



She sells her seas shells as Christmas ornaments

By Linda Hartmann
Senior Editor

Margaret Furlong hangs a little bit of herself on thousands of peoples' Christmas trees every year.

The bisque porcelain ornaments and tree toppers this University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumna designs and crafts in her Salem, Ore. studio are widely sold and have helped to turn her career into a UNL success story.

Furlong's business netted \$1 million in fiscal year 1986; and she employs 22 people to handcraft the creamy white angels, stars, wreaths and hearts that she began making in 1976.

That was the year Furlong, a 41-year-old native of Falls City, received her master's degree in fine arts from UNL. She rented an old carriage house behind what is now The Castle Apartments at the corner of 19th and D streets, turned the first floor into a studio and began selling some of her pottery and landscape sculpture through the Sheldon Art Gallery to support herself.

A friend suggested she do some artwork using angels to sell during Christmas that year, "which was quite a diversion from my abstract

landscape pieces," she said.

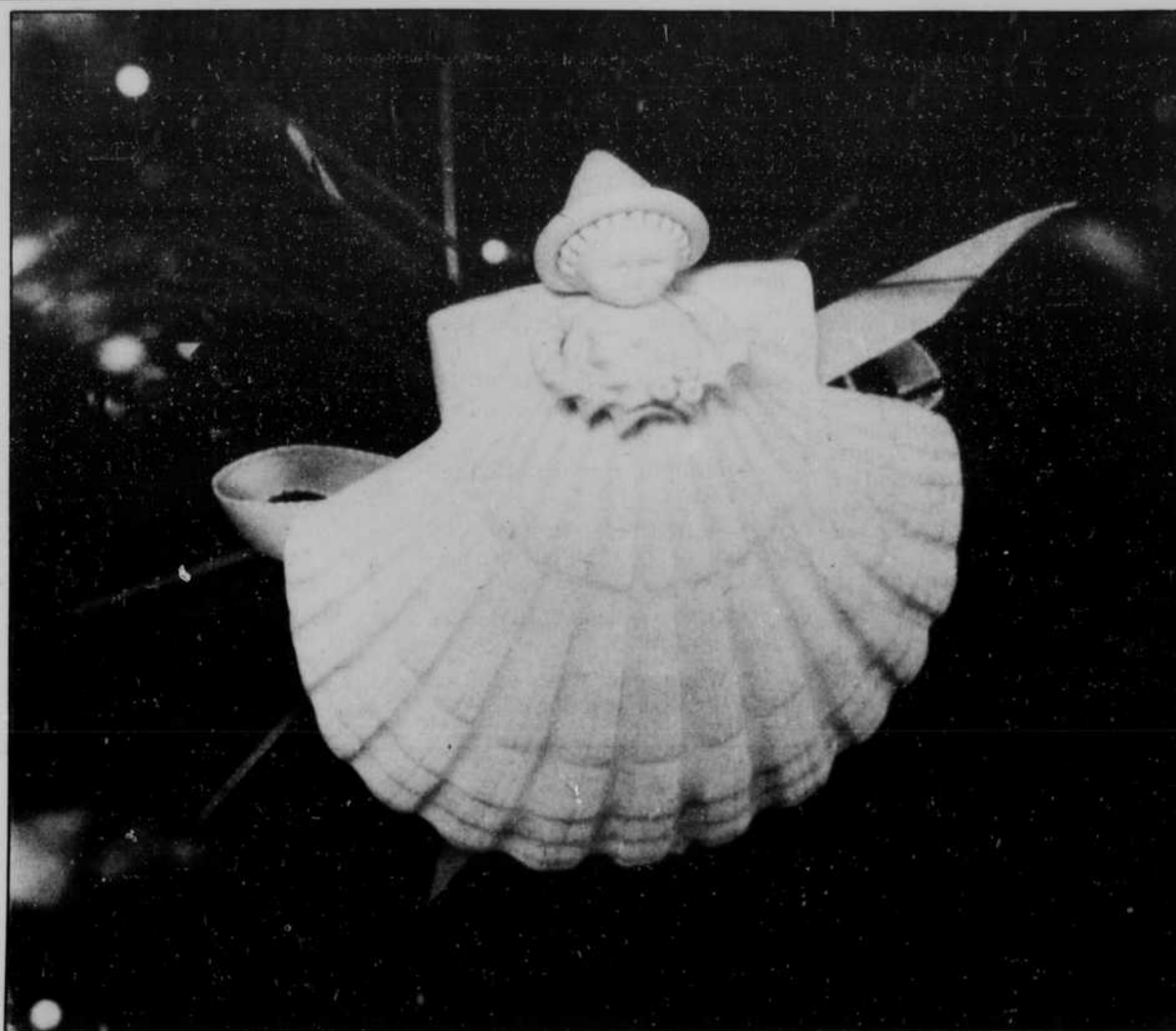
At the same time, Furlong was doing some commissioned work using a family's crest of a cross and shell. While sketching shells for ideas, she suddenly decided to use a half shell as the dress of an angel and form an ornament, the first of her collection.

The business took off slowly. She first sold the pieces at Sheldon Art Gallery's gift shop. In 1979 her husband, Jerry Alexander, helped her set up some sales at other museum and art-gallery gift shops.

"Every year since then, it has sort of just taken off like wildfire," she said. She and her husband continued as an art-and-business team to expand sales after they moved to Seattle in 1980 and Salem soon after that.

