario hustling around Mazda Laguna Seca Raceway, but automobiles have really improved and the 300h isn't half bad in the twisties and exceeds most drivers' capabilities. Yeah there is some body roll, more than a super sport sedan, but the 300h tracks well and doesn't lose its composure when pushed hard. It acquitted itself beautifully on Highway 50 from Ice House Road all the way to the summit.

But the benefit is a magic carpet, sublimely quiet ride. If your passengers need to rest, this 300h will cure their insomnia. It smooths out road irregularities as if the pavement were new. Maybe Caltrans instead of fixing the roads should deliver new 300h's to all California drivers and go home as their job of fixing roads would be done and as an additional benefit, it would lower California's fuel consumption. Now why didn't I think of that earlier? Maybe a certain San Francisco assemblyman/woman will introduce a bill for just such a thing claiming he's saving the environment. Here's an easy way to do it.

Safety is all there in spades, great ABS brakes, all the rest of the safety acronyms, enough airbags to make Washington politicians look like lightweights and then there are the superb low beam LED headlights. High beams, while not LEDS are also very good. Please remember, basic safety comes back to driving ahead, staying ahead of the power curve, paying attention and exercising good judgment.

Lexus is about value, quality and luxury and while the 300h is more of an entry level Lexus (the hybrid version of the ES350), it leaves little to be desired with respect to all three of those qualities. Attention to detail and quality of materials are second to none. Everything is power and the leather seating is sublime.

Built on the Avalon platform, it is very spacious inside and the instrument panel, while not glitzy, is a champ even sporting a tach when operating in sport mode. Something needs to be mentioned about the driving modes which offer ECO, normal and Sport. Let me tell you there is a difference between Sport mode and the other two. This ES changes character in Sport mode from an extremely smooth and fluid runner to an aggressive cat. It literally jumps at a touch of the throttle with almost instant reactions. It really surprised me and what a great surprise it was. Kudos to Lexus for that.

Two tiny negatives with the 300h, the gas tank while still large is 17.2 gallons and the trunk loses a couple of cubes, down to 12.1 cubes.

Pricing for this superb automobile, which my brother thought may have been one of my best test cars ever, starts at \$41,820, plus shipping of \$975 from its Fukuoka, Japan, assembly plant. My ride had some great options including the Mark Levinson sound system (\$2,590) pushing the grand total to \$48,415, still a good price considering what you get in the bargain. And bargain may be the operative word here.

*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.*

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## **Placer County providing new resource for homeless**

Placer County residents who are experiencing homelessness now have a new, centralized gateway to housing resource.

People who are homeless may call 833.375.2237 to determine their eligibility for various housing programs. Their needs will be shared with participating homeless service providers offering emergency, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing in Placer County.

This telephone hotline is operated by the Homeless Resource Council of the Sierra, a collaborative group of agencies and nonprofit organizations from Placer and Nevada counties. That group leads the Continuum of Care, coordinating housing and

services funding for homeless families and individuals.

This streamlined service will help various agencies throughout Placer County better coordinate services and prioritize needs. Homeless individuals will have their needs assessed in a consistent manner, and their data will be placed into the Continuum of Care's Homeless Management Information System.

The helpline is also available in Spanish. Walk-in services will still be available at local emergency shelters for those who do not have a phone.

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## Major crime-genre book event coming to region

One of the largest book-related gatherings in the country, Left Coast Crime, is coming to Reno in two months.

South Lake Tahoe author Todd Borg will be the toastmaster for this event.

"This is an event that I can personally certify as a big deal," Borg told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Having attended in the past, I can attest to how interesting, informative, and fun these LCC gigs are. There will be dozens of panels on every subject involving crime fiction. There are talks, and interviews, and a banquet dinner, and a performance by the ghost of Mark Twain, who, as many locals know, is channeled by famous local Twain impressionist McAvoy Layne."

Anyone who is interested in books and writing is invited and welcome to attend the March 22-25 event.

More than 500 mystery fans, both readers and authors, have

already registered to attend. Attendees come from all over the country, and some from outside the country. This convention at the Nugget Hotel in Sparks will be one of the biggest literary events ever to come to the Tahoe-Reno area.

The guests of honor include authors Naomi Hirahara and William Kent Krueger. They will be talking and participating in panels.

Readers will have a chance to meet and talk with authors. And for authors, this is a chance to meet readers and colleagues.

“If you are an aspiring writer, this is an experience that is beyond valuable. You will come away with career-shaping information just by listening to the panels and hearing what 200 authors have learned about the world of writing,” Borg said.

Cost is \$220 for all four days. For more info, go **online**.

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## **Authors to give talk at Sierra Nevada College**

Sierra Nevada College’s Writers in the Woods brings well-known poets and writers from all over the country to the campus for intimate readings and workshops, where audience members can meet and exchange ideas with the guest writers.

The next event is Feb. 9 from 7-9pm at the Incline Village campus. It will feature Indigo Moor and Lynne Thompson.

Moor, poet laureate of Sacramento, is also a playwright and author. His second book of poetry “Through the Stonecutter’s Window” won Northwestern University Press’s Cave Canem prize.



His first book, "Tap-Root" was published as part of Main Street Rag's Editor's Select Poetry Series.

Thompson is the author of "Start with a Small Guitar" (What Books Press, 2013) and ""Beg No Pardon (Perugia Press, 2007).