

WSU / MLK

Wayne State University's annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute will take place Tuesday, Jan. 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Max M. Fisher Music Center in Detroit.

The annual Tribute brings together the metro Detroit community to celebrate and honor the life and ongoing legacy of Dr. King.

The keynote speaker is Donna Brazile, best-selling author, adjunct professor at Georgetown University, a syndicated newspaper columnist as well as a columnist for Ms. Magazine, O Magazine, a contributor to CNN and more.

Dart's Return Will Aim at Compact Car Bull's-Eye

by Jim Stickford
Special Writer

Dodge's big announcement at the recent North American International Auto Show was the return of the Dart.

The automaker ceased production of the Dart in 1976, meaning several generations of car buyers have entered the marketplace unaware of the model.

Mike Merlo, Dodge Dart chief engineer, said work on the new Dart started about two years ago. It's based on the Alfa Romeo Giulietta platform.

He said the idea behind naming the new Dodge subcompact was to emphasize its sleekness and aerodynamic qualities. The name Dart has been out of the marketplace so long, he said, that there's not a whole lot of heritage associated with the name.

The announcement was made by Reid Bigland, Dodge brand president and CEO, on Monday, Jan. 9. He said that 2011 was a great year for Dodge and for Chrysler, but it's difficult to move forward by looking in one's rearview mirror.

Chrysler saw a 26 percent sales increase in 2011 compared with the previous year, Bigland said. This was despite not having a vehicle in the compact category, which he said at 15 percent comprises a huge portion of the North American auto market.

"We've seen 21 straight months of year-over-year sales growth," Bigland said. "That's both here and in Canada. We've gained market share and in Canada we're the fastest-growing car company."

"On the corporate front, we've repaid the government loans, with \$1 billion in interest, six years earlier. We're proud and grateful for the second chance."

"We've been through a lot and we're not looking to go back. There's still a lot of

Auto Show Ed. Day Is Jan. 18 at Cobo

DETROIT – The North American International Auto Show last week announced that plans are in place for its annual Education Day, scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Cobo Center in Detroit.

Show executives also announced that for the first time, Education Day would be open to students of all ages, including college level. The PNC Foundation, which specializes in early childhood education, is supporting NAIAS Education Day.

"It's never too early to educate our young people about the many opportunities that exist within the automotive industry," said Bill Perkins, chairman of the NAIAS 2012. "We are proud that we can contribute to an industry that offers such diverse opportunities, from technology to creative disciplines like art and design."

Now in its seventh year, NAIAS Education Day is effectively "kids' day" at the show.



If the 2012 Detroit auto show proved anything, perhaps it's that the domestic automakers have their "swagger" back. Here, automobile detailers, from left, Luis Aceveo, Noemi Hernandez, Aaron Monjaras and Khaled Madison put a shine on a Cadillac Escalade.

work ahead," he added.

Bigland said part of that work is introducing a compact. The Dart, which is expected to enter the marketplace sometime in the second quarter of 2012, has no track record in North America, which is both good and bad.

He said there is no bad reputation to overcome, such as compacts being boring or bland, but then there's no positive history that consumers can tap into.

Bigland said that Dodge has worked hard to make the Dart more than just an appliance that takes the driver from point A to point B. He said Dodge wants the Dart to be a car that is affordable. It's starting price is \$15,995, and offers great fuel economy – they're still in the testing phase and are aiming for about 40 mpg highway – and is still fun to drive and offers a premium motoring experience, he said.

To that end, Bigland said they combined the DNA of the Alfa Romeo with the Dodge passion for driving.

The vehicle will be manufactured in Chrysler's Belvedere, Ill., factory. It will have 10 airbags, making it a very safe vehicle to drive, he said, and it is very customizable.

It comes with 14 interiors, five model levels in 12 colors,



Chevrolet Tru 140S concept and Lead Designer Nick David.

With 'Small' Being 'In,' Chevy Loads Up at Auto Show

by Jennifer Knightstep
Special Writer

At this year's North American International Auto Show, small cars reign supreme, and nowhere is this more evident than at the Chevy display.

The "small cars rule" philosophy is evident not just in the release of two new Chevy concepts, the Tru 140S and Code 130R, but also in the car that shared the stage with them, the Spark, which is intended for production.

There were also a range of customized Sonics, all of which are downright tiny, giving the Chevy display an all-around small car feel.

On Monday last week, to kick off the show, Chevy unveiled two sleek, utterly cool new concepts, the bright red upright Code 130R and the lush white, streamlined, low-slung Tru 140S.

