

# MAY, THE MONTH OF MOMS & MEMORIES!



## IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

- What to do with memorabilia – some advice from fellow readers
- Making your mom's life easier – how to celebrate mother's day in a very special way
- Remembering those we have lost on Memorial Day – honoring their memories by treasuring their photos. Consultant Dale Robinson discusses the art of scrapbooking

## What to do with memorabilia-some ideas from fellow readers.

I think it is so sad when I see old photos in an antique mall or find a shoe box full of pictures that are stuck together. Memorializing loved ones in an album or scrap book is a wonderful way to keep this from happening. Which do you think is better: having them stowed away in bin number 68 in the garage, or having them in a beautiful album on your bookshelf? The best way to keep memories is to put them into a useful setting. Here are some other ideas I have heard. Each of these comes from a client of mine and fellow reader, so I can't take any credit:

"My mom passed away when I was 20. She traveled a lot, so she bought me a lot of tee shirts. I wanted to remember her travels and her, so I made a quilt out of all the tee shirts she bought me."

"I put all of my personal letters into a drawer near my desk so I can go back and read them with ease."

"I lead a very busy life, but my travels are very important to me. Something I look forward to when I return is spending an evening arranging my pictures and souvenirs. The weekend after I get back, I make a new album highlighting my trip. I have them displayed for my enjoyment. Visitors also enjoy looking through my books."

*(Note: the Wall Street Journal recently gave an excellent review to <http://www.mypublisher.com>, a service that lets you organize your digital photos and order custom photo books. For tips on printed photos, see the article later in this newsletter!)*

"I am a full time working woman, but I have a passion for interior design. At the end of every week, I have a small pile of ripped out pages from magazines. I put them away into my file system. Whenever I need an idea, or I am getting ready to redesign a room, I take these files out and get inspired! When I go out to purchase paint, I can bring the pictures that inspired me to match the color exactly.

"I couldn't bear to throw away my baby girl's little outfits, so I picked the cutest part of each one, cut it out, and made a whole quilt out of her baby clothes. My daughter just loves it!"

The key here is that they are getting joy and use from their memorabilia instead of stowing it away. If an item doesn't make you happy, why keep it? For your memories, I suggest the following rule of thumb. Take a medium sized Rubbermaid tub. This is the only tub you get to store your memorabilia. If you want to keep it, make something useful from it so it doesn't go into the tub. If it does go in the tub and you don't look at it for one year, you have to get rid of it. I realize there are exceptions and I of course defer to those. For example, one of my clients has dedicated some of his extra space to memorabilia that he wants to store for a long time. It is in four tubs, well labeled, and he often goes back to reminisce. Your memories are precious; treat them that way!

## Making your mom's life easier – how to celebrate Mother's Day in a very special way

I have a lot of women who contact me to help out their mom. Most of these mothers are retired and very busy enjoying life. They also have a lifetime of stuff! When we're finished working together, they find that they have more space, more peace of mind and less clutter. While this is one of my favorite kinds of work to do, it's also a very special gift that you can do for your own mother. Sometimes the act of going through a lifetime of memories can be more precious than the final result. I strongly believe that the best gifts in life are actionable ones, not more stuff!

Print out this list and visit your mom. With this in hand, start going through the stacks of boxes. You may not get much organized; in fact, you may wind up sitting in a pile of boxes all day. That's OK. This can be the greatest gift of all.

### 1. Attic

Many older homes have stacks of packed boxes in the attic, untouched for years. Depending on your and your mom's goals, you may go through these together or you may do it for her. Lay a sheet or tarp on the good floor (to prevent dust getting everywhere) and sort what you find into four piles:

- Keep
- Toss
- Sell
- Donate

As you are cleaning out the attic, you may find some lost treasures. Bring them out to display for you mom. Sell or donate whatever doesn't spark a smile. Keep in mind that if it has been in the attic this long, she probably won't miss it. However, I suggest double checking with mom first or working with her from the start. What you may think is just a dusty, empty box may be her treasured debutante gift.

### 2. Kitchen

If your mom is disorganized or just plain too busy, this is a great thing to help her out with. Over the years kitchens tend to acquire more stuff. Kitchen utensil drawers get stuffed, cupboards are filled with way too many dishes, and there is usually a ton of appliances that are never used. Brace yourself... some of them will have been gifts from you! Again, sort them into four piles (as described in #1) and she will be thrilled!

### 3. Master Closet

This is a great way to get rid of your mom's outdated clothing. If the clothes are in good condition, you can take them to a consignment shop. If not, goodwill is always grateful for clothing. If she's reluctant to let the clothes go, or if you want to make the gift extra-special, combine the closet cleaning with a visit from a professional who specializes in makeovers or a mother's day trip to shop for new clothes!

