

The Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS

Stuck on memories

Scrapbooks preserve life, enthusiasts say

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

For Karen Lochhead, making scrapbooks is about more than just gluing photographs on a page. It's about preserving life. The Woodbridge resident fell in love with making scrapbooks about 2-1/2 years ago, when a friend asked if she could use Ms Lochhead's home to host a scrapbook making party. When her friend demonstrated the scrapbook stickers, paper and other tools, Ms Lochhead was hooked. "I thought what a practical, creative hobby. You're creating such a treasure for your family." She is making a tribute album of her mother-in-law, who died in December 2002.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Karen Lochhead of Woodbridge displays some of her scrapping projects.

She gathered aunts and uncles at her home last spring and asked them to bring photographs of her mother-in-law or situations that remind them of her. She plans to complete an album about her mother-in-law's life and children. But Ms Lochhead has seen many people, including her parents, lose their precious, tangible memories because they collect tons of photographs and albums but do not document or organize them.

"It's just a bunch of photos in a box. It could belong to anybody... everyone makes the effort to take photos or videos and do what with it? Throw it in a drawer? (Making scrapbooks) is a method of trying to preserve our life."

Richmond Hill resident Sue Farguson finds scrapbooking tremendously rewarding. About five years ago, she decided to organize a big box of photographs and memorabilia from the bottom of her mother's closet.

She was amazed by the treasures she found in that old box, including her father's bank book from the 1920s, showing a deposit of a few pennies because that was all he could afford to invest, and her great grandfather's rent receipt book from 1908

that showed \$7.50 paid per month for a cottage.

"I don't think there are many people that can show you their great-grandfather's handwriting... I'm so glad those pictures won't end up in a garbage somewhere," she said.

Ms Farguson is now a scrapbook consultant, among the burgeoning number of professionals who help preserve other people's memories.

A news release out of Lodi, California, demonstrates the popularity of the scrapbook-making trend.

A company called Gotta Crop! (www.gottacrop.com) organizes weekend scrapbook making get-togethers at resort hotels, complete with supplies, prizes and even a

massage therapist for weary scrapbook creators.

Ms Farguson has seen the increasing popularity of scrapbook making first-hand. When she began as a "photo paramedic" six years ago, she led one class a month. Today, she leads between four and six classes a month and said the number of students has tripled since she started.

In workshops and classes, she teaches people how to crop photographs and how to lay out pictures and additions on a page.

"Amateur scrapbook producers can make major mistakes," she said. For example, failing to use photo-safe material, such as acid

GETTING STARTED

Gather all of your photographs and memorabilia in one place. This does not just mean photographs, but also wedding invitations, birth announcements, play bills, ticket stubs and boarding passes.

Decide how you would like to sort your pictures. Will you display them in chronological order, by family member, event, trip?

Get rid of the duplicates. Pick the best picture and put the rest into an envelope to give to someone else.

There are three properties to look for in a photo-safe album. First, make sure it is acid-free. Of course, there are degrees of "acid free," just like there are degrees of "low fat." Acid in your album will accelerate the deterioration of your colour photographs. You want an album that is lignin-free. Lignin is found in any type of vegetation and, unless it is removed, it will accelerate the deterioration of your colour photos and cause white pages to turn yellow. The last property to look for is buffered pages. Just like buffered aspirin, they have a coating on them. This allows you to put a greeting card with acid in it on a page and the acid will not migrate to the other side. When you put ticket stubs, programs and other memorabilia into your album, make sure to put them into a photo-safe mounting sleeve if you are putting photos on the same page. This will isolate the acid in that paper.

Crop your photos, cutting out the stray elbows or distracting backgrounds. Just keep in mind not to crop anything of historical reference, such as that old hobby horse, bell bottom pants or a car that will tell something about that time period. Do not crop Polaroid photos either. They have active chemicals that could harm your skin or eyes if you cut into them! Make a colour copy on good quality photo paper and crop that copy. Mount your photos with acid-free adhesives. If you are using paper as a colour or pattern accent in your album, make sure it is acid-free too.

The second most important part of your album, next to your photos, is journaling — the who, what, when and where of your photos. What would you say about each picture or event if you were explaining it to someone? If you can, be sure to use your own handwriting as much as possible.

Tips courtesy, Creative Memories consultant Sue Farguson

See SCRAPBOOKS, page 20



Evelyn Wolf

Dirty Knees

Restoring holiday flower labour of love

Q. I saved my Christmas poinsettia from last year and, while it is strong and healthy, it doesn't have any blooms. What did I do wrong?

A. While you can give your poinsettia a new life as a foliage shrub for the summer garden, frankly, getting it to bloom again for another Christmas is not worth the trouble. (Closet darkness, black plastic bags, daily doses of an exact amount of light for an exact amount of weeks, high temperatures, followed by cool temperatures, fertilizing, repotting, special pruning, magic wands, eye of newt, etc.)

Getting a poinsettia to bloom again isn't as simple as with other types of plants, since the huge scarlet heads are not actually flowers, but bracts — coloured modified leaves that surround the tiny cluster of bud-like flowers in the centre of the rosette of red leaves.

Another example of nature's wondrous diversity:

Poinsettia is a large shrub native to the sunny ravines and hillsides of Mexico.

Commercial growers use a wide assortment of special treatments to adjust bloom time, keep them compact, produce larger blooms than would naturally occur and, in recent years, produce them in white, pink, spotted, etc.

Poinsettias, as we know them, are virtually a man-made plant that bears little resemblance to the plant as it appears in the wild.

See POINSETTIA, page 20

one 80
NOT YOUR PARENTS NEWS PAPER!
york region's youth newspaper

In this month's issue...

In Essence - get the low down on what's happening with this hot group

Namugenyi - now co-hosting her own sports culture show NBAXL

Evanescence - they came, they played, they amazed

Next Door Noise - Pangea, tell us how it is

Now available

at all

York Region High Schools

www.oneeighty.ca

For advertising call Bryce McGregor at 905-294-2200