

Flowers, sweets tough to beat

Gifts: Valentine's Day shoppers still line up for roses, chocolate.

By **THERESA MCQUEEN**
THE PORTERVILLE RECORDER

The saying that you can't go wrong with flowers or candy was proven true once again this Valentine's Day.

Stafford's Famous Chocolates in Porterville had people lined up out the door in hopes of getting a last-minute sweet sur-

prise for their sweethearts.

"I'm here shopping for my husband, my daughter and my son," Erika Carazolez said while patiently waiting in line at Stafford's.

Carazolez said that every year she buys her holiday chocolates from Stafford's.

"They have the best chocolate here," Carazolez added.

Next in line, half way out the door was Rosanne Huston who was shopping for her 5-year-old son and her fiance.

"We [Huston and her son's

class from St. Anne's Catholic School] went on a field trip here," Huston said.

"Mr. Stafford came out and talked to the kids. He talked about how they made their famous chocolates, their turtles and marshmallow candies."

Huston went on to say that since the field trip, all her son wants is Stafford's chocolate.

"He loves it," Huston said about her enthusiastic son and his new found love for chocolate.

Please see **SWEETS, PAGE 12A**



RECORDER PHOTO BY JOHN TIPTON

Stafford's Famous Chocolates was once again a busy place Monday as Valentine's Day shoppers were out in mass.



RECORDER PHOTO BY JOHN TIPTON

Nothing says 'I love you' like a chocolate heart with a cupid on it. Stafford's Famous Chocolates is a popular spot each Valentine's Day.

SWEETS: And 'you can't go wrong with flowers

Continued from Page 1A

The line at Stafford's mirrored that at The Flower Mill in downtown Porterville.

According to Daryl Walters, owner of The Flower Mill, Valentine's Day is one of the largest one-day holiday occasions.

"Everyone wants their love sent on Valentine's Day," Walters said.

Walters also confirmed that as expected, by far the most popular floral request is a dozen red roses. However The Flower Mill carries roses in 12 different colors for the holiday, and they're all imported from South America.

"This year the second most popular flower is tulips," Walters added.

Walters personal opinion is that the best choice for floral arrangements is Peruvian lilies because they not only look nice,

but they are very-long lasting.

The Valentine's Day rush also requires a lot of planning, staff and grunt work.

"We start preparing in December," Walters said. "It takes a large crew of people, from delivering to taking order to making the arrangements."

Walters estimates several hundred of arrangements are ordered during Valentine's Day.

"We triple the staff size for the holiday, and everybody puts in 70-100 hours for the week," Walters said.

Beverly Hiram is in front of the line Monday afternoon ordering candy and flowers for a physical therapist who helped her mother. Hiram has been a customer at The Flower Mill for years.

"Yes, every year I shop at The Flower Mill," Hiram said. "I just love the people here and the service you receive."

"They're so creative and artistic," Hiram added. "And Daryl [Walters] is the bright spot of The Flower Mill."

Another customer at The Flower Mill was sent in as a sort-of consultant for a friend. Joyce Crawford, loyal Flower Mill customer for the past four years, was shopping for a friend who needed help picking something out for his wife.

"I picked out the multi-colored roses, their beautiful," Crawford said.

Crawford admitted to being sent on such errand for friends on many occasions, and when asked why, she simply responded with a grin, "because I have good taste."

"You can't go wrong with flowers as a vessel to convey one's feelings and emotions for their loved ones," Walters said.

► Contact Theresa McQueen at 784-5000, Ext. 1043 or tmcqueen@portvillerecorder.com.