

Peterson's legacy is preserved

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Randall talking with museum guests. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

in the museum is documented, measured, weighed and logged in a computer. She credited Clark with most of that, as well as the exhibit designs. "Cherrie really has an eye for it."

Other exhibits include everything from a bunkhouse to the back room at the Frog Pond Saloon to a Gilliam & Bisbee display.

Clark said Les Paustian made the Gilliam and Bisbee sign, and he and wife Jan helped arranged that exhibit. At the Balsiger family parlor display, Fishburn pointed out a vintage dress and spinning wheel donated by her family.

The exhibit honoring the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Court recently got an update, as well, and Clark said Hal and Rita Bergstrom helped with that, taking the time to rearrange all the family brands.

Clark mourns that the museum is, for many, an undiscovered gem.

"It's amazing when you ask people who have lived here their whole lives who have never been here," she said. "It's sad."

Despite space constraints, F.A.R.M. Foundation members decided a display to honor Peterson's Jewelers was worth the room.

"One family having run the same business for almost 94 years," said Clark. "It's kind of unheard of in this day and age."

Clark started by taping out the floor of the area to get an idea of where things would go. Peterson's stepson, Hal Bergstrom, made shelves for the exhibit. Once the museum received the display cases and work counter from the jewelry store, Clark said there was a lot of "pushing and shoving and getting things to fit."

"We've spent many, many, many hours down here putting things together," added Fishburn.

The museum volunteers put thought into every inch of the display. The display cases and work desk are from the jewelry store and hold the Peterson family's watch and jewelry tools—those they have room for.

One of the cases is the one in which Peterson displayed piggy banks and children's jewelry, and many of the items in the display are from the store. The other display case used to hold wedding rings and other bridal paraphernalia. Now, it shows off part of the extensive collection of tools the family used over the years.

Trying to get every detail right, they even tried to find the wrapped cinnamon bears Peterson always had in a bowl on his counter. However, the closest they could come is wrapped cinnamon candies. Those sit near the last printing of the annual Peterson's Jewelers calendar. Just as they were in his store, those calendars are free for the taking until they're gone.

At the grand opening, Randall Peterson pored



Randall Peterson pores over the display of tools from his family's jewelry store. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo



Randall Peterson and former Peterson employee Gail Arbogast of Heppner discuss the exhibit at the open house last week. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo



A display in the Randall Peterson exhibit.



Eric Imes shows Peterson a Peterson's Jewelers matchbook he found in the wall of his house.

-Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

over the display case and greeted old friends who stopped to chat, to ask about the tools or to reminisce over old times.

The morning included several warm greetings, as well as a few surprises. Lexington man Eric Imes stopped by to show Peterson a Peterson's Jewelers matchbook he had found in the wall of his house while remodeling.

Another surprise visitor was Gayle Arbogast, who worked for Randall Peterson for many years.

"I miss the interaction with people in Randall's store," said Arbogast.

She said the years she worked there were full of stories, not only from people who went in to buy jewelry, but also from people who simply stopped by

to talk to Peterson. After posing for a picture with her former employer, she noted that, even then, he was dressed for the occasion.

"He never came to work without a suit and tie," said Arbogast. "I'm glad he had that work ethic that he had."

As for the man himself, Peterson seemed well pleased with the exhibit, which even includes a mannequin of him sitting at the work desk. He said his favorite part is the microscope.

"Great. Great," said Peterson of the display. "I couldn't improve on it. I had no idea how they were going to arrange everything."

"It's fun to walk by and look at those tools again."

Lexington city council meeting

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County Public Transit/The Loop fixed route bus stop.

The Holly Rebekah Lodge on Main and C Street is also hoping to pursue cleanup and development of its building; a Holly Rebekah member told the Gazette-Times they would like to write a grant to make the front of that building a usable storefront space.

All of those developments are good, but they are also leading the town council to consider other concerns, such as the need for more and safer parking, and the safety of pedestrians and transit riders.

The town had applied for a TGM grant in 2022 but, although the project was well received, the town did not receive a grant. Lexington councilors are hopeful that creating community engagement now will put the town in a better position for the next round of funding.

