

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Tuesday, August 6, 2002

Out of the ordinary

Students show their creative side when finding alternative ways to enjoy dates with a loved one

By Lyndsey Sage
THE BATTALION

Like most students, Anita Barron considers a normal date to be dinner and a movie. However, others see planning a date as a way to show their creative side along with showing their attraction.

From picnics to hot-air balloon rides, from amusement parks to zoos and museums, students have reinvented the "traditional" date of dinner and a movie. By stretching their creativity and incorporating touches of their personality, students have found there is no limit when it comes to options for date.

As Barron discovered, something as simple as an afternoon in the park offers one option students can take when stepping out of their normal date routine.

"He called me that day and said, 'I'll come pick you up in the afternoon and wear something active,'" Barron, a junior wildlife and fisheries science major, said. "When he picked me up, he told me that I was not equipped."

Not knowing what to expect or what was going on, Barron followed along with her date. He drove her to Academy, where he purchased her a disc golf Frisbee.

"We went out to Research Park and played all 18 holes of disc golf," Barron said. "It wasn't awkward because we were doing something, and he was teaching me how to disc golf so I was learning something new."

After a round of disc golf, Barron's date pulled an ice chest out of the back of his car, complete with sandwiches from Schlotsky's and bottled water.

"We laid out a blanket and just talked," Barron said.

Then the two went back to their houses to shower and reunited that night to light fireworks.

"It was the best first date I had ever been on," she said. "I had no idea what we were



JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Heather Jernigan, sophomore general studies major, and Ross Dillon, junior mechanical engineering major, test drive a 1998 Ford Mustang Cobra on one of their unique dates.

doing. I liked it because I didn't have to decide; on the first date I would rather the guy decide. It was all such a surprise."

For Suzanne Henry, a senior kinesiology major, the most creative date she went on occurred in the mall parking lot.

"It was our second date," Henry said. "We went to dinner first, and then we were driving toward Hollywood Theaters so I thought we were going to the movies. Then [my date] turned into the mall and drove around to the J.C. Penney parking lot. Then he parked the truck, put in a CD, and asked me to dance."

Despite the cold February temperatures, the couple danced for almost an hour.

"It wasn't supposed to be

cold but it turned out to be," she said. "We didn't have our jackets or anything but we wanted to keep dancing."

Henry says the date was one she will always remember because it was so out of the ordinary.

"I had never been dancing in the mall parking lot, and it wasn't what I was expecting at all," Henry said. "We usually just rent movies. Sometimes we go out to dinner, usually with friends though."

Not only is it a way to avoid the crowded dance halls and bars for alone time, but it proves that anything, even an empty mall parking lot, can be romantic with some imagination.

Jeff Stokes, a senior information and operations management major, also opted for a different approach on dating

when he decided to take his girlfriend out one afternoon.

"It was a Saturday and we wanted to go ride 4-wheelers," Stokes said. "We called around but we couldn't find anyone to rent them from. So we decided to go test-drive cars. It was something I used to do."

To add to the fun, not only did the two go with the intention of test-driving some cars, but they posed as potential car buyers.

"We decided to dress up and play the role," Stokes said.

The couples pretended they were interested in purchasing a car, even asking financial questions and details about car packages. After they looked at several different cars, they took one for a drive.

"It was fun because we were role playing," Stokes said. "Most people go to dinner and to a movie or a bar, so this was something to do during the day. It was a good way to waste three or four hours in the afternoon."

Even limited to a small town environment, students have found ways to circumvent the conventional date.

"Most people go to dinner and to a movie or a bar, so this was something different"

— Jeff Stokes
senior information and operations management major

VOLUME Control

Music Review V 2.002

The Start
Shakedown
Geffen Records



The Start broke loose on the California music scene with its debut album *Shakedown* last fall. Led by the vocals of Aimee Echo, The Start brings a new sound to the overdone metal rock genre. Unfortunately, the music scene may not be ready for a mix of hard rock riffs with the synthesized techno sounds The Start offers.

The album's tone and overall sound is set from the beginning of the album as the song "Shakedown" is obviously the basis for the album. Over synthesized sounds dominate and cover up the rock sounds of Jamie Miller's guitar and Scott Ellis's drumming ability. Listening deeply to the songs will reveal well choreographed beats and guitar riffs, which are sadly covered up by techno effects and Echo's amateur lyrics. Echo's voice takes away from the album in a number of ways as it lacks the energy to make an album like this work.

Fast, upbeat sounds, keep the album going, especially on tracks like "Melt" and "Gorgeous." Songs like "Glimmer Man," "Nemesis" and "Melt" are the best on the album as the quick rhythms will cause foot tapping and head banging. Most of the songs on the album sound alike, with the only different track being "Time," where whatever rock sounds The Start had were traded in for a complete techno trance sound. It is with this track that Echo's lyrics and voice fit the sound and balance with the rest of the band. The hyper tone, worked up from the previous quick moving songs, is relaxed as this last track has a much more relaxed feel and tempo.

A lack of catchy lyrics, over synthesized sounds, and similar songs caused the death of *Shakedown*. Although placed as a top 10 album during 2001 by the AP Critics Poll, *Shakedown* was just the start for the band.

—Micah Grau



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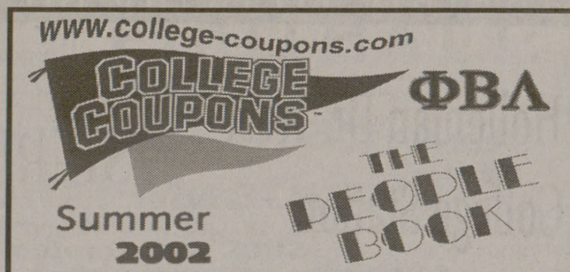
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