

Clark

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He didn't have enough cash to pay the entire bill. He asked Jerry to hold the gun as collateral until he could pay what he owed.

Jerry agreed. He placed the pistol in a drawer.

Quite some time later — three or so years, as Schuh recalls the story — the truck driver walked in. No preparatory phone call or letter.

Jerry, acting as though the previous transaction had happened just last week, retrieved the pistol from the drawer — where it had been sitting ever since — and exchanged the gun for the cash.

Hard to bid farewell

As she watches the snowflakes fall, Donna ponders all the years and decades that have passed, all the cars that have rolled into the shop and rolled out later, engine running smoothly again.

All the grease-stained white jackets, each bearing its owner's name in red thread over the right breast pocket.

She knew it had to end.

And although she much prefers that Clark Auto Electric, which is closing in on the century mark, continues, she laments the loss.

"It'll never be run the way it was," she said. "No one's interested in working that hard."

No one but Jerry will ever be able to navigate the dark aisles, shelves and bins laden with obscure parts whose purpose is known only to a few, and know where to find just what he needs to get an engine going, an engine that might have been assembled before World War II.

"He knew where everything was," Donna said.

Schuh also talked about the irreplaceable knowledge that Jerry possesses.

"It's just not going to be the same," Schuh said. "We're going to miss Jerry. A lot of people are."



Donna Goodwin in the office on April 14, 2022, at Clark Auto Electric, the business she and her husband, Jerry, have owned since 1972.

"Jerry couldn't run the business any longer. I couldn't run it. It took a lot of thought, though, to finally end it. It's hard."

— Donna Goodwin

Donna will miss her office, her ledger books kept by hand, an accounting anachronism in an era of spreadsheets and smartphones.

Everything about Clark Auto Electric has the palpable feeling of a bygone era, when cars were not as reliable as they are today and a good mechanic, a man like Jerry Goodwin, was much sought after, so vital were his skills.

The cash register is a massive thing of steel and wood. Its lever makes a satisfying thunk, the antithesis of the plasticky clicking of its modern equivalent.

Transactions are handled without the aid of a single mega-

byte or silicon chip.

It's rather dim inside the shop. The air bears the inimitable aroma of a place where internal combustion engines are worked on, as if the walls and the concrete floor have absorbed the scents of oil and dielectric grease and the tinge of ozone from 12-volt batteries.

Donna will miss the work that was so much a part of the life that she and Jerry built over 66 years of marriage.

"Jerry couldn't run the business any longer," she said. "I couldn't run it. It took a lot of thought, though, to finally end it."

She glances again at the win-



A vintage light switch at Clark Auto Electric advertises Champion spark plugs.

dow, as if to conjure some lingering memory from the wintry sky.

"It's hard."

Well

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City officials had hoped to start tapping the new well this spring. But Owen said supply chain issues have prevented the city's contractor, General Contractor Inc. of La Grande, from building the well house and installing needed equipment.

"Getting supplies these days is as challenging as ever," Owen

said. "A lot of this is dependent on some supply chain issues we're having with the control panel boards, things like that. So, that's my goal; is to have a new well by fall, an operational well."

Drilling the well, which is 654 feet deep, cost the city about \$677,000.

The second phase, which is underway and includes the well house and equipment needed to operate the well, will cost about \$2 million.

Owen said the goal is for the well to produce about 1,500 gallons per minute, approximately 2.16 million gallons per day.

The city will use the well both during the summer, when water demand peaks but the volume from the streams and springs in the city's watershed drops. The well will also be beneficial in some years during spring, when rapidly melting snow in the watershed, which is in the Elkhorn Mountains west of town,

can temporarily cloud streams with silt.

The new well is one of the major projects that prompted the City Council to boost water rates by 10% in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The new well is the city's second.

The other well, which the city drilled in 1977 near its water treatment plant and reservoir on the hill near Reservoir Road, is about 800 feet deep.

Camping

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properties, including within 150 of any school, preschool or childcare center, or at the Baker Heritage Museum at 2480 Grove St., the Baker County Courthouse, Sam-O Swim Center, the YMCA gym on Church Street and the YMCA Fitness Center on Pocahontas Road.

The ordinance also states that if someone is living in a vehicle, it must be moved at least every 24 hours and for at least the distance of a city block.

"Really what we're doing, we're looking for solutions to work with homeless issues that regularly arise in our community," Duby told councilors.

The police chief said last summer that he intended to bring an ordinance to councilors to consider.

He was prompted by a bill that the Oregon Legislature passed earlier in 2021 and that Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed into law on June 23.

The law — introduced as House Bill 3115 and passed by the Democratic majorities in both the state House and Senate — is based on a 2019 federal court ruling in a Boise case that in effect prohibited cities and counties from making it illegal for people to sleep outdoors in public spaces if the jurisdiction doesn't provide indoor alternatives.

Baker County's two state legislators, Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, and Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, both voted against the bill.

The new Oregon law states that cities or counties which have ordinances that regulate "the acts of sitting, lying, sleeping or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property that is open to the public must be objectively reasonable as to time, place and manner with regards to persons experiencing homelessness."

Baker City does not have such an ordinance now, but Duby said ordinance 3383 would serve that purpose.

The state law also states that "A person experiencing homelessness may bring suit for injunctive or declaratory relief to challenge the objective reasonableness of a city or county law."

The law states that "reasonableness shall be determined based on the totality of the circumstances, including, but not limited to, the impact of the law on persons experiencing homelessness."

Duby said that once House Bill 3115 passed, he looked at what other cities had done, finding that Coos Bay and North Bend had come up with an ordinance similar to Baker City's proposed ordinance 3383.

"We feel like House Bill 3115, while offering compassion and support to those experiencing homelessness, can fail sometimes to protect both the citizens of our community and the very homelessness the law is designed to protect," Duby told councilors Tuesday.

Duby said the proposed Baker City ordinance would prevent camping on public property in residential zones, while it would be allowed, with time restrictions, on public property in the general-commercial, general industrial and light industrial zones.

The time restriction states that people can't camp on public property between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

He emphasized that the ordinance applies to public property; people are not allowed to camp on someone else's private property regardless of the zone.

"I feel like we're being reasonable and we're allowing space," Duby said.



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