

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

# WHEELS

SECTION F

What's the proper tire pressure on snow, ice? Loser cooks

TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI

## CAR TALK



**Dear Tom and Ray:** I am having a dispute with two of my three sons. They claim that in order to increase traction on snow and ice, and even sand, one should remove air from the tires to increase the amount of rubber that touches the road surface. I contend that this is a dangerous practice and that one should keep tires inflated to the manufacturer's recommendation, or perhaps even increase the pressure under the above conditions. Please tell me I'm correct. Doing all the cooking at deer camp hangs in the balance. — Tom

**Tom:** Your sons are, technically, correct — although as a practical matter, you can make a good case for leaving the tire inflation alone.

**Ray:** Here's the story. On a slippery surface, like ice, compacted snow or sand, the larger the contact patch on the ground, the more traction you'll get. And "flattening" the tire does give you a larger contact patch.

**Tom:** In fact, if you've been someplace where park rangers allow driving on the beach, they'll often require that drivers deflate their tires. Those tires may be set as low as 10 psi, to expand the contact patch and keep the tires from biting through and sinking into the sand.

**Ray:** But here's the practical part of the problem: As soon as you get off the beach or the compacted snow, it is dangerous to drive around with underinflated tires.

**Tom:** Here's an example of how deflating the tires can get you into trouble. Let's say you're at deer camp. Overnight, it snows 6 inches and you have to drive out. You lower your tire pressure 10 or 15 pounds to give you more traction when you drive on top of this snow.

**Ray:** So you get out to the highway, and there's no gas station, or no air available. And the highway has already been plowed. Then you're in a position where you're going to be driving at highway speeds with seriously underinflated tires. That not only compromises your handling, but also increases the chances of an accident or rollover, because underinflated tires tend to overheat, and overheated tires explode.

**Tom:** There are two other points we should make. In snow, there are times when you don't want a wide rubber patch. If the snow is just a couple of inches deep, you'll usually do better with a normally inflated, narrower tire, which can bite through the snow down to the pavement, where the tire can get some real traction. That's why snow tires are often narrower than all-season or summer tires.

**Ray:** But there are no circumstances when overinflating tires will help you get more traction. Overinflating leads to a narrower tread patch, less friction and less traction — which is why it's associated with slightly higher fuel economy.

**Tom:** So, you guys are going to have to fight it out regarding who cooks at deer camp, Tom. But for your average Tom, Dick and Harry, it's best to stick to the manufacturer's recommendation for tire inflation.

Write to Car Talk, c/o the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, P.O. Box 1909, Seattle, 98111. "Car Talk" is heard at 9 a.m. Saturdays on KUOW radio, 94.9 FM, and at 11 a.m. Saturdays on KPLU radio, 88.5 FM. The "Car Talk" Web site is [www.cartalk.com](http://www.cartalk.com).

## MARKETING

### Ford starts multimedia campaign:

Ford Motor Co. is taking its message directly to the masses with a new, multimedia marketing campaign that uses advertising, TV shows and even an online documentary series to tell its story. Ford is trying to burnish its corporate image. Dubbed "Bold Moves," the campaign was unveiled at a meeting of top dealers last week. In conjunction with the "Bold Moves" tag line, Ford is launching a new ad campaign starring "American Idol" winner Kelly Clarkson. Ford also is planning its own reality show to feature aspiring vehicle designers.

## DEALER WEB SITES

### More buyers kicking tires online:

Friedman-Swift Associates reports that car buyers visiting dealership Web sites have increased by more than 70 percent over the past four years. In 2005, 30 percent of new-car buyers visited Web sites, compared with 35 percent who looked at dealer ads in newspapers, the company found. "Five years ago, dealerships centered their advertising strategy on big ads in local newspapers," Friedman-Swift President Judy George said, adding that now, more buyers use Web sites, which often cost less than a newspaper ad.

## INSIDE THIS SECTION

P-I film critic Bill Arnold warms you up for the "summer" movie season, which kicks off today.



## COLLECTOR CARS

# An auto heaven in Tacoma

Museum to have largest group of historic vehicles

BY EVAN McMULLEN  
Special to the P-I

If you're an old-car enthusiast, it apparently won't be long before you'll be able to point your hood ornament south on Interstate 5 and cruise to antique-auto heaven . . . in Tacoma.

The LeMay collection of about 2,600 cars is the world's largest aggregation of historical vehicles — and it will soon be housed in a world-class home.

Propelled by broad support from around the nation, the Harold E. LeMay Museum is poised for a 2007 groundbreaking on a \$100 million-plus, 500,000-square-foot palace next to the Tacoma Dome.

