

Up on the tree top



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Pam Schneider, left, and Deb Pohlmann search for the perfect angel tree top at Custom Christmas, a specialty holiday store. Pohlmann said her son, Justin, didn't like his grandmother's tree top.

What's in store

Specialty shop keeps spirit alive all year long

By Julie Sobczyk
Senior Editor

Christmas comes but once a year ... but not always. At Christmas Lane Antiques and Collectibles, it's the holiday season all year round.

Christmas Lane, with stores at 1265 S. Cotner Blvd. and 311 N. Eighth St., is a specialty shop that has collectibles for every season, especially Christmas.

But it's not any ordinary store with the average ornaments, bows and blinking lights.

"In our store, we try to capture the ambience of Christmas," said Kim Underdahl, the store's owner. "It's kind of like walking into a winter wonderland."

In the wonderland, miniature collectible snowmen, Santas, angels, and carolling teddy bears line the shelves. Christmas trees with unique themes are displayed throughout the store. One is decorated with farm animals; another heavenly tree is adorned with angels. A tree to delight the outdoorsman is covered with fish and duck ornaments.

"The Christmas items here are more unique items," Underdahl said. "We supply one-of-a-kind ornaments."

The most popular items in the

"We have a lot of regular customers, and that makes it fun. A lot of people come in after they've had a bad day, and wandering around makes them feel better."



PEG BARRETT
Christmas Lane employee

store are hand-painted ornaments, which customers collect, she said.

"People collect ornaments for a number of certain occasions in their lives," she said. "People often give sets as wedding gifts."

One special part of Christmas Lane is the store's official greeter. Libby, Underdahl's dog, is at the store whenever she's working.

"I can visibly see the children's eyes light up when they look for Libby," she said.

For the third year, Libby will have her own ornament designed by a local artist. For this year's ornament, the

dog will be dressed in an angel's outfit.

Peg Barrett, an employee of Christmas Lane, said working for Underdahl made her job enjoyable.

"My favorite thing here is the owner and her dog," Barrett said. "I like being around all the happy merchandise. It's all cheerful, and I love Christmas."

The customers enjoy the store's cheerfulness, too, Barrett said.

"We have a lot of regular customers, and that makes it fun," she said. "A lot of people come in after they've had a bad day, and wandering around makes them feel better."

With Christmas just a few weeks away, Barrett said, business had been picking up.

"The last few weeks have been busy," she said. "Most people don't come in for a quick minute. There's too much to see, and we like to take time with each customer."

Barrett said she didn't know of any other store in Lincoln that specialized in Christmas all year.

For Underdahl, the best part of working in a winter wonderland is the joy the store spreads to customers.

"People walk in and are often surprised," she said. "People will say, 'Oh my gosh. I didn't expect it to be like this.'"

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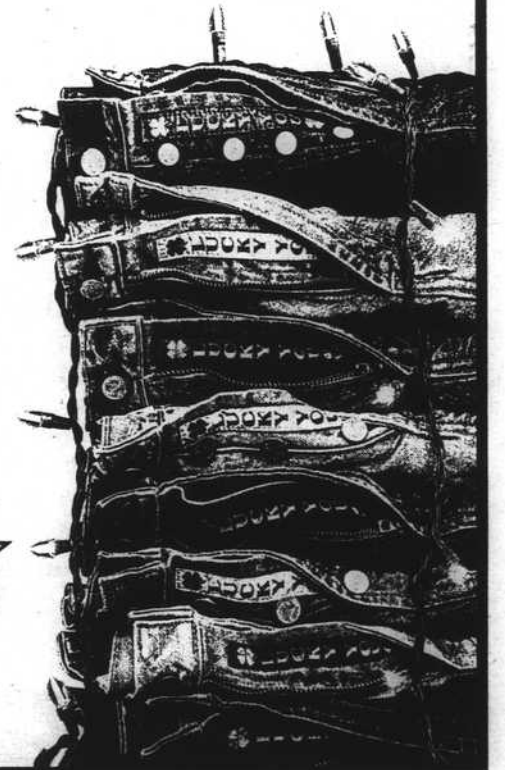
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