

# Harley Earl Trophy Sparkled at Henry Ford Museum

by Gerald Scott  
Editor  
U.S. Auto Scene

There was a big trophy with a GM car on top of it on display at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn last week – but the Ford Motorsports folks couldn't be happier about it.

That's because the trophy in question was the Harley Earl Trophy – given to the winner of the annual Daytona 500 race in February.

This year's winner, of course, was Ford driver Trevor Bayne. And the trophy happens to have an historic GM car on top of it, the Firebird created by Earl, the former GM design chief who was also the second commissioner of NASCAR.

The winner's trophy was on display amongst the Henry Ford Museum's motorsports-related car collection through March 28.

"It's safe to say that Trevor Bayne will always remember his 20th birthday because just one day after celebrating that milestone, he was behind the wheel of the legendary No. 21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford Fusion of the Wood brothers in the Daytona 500 – and won the race in just his second NASCAR Sprint Cup career start," the museum exhibit read.

"The unlikely victory by Bayne and the Wood Brothers – Ford's 600th victory in the Sprint Cup Series and the Woods' 98th as a race team – sent Bayne from unknown driver to national fame, with



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

The Daytona 500 winner's trophy is designed for and named after former GM Design chief Harley Earl, who created the Firebird series of 1950s race cars pictured above.

appearances on national television, stories in national newspapers and magazines and homecoming events in his hometown of Knoxville, Tenn.," it further read.

"While the Wood Brothers have had their share of Hall of Fame drivers, none has been as young as Bayne, who made his NASCAR Sprint Cup Series debut with the team last season in November's Lone Star 500 at Texas Motor Speedway, where he finished an impressive 17th."

It might be noted that Bayne himself visited Henry Ford Museum earlier in February, within two weeks of his victory, and he was mobbed by NASCAR fans and media.

It's still early in the NASCAR Sprint Cup season, of course, but perhaps all of this attention to Daytona bodes well for

Ford and its motorsports enterprises.

The Daytona trophy was positioned next to Henry Ford's 1901 "Sweepstakes" racer, so perhaps that's an extra omen that 2011 is going to be a very good year for Ford and its various race cars after all.

The Daytona winner's trophy is beautiful and Ford must've been proud that the most publicized race in motorsports turned out to be the Dearborn automaker's 600th NASCAR win as well.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

The 2011 Daytona 500 winner's trophy was on display amongst the Henry Ford Museum's motorsports collection last week at the front of the facility.

## 'Volt Women' Say Hybrid Appeals to Both Genders

by Christine Snyder  
Staff Reporter  
Tech Center News

During the darkest days at GM, the Chevrolet Volt became the beacon for brighter days.

Now, the "little car that could" is in showrooms and is preparing for a national rollout by the end of the year.

Some of the GM women involved in bringing the Volt to fruition participated in a web chat March 22 in honor of National Women's Month to discuss the Volt's national rollout and their opinions about the vehicle.

There are a thousand Volts on the roads today in selected markets and it will go "national" by the end of the year, beginning on the East and West coasts. By summer, the second-generation model, the 2012 Volt, will be for sale.

The four women – Cristi Landy, Volt's product marketing manager; Britta Gross, director of global energy systems and infrastructure; Teri Quigley, plant manager of Detroit-Hamtramck where the Volt is made; and Pamela Fletcher, the Volt chief powertrain engineer – are enthusiastic cheerleaders for the Volt, which they said has many qualities appealing to women, though it is perceived as a "man's" car.

"Most of our early buyers are males as they tend to be early technology adopters," said Landy.

Landy said while many of the car's attributes, such as its environmental friendliness and quietness, appeal to women, the car isn't being marketed specifically to either gender.

Gross said she currently drives a Volt that fits her life well.

"My favorite feature has to be the quietness of the vehicle," said Gross. "It's the only time of day I have to relax, when I'm driving my Volt."

Landy said the biggest marketing challenging is to communicate that the Volt can be the primary vehicle for most people.

"It is a practical solution for all types of consumers," said Landy. "We know that once people have a chance to drive the car and learn more, they love it. It's all about being able to commute gas-free and have no gas limitations."

