Creative Dates

Dating is not the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions Folklore. Often fairy tales are the closest thing associated with the word. The definition of folklore is “traditional customs, tales, sayings, dances, or art forms preserved among a people,” or “an often unsupported notion, story, or saying that is widely circulated.” (1) That means that tired jokes and old wives tales are a large portion of what folklore actually is. Folklore doesn’t need to be hundreds of years old to be studied. In the BYU folklore classes, students write up projects on more modern folklore, such as pranks and dating stories.

Not only is dating a rather large part of culture at BYU, the stories about weird dates get passed around and around until they are more legend rather than an individual act. Through the archives there are records of creative dates spanning decades with similar situations described by people separated through time, who had no way to ever contact each other save though the stories of their people.

The same ideas circulate over and over, losing any sense of creativity except to the people living in the moment when the dates themselves occur. Creativity in the context of dating is usually defined as anything besides dinner and a movie. When asked, frequent daters will define a creative date as either a date that took a lot of planning or a date that was completely spontaneous. Most of the examples of ‘creative’ dates were variations on the theme of dinner and a movie that gained creativity because they were done in non-traditional ways. People like having dinner and watching a movie, even though they know it’s a boring date idea.

Dates involving food or unusual locations are very popular with those who consider themselves creative daters. Other ideas that show up again and again are dress up dates (where couples will dress according to a certain theme) and dreadfully inconvenient dates that border on pranks. The usual reasoning for torturing a date is to see them in unscripted situations so that they reveal their ‘real self.’ As with most short-cuts, it works but has major drawbacks. One young gentleman liked to bring his dates on a tour of the local morgue. Once there, he would have a friend lie on one of the autopsy tables and pretend to rise as one of the undead when his date came close. In his own words, he was forced to stop after one of his dates had ‘unexpected mental repercussions.’ (FA 14 1.1.1.2.2.1)
**Creatively Located Dates**

*Examples of Creatively Located Dates in the Special Collections Archives:*

**Dating At BYU (FA 01 719)**

Thermal dates occur anywhere there are out blowing vents on campus and couples can keep pleasantly warm on a cold winter night.

‘Sardines’ is a type of reverse hide and seek where one couple hides and more and more couples join them in their hiding spot as they find them. It ends with one couple wandering around a silent building looking for all the rest.

**Creative Dating: A BYU Tradition (FA 01 787)**

Camping in the park makes dinner and a movie creative because it’s done in a tent.

Carriage ride around Provo are romantic, but a bit one note. They are best accompanied by a fancy dance or other fairytale type activity.

Chariot ride around Provo with a home-made chariot under the power of roommate-horses are a feat of engineering. These are less formal than a carriage ride.

Kidnapping is surprisingly popular as a courting activity.

Hide and Seek gains new thrill by being performed in a public building or grave yard. Couples should remember to be respectful of the patrons with legitimate business.

**Creative Dating Customs (FA 01 1347)**

According to legend, if a person runs across the lawn just south of the statue of ASB building while staring at Brigham Young, the statue’s legs will appear to move. It was not clear from the primary source as to whether this was true, but everyone had fun running back and forth.

Bowling is more fun if the person doing it is blindfolded. This may not be possible in an actual bowling alley, as employees are not likely to be amused.

Snow caves built by local boy scouts can make a lovely date location after they’ve been vacated by their original inhabitants. Any coldness is an excuse for extra cuddling.

**Creative Dating and Folklore? How Do They Relate? (FA 01 1368)**
Spontaneous snowmobiling is probably less fun than planned snowmobiling, but that depends on the surprised date’s sense of humor and level of winter dress.

Indoor camping is appropriate when it’s too cold to go outside. Black bags over windows make it dark no matter what time it is, and tents can supposedly be pitched indoors. This is one of the few dates where it is appropriate to wear pajamas.

Boats are really fun for those who have access to a boat. Likewise, water-skiing or water-tubing can be exciting.

Arcades are an underutilized resource for dates. The games are fairly inexpensive, and there are a lot of different types.

Sundance had an outdoor theater that still exists. Dates can have a picnic while being entertained in the mountains.

With such heterogeneous elevation, there are lots of lookout points where couples can go to ‘view the lights of the city.’

Hunting as a couple is probably an activity that should be discussed thoroughly before it is planned. Not everyone reacts well to killing Bambi’s mom.

Haunted houses have all the appeal of a scary movie without the stigma of cuddle manipulation.

*Dating You Is Like Christmas Day. . . It’s Cold And There’s Nothing To Do; First Dates At BYU* (FA 01 1487)

If the bishop is serious about people in his ward getting married, he’ll likely allow them to use his house as a location for an inexpensive date. He might even make dinner.

Renting tandem bicycles is okay for double dates. Pretending to pick the locks on the previously rented bicycles is thrilling according to ones who tried it.

Living rooms can be transformed into any number of exotic places with the help of paper murals or excess fabric. Themed dates are easily enhanced by homemade scenery.

*Authentic BYU Date: Folklore Research Project* (FA 01 2122)
The Eyring Science Center is really great for dates. There is the planetarium, which does shows every Friday, as well as telescopes on the roof. There are also a great number of science fair type exhibits to view every day.

