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## PRESSES &gt; CONT'D

beloved presses. Seat has been fixing Linotype, Intertype, Ludlow, Chandler and Price, and others for half a century. He travels around the country fixing presses – those housed in museums, basements, and warehouses, like the Daggses' in Ackley. Jim and Dave were good friends, connected by a mutual respect and love for the old machines.

To Endress' good fortune, Seat was willing to carve out time for a visit to Ackley on a Sunday afternoon.

"Dave is a genius when it comes to this equipment. I think Jim would agree with that statement," Endress said.

"And then Pat said, 'You've got to meet Ron Hylton, too,'" Endress recalled.

Hylton lives in Washington state. His reputation as an incredible operator of the presses precedes him. A friend of Jim's, he'd spent a week each year at the Ackley location where the pair would run the presses, bringing them to life through the operation they were originally de-

signed for.

"I can set type," Hylton said. His remark echoing the modesty of the rest of the group of experts – Endress, Sears, Fay, Hylton, and another expert in his own right, Gary Frost. The group gathered last week to "tune-up" the massive collection of Jim's beloved presses, getting them operational after a year of sitting idle.

The experience was one none of the men will forget.

One of their many successes during the week was an Intertype G-4-2, a 42-pica hot metal model – one of only a few remaining in the country. Seat explains that the "government printing outfit" has one and there may be "a couple more," making the one in the collection very unique.

"We've been making great progress with each of the machines here," explained Endress. "They're all unique in what they can and cannot do. It's been an amazing week in terms of what we've managed to accomplish."

Part of the week was



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**Endress, Hylton, and Seat enjoy a laugh as Endress works at the one of the many presses he purchased. The experience of spending an entire week in the building with experts from across the country was one that created new and lasting friendships with good laughs and good fun mixed in with the hard work.**

spent teaching Endress to run the presses that he didn't have prior experience with.

"Dave and I aren't going to be here, but Jay is a quick learner. He knew the basics and we're just fine-tuning what he already knows," said Hylton. He adds that he and Seat are a good team: "I break 'em and he fixes 'em!"

Amidst the banter, the conversation turned to the machines themselves: how each has its own personality and feel, how they could tell which press Jim had running

most – a black Intertype C4 – which presses didn't get used as much, and how their preservation depends on running them.

"I think Jim and that black one grew up together," said Seat. "He had it for a long time. He knew its idiosyncrasies and it ran great."

### Only one regret

While Endress regrets he didn't know Jim Daggs personally, he most certainly knew of Jim and his ongoing love of presses and printing. Twenty-one years ago,

Endress took part in an event Daggs hosted in his warehouse located behind Ackley Publishing.

"I drove over to it and will never forget walking in here and seeing all the linecasting machines. I was quite impressed," Endress said.

Like Daggs, Endress' passion for printing – particularly for letter press printing – began early when his mother got him a job at the local newspaper. There, he was allowed to run the hand-fed presses and a deep passion for the art was fostered.

Endress began collecting presses in the 1980s and '90s.

During the beginning of his adventure, Endress had thought that most of the equipment was long gone. Instead, he discovered there were still pieces to be found, adding what he could to his own collection over the years. He moved to Illinois where he ran the local newspaper as his collection continued to grow to the point that he needed a building to house them all in.

"I had them, and I knew how to run them," said Endress. "What I didn't know was how to fix them. After this week, I know more about that."

### The present

Interruptions by community members – those who were curious about what would happen to the former mayor's impressive collection of presses, and those who'd heard the new owner and his friends were working in the warehouse – were a constant line through the door.

Their visits did slow

down the process, but each of the men enjoy nothing more than sharing their love of the interline presses with others who showed interest.

### The future

Endress says that while he doesn't have a concrete plan for the future, he does acknowledge the collection's historical value and hopes to preserve it. Someday, perhaps down the road a way, the location might be considered a working museum.

He plans to spend more time in the building.

"Right now, I'm honored to be the caretaker," Endress said. "In some vein, this all needs to continue on beyond me – perhaps through a trust or a foundation. I did feel a need to step up, to provide some continuity."

### Giving Tribute

While Jim's death from COVID-19 left his beloved presses idle, Endress and his group of friends are doing everything in their power to keep them in their glory.

"Jim was known across the country. People in the craft may not have known him on a personal level, there is tremendous respect for his work here," Hylton said. "I both admired him and have the greatest respect for his life here in the back shop."

"He was a class act," Seat added.

The conversation continued, each man sharing a story of Daggs and his impact on the profession and the presses that surrounded them, as well as on their own lives.

"I wish I would have known him," Endress said. "It sounds like what you saw was what you got." ●

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