### 4. Linen Closet

There is always more sheets than necessary. My rule is three sets for every bed. Your mom probably has five sets for the spare bedroom, just in case every living relative drops by unannounced on the same weekend! The reality is that the spare bedroom only needs one set of sheets, since it doesn't get heavy use. Try organizing the tea towels by occasion. For example, Christmas towels should all go together, while spring colors should go with spring. Throw away any half empty bottles of shampoo, lotion, and toothpaste. Keep a small tub to hold all of the guest soaps, shampoos, toothbrushes, and razors. Go to <http://www.fredmeyer.com> for their Rubbermaid items this week– they are having a HUGE sale!

### 5. Sitting Room or Den

This may be your mom's favorite room. It is where she reads, watches TV and gets some relaxation time. Just think how much more relaxed she will be when you remove all the unnecessary clutter! There will be countless magazines that can be recycled. Move all magazines older than this month into one pile, then ask her if you can get rid of them all at once. If she wants to keep them, put them neatly on a bookshelf, and use an accent piece as a bookend. Not only does this look nice, but it helps her see how many magazines she has and how much room they are taking up. If your and your siblings' artwork is decorating the room, have pieces framed or put in a portfolio so they can be enjoyed without being damaged or getting in the way. There's a great price on a portfolio right now at [http://www.dickblick.com/zz150/19/products.asp?param=0&ig\\_id=684](http://www.dickblick.com/zz150/19/products.asp?param=0&ig_id=684) that you can use for this purpose.

### 5. Photos

You know that mom or dad is constantly taking photographs but there's no time to put them into albums. Helping them with this not only makes more space but it brings them more family joy. Because it is your family, you are the very best person to do this. The rest of this newsletter has many techniques for organizing them, but when it's your parent's items, remember:

- If you need more information about the photo (like who a relative is or what date it was taken on), set them aside in an archival photo box to ask Mom about later
- Toss photos that are blurred, cut off, or otherwise damaged, and toss duplicates
- Before you get started, consider taking the photos to the lab and have them bulk-scanned on to CDs so you can easily share them with other family members and so you have your own copy
- The best part of this gift isn't the albums, it's the quality time you spend with her looking at it when you're done!

## What to do with memorabilia-some ideas from fellow readers.

For those of you whose mother's have passed away, I am sorry for your loss. Here are three suggestions for a way to bring more meaning to Mother's Day:

- \* Visit an elderly lady whose family is too far away to visit. It will make that lady feel so special! Here are some websites where you can go to volunteer:

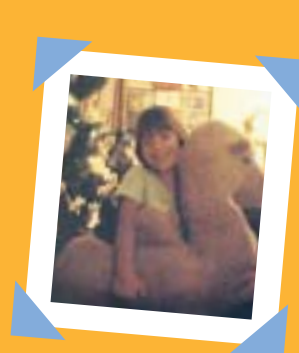
<http://www.jfsseattle.org/vol.html#visitor>

<http://www.fremontpublic.org/vols/rsvp.html>

<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/uvwk/volunteer/search-2.tcl?target=&zip=&r>

- \* Plant a tree or a plant that reminds you of your mother.
- \* research family tree genealogy

## CELEBRATING NATIONAL SCRAPBOOK MONTH



The month of May is National Scrapbook Month and many beginner classes and ongoing workshops will be attended by an ever-growing populace this month. And with good reason. Scrapbooking is not a new concept. Many of you have grandmothers who also kept journals and picture scrapbooks. There is no better way to consolidate your memorabilia and precious photos than scrapbooks. There are many products out there designed for the beginner and experienced scrapbooker but it's important to choose a quality album with quality pages that will last a lifetime. Your photos, especially the older black and white photos typically last 70-90 years and your scrapbook album should, too. After all, having done the work of documenting your family's events in the first place, it should be your requirement to only do it once

I'll use this opportunity to teach a brief lesson now, incorporating many of the questions I receive during one of my classes. How does one begin? First and foremost you should start by locating all the boxes and envelopes of photos from around your house. Sort through them quickly, don't labor over each photo. And this is the hardest thing to do: as you go through those photos and if you don't know who's in those photos and there are no living relatives to help you, throw them out. That's right, get rid of them. Are you feeling the guilt? It's a hard lesson to learn, but if you don't know those people your children won't either and you'll just burden them with more paraphernalia that they'll have to throw out.

