

## Historic store to close

By Whitney Helm [whelm@beloitdailynews.com](mailto:whelm@beloitdailynews.com) | Posted: Friday, February 20, 2015 4:00 pm

Standing in the half empty jewelry store, Brill Jewelers owner Andrea Kempton is quiet. She moves to the other end of the counter when a customer comes in for an adjustment for a watch.

“I’m sad to see you’re closing,” the customer said.

“Me too,” replied Kempton.

Kempton co-owns Brill Jewelers with Tony Grover. The two took over the shop from former owner Kim S. Beals after he retired in 2012.

Kempton was a customer of Beals prior to buying the store.

“I learned about jewelry and the different parts and pieces,” Kempton said. “Most people don’t know about what they have in terms of jewelry.”

She said she’s learned about watches, jewelry and appraising during her time at the store. Her favorite part was building a piece of jewelry from scratch, which included helping the customer design the piece.

Kempton cited personal reasons for the store’s closure and is unsure of what she will do next.

“I have no idea what I want to be when I grow up,” Kempton said.

Brill Jewelers has a long history in Beloit. The current store location is at 319 State St. in downtown Beloit, but the store has been located in various places throughout the city.

In a 2013 interview, Wesley Brill, a historian of the family, said Henry Brill worked for a jeweler, John Gaard, starting when he was just a lad of 16 years old. When Henry Brill was 22, he joined with John Tier, who was from Appleton, to start their own business.

In 1923, Brill and Stier went their separate ways and Brill opened his own jewelry store. However, Henry Brill’s son, Michael Brill, who had already started working at the Brill and Stier Jewelry Store, continued to work for John Stier.

Brill’s store was once located at 316 State St., where Austin’s Barber Shop currently stands.



### Closing up shop

Co-owner of Brill Jewelers Andrea Kempton stands in the store, packing up displays to be sold at Beloit Auction Service and helping her final customers before the store closes on Feb. 27.

Brill Jewelers had several locations in downtown Beloit and several owners over the years, but the Brill name was retained. In 1983, the business was sold to Jack Marco and in 2000, Kim Beals was the proprietor of Brill Jewelers.

“It’s sad to see a part of Beloit history close,” Kempton said.

The store will be closed on Feb. 27.