

## Summertime Means Celebrating Michigan's Car Culture

by Jim Stickford

Southeast Michigan is host to a number of auto events known collectively as Autopalooza, and the first event – the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix – kicks off the summer season May 31.

At a special press conference held at the GM Heritage Center in Sterling Heights, Jim Campbell, U.S. vice president of Performance Vehicles and Motorsports for GM, said that it was always a great day when he and others are able to attend events at GM's Heritage Center.

"We get to see all the beautiful cars here," Campbell said. "There are about 600. They are race cars, concept cars, antique cars. This is a special place for us. And the Autopalooza is a celebration of Michigan through races, cruises and car shows. We get to show our passion for the great cars and designs. Chevrolet is proud to be involved in Autopalooza and proud that the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix kicks off all the events beginning on May 31."

The June events are:

- Quicken Loans 400 NASCAR Weekend, Brooklyn, Mich., June 15-16.
- Motor Muster, Dearborn, June 15-16.
- EyesOn Design, Grosse Pointe Shores, June 16.
- Eastpointe Gratiot Cruise, Macomb County, June 15.
- Sloan Museum Auto Fair, Flint, June 22-23.
- Cruisin' Downriver, Southern Wayne County, June 29.

There are two events in July, both in Plymouth – the RM Vintage Motor Cars Auction (July 27) and the Concours d'Elegance of America (July 28).

August is busier:

- The Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise in Macomb County, Aug. 4.
- The Back to the Bricks Weekend, Flint, Aug. 13-17.
- The Pure Michigan 400 NASCAR Weekend, Brooklyn, Aug. 17-18.
- The Woodward Dream Cruise, Oakland County, Aug. 17.
- Cruisin' Hines, Westland, Aug. 25.

In September, two events close the season – the Old Car Festival in Dearborn (Sept. 7-8) and the Orphan Car Show in Ypsilanti (Sept. 22).

Macomb County Chief Executive Mark Hackel said at the press conference that the car culture was a huge part of his childhood.

"I grew up in Warren and I am working on an event that would encompass all of Macomb County," Hackel said. "Imagine having a car event that was as big as the ... Mardi Gras. If we can put that out in the streets, it would be a tremendous event that would showcase the area to the world."

Hackel said for that to happen, Macomb "has to get its house in order."

"The communities in the county, in Southeast Michigan in fact, have to cooperate," Hackel said. "That's not easy. Everyone is afraid of giving up something without getting anything back."

But Hackel said the idea of a four-day event that covers the traditional cruising and racing avenues and takes people throughout metro Detroit to different auto-centric locations is an idea worth pursuing.

"Imagine an event that would attract people nationally and attract international attention," Hackel said.

"It would be a huge boon to the economy. But I admit it's an idea that is not without a lot of resistance."

Campbell said that over the years, GM has played a role in a lot of individual events, but it wasn't until last year that the company started getting involved in the Autopalooza.



GM executive Jim Campbell at the Autopalooza press conference.

And the benefits of these events pay off, Campbell said, adding that he has been told that the economic benefit from the Grand Prix alone is about \$45 million.

"Now, not every event will generate that kind of income," Campbell said, "but it's just one of 16 events. They will all generate some kind of money and give people a chance to celebrate the car culture here in Michigan."

Ultimately, Campbell said, Southeast Michigan from May 31 to Sept. 22 will see three race

days, six cruise events and seven anchor classic car events put on.

## Warren Honors Volunteers at City Ceremony

The city of Warren held its fourth annual Outstanding Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at city hall on April 24.

Mayor Jim Fouts said the city likes to honor its volunteers because they add so much to the quality of life in Warren.

"We honor citizens from all kinds of groups, both civic and religious," Fouts said. "I can't say enough nice things about the volunteers who give so generously of their time."

Fouts said that people like Thornton Tapert, who cleaned up an empty lot next to his home really helped improve the whole neighborhood.

Volunteers do everything from setting up biweekly bingo games to helping teachers with projects to giving their time at local food pantries.

"April was National Volunteer Month, so it makes sense to honor Warren's volunteers during that time," Fouts said. "Volunteers are sincere and unselfish, and it is my pleasure to acknowledge all that they do for the city and its citizens."

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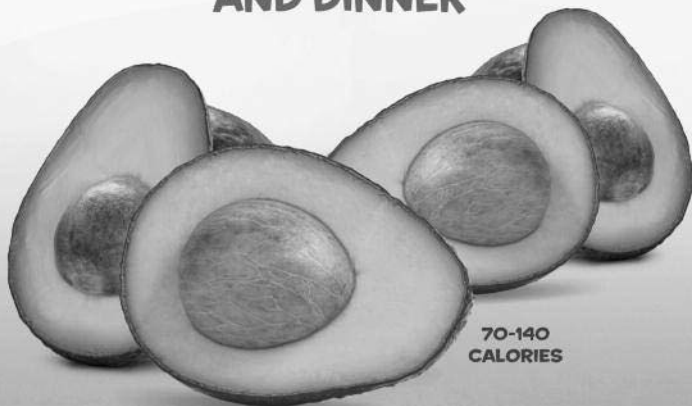
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