

Daily Herald

AUTOFOCUS

dh dailyherald.com

SECTION 9

AutoSunday

Routine care for warranty can be done outside dealer

Q. The local dealer where I take my car just went out of business. Where can I go since the next nearest dealer is kind of a long drive away?

A. Unfortunately the automotive industry is getting hit pretty hard by this current economic downturn. We are reading and hearing about the struggles of the "Big Three" everyday in the news. It is

hitting local car dealers very hard. Many of us are watching carefully what we spend and are putting off buying a new car in favor of keeping the old one going.

This past month we lost the Dodge dealership in our Barrington market and the Ford dealer is closing in Crystal Lake. I know of many others that have closed in the last several months.

One thing you need to know is that you do not have to go to the dealer for your service and it will not affect your new car warranty. There is a federal law (Magnuson-Moss Act 1975) that prohibits a new car dealer from implying or denying warranty service because routine maintenance was performed at an independent repair facility.

If your dealer is no longer convenient, find a local shop that you have confidence in and build a relationship with them.

When something comes up that is covered under the warranty, your shop will guide you in what to do; in fact, it is not uncommon for us to take the car to the dealer for our client to get the warranty work done.

• Douglas Automotive is at 312 S. Hager Ave., Barrington, (847) 381-0454, and 7218B Virginia Road, Crystal Lake, (815) 356-0440. Send questions or comments to underthehood@dailyherald.com.

Auto briefs

Vettefest coming to Rosemont

The Nickey Chicago Chevy Vettefest, presented by Bill Stasek Chevrolet, takes place Nov. 22 and 23 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road in Rosemont.

The Chevy Vettefest is the world's largest all indoor, all Chevrolet show and swap meet. More than 400 swap meet and commercial vendor spaces and more than 400 of the countries best Chevy's will fill the exhibit space. The Triple Crown Gallery features the finest Corvettes that are accepted only after achieving NCRS Top Flight and Bloomington Gold status, the most prestigious awards among restored and original Corvette enthusiasts.

The show also includes a high performance 1968-70 Nova Showcase, the sYc Supercars Showcase and what is believed to be the only gathering of 1969 Camaro Z/28's that may represent all of the 18 available colors and several special order, non-standard cars.

Show hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 22, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 23. Admission is \$15. For information, visit online at chevyvettefest.net.

Life has not slowed for this true Texas racing pioneer

By **TODD D. BURLAGE**
Wheelbase Communications

"I don't know who you are, but if you don't want a stupid answer, don't ask a stupid question."

A.J. Foyt is retired from racing but carries on in the garage area of the track like he's still that 1970s smart-aleck who won about as many races as he made enemies.

Seventy-three years old and Foyt can still make competitors run and the media cower.

Pro-Files

Automotive legends and heroes

His response was to a question about how racing has changed during his storied career. Even out of the car he still commands, and demands, as much respect today as he did when he became the first driver to win four Indianapolis 500 events, the Super Bowl of open-wheel racing.

The voice might be a little softer now, more like a leopard than a lion, but don't think the passion inside Foyt is gone.

"I work 24 hours a day," said Foyt, a teddy bear one minute, a hungry bear the next. "I always have. It's the only way to stay ahead."

Foyt loves God, racing, America and himself ... and not necessarily in that order. He's loyal to his friends and indifferent to his enemies. Cross him once, shame on you. Cross him twice? Better duck.

Foyt acts first and thinks later. He does things on his terms. And he speaks that famous southern language: Texan.

"I still ain't gonna take no bull," Foyt said about his approach to racing, life and questionable questions. "I still got a little fire in me. I'm getting a little old. Maybe I've slowed down a little. I don't know."

If slowing down means owning and operating racing teams in the big leagues of NASCAR stock cars and the open-wheel Indy Racing League as well as serving on the board of the nation's largest funeral business, then maybe Foyt did back off the throttle a bit. It would have been tough to keep up the pace Foyt kept during the 1960s, '70s and '80s, the heyday of open-wheel racing and the decades for which Foyt will best be remembered.

He has come as close as anyone to owning the open-wheel racing scene, maybe even closer.

Foyt remains the only IndyCar driver to have raced for 35 consecutive years. His seven IndyCar championships remain a record. So does his 67 victories, which are 15 more wins than second-place driver Mario Andretti.