Furlong has added to the original four pieces in her line to include about 25 different porcelain wreaths, angels, hearts, crosses and stars, all in shell designs. Her "valentine-spring line" includes heart wall hangings and pins of crosses, flowers and bows that also sell well after Christmas. Many of her pieces are available for \$12 to \$20 at Miller & Paine in Lincoln and at the Sheldon Art Gallery gift

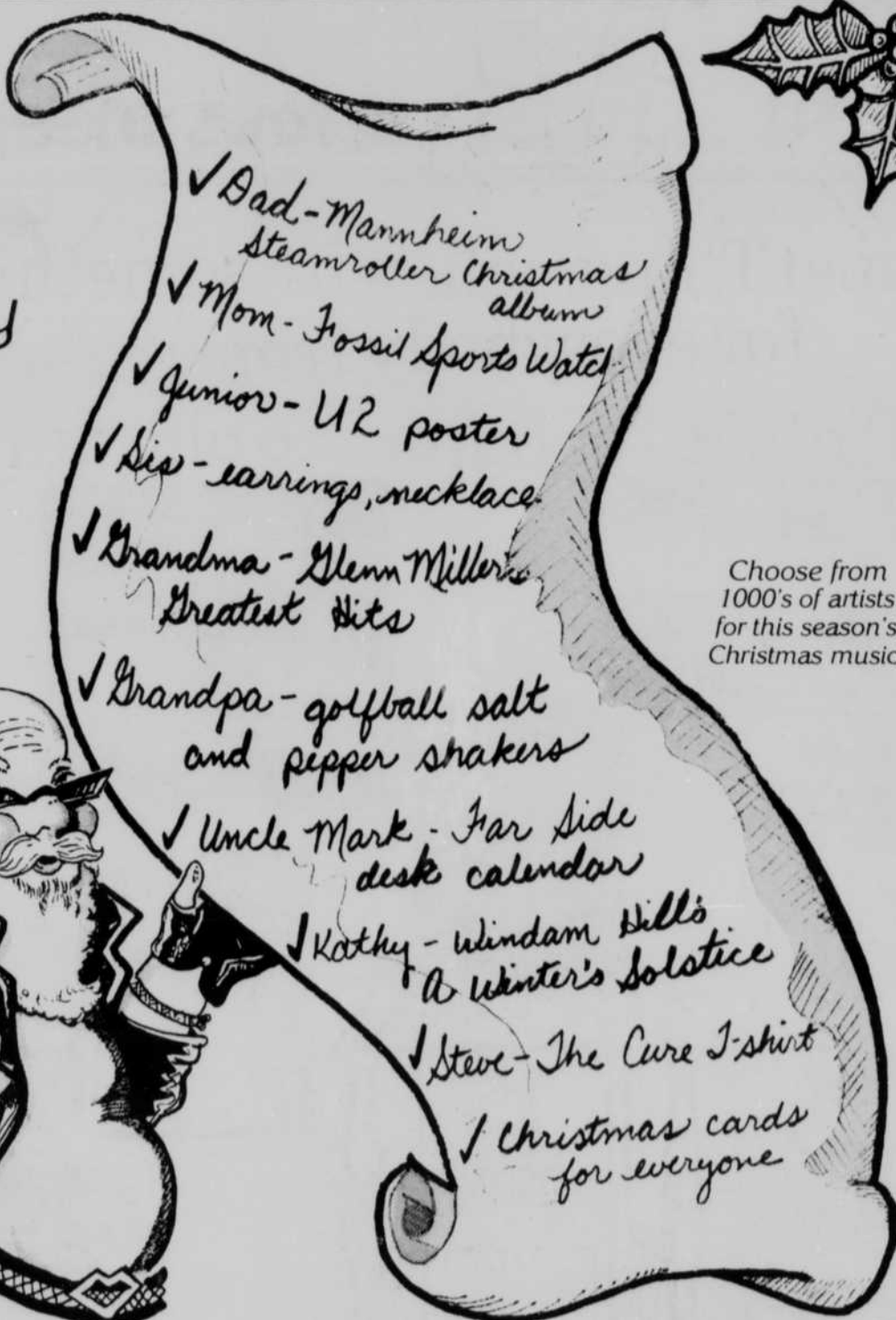
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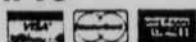
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Holstein cow art, mini Ferraris sell in catalogs

By The Associated Press

Cows in the Christmas tree? A "toy" car that costs more than most full-sized autos? A cable car that plays "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" as it dangles from a yuletide wreath?

These are among the many offbeat items offered Christmas shoppers in this year's crop of gift catalogs, sometimes called "boutiques in print."

The popularity of shopping at home by mail or telephone is growing steadily, according to the New York-based Direct Marketing Association.

A recent survey reported that more than 87.8 million Americans made catalog purchases in 1986, a 15 percent increase over the previous year.

"This can be attributed in part to the growing trend of women in the work force and the increase in the population and discretionary income of senior citizens," explains a representative of the marketing group.

The millions of catalogs mailed out each year offer products ranging from gourmet food to garden tools and from computers to cows.

Vermont artist Woody Jackson, who describes the Holstein cow as "a beautiful, noble animal," has published a 12-page Holy Cow Catalog featuring such items as T-shirts and boxer shorts with a Christmas tree decorated with cow designs.

Cow ware in Jackson's catalog also includes Holstein eggs, cow note cards, cow bowls, cow bags and jaunty black and white cow cutout sculptures.

In the "toy" category, the F.A.D. Schwarz catalog offers for \$14,500 an 11-horsepower Ferrari Testarossa Junior automobile, made in Italy, complete with automatic transmission and a 3600 rpm engine. Top speed is 28 mph, but it can be regulated.

A tiny cable-car replica with a miniature windup movement that can be hung as an ornament on a Christmas tree is available from the catalog of the San Francisco Music Bos Co., and plays, naturally, "I left my heart ..."