



VELVET and BRASS

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Do We Give to Charities Out of Guilt or for Impact?

Folklore tells us it's better to give than receive, let your conscience be your guide, and charity begins at home.

Home, of course, is where the heart is, and sometimes any place you hang your hat is home.

Somehow, charitable organizations and fund-raising outfits find your address, and a deluge of solicitations arrive as crest of a flood of junk mail.

I suspect mailing lists are swapped to be certain the potential donors are alive and well, with some semblance of loose cash and a guilt complex.

Even hard-hearted Hannahs have pangs of guilt when ignoring solicitations baited with "free gifts" or photos of starving or deformed waifs, or emaciated paupers living in filth.

A few might be doable, but the Niagara showered by most begs answers to "How much is enough?" and when does one become "generous?"

The "free gifts" usually are not products from the USA, and can be considered costly when evaluated in the total appeal package.

You wonder if your donation (if any) even covers the cost of elaborately printed multi-piece enclosures, return-address envelopes, personalized labels, token pins or geegaws, note pads and pens, calendars and/or date-books and USPS special-rate

postage.

If you use those handy little mailing labels as a denominator of aforementioned generosity, most of us qualify as "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" mega-donors.

Placed end to end, the labels probably would encircle Earth, maybe right over those faraway places with strange-sounding names whose miserable inhabitants are bodacious sufferers.

It doesn't embarrass anyone in our mortgaged manor that we used every "gift greeting card" and envelope.

We considered them paid for in full with one of our numerous donations.

(Incidentally, if you don't know what to do with your surplus calendars or date-books, take them to your local prison or jailhouse. Felons like to keep track of their time instead of scratches on a wall.)

This diatribe by no means belittles or crucifies the many legitimate charitable organizations and fund-raisers, which are good and plenty.

Schemers and scammers trying to wiggle their snouts into the charity trough deserve damnation and criminal prosecution.

Although not as visble or aggressive as the biggies, charities for the blind, the deaf, paraplegic mouth-teeth painters, animals. Many are small and local, but nevertheless worthy of a dip in the gro-

cery money jar.

Donations that aren't guilt-complex ticklers are those to charities run as businesses or meal programs.

The Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Purple Heart, Volunteers of America come to mind, but there are many others.

Citizens donate items from afghans to zithers to the do-good units and receive a receipt showing a value for a tax deduction.

Profits from sales of the goods assist the needy in many fashions.

Often irksome are the houndings of some major groups that keep USPS happy with relentless mailings that include membership cards to be renewed "to continue to provide funds for . . ." or to remember them in your will.

Like it or not, I am a cardholder in the NRA, American Legion, VFW and DAV— and I didn't pay my "dues."

Somehow I have become a "benefactor" of at least four American Indian tribes. It's easy. Donations have showered me with gifts perhaps worth more than the donations themselves: gloves, dream-catchers, cards, labels, medals, infant blankets, key fobs, crucifixes.

I really could use some wampum to bribe IRS agents who might question my charitable deductions.

After all, it's better to give than receive.

Soprano to Sing at Ford Honors Gala

Famed soprano Renée Fleming will be performing Sunday, Jan. 16, at the 2011 Ford Honors Gala at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, as part of Ford Motor Company's honors program.

Fleming is being honored with the UMS Distinguished Artist Award.

The Ford Honors Program recognizes the longtime generous support of UMS Education Programs by Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services.

Fleming's full-length recital begins at 4 p.m. at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor and is immediately followed by the Ford Honors Gala at U-M's Biomedical Science Research Building (BSRB), 109 Zina Pitcher Place.

The Gala ticket includes a champagne reception, dinner catered by Opus One, and dancing with Detroit's Rhythm Society Orchestra, plus the presentation of the DTE Energy Foundation Education Awards.

For Gala reservations, call 734-764-8489. Concert tickets are available online or by calling the UMS Ticket Office at 734-764-2538.

A limited number of gold main floor seats are available for Gala attendees and can be purchased along with Gala dinner.

The Gala features complimentary valet parking with transportation provided from Hill Auditorium to the Gala dinner location.

Fleming is an American soprano specializing in opera and lieder. She has a full lyric soprano voice and has performed coloratura, lyric, and lighter spinto soprano repertoires.

She has sung roles in Italian, German, French, Czech, and Russian, aside from her native English. She also speaks fluent German and French, along with limited Italian.

Her signature roles include Countess Almaviva in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*, Violetta in Verdi's *La traviata*, the title role in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, the title role in Massenet's *Manon*, the title role in Massenet's *Thaïs*, the *Marschallin* in Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, and the title role in *Arabella*.

A Richard Tucker Award



Renée Fleming

winner, she regularly performs in opera houses and concert halls worldwide.

In 2008, she was awarded the Swedish Polar Music Prize for her services in music. On Dec. 9, 2010, the Lyric Opera of Chicago announced that she had been appointed to the newly created position of creative consultant for a period of five years, effective immediately.