He's also the only driver to claim racing's triple crown with wins in the Indy 500, the 24 Hours of Le Mans (France) international sports-car endurance race and the Daytona 500, the crown jewel of stock-car racing.

But Foyt will always be thought of as the king of the Indianapolis 500, a race he ran in five different decades, an event that paid him nearly \$3 million in winnings and one that would require more than



GREG PERRY/Wheelbase Communications

A.J. Foyt

would have taken a blowtorch and built a race car out of it all.

He was the inaugural inductee into the Motor Sports Hall of Fame in 1989 and, if many had their way, a good bet to have the museum at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway named after him.

"It has been a great life. If I left today, I would be a happy man. But I have no intention of going anywhere."

Foyt's straight-up style comes from growing up in a hardworking family on a cattle ranch outside of Houston. When Foyt began racing, he did so with a beat-up clunker he built, towed and raced around the Lone Star state with hopes of just making enough money to get him home.

He won his first race in 1953 at the age of 18, 55 years ago on a quarter-mile dirt bullring near his hometown.

It would be 28 years between that first win and his last, in 1981 when he won the Pocono 500 in an open-wheel Indy car.

In between, Foyt built himself into one of wealthiest and most respected men ever to roam a garage area. Even if he can be a little hard to approach at times.

"Now, no more stupid questions please!"

12,000 miles of track driving. (That's about five trips from New York City to San Francisco.)

"If I was reborn right now, I wouldn't want to change anything," he said. "Life has been wonderful to me. Racing (has) been wonderful to me."

Most would agree he has been just as wonderful to racing.

Chances are if you would have dumped a truckload of steel tubing and sheet metal onto the front lawn of Foyt's Texas ranch in the 1950s or 1960s, he

• Todd D. Burlage is a feature writer with Wheelbase Communications. He can be reached online at wheelbase.us/mailbag.html.

Chevrolet introduces roomy new crossover SUV

By **ANN M. JOB**
For The Associated Press

When \$28,990 starts to look like a bargain for a seven- or eight-passenger vehicle, you know that crossover SUVs with three rows of seats have become popular with American families.

Chevrolet dropped its eight-passenger minivan, the Uplander, in the 2008 model year and added the seven-to-eight-passenger Traverse crossover sport utility vehicle for 2009. Crossovers give you a carlike ride and modern styling that's more SUV-like than that on minivans.

The Uplander minivan's starting manufacturer's suggested retail price, including destination charge, was \$22,320, but the Traverse's starting price is just under \$29,000. Still, it's at least \$2,600 less

At a glance

Base price: \$28,255 for LS two-wheel drive; up to \$41,075 for LTZ all-wheel drive.

As tested: \$43,210.

Engine: 3.6-liter, double overhead cam, V-6

City/highway fuel economy: 16/23 miles per gallon.

Curb weight: 4,925 pounds.

Built: Spring Hill, Tenn.

than that of the crossover SUVs that share the Traverse's underpinnings — the GMC Acadia, Saturn Outlook and Buick Enclave.

The Traverse also is priced about the same as competing Japanese crossover SUVs. The 2009 Honda Pilot starts at \$28,265, the 2009 Toyota Highlander at \$28,245.

Shoppers will find the Traverse to be a rather sizable crossover with surprising capability.

When properly fitted with towing package, the Traverse can tow 5,200 pounds. In contrast, the maximum towing capacity for a 2009 Honda Pilot is 4,500 pounds.

At 205 inches long, from bumper to bumper, the new Traverse is nearly 17 inches longer than a Toyota Highlander and 14.1 inches longer than a Pilot. It's 3.5 inches taller than a Highlander and more than an inch taller than a Pilot.

The Traverse also boasts more total cargo room inside — 116.4 cubic feet — than either Japanese competitor. For example, the maximum cargo space inside the 2009 Pilot, aft of the front-row seats, is 87 cubic feet. Best of all, the federal



ASSOCIATED PRESS/Courtesy of Chevrolet

The 2009 Chevrolet Traverse LTZ is a roomy crossover with surprising capabilities.

government's fuel economy rating for the bigger and heavier Traverse is nearly the same as that for the 2009 Pilot and Highlander, at 16 miles per gallon in city driving and 23 mpg on the highway for a

two-wheel drive model. All safety items, including six air bags, are standard, and the Traverse earned a top, five-out-of-five-star safety rating from the federal government in frontal and side crash testing.