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Amy Sarri, choir director

GM Chorus Schedule

by Jim Stickford

The General Motors Employees’ Chorus is kicking off the holiday season with a series of concerts beginning on Nov. 30.

The chorus will be performing on the following dates:

- Friday, Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m. – Cana Lutheran, 2119 Catalpa, Berkley

- Sunday, Dec. 2, 2 p.m. – Joint Concert with the Warren Concert Band, Warren Woods Auditorium, 13400 E. 12 Mile Rd., Warren

- Monday, Dec. 3, 7 p.m. – HarborChase Senior Living of Sterling Heights, 13400 19 Mile, Sterling Heights

- Friday, Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m. – St. Paul Lutheran Church, 375 Lothrop, Grosse Pointe Farms

- Sunday, Dec. 9, 3 p.m. – New Beginnings United Methodist, 3000 28 Mile Rd., Washington Township

- Sunday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m. – Holy Innocents Church, 26100 Ridgemont, Roseville

- Monday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m. – Village of East Harbor (continuing care facility), 33875 Kiely Drive, Chesterfield

- Sunday, Dec. 16, 3 p.m. – Sterling Heights United Methodist, 13333 16-½ Mile Rd. Sterling Heights

- Sunday, Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. – Grace Lutheran Fellowship Church, 7525 32 Mile Rd., Romeo

- Monday, Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. – Park Place at Heritage Village, 29250 Heritage Parkway, Warren.

Amy Saari, who has been choir director for the past five-and-a-half years, said that choir members work hard on their music.

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Spark is Aimed at ‘Digitally Enabled’ Youth

by Irena Granaas

The 2013 Chevrolet Spark minicar is designed to appeal to an evolving customer base of younger people who want personal transportation but resist taking on the burdens and expense of owning a car.

For generations, buying a car was a highly anticipated event on the road to young adulthood. But, according to research by Chevrolet and MTV Scratch, today’s next-generation urbanites tend to delay this kind of major purchase because of uncertainty about taking on new vehicle ownership expenses.

They also want a car that is cheaper and easier to maintain. The Spark, with its retail starting price of \$12,995 (priced more than \$3,000 less than its nearest competitor, the Scion iQ), is designed to overcome these consumers’ objections to car ownerships right out of the gate with a flurry of cost-saving and convenience features.

Annalisa Bluhm, communications manager for Chevrolet small cars, expounded on the identity and characteristics of these next-generation customers.

“It’s someone who is between the ages of 16 and 32, or even a little older, but who is very digitally enabled, you know, who lives and

dies by their cell phone, but is familiar with posting to social media,” she explained.

Bluhm indicated much thought went into this idea of the digitally enabled person and what they need to feel more at home inside a vehicle.

“Because when you shut the door and put the phone down, that really does cause a lot of anxiety for a next-generation customer, so how do we make it safe, interactive and create a familiar environment in which they can engage?”

In answer to that question, Chevrolet offers Spark customers the seven-inch touch screen

MyLink infotainment system, which Bluhm said works directly with the user’s cell phone to enable the vehicle occupant to use applications, do navigation, watch movies and view photos, for example.

“It even helps to re-text messages safely, so there are a lot of things to help bring that new, next-gen customer mentality to the vehicle,” Bluhm commented.

“For a vehicle like the Spark, you really are looking at the ones who understand the constraints and challenges of city driving. These customers want something a little smaller, nimble, to help them get through the com-

mute in a comfortable way, not just for themselves but for up to four passengers.”

In another move likely to enhance the Spark’s appeal to the “digitally enabled” set, Chevrolet includes OnStar service for six months, giving Spark owners the convenience of receiving monthly vehicle diagnostics, including tire pressure and fluid levels, sent to their email accounts and cell phones.

Savings and convenience for owners continue over the life of the vehicle, Bluhm said. For example, Chevy officials say, the

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The Chevy Spark drives through Grosse Pointe in July.

Lunch with Santa Set for Dec. 1

St. Paul United Church of Christ in Warren’s Old Village is hosting a special “Lunch with Santa” on Saturday, Dec. 1, at 11 a.m.