Renowned conductor Sir Georg Solti said of Fleming, "In my long life, I have met maybe two sopranos with this quality of singing, the other was Renata Tebaldi."

The Ford Honors Program is held annually in Ann Arbor.

Ford's Yearly Sales Jump 19 Percent For Its Biggest Increase Since 1984

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Compared with a year ago, Phipps said, retail sales were up 17 percent.

"For the entire year of 2010, Ford sales totaled 1.95 million, up 19 percent," he said. "This is the largest full-year sales increase for any full-line manufacturer in 2010 and, in fact, it's our largest full-year increase in sales since 1984."

Ken Czubay, vice president of U.S. marketing, sales and service, said Fiesta sales had its best month ever, totaling 5,212 units and, for the third month in a row, the Los Angeles region was the top-selling Fiesta region.

"Overall, the L.A. region for Ford accounts for less than five percent of Ford's total U.S. sales, but for Fiesta, the L.A. region accounts for 10 percent of total U.S. sales," Czubay said. "This is a watershed number. Going forward, it has huge implications for

Ford, especially as we approach the Focus introduction. For us, California is an emerging market, especially for cars and crossovers. We had certainly hoped that Fiesta would connect with California consumers, but the results are far beyond our expectations."

He said for December, combined retail sales for the Fiesta and Focus were up 80 percent versus last year and retail share of the small car market is almost 10 percent, which is 50 percent higher than a year ago.

"Fifty percent of first time buyers under age 30 go to the small car market for their first new vehicle, so increasing our share in this category is key to our growth strategy for the U.S. and around the world," he said.

Czubay said that if a company's product appeals only to traditional buyers, the potential growth is limited.

He said the company is also looking at gasoline prices, which elevates the sensitivity of buyers to fuel economy when shopping for a new vehicle.

"Ford is in a much better position to compete and win in an environment where gasoline prices are on the rise," he said.

"Small cars are part of the equation, but so are utilities and pickups with class-leading fuel economy. We've made a big bet on fuel economy and it's paying off."

Last week was a busy one for the Ford Motor Co. enterprise, counting CEO Alan Mulally's keynote talk at CES in Las Vegas. Mulally is only the third such executive to give three consecutive annual keynotes at CES, with the other two being Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer, both of Microsoft.

Next up, the Detroit auto show press days kick off.

Ford Hosts Multi-Level Auto Display As Detroit Auto Show Arrives Jan. 10

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year.

"GM is going all out this year for the North American International Auto Show," he said.

Both GM and Ford will have multi-level displays and Perkins said this is reflective of their increase in business in the year 2010.

"They're feeling better so they're spending more money," he said. "No one was spending last year, but as you can see, this year we're going to (produce) somewhere around a little over 11 million cars in the industry — last year it was 10 million four, so you've had an increase of almost 10 percent. So, you're seeing that increase now. They're feeling better about

the marketplace, they feel that next year we're going to be about 12 million. So, they're anticipating these increases and they want to be out there and seen by the public."

Meade said it's the first time NAIAS will have Fiat at the show as a manufacturer.

"We're very excited about Chrysler, the Chrysler Group's involvement in the show. And you can see the depth and how much they're putting into the Chrysler brand," he said.

Meade said the 2011 NAIAS is a testament to regional cooperation, Southeast Michigan, and the investment seen at the show. He anticipates the show will have a \$4 million-plus impact on the region.

"It's a good investment, Cobo's a good investment," he said. "This is our showroom for Southeast Michigan and it's putting us on the world stage."

Meade said a number of improvements are expected to take place at Cobo in the next few years that will improve the annual Detroit auto show, including the expansion of Oakland Hall starting this year.

"As we get more space at the NAIAS, we'll be able to make sure that NAIAS is the premier auto show in the world," he said.

Russell Shelton, NAIAS Chairman Emeritus and president of Shelton Buick GMC, said the 2011 show is a definite improvement over last year's show.

'Bikes' are Handcrafted for Each Client

by Stefanie Carano Staff Reporter Detroit Auto Scene

Voodoo Choppers in Clinton Township is creating handcrafted, one-of-a-kind motorcycles for serious enthusiasts.

Located at 22705 Morelli Dr., owner Eric Gorges said his company's bikes are tailored to the individual who rides them.

"It's handcrafted to fit you. Every aspect of the motorcycle is built around you," he said.

One of Voodoo Chopper's latest creations is a custom-made chopper displayed at The Detroit Shoppe at the Somerset Collection in Troy. The bike is available for viewing now until Jan. 25, when the temporary retail store is scheduled to close.

"It was built about 12 months ago when I finished it for a local client," Gorges said.

Though 'chopper' is in the title, Gorges said the company creates all kinds of motorcycles.

He said everything built by Voodoo Choppers is on commission and customer appeal lies in the fact that the company creates handmade bikes.

"It's the difference between a tailor-made suit and going to Nordstrom and buying a suit," he said.

Gorges said the length of time it takes to build a bike depends on how complicated it is, based on the specifications the customer is asking for.