Imes, the project manager for the TGM project, has been working closely with individuals from the Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) to develop the project draft. Once the project team and the state have finalized it, the council will need to approve it to move forward with the project.

"Really, they're going to be doing the heavy lifting," said Imes of the state. Ferguson will assist with public notices and getting information out, and the town's job is to facilitate the discussion.

Ferguson also questioned how to let ODOT know about the proposed work to head off potential conflicts. ODOT is currently installing and replacing ADA ramps throughout the state, including in Lexington, and there is concern about the ADA ramps going in prematurely and not fitting in with the town's current plans.

The council also heard from Ferguson regarding findings from a Feb. 21 NHMP meeting hosted in Lexington. The natural hazard mitigation plan is for all of South Morrow County, so stakeholders from the county and cities are involved, as well as other agencies. Ferguson reported that the last meeting concerned the natural hazard analysis data collected from the state.

At the meeting, the participants looked at data

for disasters ranging from freezing fog to volcanic eruptions. New to the list this year was dam safety. Each of the events was scored and given a low, medium or high threat level. They will later be ranked.

In the 2016 NHMP, drought ranked first as a concern for Morrow County, followed by winter storms and windstorms. Flood and wildfire followed respectively.

While this year's list hasn't been ranked, wildfire, air quality (including inversion and wildfire smoke), and extreme temperatures all received high marks as concerns. Since dam safety was new to the list, there was not enough data to score it.

Ferguson mentioned that she appreciated the involvement of Heppner Fire Chief Steve Rhea at the meeting, because he brought a lot of information with him.

"He brought binders of documents and just years of history of all of the actual events and recordings and calls of things that have happened in South County, pretty much," said Ferguson. "And it was a specific meeting for South County, so it was great. It was perfect timing for him to join in and have all that information."

In other business, the town council passed a resolution changing the timing of the late fee on water payments. In the past, a late fee of \$25 has been charged on all accounts one day overdue. The new resolution states that the \$25 late fee will be charged once an account is 30 days overdue.

The council also authorized Lexington Assistant Fire Chief to hold and sign for a second fire department credit card. Lexington Fire Chief Charlie Sumner holds the other credit card.

Lexington Mayor Juli Kennedy reported that plans for the May Day celebration are "moving right along."

Ferguson also mentioned that she would like to take some May Day flyers with her to an Eastern Oregon Stakeholder Meeting March 21 in Condon. The meeting included Travel Oregon CEO Todd Davidson and Lawrence PR, Travel Oregon's marketing firm.

"I thought it would be a great time to have May Day flyers," said Ferguson.

The council also discussed the need to distribute more flyers throughout the

community, as well as parade forms.

Lexington Maintenance Director Keith Hess told the council he got both the Little Free Library and the bike rack installed by the park area behind town hall. The library box already has some books in it. He also said he was able to locate the water valve at the end of C St. and needs to dig down and see if it has asbestos.



In her town recorder report, Ferguson said one of Gov. Kotek's priorities is childcare, and Morrow County Commission Chair David Sykes and State Rep. Greg Smith would like to receive the community's childcare concerns. Ferguson said she replied to Morrow County Planner Tamra Mabbott's email request for addressing day care priorities since she has current experiences dealing with that issue.

"I just basically highlighted the Fridays," said Ferguson. "When I first started working here, the day care wasn't available and open for all of Friday, and they don't even offer Fridays. I'm sure that's affecting a lot of people in this community."

She also said she obtained information about Lexington Cemetery from Myrna Sieler because she had a few requests for cemetery information. Sieler also told her they are working on an updated map to indicate where people are buried, but it has been a difficult task due to lack of proper recordkeeping in the past. Ferguson asked for a copy of the map when it is completed because she has had people visit town hall asking for one.



Ferguson reported that she had not seen the semi-truck parked on Main Street since she received a complaint, so had not been able to issue a letter to the owner, but if she spotted the truck creating a safety hazard, she would immediately issue the letter. The issue was also raised of the camper trailer that is sometimes parked in front of the old store on Main St. and obstructs the view on that corner.

Finally, Ferguson also said she had attended Bingo at Holly Rebekah Lodge. She reported a good turnout, and told the council that the proceeds from the monthly event would go toward rejuvenating the lodge.





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