

BLT Guys History

by Tom Endy

The creation of the BLT Guys organization began in 2017 when Bryan Thompson and myself were attending the San Diego swap meet. While there we ran into Rudy Perez. I had known Rudy for years. He and his wife had owned and operated Meets Antique Auto Parts, a Model A supply company.

Rudy told us about a couple who had recently bought a Model A Victoria they intended to drive cross country. The project would later result in a published book. The couple knew nothing about Model A's and did not belong to a Model A club. They had been told they should have a Mitchell overdrive installed in the Victoria if they were going to drive it cross country. They were referred to a commercial shop in San Diego that quoted a huge price and a long lead time. Rudy asked if we could do the install since the couple lived in Rossmoor, only a few miles from where I live. I told Rudy we could do the install and have them call me.

Later that day I received a call from Diane Gaughen. She and her husband Gerald had recently purchased the Victoria in Pasadena. Diane was a retired high school principal and their plan was to drive the car from Grandville, Michigan to Los Angeles. Diane's mother and grand father had made the trip in 1934 driving a Model A Ford and her mother had kept a detailed journal of the trip. She had documented everywhere they stopped to eat, gas up, and stay overnight. The journal had survived the years and the project was to repeat the trip. That being the case, husband Gerald insisted it had to be done in a Model A Ford, so they bought the Victoria.

Bryan and I, along with Larry McKinney had done numerous Mitchell overdrive installs. We had never charged any one for it. It was always for friends and fellow club members. Diane insisted that we be paid for the installation. We agreed to take on the job, but not for the price they had been quoted. It was way too much money. I thought \$500 was more reasonable, and we would donate the money to the Model A Youth Restoration Award program, and we would do the job in one day. I told Diane to order the overdrive from Mitchell and have it delivered to my house. I gave her the contact information and told her to make sure to order one for a Victoria. As soon as the overdrive arrived we would schedule the install date.

When we first saw the Victoria in July 2017, we noticed it was a beautifully restored car, but it had some mechanical issues that needed attention. We recommended the car be taken to Jim Nichols Model A shop in Costa Mesa after the overdrive was installed.

Jim did a brake job on the car, installed a new water pump, and a Snyder high compression head. I also recommended that the Gaughens carry a spare distributor with them, along with the MAFCA national roster. They agreed, and I supplied them with a restored distributor. Both items proved their worth during the trip.

On installation day Bryan, Larry, and myself installed the overdrive in about five hours. Thus we became known as the BLT Guys (Bryan-Larry-Tom). It took three years for word to get around the Model A kingdom by word-of-mouth that there was an organization known as the BLT Guys that can install a Mitchell overdrive in one day for a reasonable fee, and with the money being donated to the Model A Youth Restoration Award program.

In 2020 the install jobs began coming out of the woodwork. By October 2023 we had done 20 installs, with some including a Mitchell sync transmission, and we had raised a total of \$11,700 for the Model A Youth Restoration Award program.

The owner of each car received the tax credit since the organization is a 501 (c) 3. The BLT Guys organization has grown from the original three guys to as many as 20 members from several local clubs that have participated at the install events at various times. The installs are usually conducted on a Saturday at my house in Westminster, beginning at 9 AM and is usually finished by 2 PM. The owner of the car is asked to bring two dozen donuts and to write a check directly to the Model A Youth Restoration Award program, for which they receive a tax receipt. The BLT Guys provide the coffee and cold drinks.

BLT Mitchell Install Record

Gerald Gaughen

Los Alamitos

Install date July 2017

1931 Victoria



Jim Mikeloff

Seal Beach

Install date 8-1-20

1929 speedster



Gene Barbee

Huntington Beach

Install date 9-7-20

1932 V8 roadster



Gary Larson

Diamond Bar

Install date 9-19-20

1929 roadster



BLT Mitchell Install Record

Jeff Headley

Carson City, Nevada
Install date 3-25-23
1928 Tudor



Gary Larson

Diamond Bar
Install date 2-20-21
1930 huckster



Eric Engle

install date 10-17-20
Fountain Valley
1931 coupe



Mike Edmonson

Westminster
Install date 4-30-22
1928 sedan



Mark Lackey

install date
Santa Ana
1930 coupe



Perry Wilson

Anaheim
Install date 5-23-22
1931 roadster



Steve Miller

Huntington Beach
1931 coupe
Install date 4-18-21



Steve Pavich

Fountain Valley
Install date 12-14-22
1931 coupe



Josh Ferguson

Temecula
Install date 9-18-21
1931 pick-up



Ben Stone

Huntington Beach
Install date 12-28-22
1930 Tudor



Mark Hooper

Santa Clarita
Install date 1-15-22
1930 roaster



Dan Paige

Altadena, CA
Install Date 9-23-23
1929 Phaeton



Tony Lovejoy

Huntington Beach
Install date 1-15-22
1928 sedan



Larry

Tujunga, CA
Install Date 10-21-23
1929 coupe



Steve Pavich

Fountain Valley
Install date 4-30-22
31 sedan

David Van Elgort

Canyon Country, CA
Install Date 5-6-23
1928 Sports Coupe

