



PHOTO: CHRISTINE SNYDER
Robert Lutz, left, retired GM executive, with Timothy Grieg, a GM interior design manager, minutes before Lutz's book signing at the Ward's Auto Interiors Conference in Dearborn last week.

Civil War Re-Enactors Coming to Visit Dearborn's Greenfield Village Ground

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1860s funeral ritual; also see Michigan Civil War battle flags, relics and artifacts at the Miller School, or take a look at what people of all classes wore during this era in a fashion show on the porch of Town Hall.

At the Edison Homestead, visitors can create a souvenir ribbon rosette to show their support for the military or they can even "enlist" themselves at the recruiting office on Main

Street and receive a reproduction Volunteer Enlistment paper.

Smiths Creek Depot, originally from St. Claire County, will come alive as ladies inside the Depot prepare packages for the soldiers' aid and comfort on the front lines. Some of these packages, researched from accounts and letters from the early 1860s, could include entire cooked turkeys, cakes, plum puddings and many other items sent to loved ones away at war.

Special lectures from expert

Swiss IndyCar Driver, 22, Making Name on Track

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Simona de Silvestro remembers her parents "freaking out."

In hindsight, it's hard to blame them.

It was 2006, and de Silvestro, then 17, was trying to talk her mom and dad — and, for that matter, herself — into the idea that moving across the Atlantic to advance her racing career in the United States was a good idea. Major auto racing was banned in her native Switzerland in the 1950s, and a deal for her to race in England had just fallen through.

After some soul-searching, away she departed for the U.S.

"I was lucky that they let me go away," she said. "It was pretty strange, but I was like, 'Oh, I'm racing. It's cool.' Other people go to college, things like that. I'm racing."

Now 22, de Silvestro has established a foothold in the IndyCar series. Driving for HVM Racing in her second IndyCar season, she already has a top-five and a top-10 finish in four starts this season and is preparing for what would be her second Indianapolis 500.

De Silvestro might not yet be a household name or have a race victory on her resume, as Danica Patrick does, but the stats say she's outdriving Patrick so far in the IndyCar season. De Silvestro is 11th in the standings and Patrick, who is off to a disappointing start in 15th.

While de Silvestro is thankful for the chance she has in IndyCar, she dreams of making it in Formula One — a place where opportunities for female drivers have been far more difficult to come by than in IndyCar.

"I just consider myself a race car driver," said de Silvestro, who recently visited Milwaukee to promote the June 19 IndyCar race at the Milwaukee Mile. "I just want to be the best out there. If I'm here in IndyCar, if I'm in F1, I just want to be known as a good race car driver. For sure, I think opening the doors would be kind of like the historical part of it, but I don't really look at it that way."

And while Patrick, Sarah Fisher, Lyn St. James, Janet Guthrie and others before de Silvestro have blazed a trail for women to compete in Indy-style racing, de Silvestro says she still has to prove herself.

"I don't think it's easier in the IndyCar series, just because somebody already has shown she can win a race," she said. "That's why it looks easier, because Danica has

shown she can be competitive."

While de Silvestro is more comfortable on road courses than on oval tracks, a good run at Indy would be a big boost to her career. She finished 14th at Indy last year and was named the race's rookie of the year.

"I think the second year around, you're a little more nervous," de Silvestro said. "Because the first year when you do it, you kind of take it like any other race, and when the race is over, you just realize how big it is and how important it is. When you come back, you (say), 'OK, it is the most important race.'"

Auto racing takes a back seat in Switzerland to skiing, soccer and tennis. The country was one of several European nations to ban racing after spectators were killed at a horrific accident at Le Mans in France in 1955. While other countries eventually lifted their bans, Switzerland kept its in place.

So growing up, De Silvestro's only firsthand knowledge of auto racing was go-kart races in supermarket parking lots.

"I saw that, and I said, 'Oh, that's what I want to try,'" she said.

Her father bought her a go-kart, and she also had an Indy-themed computer racing game growing up. But she had to go to France and Italy for real racing.

