

It takes Gaylen Sundquist about 1½ hours to shoe each horse.

They shoe horses don't they?

Gaylen Sundquist's hammer clangs against the horseshoe, bending it just slightly each time metal meets metal.

He thrusts the U-shaped shoe into the fire of his portable forge. In a short time it glows cherry red. A few more taps open the nail holes he earlier had pounded shut.

Gaylen Sundquist is a modern day horseshoer.

Like blacksmiths before him, he uses a forge and anvil to shape shoes of all sizes for horses.

Sundquist learned his trade the modern way — in school. Unlike early farriers — the British word for horseshoers — Sundquist went to Clackamas Community College for six months to learn his skill.

"I was working in an office and I just didn't like it," Sundquist says as he prys off a shoe from a gentle thoroughbred. "I was attracted first by the way the old blacksmiths used to do it, the old hand-cranked forge, the feeling of going back to using horses."

So Sundquist worked during the day at his office job and spent nights going to school. Shortly after graduation he found himself spending evenings and weekends fitting horses with new shoes.

"Now I'm into it fulltime and that's what's been paying the bills," he says. The job is fulltime for him, supporting him and his wife and two children in their home in Boring.

And like any craftsman, he takes pride in his work. Seamstresses are proud of even stitches; chefs boast of a perfect meal. For Sundquist his delight comes in completing a straight row of nails.

To get that even row Sundquist holds in his mouth the eight nails used on a shoe. He gently cradles the horse's hoof between his legs and sets the new shoe on the hoof. With one quick motion, he pops one nail out of his mouth, into the nail hole and hammers it out through the hoof. With another snappy motion, Sundquist nips off the exposed nail tip and begins the process again.

"I try to take some pride in my row of nails. I make it straight and even," he says. "Sometimes I pull nails out because they're not in line."

He's had pretty good luck so far with feisty horses or mules, coming out with only a broken toe and a bruised arm.

"I was working on a mule. Well, I never did finish him. Anyway, I was working on his back leg and he was nasty. He kicked my arm and banged it, bang, bang, and even knocked my glove off. So I relinquished that job to another fellow who wants to risk his body."

Like a circuit-riding preacher, Sundquist visits his horses every eight weeks to trim their hooves. Every other visit requires a new set of shoes.

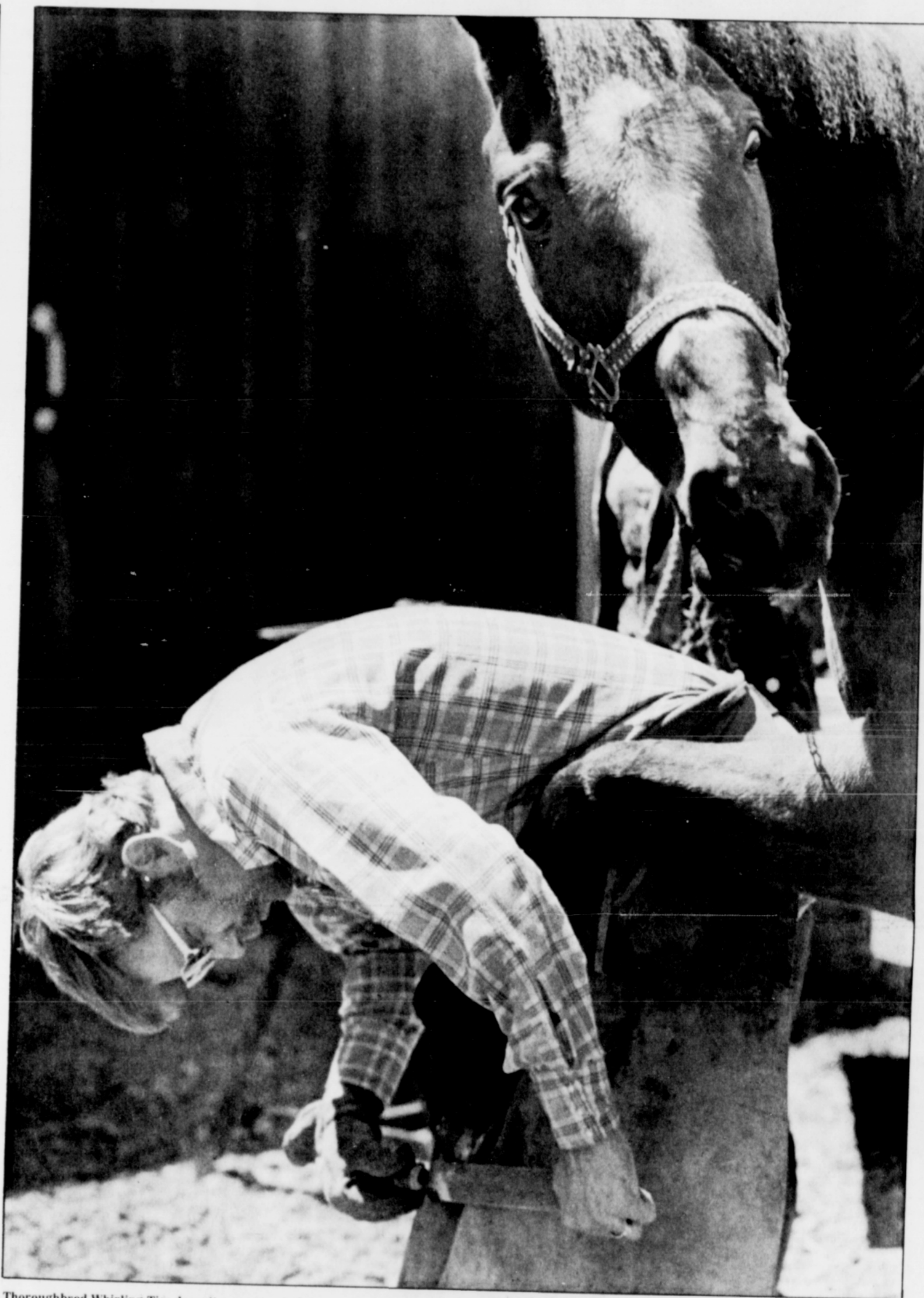
An average day will find Sundquist fitting four horses with new shoes and trimming the hooves of three other animals. He travels from Ames to Oregon City but most of his work is in East County and the Damascus-Boring area.

But it's often not the mean horse that will stir up trouble for the shoer. Flies can make even a mild-mannered beast grumpy. Sundquist says. To calm a jumpy horse, Sundquist believes the shoer's stall-side manner and personality are most important.

"I think a lot of getting along with horses is the shoer's personality," he says. "They can pick up a quiet voice or a gruff sound."

The horseshoer considered going back to an office job. He even went back to his old job for an interview. But it didn't work out.

"Boy, I'm sure glad it didn't too," he says.



Thoroughbred Whirling Tim doesn't seem to mind the manicure horseshoer Gaylen Sundquist is giving him. A new set of shoes is needed about every 16 weeks and the going rate for area shoers is \$23 to \$30.



Sundquist packs everything on his pickup truck and travels from horse to horse. The Boring resident quit an office job to become a fulltime farrier.



Most shoes are pounded into shape while they are cold, then thrust into hot coals to open up the nail holes again.

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