There will be a train room, a Christmas bake sale, a Nativity room, as well as activities for children. Hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, veggies, chips and cookies will comprise the menu.

Cost is \$5 per person, which includes a picture with Santa. Call 586-264-4777 by Wednesday, Nov. 28, to reserve. The church is located at 31654 Mound Road.

Selfridge Base’s First Two Commanders Are Paid Tribute

by Jim Stickford

As part of its efforts to educate area residents on the history its region has played in the country’s military history, the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society (MMTHS) hosted Dan Heaton, who spoke about the first two commanders of Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Robert Causley, one of the founders and treasurer of the MMTHS, said the group is dedicated to educating the public on the role Michigan and Michigan industry has played in the country’s military history.

The MMTHS has displays showing what products were made in Michigan since WWI, as well as items of historical interest donated from the collections of military collectors and veterans.

The group is new and its headquarters, located at 16600 Stephens

in Eastpointe, used to be a teen center and then senior center.

Causley said he worked at the Army’s TACOM facility in Warren for more than 30 years and he, along with his son Chris and their friend Socratis Stergio and others, wanted to honor the region’s rich military history. When they learned that Eastpointe was going to have a building available, they jumped at the chance to take over the site.

“The museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays, and we open it up for special occasions for tours,” Causley said. “We opened our doors for the first time on Veterans Day 2011.”

Having someone like Heaton – who is a public relations officer for the Michigan National Guard out of the Selfridge Base in Mount Clemens – speak about

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Dan Heaton praised Thomas Selfridge at MMTHS hall.

Engineer Explains GMC Truck Ratings So Operators Don’t Get Carried Away

by Jennifer Knightstep

General Motors trailering engineer Robert Krouse is on a mission. He wants to make sure every full-size GMC pickup owner knows GAWR from GVWR and GCWR. So what are these odd acronyms, and what do they mean? That’s exactly what Krouse wants to explain.

These four-letter acronyms represent various gross weight ratings, important because exceeding any of them is unsafe, and it’s a driver’s responsibility to know them to avoid exceeding them.

Krouse explained, “Nearly every vehicle performance attribute is designed and tested to one or more gross weight rating. Body and chassis structural durability, powertrain and driveline durabil-

ity, handling, braking, thermal and propulsion performance are all validated to specific ratings. That’s why it’s so important for owners to understand those limits.”

The three most important acronyms, says Krouse, are GAWR, GVWR, and GCWR. They are all gross weight ratings, but each indicates a specific sort of rating, as Krouse explains.

- GAWR is the Gross Axle Weight Rating, or the maximum amount of weight that can be placed on either a truck’s front or rear axle, including the weight of the truck, driver, passengers, equipment and cargo. A higher front GAWR generally means more capacity for accessories like plows (attached to the front), while a high rear GAWR relates to a higher payload (for items in the truck).



A pickup pulling a flatbed and a John Deere 410e. Note the axle positions and the weight on the gooseneck.

- GVWR is the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating, or the maximum amount of weight for the entire truck and everything in it. This number isn’t simply each axle rating added together; for that to work, the owner would have to precisely load so that each axle weight rating is met just as the overall vehicle rating is met, which isn’t possible in real-world conditions. As a result, GVWR is always lower than the sum of

each axle to account for changes in weight distribution.

- GCWR is the Gross Combined Weight Rating, or the maximum weight of a truck and an attached trailer, plus everything in each of them. Some of a trailer’s weight is supported by the truck – this is known as tongue weight – a GCWR isn’t simply the GVWR plus the trailer’s weight. When attaching a trailer, factor tongue weight into a truck’s payload capacity.

Krouse suggests that pickup truck owners familiarize themselves with each of these ratings, and what they mean, to keep safe, and to extend the life of their trucks. “It’s very important,” he said, “that drivers observe these limits to maintain safe stopping distances. Not only that, overloading a truck causes excessive wear on suspension and brakes and could lead to engine or transmission failure.”