

Shoe fixer says she loves job

Jim Hanna
Reporter

of skill and then just the upkeep on the machinery."

There are no shoe machine repairers in Lincoln so Herrod and Waldren do most of the repairs themselves.

The difficult nature of the job was part of the attraction for Herrod, she said. Since few people are willing to take the time necessary to learn the trade, Herrod thought she would be fulfilling a valuable need by getting into shoe repair.

"When the Stoehrs were active in shoe repair, there were 70 shoe repair shops in Lincoln," Herrod said. "And now there's only maybe 20 or 25."

"The need has been increasing but you have to learn how to do it which is no easy thing to do. There's more need for shoe repair but less people willing to do it."

The shop caters to needs from those of big department stores like Dillard's to those of a passerby with a worn heel.

The business also does work for the university, specifically for the department of theater and dance. When costume shoes need repairs, Herrod and Waldren will make

them, usually in exchange for theater tickets, Herrod said. At times, they've even been show-savers.

"One time, and this has been years ago, they were doing 'Grease' and a zipper broke (on a shoe) an hour before opening night and so they called me and I came down and replaced the zipper real quick for them."

Herrod said she realizes the importance of continuing to do such quality, reliable work. If the business doesn't do well, they will be unable to pay the exorbitant prices involved in machinery upkeep and purchase.

Since there are fewer people in the shoe repair business, there are also fewer people making the machines needed for the business. As a result, fewer new machines are produced and those that are produced are expensive.

"This is a press and I could have bought a small car for what that cost," Herrod said, pointing about the room. "I could have bought a very nice car for what that finisher cost. This little thing right here, all it does is nibble off heels, was like



Connie Sheehan/Daily Nebraskan

Downtown Boot and Shoe Repair

six or seven hundred dollars."

But through it all, difficult training and expensive machinery, Herrod said she loves the business she's in.

"There's a lot of creativity to it," she said. "To take a shoe and take

it apart and put it back together again.

"I think the best part is meeting the people. There are so many different people that work downtown and I've made some very dear friends."

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