"The scope of the work is pretty large," he said. "We probably make 4-6 bikes, handcrafted, each year."

Prices for his motorcycles range from about \$25,000 to more than \$100,000. Clients have included local celebrities and local athletes, but customers generally come from all walks of life.

Before opening his own shop, Gorges spent a significant portion of his adult life working as a consultant for Xerox. Then in 1999, he decided it was time for a change and Voodoo Choppers was created.

Gorges is a Warren native who grew up in the area of 13 Mile and Mound Roads. He attended St. Anne High School near there, noting that he had early exposure to motorcycle mechanics.

"Growing up, my father was mechanically inclined, working with his hands. He always liked motorcycles, since I was a little kid," he said.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Voodoo Choppers of Clinton Township displays this hand-built motorcycle at the Detroit Shoppe retail store at Somerset Collection in Troy. Voodoo specializes in hand-built, premium bikes.

LTU Engineering Students Participate At Detroit Auto Show with Car Projects

SOUTHFIELD — Lawrence Technological University students will have a booth at the North American International Auto Show to display design projects they have done for the auto industry, as well as racing vehicles they have designed and built with support of industry sponsors.

With support and encouragement from the automotive industry, in 2007 Lawrence Tech created a unique Bachelor of Science in Transportation Design program that simulates an industry studio environment. Blending their creative talent with an understanding of engineering and manufacturing technology, students design projects with feasibility of manufacturing in mind.

Lawrence Tech has pioneered a breakthrough design philosophy to meet the changing demands of the global market. Student transportation, mobility, and design projects provide students with unique opportunities to "test drive" their educations in real-world situations.

The following students and their projects will be at the Lawrence Tech booth located in the concourse near the northwest entrance of Cobo Hall:

- Jason Falenski (Troy), Ford Sidewinder — In 1929 Henry Ford developed the Fordson Snow Machine in an effort to boost the Model T's agility in inclement weather. The Model T's narrow wheels were replaced with large hollow wheels, displacing the weight and allowing the Snow Machine to move over deep snow and mud with ease. In a StudioX Internship Project, Falenski drew his inspiration from the Fordson Snow Machine and used hybrid turbine propulsion technology that can pull the vehicle

across sand, mud, snow, and even water.

- Ben Graf (Sebewaing, Mich.), Dragonfly — The Dragonfly, developed in a StudioX Internship Project for Ford Motor Co., is a futuristic air racing vehicle for the year 2065. The vehicle pushes the boundaries of human reaction time and split-second decision-making. The Dragonfly is powered by eight micro-turbine jet engines weighing less than 100 pounds, producing over 800 foot pounds of thrust per engine. The radical multi-faced design language of the Dragonfly was developed to channel airflow over an increased surface area to improve maneuverability and control.

- Chris Nichols (Sears, Mich.), Jeep Exterior Concept — During a summer 2010 internship with the Jeep Design Studio at Chrysler Corp., Nichols had the opportunity to work on multiple projects while experiencing the product development process at the Chrysler Technical Center. The daily workflow included sketching, design reviews, vehicle exterior clay modeling, gaming, and component design. In addition, a promotional video with the intern marketing department was generated to highlight the Chrysler design process.

- Taylor Manuilow (Port Huron), Jeep2 Interior Concept — Another Chrysler intern, Manuilow worked on the Jeep2 at Chrysler's advanced studio. Created as a concept study for future global Jeep interiors, it utilizes a base model for third-world countries that can be upgraded for young, more affluent European and North American consumers. After an initial sketching phase of two weeks, the design was refined through weekly reviews with studio designers and engi-

neers. It was eventually modified to fit specific package and engineering requirements, and the final model was presented to Chrysler design management.

- Jennifer Bur (Cheboygan), Jeep Apparel — In a proposed rebranding of the classic Jeep image for the outdoor lifestyle, Bur added functional fashion: dynamic pockets, technical pattern drafting, and cutting-edge materials. The iconic Jeep grille is reinvented for 2011 through wearable graphics and innovative fashion inspired by consumer trend profiling. Lawrence Tech's unique Fashion Lab encompasses all aspects of becoming future fashion industry leaders.

- Jon Russell (Northville), DeWalt TechVest — The DeWalt TechVest is the future of construction site communication and media. A next-gen personal device, the TechVest builds on DeWalt's heritage as a premier purveyor of rugged, durable construction equipment. Taking inspiration from cutting-edge military technology, the TechVest integrates many communication and entertainment features, such as an mp3 player, webcam, and loudspeakers, to help construction workers connect and stay focused on the job-site.

- Blue Devil Motorsports — Lawrence Tech was one of the first universities in the country to compete in racing competitions sponsored by SAE International. Each year, Blue Devil Motorsports students gain valuable, career-enhancing experience in competitions that encourage them to tackle real-world design and engineering challenges.

College for Creative Studies students have participated at NAIAS for a long while and now Lawrence Tech students have equal opportunity.