Apparently Provo has several nearby hot springs where groups can go on warm dates. Wintertime is especially popular for thermal activities.

When it’s warm, water gun fights are a popular way to cool off. There are quite a few variations on the theme, mostly involving where these fights can occur. None of the buildings where this date has taken place will be mentioned for posterity because someone could get in trouble. For more information, the full project is available in the archives.

Some bookstores don’t mind if dates come to their cafes to play board games. Buying something probably goes a long way towards good will though.

_The Ritual of Creative Dating (FA 01 2285)_

Dates can attempt to fly homemade UFOs. According to the source, it’s still fun even if no one is successful.

To test a date’s reaction to discomfort, formal wear may be used in inappropriate venues like monster truck rallies.

Rock Canyon is fun to roll down. Method is up to individuals.

Putting on makeup in the dark is made ten times more acceptable when it is being put on by men.

The Provo River is rife with small boats set free on group dates.

Though Provo lacks and actual Jungles, substitutions for live animals in the form of plush toys can go a long way to enhancing a simple nature walk.
**Dress Up Dates**

Examples of Dress Up Dates in the Special Collections Archives:

**Folklore Archive 01- Student Projects**

*Creative Dating: A BYU Tradition* (FA 01 787)
Couples on Happy Days themed dates dress up in clothing from the 1950’s and drive a model-T, and went to view a play.

*Creative Dating Customs* (FA 01 1347)
Some couples wear really ugly clothes to the mall and play board games where they’re sure to get a lot of dirty looks. This is more of a public nuisance than a date.

The important aspect of a decade themed party is getting the right music. Dressing up and listening to historically accurate music are essential to get the feel for a decade.

Roller-skating or ice-skating is meant to occur in outdated clothing. Often, the DJ will allow people to request songs; this should be taken advantage of to draw attention to the people in the group who are appropriately dressed in era-specific clothing.

*Authentic BYU Date: Folklore Research Project* (FA 01 2122)
For people who like marathon dates, face-painting before an activity can be a great addition to the lineup. After, football games are ideal extensions, but more inappropriate situations could be found.

It is somewhat popular to attend a semi-formal event in formalwear picked out at DI.
**Food Dates**

**Examples of Food Dates in the Special Collections Archives:**

*Creative Dating: A BYU Tradition (FA 01 787)*

Progressive Dinner Dates involve ordering different food items from multiple restaurants. These usually occur along streets where there are a row of fast food chain restaurants.

Elevator Dinner is a simple variation on dinner that occurs in an elevator. Amusement is derived mostly from the reactions of people who want to use the elevator.

Candle-lit dinner at a fast food restaurant brings a feeling of celebration to an inexpensive activity.

The genie is a roommate who consents to toss food over a hedge to a couple whenever they utter the phrase ‘I wish.’ The situation is more amusing if the wishes are improbable.

*Creative Dating Customs (FA 01 1347)*

Candle lit dinner in the back of a truck or rented U-Haul can be nice if the view is overlooking the mountains.

Tinfoil dinners are nice after hiking in the mountains. Ghost stories and s’mores make them more fun than romantic.

A messy dinner can shock dates if it is done rarely. Using a disposable plastic table-cloth, utensils are drawn on but otherwise not provided for difficult finger foods like spaghetti and ice-cream.

To complicate an otherwise simple dinner, couples on a group date can be randomly assigned to use non-regular kitchen implements such as spatulas and whisks as eating utensils.

Dinner based on a letter instead of a theme can be delicious or disgusting depending on the creator. F is for fish, fondue, and fries. B is for broccoli, bananas and bacon.

*Creative Dating and Folklore? How Do They Relate? (FA 01 1368)*

An ‘S’ themed date has Star Wars, skating, spaghetti, salad and sprite.

Food picked from nature is free, so some couples like to collect pinecones and pick out the nuts. Berry picking would also be appropriate, as there are a large number of edible berries on campus.
Dinner on a golf course is probably only possible if permission of the owners is obtained. But driving around on the golf-cart to get to the dinner location would be very posh.

**Authentic BYU Date: Folklore Research Project (FA 01 2122)**

Some group dates have included a dinner where everyone’s hands are tied together. This either promotes cooperation or leaves the guests hungry and irritated. Afterwards, couples can compound any feelings of resentment by writing out embarrassing things for each other to do. The trick to this game is that the person who writes something out has to do whatever they wrote.

**The Ritual of Creative Dating (FA 01 2285)**

When eating colored candies, a group or couple may assign each color a topic, and for each piece eaten the person who ate it must talk about something related to that topic. For more OCD dates, a whole conversation could be had on each topic as the candies are eaten in proper color order.

Soup served out of carved out pumpkins is more thematically interesting than a pan.

If everyone is warned before-hand, a whip cream fight on a date can be a creative bit of excitement. As a spontaneous activity, it has potential to ruin someone’s day.

If trash bags are put over clothing and hair ties are provided, dates may possibly enjoy eating something messy with their hands tied behind their backs.

**Citations:**