

THE CAR CLUB



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Keep On Truckin'



Antique and classic car restorations are a testament to a much simpler time. Yes, there was a time when we didn't care if someone deleted us as a friend on Facebook, or if we didn't win a bid on Ebay. Sock-hops, milk shakes and drive-in movies were all the rage in the late 1950s, and this month's featured **City Employee, Jon Billesbach**, lived through many milk shakes and drive-in movies. He cruised Van Nuys Boulevard in the late '50s and early '60s as well as past the Bellflower Clock, and like many people he had to sell his prized truck in which he made those many memories. While he regretted selling that prized possession, he made a promise to himself that one day he would have that same truck in which to sit and enjoy another shake.

Jon, a Retired DWP District Superintendent, was a car guy before he acquired his driver's license. As soon as he did get that plastic card of freedom for American teenagers, he plopped down the money he made from working at a feed store in Sun Valley on a silver 1956 Ford F100. Tinkering with it in his parent's garage after school and work, Jon made it his own and enjoyed showing it off wherever he went. After graduating, he was enlisted in the Service, and the keys were tossed to his brother, who got to enjoy all of Jon's hard work. The 272 Y-block was getting tired a few years later when Jon received a phone

call from his brother, telling him that someone offered to buy the truck for twice what it was worth. Jon told him to sell it but regretted it as soon as he hung up the phone.

The 1956 Ford F100 is the best-looking truck Ford ever made. The 1953, '54, and '55 models are similar but don't have the perfection of their younger brother. With its cab leaning slightly forward, straight wind wings, a new front grille, a wrap-around windshield and, for an extra \$16, a wrap-around rear window, the 1956 Ford embodied great and untouchable truck styling other companies couldn't compete with. Of course, the crazy kids in Southern California garages like Jon's made it look even better.

A promise is a promise, and in 1990 Jon found a running '56 that he could not walk away from, so he bought it. After tooting around with it for a while and making a few alterations (the 289 Ford motor and transmission had about had it), Jon thought it was about time to make it more like his old '56. After pulling the motor and transmission out of the truck, he caught wind of a fuel-injected 5.0 HO motor out of a 1993 Mustang for sale and snatched it up along with the four-speed overdrive transmission. Before he could put that in, though, he got rid of that old rickety stock suspension and replaced it with an independent front suspension with disc brakes.

While he was at it, the ride height was altered in front (lowered six inches), and air shocks were placed in the rear so he could adjust the height. A posi rear end keeps the rear tires spinning, and the tilt steering column keeps Jon grinning.

The body panels were next on the agenda. The rear fenders were widened to accommodate the wide rims and tires, and, after hours of sanding and priming, the truck came out of the spray booth with a gleaming silver paint job just like his original truck. A black vinyl bed cover that matched his original was also installed, covering the custom 40-gallon stainless steel gas tank in the bed.

The only thing left to tackle was the interior. The stock bench seat was left in place but was hooked up to a Granada power seat track to adjust to driver and passenger preferences. Black cloth and black carpet wrap the rest of the interior body panels. The truck was being driven so much especially during summer months that Jon decided to install air conditioning to keep from sweating all over the interior.

I am glad Jon kept a promise to build another '56, and he can be seen re-living 1958 on any given Friday night at Bob's Big Boy in Toluca Lake. If you can't find him there, he might be screaming off into the sunset with more than 200 horses under the hood and a milkshake in hand.



PROUD OF
YOUR WHEELS?
SEND IN
A PHOTO!

Send in a photo of you and your car, and we might publish it!

Send us your information, too – name, title and City department, a phone number (we won't print it) and a paragraph or two about why you love your car, what kind of car and year it is, and maybe some fun details of how you got it, how you restored it, etc. Send it all to: talkback@cityemployeesclub.com



Newsbriefs

BRADLEY TERMINAL IMPROVEMENTS:

The Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners took a significant step in late October toward the modernization of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) by awarding two contracts totaling \$1.26 billion to reconfigure the Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT). The Bradley West Project, as it is known, is considered to be the biggest public works project in the City's history and is expected to create 4,000 construction-related jobs during the four-year project schedule.

Walsh Austin Joint Venture, Los Angeles, was awarded two contracts. One contract amends an existing contract to include construction services for "Bradley West Gates Project," which includes nine new boarding gates on the terminal's west side to supplement existing gates on the terminal's east side; dual passenger loading bridges; concourses with larger passenger lounges/holdrooms; aircraft tarmac areas and associated structures; and aircraft support equipment to accommodate new-generation aircraft including the Airbus A380 and the Boeing B787. The new boarding gates are scheduled for completion in 2012.

The second contract for "Bradley West Core Improvements" covers upgrades to the Federal Inspection Service/Customs and Border Protection facilities; addition of secured corridors between Terminals 3 and 4 and the Bradley Terminal, so passengers with connecting flights do not have to exit the terminals and go through security screening again; and more than 1.25 million square feet for food/beverage and retail concessions and other passenger amenities located beyond passenger security screening. The core improvements are scheduled for completion in spring 2013.

Funds for the Bradley West projects will come from LAX's operating revenues, capital improvement program funds, fees from airlines, passenger facilities charges and airport revenue bond proceeds.

Airports Executive Director Gina Marie Lindsey said, "The action by the Board is a cornerstone of the work to build international facilities worthy of the LAX name. A world of international travelers and the airlines that serve them have now come a giant step closer to the delivery of one of America's premier international gateways."



The Bradley West Project (rendering).

Walsh Austin Joint Venture was awarded a contract earlier this year for construction manager at risk, pre-construction services for the Bradley West Project. Pre-construction services included risk assessment, construction phasing, cost and budget estimating, and mitigation recommendations.

The Bradley West Project is one element of the overall LAX Master Plan approved by the City Council in December 2004. In addition to providing a substantial number of construction employment opportunities, it is expected to also provide direct and secondary regional economic benefits, including the need for construction goods and services associated with a large capital improvement project.

The contract awards are contingent upon approval by the Los Angeles City Council.

The Tom Bradley International Terminal is LAX's primary facility serving international travelers, with nearly 35 airlines operating in the terminal today. Since its opening in 1984, hundreds of millions of international travelers have passed through the Bradley Terminal.

Information: www.lawa.org