

1-of-a-kind presents hide in crannies, nooks

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

One of the indisputable benefits of going to college in Lincoln is that you have access to Christmas gifts that can not be found back home at the Wal-Mart, or even while "bringing all your Christmas needs to the many friendly merchants of downtown Aurora," as the TV ads say.

Unique gifts can be found in the city, many are in shops that are close to campus and they can be found even in a student's narrow price range.

College towns tend to be stocking-stuffer heaven. There's some mysterious element in the post-adolescent psyche that creates an inescapable need to buy and display as many comical but otherwise pointless knick-knacks as humanly possible. Lincoln merchants are aware of this phenomena and take full advantage of it.

Although Dirt Cheap Records and Gifts, 217 N. 11th, has declined since its glory days as Lincoln's premier counter-cultural boutique, the store still carries some truly outie items. Of particular interest is a selection of outrageous costume jewelry guaranteed to send any would-be metal-head or any valley girl's younger siblings into Nirvana.

- Gold-color cat earrings by Laurel Busch - \$25.00
- Silver-color, heart-shaped bird pin - \$17.00
- Art nouveau style pin; green enamel on black and gold - \$6.00
- Silver-color safety-pin bracelet - \$19.95
- Gold-color safety-pin earrings; square - \$14.95
- Art nouveau-style gold lizard with rhinestones - \$20
- "Fossil" brand watches - \$40 to \$50

The local crown for the most comprehensive collection of trendy, expensive junk probably goes to the Nebraska Bookstore, 1300 Q St. This year the Nebraska Bookstore is featuring one of the Midwest's more notable collections of dinosaur paraphernalia.

- Inflatable dinosaur in a Santa suit - \$4.95



- Dinosaur magnets in red, blue, yellow and green - \$1.95
- "Dino Soap." Soap shaped like an egg with a plastic prehistoric animal, such as a saber-toothed tiger, in the middle - \$4.95
- Plastic "just hatching" dinosaurs that squirt water - \$2.50
- Dinosaur-topped pens - \$1.75
- Opaque white dinosaur with a light inside - \$47.95

In addition to fully living up to its name in the greeting card department, Avant Card, 1325 O St., stocks small toys of the wind-up-hopper and scary-plastic-bug variety. The store also stocks inflatable jungle and circus animals.

- Lifesize, inflatable Reagan bust - \$19.98
- Yellow, stuffed Triceratop dinosaur - \$32.95
- "Is it Voodoo?" red cloth dolls - \$4.95

All the above businesses sell a selection of interesting T-shirts, but

Lincoln's most unusual T-shirts can probably be found at Cosmic Comics at East Park Plaza. Cosmic also offers a huge selection of cartoon books that will delight any sibling from the subliterate to the precocious little know-it-all.

Class is a characteristic not normally associated with the knick-knack market, but there's class aplenty at the Sheldon Art Gallery gift shop, where you can find today those frightfully interesting little innovations that will be filling the shelves of other gift shops next Christmas. Of course class costs, but prices at the Sheldon range from a few dollars to the triple digits.

- Handcrafted porcelain and cloth doll with porcelain mask - \$95
- Handcrafted porcelain and cloth doll with frog face - \$140

See GIFTS on 11.

Tacky or tasty, they're gifts from the Heartland

By Scott Harrah
Night News Editor

Those looking for the unusual Christmas gift may want to purchase something that's uniquely Nebraskan.

Several Lincoln merchants have Nebraska items that make great Christmas gifts.

Bill Cummins, a buyer for Nebraska Bookstore, 1300 Q, said the shop stocks a variety of generic Nebraska items such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, glasses and key chains. "Go Big Red" boxershorts were one of last season's big sellers, he said.

Although Nebraska lost to Oklahoma, Cornhusker items are still in demand.

"Just about everything with Nebraska on it is selling well," he said.

Some of the items available at the Nebraska Bookstore are:

- Men of Nebraska, Women of Nebraska calendars for 1988 - \$7.95
- Nebraska T-shirts, like "Nebraska Crossing," - \$7.75 and up
- A Nebraska windbreaker, red and grey - \$65
- White sweatshirt with "Nebraska" in right-hand corner - \$36.95
- Herbie the Husker stuffed doll - \$19.95
- Stuffed bears wearing "Nebraska" or "go Big Red" sweaters - \$11.95.
- Kit to needlepoint Herbie the Husker - \$18.95
- White toilet paper with red "Go Big Red" lettering - \$3.95

Vil Rizije, a co-owner of The Big Red Shop, 242 N. 12th, said this Christmas season's most popular item is a red Nebraska phone. The phone, regularly priced at \$19.95, is on sale for \$15.95 through the holiday season.

said. "We get a lot of orders from out-of-state. There's a lot of Big Red fans all over the country."

Kim Bichlmeier, a clerk at the UNL Dairy Store on East Campus, said Nebraska cheeses have become a tradition at Christmas.



Cornhusker blankets for \$22.95 are also selling well, he said.

The shop also sells a variety of Nebraska novelties.

"We sell a lot of phones, Christmas stocking stuffers and Nebraska license plate holders," he

The store makes and sells the following types of cheeses: Husker, Husker Jalapeno, Husker Caraway, sharp cheddar and smoked cheddar.

A variety of cheese gift packages are available. A one pound

gift pack sells for \$4.99. The largest gift pack, six pounds, sells for \$21.00. Mail order prices are slightly higher, ranging from \$6.99 for the one pound pack to \$24.50 for the six pound pack.

"The cheeses are known," Bichlmeier said. "People have come for several years to buy them."

The Nebraska Games and Parks Commission will send out gift subscriptions of "Nebraskaland" magazine. With the subscription comes the special January edition of the magazine, which this year will feature Nebraska wild game recipes. A calendar full of scenes of Nebraska with subscription.

Local bookstores, like the Nebraska Bookstore and University Bookstore, have books written by Nebraska authors, such as Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz and poet Ted Kooser.



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