While GM continues to educate the public, it is also putting a lot of time and effort ensuring that new Volt owners find the experience pleasant.

"A vehicle like the Volt requires a higher level of cus-

tomers service because it is a unique vehicle," said Landy. "We plan to offer this level of service as long as it's needed. Over time, consumers will become more familiar with the aspects of electric vehicles."

For example, the Volt's driving range, which GM sets as 25-50 miles per full charge, depends on the same variances as any conventional vehicle – technique, terrain and temperature.

"If you are an aggressive driver, you will get less range, whether on battery or gasoline," said Fletcher.

"A person commuting on flat terrain will use less energy than a person commuting in the mountains, and similarly, a person driving in hot or cold temperatures may utilize the electric A/C or electric heater, which will consume more energy than would otherwise be used for range."

The team also fielded questions about the challenges working in what has traditionally been considered men's fields such as automotive engineering and plant management.

"I really don't think there are challenges in engineering," said Gross.

"The challenge is getting women interested in engineering (to begin with). Some may see this as a 'dull' career and this couldn't be further from the truth. There are huge opportunities for girls and women and they are missing them by not considering an engineering career."

"The Volt is a great demonstration of the opportunities that exist for women," said Quigley, who has been in manufacturing roles at GM her entire career, the past four at Detroit-Hamtramck.

"It requires hard work just like any job, but the door is wide open for success."

## Reviewer Likes 'Lincoln' Book More Than Movie

By CHRISTY LEMIRE  
AP Movie Critic

When it comes to "The Lincoln Lawyer," the novel is still hot while the movie is . . . not.

It seems that the book and movie versions of "Lincoln" are finding different audiences as book clubs across the U.S. embrace the literary version of this unique story that features a Lincoln limousine as part of the backdrop.

And locally, the novel's author will be making an appearance at the Community Center in Birmingham in April.

The movie, however, is another matter entirely.

Matthew McConaughey stars in "The Lincoln Lawyer" as an attorney who drives around Los Angeles . . . in a Lincoln. It has nothing to do with the capital of Nebraska or the former president.

While you're watching it, though, you'll wish it did. Director Brad Furman's film, which John Romano wrote based on the Michael Connelly novel, has the slick, disposable feel of the sort of legal drama you could find any night of the week on primetime TV.

From the opening titles and

underdeveloped characters to the quick pacing and flat lighting, "The Lincoln Lawyer" seems insubstantial, recycled and forgettable – the movie simply isn't as well-developed as the book is.

Now, this may sound vaguely familiar to you. If so, please bear with us. McConaughey plays Mick Haller, a cocky, sleazy defense attorney who thinks he's got it all figured out. He woos the women – including his prosecutor ex-wife and the mother of his daughter, played by Marisa Tomei – banters comfortably with biker gangs and generally weasels his way out of every tricky situation.

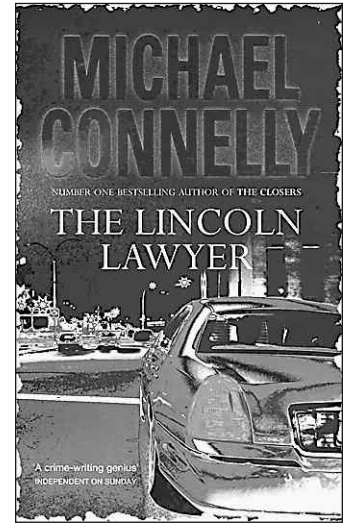
The swagger was far more charming when McConaughey played a lawyer 15 years ago in "A Time to Kill," which is still the best adaptation of a John Grisham novel. The main difference between this role and most others he has played since then is he manages to keep his shirt on, for the most part.

But, because this is a McConaughey movie, his character will have his comeuppance, and it comes in the form of a high-profile case. Beverly Hills real estate heir

Louis Roulet (Ryan Phillippe) is accused in the rape and attempted murder of a prostitute. His expensively dressed mother (Frances Fisher) feels comfortable that Mick is the right man to defend her son, and not her company's esteemed, longtime legal counsel.

