

AUTO BRIEFS



Roy Roberts enjoying scouting Jamboree

Roy Roberts Heads Boy Scout Program

As the highest ranking black executive at General Motors Corporation, Roy Roberts is indeed a busy man. But the vice president and general manager of Pontiac-GMC takes time to make a difference in communities. Roberts, 58, chaired the 1997 Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree held July 28 - Aug. 5 at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. The Jamboree attracted over 35,000 participants from more than 30 nations. Roberts is the first black to hold the position of national chairman.

"It's about doing the right thing for people, showing that you care about this nation," says Roberts. "Scouting builds character. These young people are going to be our future leaders, so we must get involved!"

The Jamboree, Roberts says, took two years to plan and is held every four years. Thousands of participants were joined by President Clinton; Secretary of the Army, Togo West; members of Congress and countless other dignitaries. Transportation was handled exclusively by Roberts' Pontiac-GMC.



Mercedes-Benz Builds Hi-Tech Bike

A collaborative design by Mercedes-Benz and AMP Research has assembled the first ever Mercedes-Benz all-terrain mountain bike. The 24-pound, high-tech bike features aluminum and carbon fiber tubing, front and rear suspension, disc brakes and can be packed into a carrying case. Mercedes recently featured the bike at the debut of its new 4-wheel sport utility vehicle, the ML-320. Sold through the Mercedes-Benz Collection accessories program, the bike's suggested retail price is \$3,300.

The first-ever all-terrain mountain bike may become an accessory for active Mercedes customers.

Mitsubishi Taps African American To Oversee Diversity Relations

In an effort to improve its relationship with women and minorities, Mitsubishi Motors of America has hired an African-American woman as director of diversity relations in the company's Washington office.

Brenda Girton-Mitchell, 49, formerly associate executive officer of the National Council of Negro Women, will now ensure that Mitsubishi understands and properly handles diversity issues in the corporate office and throughout its subsidiaries.

"I'm confident that with support Mitsubishi will institutionalize the concept of diversity, both internally and externally," Girton-Mitchell said.

The creation of Girton-Mitchell's position stemmed from a diversity plan developed with the cooperation of the Rainbow Coalition / PUSH, and the National Organization of Women (NOW). Her appointment has been praised by the National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers and NOW.



Photo Credit: Renee Bouchard

Brenda Girton-Mitchell

FOUR SEASONS REVIEW



Chrysler Sebring Convertible JXi

By Marc Battle

A convertible car with comfortable rear passenger seating? Yeah, right. In most convertibles, cramped rear-seating is the norm, with the back seat reserved for packages and pets. Not so with the Chrysler Sebring. Load the packages in the trunk, because now there's ample room to accommodate

additional friends.

That was one of the first, among many, surprises that caught the attention of *African Americans On Wheels*. This summer we obtained the 1997 Sebring Convertible JXi-- our first one-year loan vehicle, courtesy of Chrysler Corporation. AAOW staff is now testing this spunky roadster that has quickly become a favorite among convertibles. This report is the first of four, and includes our initial impressions.

First off, the Sebring didn't go unnoticed in the Washington, D.C. business community. More than a few heads turned to admire the full-sized convertible bathed in dark amethyst paint. The admiring glances gave way to drop-jaw amazement when, upon inquiry, passers-by learned that our fully equipped model bore a sticker price of \$26,525.

Raising and lowering the convertible top is simple. A clamp located under the sun visor on the driver and passenger sides has to be released first. With two people, it's a snap. One occupant might struggle a bit to release the clamp from the driver's seat. After that, though, a button mounted on the center arm rest actually lowers or raises the top. And even though the top lowers into the trunk area, there's still ample room for luggage.

The interior is well laid-out: The controls are uncomplicated, easy to reach and logically placed. Cruise control functions are all mounted on the steering wheel.

The sound system (with in-dash CD) is excellent — even with the noise of open air travel. The Sebring's stereo automatically adjusts to the right acoustic quality when the convertible top changes position.

The Sebring handles respectably, negotiating D.C.'s daily traffic jams with relative ease. Its 2.5-liter engine responds effortlessly with just a soft nudge of the accelerator to dart through traffic, and musters plenty of passing power while on the highway. On average, we observed 17 mpg in the city and 21 on the highway. At 4,200 miles, we took the Sebring for its first oil and filter change at Bob Banning Chrysler in Hyattsville, Md. The mechanics also checked for manufacturer's service alerts, but found none. One hour and \$23 later, the Sebring was back on the road with a clean bill of health.

Next stop: Baltimore, where AAOW Senior Editor Blair Walker will take it through its paces.

Base Price.....	\$24,660
Price As Tested.....	\$26,525
Engine.....	2.5 liter V6
Horsepower.....	168 @ 5,800 rpm
Acceleration (0-60).....	10 sec
Seats.....	4
Fuel Economy.....	17 city/21 hwy
Tank Capacity.....	15.8 gal