So, let's put that lesson you just learned to good use. Go through all your modern pictures and label them. Now. That way the names of the individuals in your current pictures will be there for all time and your children won't be in a quandary over what to save. Here's a tip: please use a special labeling pencil on the back of your photos. Ballpoint ink has three problems. The ink is known as "phantom ink". That means that as your photo ages, the ink gradually fades. The second problem frequently encountered is that ballpoint ink slowly penetrates through the front of your photos. You've probably seen that already. Especially on "sky" or lighter landscapes, you'll see "mirror writing" as time and ink take a toll on your photos. The third problem is pressure. That tiny ball point creates grooves right to the front of the photo, marring the image permanently.

I hope I have encouraged everyone to set aside a couple of hours a week to begin this labeling process. Here's a thought to get you through the next few weeks: If you select just 10 photos from each year of your child's life in a small book with a few stories, they will have more to enjoy over the years to come than most people, and definitely more than they have now."

Now, as you review and label those pictures, you can simultaneously sort them into piles. Remove the duplicates or those which are very similar to one another. Just set those aside to send to people who would be interested in them. They're all labeled, and that step will be greatly appreciated by the recipients.

Next, throw out all the pictures which are fuzzy (unless those photos show individuals which do not appear in any other photo). Those fuzzy pictures will not get less fuzzy with age and you don't need to keep them. You can sort your photos by decades or by individual, family events, vacations or your own method.

Okay, they're sorted, now what? Your next best step is to attend a scrapbooking class with a knowledgeable consultant. At Creative Memories all the consultants are extremely knowledgeable about our products and we won't get you bogged down in stickers and extraneous layout designs. We do have full line of mounting papers and stickers if that's your interest, but Creative Memories has a streamlined process to help you complete -- not just start -- albums. After you've attended a beginning class, be sure to attend a Power Layout Class & Workshop. Do you want to learn how to lay out an entire album in a weekend? This class is for you. My albums are very simply designed and in my case, creativity has nothing to do with the process. We all know people who want to protect their family pictures for the next generation. Where are those photos? If they're in boxes or in albums that are destroying, not preserving, those memories, these are the people with whom you should share these classes.

Select your album. I have chosen albums made only by Creative Memories. I'd had Hallmark albums among other brands for many years and my photos became horribly bleached out -- some in less than 5 years -- and I have now redone all those albums using Creative Memories albums. I trust their quality and their MIT-staffed Technology Laboratory which exhaustively tests each new product. Creative Memories has been in existence for 17 years, but the patented album and its hinge-binding technology has been around since the 1940's, marketed under the Webway brand name. As a matter of pride, Creative Memories' founder can state that the Webway albums her mother used in the 1950's to document her life, are still in fabulous shape and the white pages have never discolored! What a tribute! After four years and 19 albums, I decided in July, 2002 to begin my own business as an Independent Consultant for Creative Memories. These days I appreciate Creative Memories not only for its products but also for its high level of customer satisfaction. Over and over again I hear about photos and family history not being enjoyed because photos are stored in basements and shoeboxes. As a Creative Memories consultant I have the pleasure of working with my clients on a one-to-one basis, supporting their efforts to document their family's special moments and relationships.

I can teach a class in your home or in mine. I will show your friends and relatives how fast and easy it is to make an album that will last for generations. Each person will receive a three-hour hands-on class and workshop, all the materials necessary to complete their first page, a class handout, and a special gift at the time they submit their \$10.00 class fee. With my ongoing workshops, I will be with you and your friends each step along the way as all of you complete your albums. If you mention Leslie Straka's name when you book your class, you and your friends may attend any of my beginner classes for only \$5.00. That's 50% off. This offer is good through the summer, 2004. I look forward to seeing you at a class or workshop at my home, soon! Happy Scrapping!

## Workshop Schedule for May & June

**NATIONAL SCRAPBOOK DAY**  
Sunday, May 2, from 10:00 - 5:00 pm \$25.00, includes lunch.

**CLASS and WORKSHOP TIMES** - \$10.00 unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, May 5, from 12:00 - 4:00 pm

Wednesday, May 12, from 7:00 - 10:00 pm

Thursday, June 10, from 7:00 - 10:00 pm

Sunday, June 13, from 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Father's Day and Heritage Theme Workshop Ideas

If the dates and times don't fit into your busy schedule, Call me to arrange a time that's convenient for you. Classes can be held in my home with a minimum of three people.

**POWER LAYOUT CLASS & WORKSHOP** - \$20.00  
Includes Step-by-Step Instruction and Power Layout Handout

Sunday, June 27, from 1:00 - 5:00

Power Layout Box & Glides - \$25.00