

Students in area help in designing car of the future

BY DIANE BALDWIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Purple tires with water drops and spray treads, neoprene wet suit fabric seating and absolutely no roof. This doesn't sound like a car, but it is. It's called the Tekqua and it's on display at the 1998 North American International Auto Show, which is open to the public through Jan. 19, at Cobo Center.

This futuristic vehicle was designed by students at Detroit's Center for Creative Studies (CCS) as part of an interdisciplinary class. Students gained first-hand design experience on what is probably the most ambitious design project ever undertaken at the school.

Carl Olsen, chairman of Transportation Design at CCS, was instrumental in getting sponsors involved in the project. "The American automotive industry is not nearly imaginative enough," he said, "and projects like this show (them) what minor changes in color and trim can do to aging vehicles."

Students were introduced to the scope of the project when classes began in September. A similar project was offered last year, so many students were aware of the opportunity prior to registering for the class. Each component of the vehicle's design was integrated into classroom assignments and the small group of students worked closely to fine-tune their ideas before presenting them to the automotive sponsors who would turn their two-dimensional designs into actual car parts.

Four Oakland County residents, all fourth-year students at CCS, played roles in this design project: LaShirli Alexander of Southfield, Mollie Rattner of Franklin, Herbert Sparks of Troy and Robert Walker of Farmington Hills.

Projects like the Tekqua,

according to Mark Trostle, vice president and general manager of Automotive Services Corp., Division of ASC and leader of ASC's Tekqua design consultant and fabrication team, help ASC to stay on the leading edge of design.

"We recognize that our business is very much influenced by design," he said. "In the specialty vehicle market there is a lot of emotion attached to the buying decision. The Tekqua project not only helps us support and develop future designers, but it also keeps us on the leading edge of what young people of today are thinking about products of the future."

Future industrial designer Rattner was certainly thinking of the future as she worked on the project. "I like trend watching. I think the woman of the future is going to have to be pre-

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STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF KUNDEL

They are the future: Robert Walker (left) of Farmington, Mollie Rattner of Franklin and Herb Sparks of Troy talk about the car they helped to design that mirrors their future careers in the automobile fields. The trio are students at the Center for Creative Studies. Below right is what your tires could some day look like, if these students continue their designing ways. The car, however, which has no roof is unlikely to make it on the Michigan scene, except for bright, sunny days.

Sweepstakes aids cancer research

BY DIANE BALDWIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Four unique General Motors vehicles were unveiled at the 1998 North American International Auto Show.

Four fashion designers worked closely with GM brand managers to create one-of-a-kind versions of four GM brands. Tommy Hilfiger created his version of the GMC Jimmy, Cynthia Rowley designed a Pontiac Grand Prix, Michael Kors created a Cadillac DeVille Concours and Nicholas Graham for Joe Boxer designed a Chevrolet Venture.

The automaker teamed up with the Council of Fashion Designers of America in 1996 with the creation of Concept-Cure which was intended to extend the automaker's

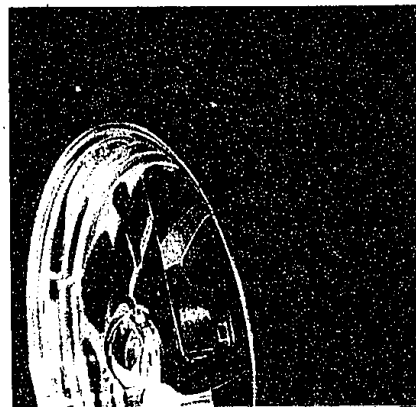
efforts to develop deeper relationships with women consumers by supporting causes that are relevant to them. Last year's efforts raised more than \$700,000 for the Georgetown University's Nina Hyde Center for Breast Cancer Research.

Four vehicles are part of the national "Unlock the Cure, Unlock the Car" Sweepstakes whereby consumers who pledge donations for breast cancer research enter a sweepstakes to win a vehicle. Consumers can call the toll-free hotline at 1-888-GM-CURE to pledge donations or to receive referral information on breast cancer education, detection and cure.

Sweepstakes entries are based upon pledge amounts — ranging anywhere from one entry for a

\$20 pledge to 10 entries for a \$100 pledge. Each contestant will be asked which vehicle they would like to win. From January through June 1998, GM will promote the "Unlock the Cure, Unlock the Car" sweepstakes program with individual promotions and special events across the country. The sweepstakes will culminate with a grand finale event in June 1998, at which the finalists for each vehicle will be given a key to unlock the door to win the vehicle.

The 1998 North American International Auto Show, held at Cobo Center is open to the public Jan. 10-18 from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. and Jan. 19 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Cost is as follows: Adults, \$8; Seniors \$4; children under 12, free.



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