

# Rising prices alter picture for photography...

By Mary Fastenau

The picture of the photography industry has changed because of the rising cost of silver used in the production of film and the paper used to print photos.

For example, Eastman Kodak will increase its prices 30 to 50 percent beginning Jan. 26.

These increases were based on silver at \$35 an ounce, although the price has reached a peak of \$49.50, according to Ralph Harman, owner of Harman's Camera Center, 244 N. 13th St. In 1978, silver prices were stable at about \$5.80 an ounce, he said.

Harman said price increases are greater for black and white film than for color because there is a higher silver content in black and white film.

Word of the price increase caused some people to buy extra supplies. Harman said one customer borrowed \$400 from the bank to buy photography supplies before the prices rose.

## Never-ending problem

Rising costs are part of a "never-ending problem" for photography classes at UNL, a journalism photography professor said.

George Tuck said the basic supply kit for the introductory photography class was \$52 at the beginning of the semester, but he estimated the price might rise to \$75. Fortunately, he added, most of the students from this semester already have purchased their supplies.

Tuck said he fears the price increases may make it difficult to maintain quality in the class.

"The effects, as to quality, remain to be seen," he said. "However, with prices going up, it will make it difficult to convince a student to make that third or fourth print."

There has been experimentation with photographic processes that don't contain silver, Tuck said, but the quality in these experiments has been poor.

Tuck said it is impossible to predict what will happen to the price of photography supplies because the silver market is tied to the gold market, which in turn is connected to the world situation.

## More conservative

If the price of silver goes down, the manager of Max Miller Cameras Inc., 1434 O St., said she thought Eastman Kodak also would decrease their prices.

Until that happens, however, Marilyn Sudbeck said people will probably be more conservative.

One way to be more conservative is to recover as much of the silver as possible from the photographic process. This is done through silver recovery devices. These devices are back-ordered for a year, she noted.

Silver recovery is "just part and parcel" of the photographic process used in making X-rays, according to Bob Connelly, chief X-ray technician at Lincoln General Hospital.

He said the national recovery rate for the process is about 52 percent. One pound of the reclaimed silver is usually equal to the price of 11 ounces of silver on the regular market, Connelly said.

The fluctuations of the market, however, have caused all refineries to close so no one can sell the reclaimed silver.

## X-ray costs

The erratic market has caused the price of some X-ray photography supplies to increase as much as 107 percent. No matter the size of increase, however, people must have

X-rays, he noted.

"It is just like buying gasoline," he said. "You have to have it."

There is not question of the need for X-rays, but the price increases of black and white film might cause amateur photographers to question their necessity, according to the manager of Rainbow Color Lab, 237 S. 70th St.

Bill Krejci said the price increases might "be the end" of black and white photography, except for commercial use.

At this point, he said he is uncertain about how to handle the price increases. There is "really a competitive world" in labs that process film, he said. Because of that

competition, Krejci said he will watch the big companies to see what they do and then follow a similar course. A "wait and see" attitude also was the attitude of the owner of The Picture Man, 1630 Q St.

Bob Olsen said film is only a small part of his operating cost, but it, combined with other rising costs has left him uncertain about what to do.

"General inflation is what is really hurting us," he said, noting the increased prices in handling, postage and minimum wage.

Those in the photography business are not smiling about the price increases, but at this point there is nothing for them to do but "grin and bear it."

# ... give jewelers Midas touch

By Mary Fastenau

If King Midas were watching today's world gold market, he might reconsider forfeiting his golden touch.

After all, a 13-year-old solid gold daughter weighing 100 pounds would bring \$665.50 an ounce on the London market, making the darling worth \$1,064,800.

The king would have to realize, however, that the girl's monetary value is based on the world's economic and political situation.

For example, the price of gold closely follows oil prices, a trend which has been noticeable for the last 30 to 40 years, according to Don Hamann, chief executive officer for Sartor Hamann Jewelry, 1150 O St.

Hamann, president of the Retail Jewelers of America, said rising gold prices are caused by oil-rich nations who are flooding the gold market with their money. He said people in these countries fear a Communist takeover and think if they invest in the gold market, invading forces would not be able to confiscate all their wealth.

## Amount is stable

Hamann said it is impossible to manipulate the gold market because the amount of gold in the world is stable. This stability is the reason "everyone hangs their hat on gold," he said.

To illustrate the metal's stability, Hamann said all the world's gold would cover a football field a yard deep.

The increased visibility of the metal caused by the erratic market has increased the desire to own something made of gold, he said. Because the "average man" is not able to invest in the gold futures market, he is purchasing gold in the form of jewelry and coins, Hamann said.

Problem may arise because certain items may be priced out of the market, he said. For example, a couple used to be able to buy two wedding bands for around \$100. Today one band may cost \$300 to \$400.

## Daily price change

In some places, Hamann said, jewelers are using a "no price system" where the price is calculated daily and overhead costs are added.

Loren Lickel, manager of Brodkey's Jewelry in the Centrum, said the store has not changed prices since its opening before Christmas, but an increase may occur this week. The store serves primarily college students, he said.

Business also is good for firms which buy gold. Leo Korsaks, jeweler and watchmaker at City Clock Co., 210 Gateway North, said a "tremendous amount" of

people have been trying to sell old gold and silver.

## Old gold differs

He explained that the prices for "old" gold are not the same as those quoted in the world market. Korsaks said the gold brought in will sell for \$300 to \$350 an ounce and a lot of people fail to understand the discrepancy in price.

Korsaks said the rise in gold prices also has increased the amount of jewelry brought in for repair.

Jewelry repair also is on the increase at Midwest Manufacturing Jewelers in the Sharp Building, according to Carey Cook, business partner.

Cook said much repair work is from college-age people who bring in items of sentimental value.

Most of the people interested in selling gold are much older than college age, making the situation reminiscent of the 1930s Depression, he said.

## Selling their teeth

The price of the used gold is determined by the condition of the item and how many times it has been repaired. A jeweler must also be careful because most jewelry manufactured before 1920 is marked "solid gold," no matter what its karat content is, Cook explained. Items brought in for sale vary from rings to gold-filled teeth.

Kim Elder, manager of Triple E Co. Jewelers in the Terminal Building, said a buyer must be careful because some gold may be an unusual karat rating, such as 22.

Gold coins are also popular items to buy and sell, said the manager of Centennial Coins, Stamps and Antiquities, 1320 Q St.

Bill Williams explained that business "goes wild" when the gold market goes up. He said, however, the market doesn't affect coins as much as other items because coins have value other than that of the metal content.

## Armed guards

Hamann said a coin shop in Omaha posted armed guards outside and limited customers to three at a time.

Dentists also are affected by the gold market, according to Dr. Eugene Merchant, associate dean for academic and student affairs at the dental college.

Merchant explained that dentists do not use pure gold, but rather an alloy which contains platinum, silver and gold. The price of the alloy often exceeds the gold price because manufacturing costs must be absorbed.

One year ago the metal contained in a crown cost between \$35 and \$40. Today the price has risen to between \$135 and \$140.

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