Both were designed in response to the demands Chevy heard on the street from the

youthful, constantly-connected demographic. This segment of potential buyers, 80 million strong in the U.S. alone, wants a car they can fall in love with, not just something to get them from point A to point B.

Chevy wants to hear what this crowd has to say, and has left the interiors of both concepts open for development based on feedback from next-generation buyers.

Interactive kiosks have been set up alongside the concepts, allowing show-goers to provide their thoughts and ideas, and once the auto show is over, the concepts and kiosks will be available at various lifestyle events, giving those outside of metro Detroit the chance to add their two cents.

But regardless of what customers suggest for the interior of the concepts, their thoughts on what the shape and size of a new vehicle should be are evident: small,

'We're Back,' Say Detroit 3

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

The proverbial breath of fresh air emanating from Cobo Center last week has nothing to do with ongoing renovations to the air conditioning and infrastructure at the aging convention hall.

Rather, let's say it was the Detroit auto industry and its collective exhale following three tumultuous years – years that saw the corporate bankruptcies of two of the Big Three automakers and related financial turbulence.

Last week, however, on

press days, Jan. 9-10, something new and bright and different was emerging as Cobo Center, the North American International Auto Show and the Big Three carmakers all have a brighter future – indeed, they sure now have something to crow about.

With its head down in a foxhole the past three years, Detroit hadn't had much to shout about as it fought for survival. Now, however, fresh winds are blowing through Cobo and the industry itself.

"I swear, it was like a morgue in here back in 2009, like somebody had died," ob-

served Russ Shelton, car dealer and owner of Shelton Buick-GMC in Rochester.

"Monday was ecstatic – all of the smiles and positive energy are a welcome change from before."

Indeed, if anybody had something to brag about at the outset of the auto show it was Shelton, who enjoyed the fresh optimism of the show floor on Monday, witnessed the debut of the Buick Encore small SUV (dubbed by some the "baby Enclave") on Tuesday, and then on Wednesday,

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NAM's Chief: Image Is Up

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

Mary Andringa, chair of the National Association of Manufacturers, came calling to Detroit last week for both the auto show and a speech to the Detroit Economic Club.

Andringa runs a small family manufacturing business in Iowa and is the first woman to chair NAM's lobby group, based in Washington, D.C.

She was asked during Q&A with the media whether the Detroit auto industry's image has improved from three years ago, when the Big Three CEOs were begging for money from Congress just to stay afloat.

"It is a global world . . . but I think most (consumers) are pretty proud to be part of the American economy and American manufacturing and I think they absolutely want to see the Detroit automakers do well and come back on top and be leaders," she said.

"And to be leaders in innovative new products, that's probably why there is so much buzz at this show, over the new products . . ."

Andringa also correlated what the Motor City knows instinctively – when actual car quality is up, Detroit's national image goes up, too.



PHOTO: JEFF KOWALSKY

Mary Andringa of the National Association of Manufacturers discussed the auto industry's comeback in her speech. Andringa said that in her travels across the U.S. and the globe, the image of the Detroit automakers is up due in part to the improved quality of the cars they are selling today.

Det. Auto Scene Begins 80th Yr. Of Publication

What's in a year? It's 2012, the bicentennial of the War of 1812. Also, *Detroit Auto Scene* begins its 80th year in print with this edition, now included with the *Tech Center News*.

It isn't often that I address my readers; but on this occasion, and as publisher, I wanted to take the opportunity.

The last four years have been tough, not just for us at the newspaper, but for many. I feel I have been through a war myself. After all, it's 2012.

Most of all, most important to me, though, is what a joy it is to be publishing one newspaper for my readers; and no longer running a small company that once published a small chain of related papers.

Strangely, the original idea upon which my father started this company, came to serve us very well recently when we launched our website.

It is much more rewarding, for me. My small staff is still catching up with me on that attitude, because their work has become more detailed.

I refer to Gerald Scott and Lisa Torretta, news director and operations respectively. I don't think they realize how they've grown through this.

Thursday night the three of us worked late, just the three of us. I commented how far we had come together. Here we were, Gerry pulling the final news content together; Lisa assembling broadsheet newspaper pages for print; and me, finalizing the 2012 advertising rates and getting ready to kick everything up to the web on deadline.

And the website follows the newspaper, not the other way around. How unique is that?

I thank you for your loyal readership. I also thank our regular advertisers. Without you, there would never have been a *Detroit Auto Scene* in the first place, or for that matter, a *Tech Center News*.

– William Springer
publisher