

# Home-Ec College finds its Niche in bookstore

By Lori McGinnis

In a corner of the East Union Bookstore is a shop that sells merchandise created by students in the Home Economics College.

Hand painted stationery, ornamental wall-hangings and hand-made pillows are a few items in the Niche, a shop managed by two students as an apprentice program.

The purpose of the Niche is to give home economics students a chance to market the products they design, said Kathi Siemer, one of the managers.

The Niche sells "things you can't go to any department store and buy," said Siemer, a senior fashion merchandising major. The merchandise is special because it is hand-made by students, she said.

Siemer is sharing the management with Diane Elliott, a junior fashion design major. Siemer's duties include book-keeping, inventory and ticketing the merchandise. Elliott is in charge of shop display. Both are managing the Niche for college credit.

### Students submit

Any student in the Home Economics College can submit items to the Niche, Siemer said. The creator of the item makes 90 percent of the selling price. The other 10 percent goes to the Niche for administrative costs, she said.

There is no problem in selling the items, said Anne Fehringer, a home economics instructor and the managers' adviser.

"Our biggest problem has been getting enough students to submit things," Fehringer said.

Students in Textiles, Clothing and Design 225 are required to make an item for the Niche. But Siemer agreed not enough students submit merchandise.

"When you're in school studying it's hard to find time to make things," she said.

Starting this semester, students in home economics classes have the opportunity to make one extra credit hour by submitting items, Fehringer said. Students must make six to eight items for the extra credit.

### Painted stationery

Siemer estimated she has received about 30 new items so far this semester.

Elliott said she plans to make many items for the Niche. Among her creations will be wall hangings and hand-painted stationery. Painting one sheet of paper with a simple design takes about 15 minutes, she said. A box will contain 12 sheets with matching envelopes. Elliott said she will probably sell a box for \$10 to \$12.

Most of the items sold are between \$1 and \$10, Elliott said, but items may go as high as \$35.

All items in the Niche are accompanied with care information. The bookstore keeps a record of all Niche items sold. The Niche then bills the store and pays the students whose creations were sold, Siemer said.

The creator sets the price on the item, but she must also state the minimum price she will accept. If an item

doesn't sell, the price would be lowered, Siemer said, adding that nothing will be sold for less than the set minimum price.

### Designated date

The designer must designate a date to pick up the item if it doesn't sell. Nothing should be left in the Niche for more than a year, Siemer said.

A committee of two home economic instructors and

the two managers check each item for good quality and reasonable price before it is put on the shelf, she said.

The Niche opened in the spring of 1977. The bookstore donated space for students to sell merchandise, Fehringer said.

"The idea was so they could get more traffic through the bookstore," she said. The bookstore is a good location for the Niche, Fehringer said.

"When we get merchandise in there, it sells," she said.



Photo by Jerry McBride

Patty Farmer, a UNL student, browses through stitchery and other gift items which are on sale at the East Campus bookstore's new addition, the Niche.

## Food group plans initiative petition

The Nebraska repeal on food sales tax is "completely inadequate," according to the coordinator for Nebraskans United for Food. The organization is considering an initiative petition to oppose the taxing of state food sales.

Presently, Nebraskans can claim a \$20 food sales tax credit on their state income tax return, which John Hanger, coordinator for NUFF said "by no means compensates a family" for the amount of food sales tax they pay through the year.

NUFF's initiative petition, upon receiving the signatures of at least 35,000 registered Nebraska voters, would be included for vote in the 1980 presidential elections, Hanger said.

The petition is yet to be circulated, with NUFF currently testing it for citizen reaction.

"If the people are willing to make the commitment and give their time and energy" to the petition, Hanger said, it will be circulated.

The NUFF petition is being considered in reaction to LB16, introduced by Omaha Sen. Dave Newell, which would exempt food from sales tax.

Hanger said the bill is not expected to pass, having failed to advance on two public hearings. It awaits a third reading.

He said the Legislature probably will pass a bill that would increase the credit issued to Nebraskans from \$20 to \$28.

Hanger cited two reasons why the present refund is inadequate.

"The credit has not increased in proportion" to food prices in recent years, he said. The \$20 refund is only 50 to 60 percent of the total that Nebraskans pay in food sales tax, he added.