"I definitely think if they had a racetrack, we would have way more race car drivers coming out of Switzerland," she said. "I don't think many people get to see the sport and actually try it out. It would be great to have a track."

To make a career out of racing, she had to leave home. And when a sponsorship deal to race in England fell through, she got an offer to race in the U.S.

Somehow, she talked her parents into letting her move overseas — by herself — to race in a minor league open-wheel series. She admits she had "huge butterflies," but knew it was the right thing to do.

"To me, it wasn't really that hard," de Silvestro said. "I was like, 'Oh, I'm getting this chance to drive a race car.' Maybe my friends didn't understand and things like that, but I've always been so focused behind this goal to be a race car driver. That's all I really want, is just to be a really good race car driver. It wasn't really a difficult choice. I've got this opportunity, I'm going to take it with both hands."

Lutz Booksigning a Highlight of 'Interiors' Show

by Christine Snyder
Staff Reporter
Tech Center News

Robert Lutz, former GM vice chairman of global product development, may have retired from GM, but his thoughts are never far from the auto industry at hand.

Lutz handed out advance copies of his new book, "Car Guys vs. Bean Counter: The Battle for the Soul of American Business," May 17 at the end-of-day reception for the Ward's Auto Interiors Conference in Dearborn.

Lutz read excerpts from his book that pertained to GM's struggles with its interior designs and fielded questions with his usual candor.

"Dark, gray, plastic," was how Lutz described GM's interiors of the 1980s and 1990s before he came to GM.

He said when he complained he was told that GM's interiors had less reported problems than other OEMs according to J D Powers & Associates.

"So in other words, the buttons worked," said Lutz. "Interiors got short shrift."

GM designers in attendance described Lutz's disruptive influence at GM as the "unshackling" or "freeing" design.

He brought in Anne Asensio, a European design maverick to head up interiors, making the department "sexy" again. "Before, designers felt they were punished if they were put in interiors."

"Disruptive people are an asset," said Lutz. "But just enough to change things not enough that you can't deal with them."

"I didn't play it well enough to be CEO, but well enough not to get fired."

One thing about GM culture Lutz said needed to change was its focus. Lutz described weekly meetings as like the movie, "Groundhog Day." "You couldn't remember if this was today's meeting or last week's."

"There is something wrong with a company that promoted sub-goals as much as product excellence," said Lutz, who said the right strategy should

like a sunflower: "With product excellence in the center and enablers as its petals."

"It was sad to see so many people working so hard on the wrong things."

Lutz credited Ed Whitaker for cutting through the "b.s." and refocusing GM with his suggested — and adopted — mission statement: to design, build and sell the world's best cars and trucks.

Lutz called the change in GM's culture "self-sustaining" and that the influx of new people will help the automaker so it doesn't revert back to old ways. "They don't have 30 years experience running the auto industry the wrong way," said Lutz.

Lutz didn't speak much about the bankruptcy, excusing himself as a "non-expert," but did give his thoughts on the four brands GM dropped: Hummer, Saab, Saturn and Pontiac. He said he agreed wholeheartedly with the decisions to cut Hummer and Saab.

"Hummer was considered the anti-Christ," said Lutz. "I agreed it had to go."

Saab was a "forever drain" on resources, said Lutz. "We never should have bought it."

Lutz said the small European-style cars couldn't be

mainstreamed without losing its fans. "Saab had to have a quirkiness," explained Lutz. "When it stopped having a quirkiness, the media announced it was no longer Saab. When it had it, it sold to 95 university professors."

Lutz was a "little more disappointed" that the Saturn brand was eventually dropped by GM, but he clearly understood it had to go when despite a stellar product lineup, sales still didn't pick up.

Meanwhile, Pontiac was harder to take, Lutz said, especially since it traditionally appealed to young people. "It was one GM brand acceptable to people under 25," said Lutz. "I personally regret it went away," said Lutz. "Pontiac was largely destroyed by having a new head every eight months, each with a different idea."