Besides, Louis insists he's innocent, so it should be no problem. But this pretty boy is, naturally, more dangerous than he looks. Despite the many twists and turns and double-crosses, Mick actually ends up learning nothing and has no arc – he's just as unctuous at the end as he was in the beginning. The only time he appears to lose control is when he gets hammered at the local watering hole where everyone else gathers to get hammered – and those moments seem so incongruent with who he is, they make no sense.

Among the strong but woefully underused supporting cast are William H. Macy as Mick's best friend, a private investigator; Bryan Cranston as a homicide detective whose screen time looks suspiciously truncated; and Michael Pena as a former



The "Lincoln Lawyer" novel has been more popular than the recent movie.

client of Mick's whose case will become crucial later on. McConaughey and Phillippe have a decent back-and-forth in a couple of scenes – at least until Phillippe turns into a villainous cartoon character.

"The Lincoln Lawyer," a Lionsgate release, is rated R for some violence, adult situations and some rough language. Running time: 119 minutes. One-and-a-half stars out of four.

## Struggling U.S. Economy Now Deals with Inflation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) – Inflation spooked America in the early 1980s. It surged and kept rising until it topped 13 percent.

These days, inflation is much lower. Yet to many Americans, it feels worse now. And for a good reason: Their income has been even flatter than inflation.

Back in the '80s, the money people made typically more than made up for high inflation. In 1981, banks would pay nearly 16 percent on a six-month CD. And workers typically got pay raises to match their higher living costs.

No more. Over the 12 months that ended in February, consumer prices increased just 2.1 percent. Yet wages for many people have risen even less – if they're not actually frozen.

Social Security recipients have gone two straight years

with no increase in benefits. Money market rates? You need a magnifying glass to find them.

That's why even moderate inflation hurts more now. And it's why if food and gas prices lift inflation even slightly above current rates, consumer spending could weaken and slow the economy.

"It feels far more painful now than in the '80s," says Judy Bates, who lives near Birmingham, Alabama. "Money in the bank was growing like crazy because interest rates were high. My husband had a union job at a steel company and was getting cost-of-living raises and working overtime galore."

Bates, 58, makes her living writing and speaking about how people can stretch their dollars. Her husband, 61, is retired. They've paid off their mortgage and have no car

payments. But they're facing higher prices for food, gas, utilities, insurance and health care, while fetching measly returns on their savings.

"You want to weep," Bates says.

Consumer inflation did pick up in February, rising 0.5 percent, because of costlier food and gas. Still, looked at over the past 12 months, price increases have remained low. Problem is, these days any inflation tends to hurt.

Not that everyone has been squeezed the same. It depends on personal circumstances. Some families with low expenses or generous pay increases have been little affected.

Others who are heavy users of items whose prices have jumped – tuition, medical care, gasoline – have been hurt badly. But almost everyone is being pinched because

nationally, income has stagnated.

The median U.S. inflation-adjusted household income – wages and investment income – fell to \$49,777 in 2009, the most recent year for which figures are available, the Census Bureau says. That was 0.7 percent less than in 2008.

Incomes probably dipped last year to \$49,650, estimates Lynn Reaser, chief economist at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego and a board member of the National Association for Business Economics.

That would mark a 0.3 percent drop from 2009. And incomes are likely to fall again this year – to \$49,300, she says her studies show.

Significant pay raises are rare during periods of high unemployment because workers have little bargaining power to demand them.



LTU transportation design student Matthew Eash used a Lincoln MKR concept car to develop his proposed wheel design as part of the overall Steel Wheels competition.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

## Ford Designers Judge 'Steel Wheels' Contest

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character than today's flat blanks. Based on a paper model he designed as a solution on how to simulate folding steel, the wheel features high-strength stainless steel to achieve a lightweight design.

The Steel Wheels design competition highlighted the significant gains steel wheels are achieving with automakers through innovative styling, higher profit margins, lower warranty costs, com-

petitive weight and superior durability.

The Steel Market Development Institute (SMDI), a business unit of the American Iron and Steel Institute, grows and maintains the use of steel through strategies that promote cost-effective solutions in the automotive, construction and container markets, as well as for new-growth opportunities in emerging steel markets.

LTU design professor Keith Nagara praised the high level of design concepts at hand.