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Model T Ride Drives Centenarian's Surprise

By Cathy Dausman



Centenarian Saul Bashin, left, gets a birthday ride from BAHCC's Don Azevedo in his 1914 brass-era Model T Ford. Photo Cathy Dausman

Every step of the way the man was hands-on and self-taught. Even today, although hard of hearing, Saul Bashin remains "bright and connected," said his son.

"We've been thinking about this [birthday celebration] for 100 years," joked Bryan Bashin, who contacted local members of the Bay Area Horseless Carriage Club to ask if they could supply Model T cars and surprise his father. BAHCC club members arrived in style. Don Azevedo showed up in a 1914 Model T Ford, Orinda's Rich Green in a 1914 Model T Ford, Bill Cassiday and Bill Austen drove 1915 Model T Fords, Jon Alff had a 1913 Buick and Norman Schwartz of Lafayette drove a 1925 Model T Speedster.

There was one Ford product holdout: Whitney and Diane Haist, who came in costume, drove a 1926 Dodge Brothers. "We liked the idea, [of surprising Bashin]," said Haist. BAHCC plans to invite Bashin along on a club tour as well as to be their guest speaker at an upcoming meeting.

"We enjoy sharing our cars with people who know them," Haist said.

As for 100-year-old Saul Bashin, being around working cars that are as old as he is lit a certain spark in his eyes. "Of all the passions [my dad has had], the enduring one has been cars," Bryan Bashin said.

When Saul Bashin turned 100 Feb. 20, his life had come full circle, and what a ride it has been. The newly minted centenarian was back in the seat of a Ford Model T, much like the one he first learned to drive at age 12 in 1928. But the story gets better, because before Bashin drove his original Model T, he assembled it from spare auto parts lying in a bundle he spied at the side of a barn.

Bashin's son, Bryan, says his father paid \$12 for the parts near his Los Angeles home. He loaded them into a little red wagon, hauled them home and built a Model T. The elder Bashin was one of five children, and "a self-taught, scrappy young kid," said his son. He was born in New York; the family moved to LA in the early 1920s. At 19, Bashin moved to Detroit to soak up automotive knowledge. He worked in a defense plant during World War II where he learned about drafting, aviation, and electromagnetic devices. Eventually he designed solar powered systems for satellites.



Family members gather in front of a group of 100-year-old cars. From left: Michael (family friend), Bryan Bashin, centenarian Saul Bashin, Brendan Bashin-Sullivan, Lauren Bashin-Sullivan, Shari Bashin-Sullivan and Michelle Bashin. Photos Cathy Dausman



The button on Bashin's lapel, given to him by BAHCC, says: "I rode in a horseless carriage."

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