



Jessica Waters for the Emerald

A bouquet of flowers from local florists can be a heart-felt gift.

Love gifts stir up business

Local florists, greeting card stores and chocolate shops prepare for the traditional wave of holiday shoppers

Craig Coleman
Freelance Reporter

Before her Christmas merchandise was taken off the shelves, Shirley Lyons, owner of Dandelions Flowers and Gifts in West Eugene, was busy developing a strategy for the annual flower-buying frenzy that occurs every Valentine's Day.

Early in January, she had placed the bulk of her orders for flowers with wholesalers throughout the United States and South America. Then she had to search for extra personnel to help create and design the Valentine's Day floral arrangements, increasing her staff from 18 to 55.

She also assembled a fleet of 17 delivery drivers to complete what she believes will be more than 550 deliveries in a single day.

Even though much of the preparation is done, Lyons said she's expecting many sleepless nights the week of Feb. 14.

"It's challenging to try to do a month's worth of sales in one day," she said. "The staff is tired because they won't go home until late, then they'll be back early in the morning. We'll be working straight through the night on Feb. 13."

Lyons is one of many merchants, locally and nationally, gearing up for the first big shopping holiday of 2003. For stores that carry the traditional Valentine's gifts, such as flowers, candy and jewelry, Valentine's Day is one of the most important single retail days.

"About 10 percent of our sales for


the year will come during that week alone, and most of that on Valentine's Day itself," said Debbie Harris, a sales associate at Mark's Hallmark store at Valley River Center.

As holidays go, Christmas is still king with retailers. Mother's Day, Halloween and Easter, with less emphasis on perishable merchandise and longer shopping seasons, are also considered more profitable than Valentine's Day. Still, for many stores, a huge portion of annual revenue is generated on Feb. 14.

Jennifer Sparks, vice president of marketing for the Virginia-based Society of American Florists, said 17 percent of all holiday flower purchases are made on Valentine's Day, with more than a third of all cut flowers sold that day. Florists sold 130 million roses alone last year for Valentine's Day.

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Valentine's Dance



Bring canned food donations

Valentine's Dance

Friday, February 14th
9:00pm to 12:30am

at Riley Hall

Mocktails
and Snacks

11th	Riley Hall	N
12th	Patterson	Hilyard

Free with Student ID

Can Can Auction

During Coffee Hour in the International Lounge, Friday, February 14th from 4 to 6pm, ISA will be collecting canned food for Lane County in an auction of volunteers for the Valentine's Dance Party.

Sponsored by ISA and Riley Hall

Perfect love mix tape tells story, recreates feelings, meetings

For two Saturdays, I spent the day ensconced in my room, sprawled out on my back, head and arms hanging loosely over the foot of the bed. I moved only to thumb through records or flip them over. I occasionally read an album sleeve, but mostly just drifted through notes, lyrics and random pops or fuzzes. I'm not usually romantic, but I was searching for love songs.

Valentine's Day, that saccharine holiday both adored and reviled, was fast approaching. I wasn't on some love-spurred mission, though. I was on assignment. My goal? The perfect V-Day mix tape.

College students are poor practically by definition. Pocket lint and imagination have to take the place of pungent bouquets and diamonds when Cupid comes around. But how? Pink paper hearts, the staple of kindergarten glue-eaters and sixth-grade boyfriends, are sweet but boring. Homemade dinner is potentially disastrous and doesn't last. Hand-picked flowers have an air of "I forgot" hastiness. A mix tape is the perfect combination of cost (practically none) and effort (possibly endless).

Mix tapes have a strong history of personalized obsession. Rob Gordon, the quintessential music nerd, played by John Cusak in the movie "High Fidelity," is consumed with creating the perfect mix.

"The making of a great compilation tape, like breaking up, is hard to do and takes ages longer than it might seem," Gordon said. Not exactly great foreplay, but it gets the idea across: Making a mix isn't easy. But the thought and effort makes it such an appealing gift.

I love the idea of someone imitating my Saturday, wasting languid hours immersed in music and thinking of me. It may be Mick Jagger singing that wild horses couldn't drag him away or Joan Jett saying she thinks she could love me, but the sentiment is all mine.

A good mix, like my Jagger/Jett collaboration, follows a theme: Love, long car rides, lonely nights.

But a great mix flows like honey. It weaves a complex story: First glances and first dates, nights under stars and cars' back seats, awkward fumbling and first "I love yous." Or maybe it just recreates a feeling: Stomach butterflies, sweaty palms, soft kisses, long tumbles head over heels.

Mix tape geeks, like Gordon, create rigid rules in their pursuit of perfection: No more than one song by a single artist, only one genre, no CDs. The Web is flooded with internerds expounding on their proven method of creating a mix. Right guys, your lovey tapes work great. Oh, and I saw your e-girlfriend at RadioShack yesterday. She's neither "HOTT" nor "SXY."

Your rules don't matter. I'm inclined to agree on the tape part, but my tastes are esoteric: More Ludite than space-age. But format doesn't matter, either.

What does matter is that you were thinking of someone when you made your compilation. You got excited about sharing your favorite songs, inside jokes and un-said words.

A mix tape is tailored to the recipient yet flavored with the taste of its maker.

I panicked at the thought of writing this column. The mix tape idea was mine. The V-day theme was not. I admire romance in others, but can't pull it off myself. My tape was going well until I thought "Like You Better (When Yer Drunk)" would be a funny addition.

Anyone receiving my tape, though, would understand the joke. Music is personal and intimate. A mix tape is tailored to the recipient yet flavored with the taste of its maker. It contains your thoughts, your humor and your love. So it doesn't matter if your mix starts with "Shake Ya Ass" or "(Everything I Do) I Do It For You" — just please, please, please don't send me anything you've heard in an elevator. All booty music and rock 'n' roll will be gladly accepted.

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D.I.Y. living