Lutz said that while he had a "personal" problem with Pontiac's demise, he understood the decision. "If I use my left brain, and yes I do have one, I agree."

Lutz's new book will go on sale locally and nationally on June 9.

Even in retirement, the former Marine Corps aviator still holds the Detroit auto industry in his thrall.

Wal-Mart Still Stands Tall in Retail

By CHRIS KAHN
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. remains atop the Fortune 500 list even as it struggled to keep its U.S. customers coming in the door.

The world's largest retailer held onto the top spot for the second year in a row thanks to gains at its international stores. The company's U.S. division has had seven straight quarters of declines in revenue at stores open at least a year compared with the same periods the year before.

Fortune Magazine, which ranked companies based on revenue for 2010, released its annual list last week. It was filled with examples of how

rising fuel prices are affecting the economy. Wal-Mart was followed by the three largest American oil companies: Exxon Mobil Corp., Chevron Corp. and ConocoPhillips.

Fortune said that America's top companies profited by boosting productivity and cutting jobs. Like Wal-Mart, they also relied on growing operations overseas.

The strategy helped them increase earnings 81 percent to \$318 billion. That's the third-largest combined profit gain in the list's history. The largest jump in profit came in 2004, when Fortune 500 companies reported a more than six-fold increase in earnings. Companies that made last year's list increased profits by

more than four-fold.

Fannie Mae jumped from 81st last year to round out this year's top 5 companies, though the rise was mostly due to new accounting rules and continued support from the federal government.

Meanwhile, the housing finance giant also faces an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which is looking into statements that former CEO Daniel Mudd made about the mortgage giant's exposure to risky loans.

The top 10 companies also included General Electric Co., Berkshire Hathaway Inc., General Motors Co., Bank of America Corp. and Ford Motor Corp.

Chevrolet, Indy 500 Share Centennial Celebrations

DETROIT — On May 30, 1911, Arthur Chevrolet competed in the inaugural Indianapolis 500. One hundred years later, a Chevrolet Camaro SS Convertible will lead the 2011 Indianapolis 500, as the car maker and iconic race celebrate their Centennial anniversaries — and start the countdown for Chevrolet's return to IndyCar racing in 2012.

"Before Chevrolet was a brand, Louis Chevrolet and his brothers made a name for themselves behind the wheel of a race car," said Jim Campbell, GM vice president of Performance Vehicles and Motorsports.

"After Chevrolet became a car company, Louis and his brothers continued to race at Indy, forging one of the most storied relationships in automotive racing."

"That history includes some of the most memorable cars that have paced the Indianapolis 500, well as many checkered flags won under Chevrolet power," Campbell said.

"With a new Chevrolet race engine competing in next year's race, the relationship between Indy and Chevrolet is heating back up."

Meanwhile, although 2011 marks the 100th anniversaries for Chevrolet and the Indianapolis 500, the connection can be traced back to as early as 1905.

That year, Louis Chevrolet and Carl G. Fisher competed while touring the Midwest as daredevil drivers in racing exhibitions, and the excitement of automobile racing shaped the fortunes of both men.

In 1909, Fisher began building his brick-paved auto-racing track near Indianapolis as Louis Chevrolet became a nationally known celebrity driving for Billy Durant's Buick racing team.

Impressed by Louis's engineering abilities, Durant invited Chevrolet to partner on automotive projects, including designing a new car to be called a "Chevrolet." Louis soon took a break from engineering to help his brother, Arthur, prepare a Buick for the inaugural 500-mile race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

On May 30, 1911, Arthur Chevrolet drove 30 laps in the first Indianapolis 500 before



Army General Colin Powell paced the 89th Indy 500 race in a 2005 Chevrolet Corvette C6, the first C6 Corvette to pace the famed race. Both the Indy 500 race and Chevrolet celebrate 100-year anniversaries in 2011. The race is run on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, May 29 this year.

mechanical problems sidelined his car. On November 3, 1911, Louis Chevrolet and Billy Durant incorporated the Chevrolet Motor Car Co. in Detroit.