Museum Chief Executive Officer David Madeira and Harold LeMay's widow, Nancy LeMay, expect it to open as early as 2009 as the Smithsonian of the burgeoning collector-car world, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and supporting an array of educational and community activities.

It's not quite fair to describe the museum's progress as an overnight success. After all, Harold and Nancy LeMay quietly and persistently accumulated the collection over the course of a generation. But the museum concept has developed at an accelerated pace since a corporation for that purpose was formed in 1998. The 9-acre site was secured by 2002, and architect Alan Grant of Grant Architects began work on the design in 2003.

Since then, the Madeira-led team has taken LeMay from quiet development to a high-visibility campaign with national reach. And since 2004, when it displayed an impeccable 1930 Duesenberg J to thousands of Seattle fans at an auction, LeMay has been visible at almost every auto event throughout the region.

In addition to alliances with local events such as the Kirkland Concours d'Elegance and the Ehli Turners May Collector Car auction, coming up May 13 (see related story), the museum today has gathered strong corporate support and sponsors a wide range of commercial and non-profit events.

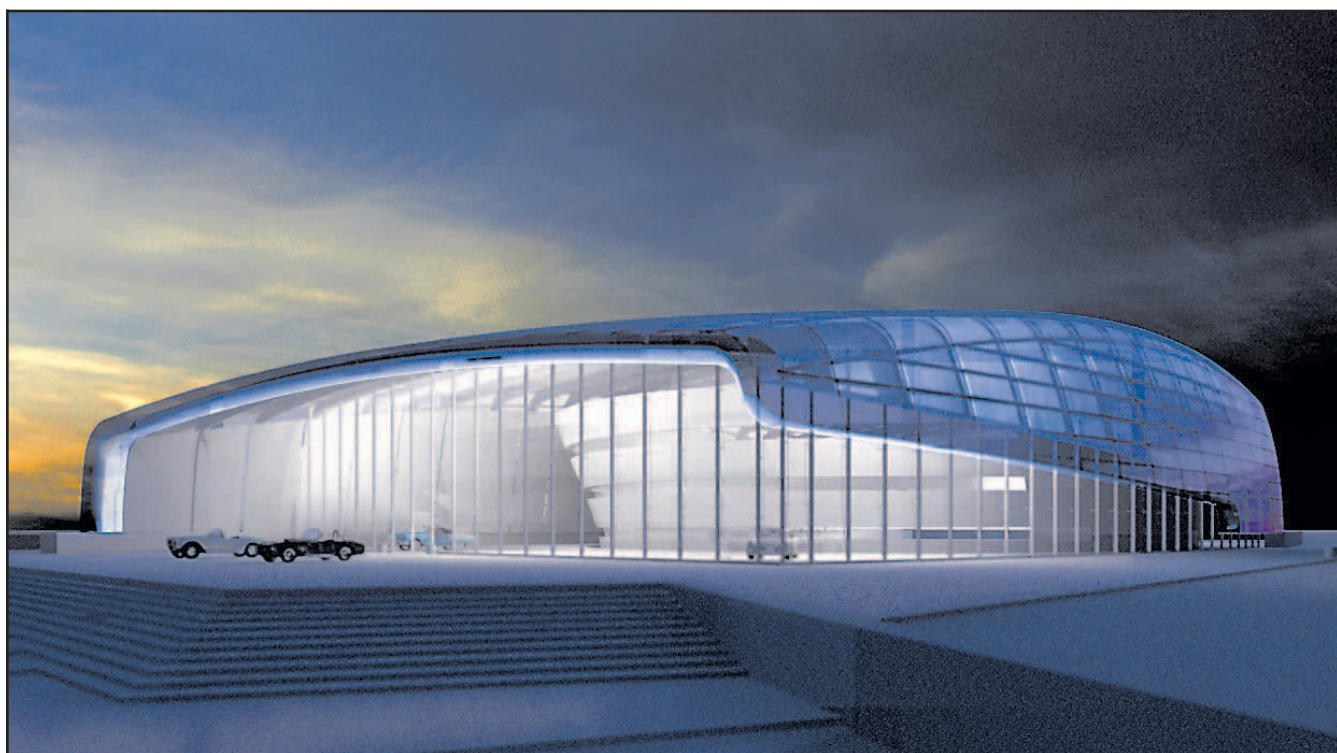
LeMay is exhibiting and networking throughout the country, including recent exhibitions in New York and Detroit. (The exhibit at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit included a 1948 Chevrolet Fleetline custom "woodie," a 1963 Corvette Sting Ray and a 1964 Pontiac GTO convertible.)

As a result, the museum has secured about \$40 million in private pledges and \$8 million in commitments from the state. The museum's site, valued at \$17.5 million, was provided by the city of Tacoma.