Another fact that renders the refund inadequate is that each year about 100,000 Nebraskans do not receive the repeal, according to Hanger.

People don't file for refunds for various reasons—including being uninformed, in a low income bracket, old-age, or illiteracy, Hanger said.

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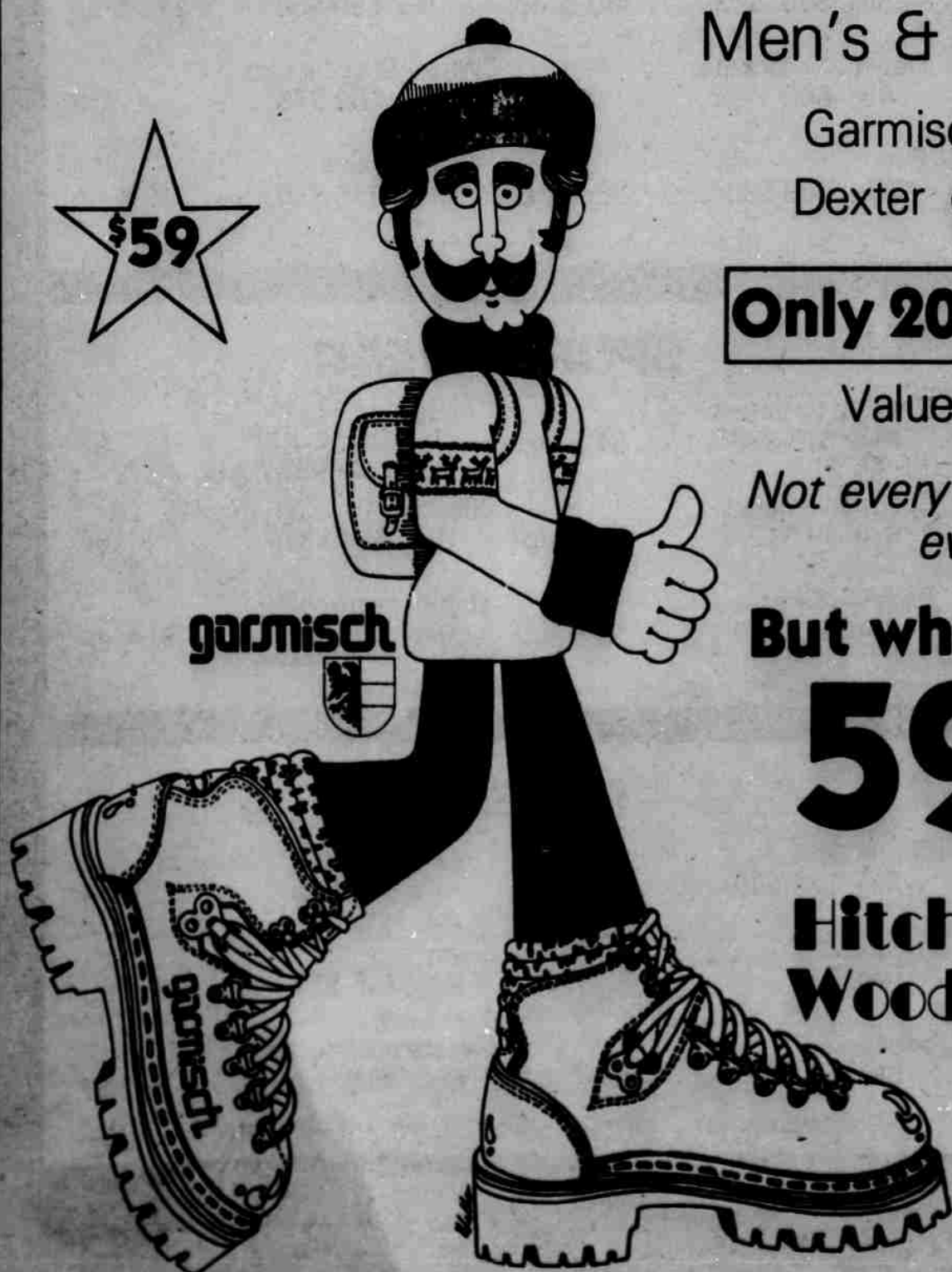
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