Three years later, Louis Chevrolet sold his interests in the Chevrolet car company to Durant and moved to Indianapolis to pursue racing with his brothers. Louis competed in the 1915 Indianapolis race, lapping the track at more than 80 mph before dropping out with engine trouble.

He returned for the 1919 Indianapolis 500 with brother Gaston, campaigning in cars from their own company, Frontenac Motors Corp. Louis and Gaston finished seventh and tenth, respectively. In 1920, Gaston won the Indy 500 in a Monroe-Frontenac, becoming the first winning driver to finish the race on one set of tires.

Carl Fisher paced the first Indianapolis 500 — in his personal car — because he felt a rolling start would be safer than the traditional drivers' sprint. Since then, the pace laps that start the race have become a popular tradition of the Indy 500. This year, a 2011 Chevrolet Camaro SS Convertible will pace the 500-mile race — the 22nd Chevrolet to do so.

"Chevrolet has paced the Indianapolis 500 more times than any other brand," said Campbell.

The 2011 Camaro SS Convertible Pace Car brings a modern interpretation of one of the most iconic cars ever to pace Indy — the 1969 Camaro SS Pace Car. We think this is a fitting way to celebrate Chevro-

let's history with the Indy 500, while gearing up for our next 100 years in Indy."

The first Chevrolet to pace Indy, a 1948 convertible, was driven by Indianapolis Speedway President Wilbur Shaw.

Ten Corvettes have paced the Indianapolis 500. The first appearance was in Corvette's 25th anniversary year, 1978. That year, the *Wall Street Journal* triggered a buying frenzy for the official 1978 Corvette Limited Edition Pace Car replicas when it published a front-page story about their collectability.

The 2011 Camaro SS will be the seventh Camaro to pace the 500. The first was in 1967, the year of Camaro's introduction. Camaro was invited back to pace the 1969 race.

The white 1969 SS Convertible pace car, with its domed hood, "Hugger Orange" stripes and specially trimmed interior, became a singularly iconic Indy pace car. Today, Camaro collectors treasure the remaining examples of the 3,675 official replicas built in 1969.

The 2011 Chevrolet Camaro Convertible Indianapolis 500 Pace Car's Summit White exterior, with orange stripes, is a direct lift from the 1969 pace-setter, while the orange leather-trimmed interior is a modern counterpoint to the historic exterior.

To bring the pace car look to the street, Chevrolet will offer 500 of the 2011 Chevrolet Camaro Convertible Indianapolis 500 Pace Cars for sale. They are slated for delivery this spring.

In addition to pacing the Indy 500, Louis Chevrolet's

namesake has also powered many of the cars that competed at the Brickyard.

Most recently, Chevrolet competed in Indy-style competition as an engine manufacturer in 1986-93 and 2002-05 with V-8 engines, winning 104 races, powering six driver champions, and scoring seven Indianapolis 500 victories.

Next year, Chevrolet will return to the IZOD IndyCar Series with a new twin-turbocharged, direct-injected V-6 racing engine powered by renewable E85 ethanol fuel. Developed by General Motors and Ilmor Engineering, the Chevrolet IndyCar V-6 will have a displacement of 2.2 liters, aluminum block and cylinder heads, and will be a fully stressed chassis member supporting the gearbox and rear suspension.

The Chevrolet IndyCar engine will be available to all entrants in accordance with the series' regulations. Team Penske is the first IndyCar team to commit to Chevrolet power in 2012. Team Penske previously tallied 31 open-wheel victories with Chevrolet engines, including four Indianapolis 500 wins.

It's difficult to remember the last time that two such significant portions of the auto industry were coincidentally celebrating their centennials at the same time.

Organizers of this year's race say it speaks well of motorsports tradition that marquee names like the Indy 500 and the Chevrolet brand are being celebrated in the fashion that they are on May 29.