

THE ART OF SCRAPBOOKING

By Carol Cron

COMM 393

BACKGROUND

The art of scrapbook design is a old and cherished hobby, which has seen a frenzy of increased interest in the last few years. Over the years, young girls, in particular, have collected memorabilia and souvenirs of their childhood and kept them in their treasured scrapbooks.

Modern scrapbooking has focused on giving more creativity and interest to the hum-drum family photo album. As photo albums collect dust from years of sitting on the shelf, they are page after page after page of picture after picture. *A scrapbook holds the best of the pictures and often tells a story with just a few photos.* For instance, a child's scrapbook might have an opening page of a birth announcement, a hospital bracelet, a footprint keepsake, and some pictures of the momentous arrival.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

A technical description of scrapbooking includes the specific supplies required, which are: acid free and lignin free album pages, acid free plastic sheet protectors, acid free, lignin free stickers, colored paper and paper frames, double sided tape or smooth drying photo paste, novelty scissors and fine tipped permanent markers. The idea is for the scrapbook to last for many, many years, and not suffer deterioration because paper, plastic and other materials used contained destructive chemicals.

Acid can cause your photos to deteriorate and can cause paper to become brittle. Photos that have been in those magnetic pages that are yellowing or paper that is brittle are a result of acid affecting them over the years. *Acid-free means that the ph is at 7.0 or above but too high a ph can be a problem too.* What you really want is something that is chemically stable and ph-neutral (at 7.0) So, it's safest to use acid-free papers, cardstock, album pages, stickers, inks, etc. in your scrapbooks. *Lignin is a substance found in wood pulp and it can cause the paper to become chemically unstable and turn brown and brittle. Also, lignin releases acids and can cause previously acid-free paper to become non-acid free.*

Where to Buy Supplies

The supplies used for scrapbooking can be purchased from a number of places. A craft store such as M.J. Designs would be the first recommendation. Ask for scrapbooking supplies, where you will find creative stickers, acid-free colored paper, novelty scissors, appropriate glue and tape, and a variety of markers. Another type of store would be your local photographic retailer, such as Ritz Camera Centers. They will sell acid free scrapbook albums and refill pages.

The pages of the scrapbook are called layouts. Ideas for layouts are absolutely endless. Magazines, books and web sites abound with thousands of ideas, and it just takes a spark of an idea for the creativity to flow from the scrapbooker, whether novice or experienced.

GETTING STARTED

How do you start? The first step is to decide what type of album you want to make. Possibilities are only limited by the creativity you have! For a child, ideas include a Special Events Scrapbook, an ABC Scrapbook, or a Pre-School Years Scrapbook. For an older child, for whom you have never made a scrapbook, perhaps a middle school or high school graduation or a 16th birthday would be a nice occasion to commemorate with the gift of a scrapbook of their baby and childhood years. Scrapbooks make ideal gifts for a wedding or anniversary. A bride or groom will treasure a scrapbook with lots of candid photos, along with a napkin, confetti from the table decorations, or flower petals from a bouquet.

A TYPICAL LAYOUT

Remember that the scrapbook will have a right hand first page, then two facing pages thereafter, until the last page, which is a left hand page. If the event needs more than one page, be sure to make them on facing pages. Save the single pages for front and backs. For instance, the first page could be the birth announcement page, then pages 2 and 3 (facing) would be newborn pages. Page 4 might be a single page of baby's first Christmas, page 5 might be a memorable first birthday, and pages 6 and 7 (facing) might be the first trip to Disney World. In other words, if a layout needs to take two pages, make sure they are not pages 3 and 4 or pages 5 and 6 (front and back, rather than facing).

TRIMMING OR CROPPING PICTURES

Let's assume most of the pictures you will use are in a photo album, with some additional pictures in the picture envelopes. The most difficult job is sorting the photographs. Once this part is done, the fun begins. A big advantage of scrapbook pictures vs. album pictures is that pictures can be CROPPED. *Cropping a photo means to cut out part of the picture that takes away from the primary subject.* If you decide a pole or tree ruins an otherwise adorable picture, cut them out! If there's another person (or part of a person) with a dumb expression which takes away from the main subject, cut them out. If the Christmas tree is blurry, cut it out. When pictures are trimmed, it is possible to put as many as five pictures on one page. If you are having trouble narrowing the number of pictures to five, you should consider doing a two page layout.

Mats and Frames

Trimmed photographs look great when they are put on a colorful mat with just a .25 inch margin. *A mat is a piece of colored paper or cardstock.* You should avoid too much thickness. Another technique is to use templates, and make a unique frame for the picture. *A template is a stencil; you can cut out the inside of the frame and place it over the picture, or cut the photo and mount it on the frame.* You have to decide on this before you trim the picture. Those small school pictures of the children can be put in small flower frames and put on a "family tree".

Novelty scissors are a fairly new product on the market, and make cutting fancy borders and edges a snap. It is good to have at least two different novelty scissors as well as a good pair of straight edge scissors.

ADDITIONS OTHER THAN PHOTOGRAPHS

Don't forget the little mementos. Not everything can be placed in a scrapbook, but certainly you can include things such as birth announcements, party invitations, autographs of special people, handwritten poems to complement a layout, and of course, the senior prom invitation. The first report card can accompany the class picture, and confetti can be glued on the page to liven up a special party.

NARRATING YOUR SCRAPBOOK

Titles

It's important to write in your scrapbook. This is sometimes called "journaling." It can be done by hand, on the computer, or with stickers. My preference is to use the Wordart or Textart function of a word processor along with a color printer. The color printer offers so much flexibility in choosing the color of the text to either match the colors in the photos or complement. You can make headlines in light blue to announce the arrival of a baby boy, who might be dressed in light blue, or you can use bright red and green for a great Christmas layout.

Blurbs

If a photo is crying out for the subject to "say something," ready made or blank stickers are perfect. A picture of an adorable toddler is great with a sticker that asks "Would you like to see my portfolio?" A picture of Fido taking a nap is livened up with a "cloud" that shows him dreaming of the World's Biggest Bone. Making up a sentence or two of funny narration is what Jay Leno uses to spice up his Headlines feature.

Stickers

Stickers add instant "pep" to a layout. They can be simple or complex. They can add just color, or they can tie photos together. For instance, pictures of children at the local fire house (for open houses) can have stickers of the fire dog, fire helmet and a page border of a fire hose. Children at the beach can have a border of blue waves, and stickers of sand buckets and star fish. Stickers can also cover mistakes. If you put five pictures on the page, and then decide you only want four, and removing one takes some of the "paper" off, cover it with a sticker!

ADHESIVES

Scrapbooking experts have tried various adhesives, and the consensus is to use a product that will not damage or wrinkle the photo. Many scrapbookers use different forms of glue to safely affix their photographs to scrapbook pages. My preferred adhesive is double sided tape, which is

completely flat, and is much faster to use than regular transparent tape, which you have to make into loops, which often makes a bulge in the photo or other item you are mounting.

WHERE TO FIND MORE IDEAS

For some wonderful ideas and hints, check out the Web. The following URL is just one of hundreds of scrapbook home pages. [<http://members.tripod.com/~tln123/luv2scrap.html>]. The designer of this page, Terri Nachbor, is an accomplished scrapbooker and has put a lot of her creative layouts on her web page to share ideas with fellow scrapbookers.