

'Be mine'

Valentine ideas for your 'sweet babboo'

Romance is alive and well in Eugene.

Sales of traditional Valentine's Day gifts are good, according to local merchants. And buying patterns seem to be traditional as well.

Area storekeepers report that men are still buying mostly romantic gifts, especially flowers, chocolates, wine, champagne, bubble bath, perfume or the occasional diamond or fur coat.

Women are purchasing primarily practical gifts for their men, including underwear, candles, lighters, ties, tie clips and mugs. Anything with a heart on it seems to attract women buyers, store clerks say.

Most gift shops and department stores, including the University Bookstore, are well stocked with novelty items, cards and gifts appropriate to the holiday. Nonetheless, retailers suggest people purchase gifts and flowers early to avoid last-minute shortages.

Also, most flower shops raise their prices just before

Valentine's Day.

The cheapest bouquets are informal arrangements or those without vases. Single roses can be bought for \$1.50 at the Fifth Street Public Market. Add at least \$5 for professional arrangement and another \$2.50 for the average local delivery.

Carnations are a popular alternative to roses. Flowers Unlimited on the downtown mall sells carnations for 75 cents apiece.

Another Valentine option that has been gaining popularity in recent years is silk flowers. Permanently attractive, silk flowers are a sure way to be remembered by your beloved long after a rival suitor's natural flowers have been pitched out. Most flower shops carry them.

Thanks to Xerox, people with lots of lovers are coming up with an inexpensive way to spread love messages. Called Xerox art, photocopied collages, cut-outs and paste-ups, or romantic poetry are copied onto several cards. Workers at Kinko's copy shop on 13th Avenue report that

many students have been making the personalized valentines — no doubt because one 75-cent Hallmark card costs as much as 10 Xerox cards.

Personalized giving is possible without resorting to a copier. Many couples choose to

dine out at an intimate restaurant on Valentine's Day. Plan on reserving a table early, if possible, or dining out prior to the mid-evening rush because restaurants anticipate large numbers of customers.

But sentiment — serious, humorous or frivolous — is the key to choosing a good gift.

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