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Photo by Andre Ramert

Steven Brence lets his Valentine's Day cheer shine forth in Hallmark's claustrophobic narrow aisles.

Cards, gifts — it's all too much!

Retailers face hell for holiday

By Thomas Prowell
Emerald Editor

There's nothing more miserable than being alone for Valentine's Day — unless of course, it's your job to not only be alone *but to also* make other people happy on this day.

So while you're sending out little paper hearts, this year, you should also have a heart for your neighborhood greeting card salesperson.

These people toil day after day during this season to put out reams of bright new cards, mountains of chocolate kisses and zoos of

cuddly stuffed animals. Working in the oppressive, blinding red and white glow that surrounds the holiday, they put on a brave face submerging their misery for your gratification.

Is this just so much hyperbole? I asked Josh King of Mark's Hallmark in Valley River Center to describe his working conditions.

His answer: "Hell."

You want to expand on that, Josh?

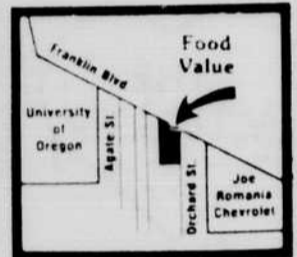
"No, I think hell's a pretty apt description," King said.

What is it that makes Valentine's Day such a particular hell on the troubled shopkeeper?

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FIRST THREE