Enthusiasm for the project runs high. A local group called the "Committee to Transform Tacoma" filed an initiative last month to close down the Tacoma Dome and give all of its buildings, facilities and parking to the LeMay Museum. The museum does not support the initiative.

Although it will be a few more years until the museum's doors open, part of the collection may still be viewed. Two-hour tours by trained docents may be booked through the museum's Web site, [www.lemaymuseum.org](http://www.lemaymuseum.org), or by calling 253-536-2885.

Evan McMullen is proprietor of Cosmopolitan Motors in Seattle.



GRANT ARCHITECTS

Architectural rendering of the Harold E. LeMay Museum. The 500,000-square-foot museum, which will be built next to the Tacoma Dome, may open in 2009. Groundbreaking is scheduled for next year. The museum is expected to draw thousands.



COURTESY OF HAROLD E. LEMAY MUSEUM

This 1927 LaSalle is one of the LeMay collection's featured cars this year, and eventually will be housed in the new museum. The collection includes such autos as a 1929 Chevrolet AC Roadster and 1930 Duesenberg J Convertible.



COURTESY OF HAROLD E. LEMAY MUSEUM

Harold and Nancy LeMay enjoy an auto show in the Tacoma Dome during the 1980s. By the time Harold LeMay died in 2001, the couple had acquired more than 3,500 cars.

## Born poor, car buff built an empire

Harold LeMay built his company from a one-truck garbage-hauling operation into the 10th-largest waste business in the United States, serving five counties.

Born poor in Yakima in 1919, LeMay moved to Pierce County in the early 1940s and bought his first garbage route — taking time out to serve as a Navy Seabee from 1944 to 1946.

By the time he died in 2001, LeMay and his wife, Nancy, had acquired more than 3,500 cars. Since then, many have been sold.

Each year, they would invite enthusiasts to their home to visit the collection on the last Saturday in August. This year's open house will be the 29th annual. After LeMay bought the nearby Marymount Academy, the open house expanded to that site.

Nancy LeMay has described her home as "a typical five-bedroom home with a 300-car garage!"

Information from P-I files and, with permission, [lemaymuseum.org](http://lemaymuseum.org).

## CAR EVENTS

### ► May 13: Ehli Turners Auctions Collector Car Auction

LeMay is sponsoring this large collector auction, starting at 10 a.m. at the Ehli Turners facility, 1222 46th Ave. E. in Fife. One or more LeMay Collection cars are expected to cross the block (the collection is still being trimmed by putting select vehicles up for auction). As many as 200 collector, classic and custom cars are expected. The event benefits Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. Previews begin May 12 at 9:30 a.m. More information: Ehli Turners Auctions at 253-926-1122 or 800-244-1946 and at [www.ehliauctions.com](http://www.ehliauctions.com).

### ► Aug. 26: 29th Annual LeMay Open House and Auction

More than 750 vehicles from the LeMay collection, plus hundreds of other local collector cars, will be on display at the LeMay family estate, 13502 C St. in Tacoma. The car show and open house begin at 9 a.m., with collector-car parking at Marymount Academy starting at 8 a.m. on a first-come, first-served basis. The auction will start at noon.

### ► Sept. 8-9: Fourth Annual Kirkland Concours d'Elegance

Held on the grounds of Carillon Point, the concours hosts about 80 of the finest antique, vintage, classic and exotic automobiles selected from throughout the United States and Canada. The cars can be viewed from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 9. Tickets may be bought in advance through the Greater Kirkland Chamber of Commerce at 425-822-7066 and will be available at the main gate.

## AUTO BIOGRAPHY



**OWNER'S NAME:** Mary Wiese

**OCCUPATION:** Owner, Salisbury House Bed & Breakfast

**CAR'S YEAR, MAKE AND MODEL:** 2002 Ford Thunderbird

**"I LOVE MY CAR BECAUSE . . ."** it replaces my 1955 aqua Thunderbird that I sold to pay for my wedding in 1956.

**CONTACT US:** E-mail a photo of you and your car (172-dpi, about 5 by 7 inches) plus all the basic information included above. Send it all to [mycar@seattlepi.com](mailto:mycar@seattlepi.com), and we'll pick one to publish every Friday. That lucky car owner will receive a nifty insulated P-I mug.

## COMING UP

### GETTING THERE

Want to know where the likely congestion will be on your commute next week?

The Transportation Trouble Spots map in Getting There tips commuters to road work throughout the region.

And P-I writers Kery Murakami and Larry Lange find the answers to reader questions about traffic and transportation.

You'll find it all every Monday in the P-I's Seattle section.