

Chapter 1

Previewing the Scrapbook Scene

In This Chapter

- ▶ Doing some initial organizing and planning
 - ▶ Finding out about photos
 - ▶ Picking out your materials and tools
 - ▶ Telling tales through journaling
 - ▶ Getting down to business
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Scrapbooking has become a spectacular phenomenon in recent years, in part because it's an ideal creative outlet for women. Men like it, too, even though right now most scrapbookers are female. People love scrapbooking because it's liberating. You get to show what you want to show and say what you want to say — in your own creative style and your own voice.

Scrapbooking certainly must mean something to you already; otherwise, you wouldn't be taking advantage of this book. And yet, maybe you're not sure exactly why scrapbooking attracts you. Perhaps you want to leave a legacy for future generations or to record the one your ancestors left for you. You may care more about scrapbooking current family events — for the enjoyment of those living *now*. Or you may want to scrapbook all of those things (and more) simply because you've grown to love the craft.

Whatever your motivation, we introduce you to the important points of scrapbooking in this chapter — styles, photos, tools, and materials, and strategies for putting everything together. We also tell you which chapters to head to when you want detailed information about something in particular.

Getting Set to Scrapbook

The process of getting ready to start scrapbooking involves a few little search and rescue operations: searching for and rescuing your photos and memorabilia, searching your memory to rescue the stories you've stored there, and searching for a permanent scrapbooking workspace that you can rescue from

your current living area. (Head to Chapter 2 for detailed information about getting ready to scrapbook.)

Although we take you through the process of finding and organizing all your photos and memorabilia, you can start separate organizational projects at the same time. Say, for instance, that you know you're going to make a personal history album or albums of your own life stories (not necessarily right now but sometime). When you're collecting all of your photos and memorabilia, put pictures of yourself in a separate holding place. Don't forget to look in old albums and family bibles, if you have any, or to ask family and friends whether you can copy pictures they have of you. Make at least two copies of each photo of yourself and keep them separate from the originals, which you can now put back with your other photos or store in a three-ring binder. (See Chapter 12 for a step-by-step description of how to organize material for your personal history scrapbook albums). Loosely arrange your copied photos and memorabilia for your autobiographical albums into page protectors by date.



Getting your personal photographs together helps you tell your stories. Every photo you look at is bound to trigger memories. If you put the stories on paper or record them on tape as you're doing your initial organization, you'll remember even more about them later when you start assembling your album and reviewing what you've recorded.

Surveying Some Scrapbooking Styles

Styles are nowhere near as formalized in scrapbooking as they are in fashion or in art. But what happens in the art and fashion worlds happens in scrapbooking, too. The style pendulum swings one way and then the other. For now, we'll leave it to the scrapbookers themselves to determine what's *in* this season and what's not.

To some extent, scrapbooking reflects fads and fashions of your local and national cultures. When you look closely at scrapbook designs during the cropping parties along the summer scrapbooking convention circuit, you find echoes of the fashion world. *Cropping parties* are similar to old-time quilting bees (and just as buzzy!). Scrapbookers spend hours at big round tables with their work spread out in front of them, cropping (or trimming their photos), arranging, adhering items to pages, sharing tools and ideas, and having fun.

In Chapter 3, just for fun, we've taken some of the style categories from art and fashion and applied them to scrapbooking. You may want to try some of these basic styles on your own pages:

- ✓ The *shutterbug style* focuses almost exclusively on the photographs and limits the use of accessories.
- ✓ The *artist's style* uses art materials like watercolors and colored pencils.

- ✓ The *classic style* ignores what's in or out with fashion and creates a timeless look (think basic black dress and pearls — or Jackie Kennedy Onassis).
- ✓ *Crafty-style* scrappers love to cut and glue and construct.
- ✓ *Shabby-chic-style* pages reflect a vintage look (worn and torn).
- ✓ *Heritage-style* albums harken back to the good old days — often in sepia tones, blacks and whites, or hand-tinted photos.
- ✓ *Modern-style* scrapbooks, like modern-art pieces, make use of clean shapes and lines.
- ✓ *Pop-style* scrapbooks are bold, edgy, and fun.

Just as your wardrobe includes different styles for different occasions, your scrapbook style, to one extent or another, also is determined by occasion and purpose. The scrapbook you make for a 50th wedding anniversary differs stylistically from the one you make for your preschooler's birthday party.



Look at the design principles that we give you in Chapter 3 before you start adapting or creating you own pages from scratch. You'll want to know how to build a three-color palette for an album and how to use the tic-tac-toe grid, an imaginary template you lay over your scrapbook pages (or your camera's viewfinder), to create dynamite layouts and photocompositions.

Highlighting Photos in Your Scrapbooks

Moving images interest people — the unending popularity of television and movies makes that crystal clear. Still images found in art pieces and photographs are just as interesting, though in different ways. A photograph, especially one that makes good use of light and detail, invites study and reflection. The better the photograph, the longer you look. Photos that tell the stories of personal lives are the real stuff of scrapbooking. If scrapbookers want people to look for a long time, having good photos is essential.

Snapping great photos

Here's a quick list of tips for taking great photos:

- ✓ Get a quality camera that takes good photographs, and practice, practice, practice.
- ✓ You *can* take it with you. You'll need your camera when that perfect shot presents itself. If you already have a good camera, resolve to carry it with you everywhere you go (do the same whenever you buy a new one).

- ✓ Read up on photography, and start implementing the tips you read about. *Photography For Dummies* by Russell Hart (Wiley) is a wonderful, easy-to-understand book on how to take great photographs.
- ✓ Enroll in a continuing-education photography workshop.
- ✓ Talk with professional photographers when you get the chance. Corner them at the next wedding you go to. Watch them and ask questions.
- ✓ Work to gain the cooperation of the people you're photographing.
- ✓ Use natural light whenever possible; use flash when you need to.
- ✓ Fill the frame. Get in close to your subjects — they won't bite! Unless you're deliberately taking a photo of the sky, you don't need to have three-quarters of your picture full of it.



If you're interested in photography, head to Chapter 4, where we explain how to frame your subject using the tic-tac-toe grid and share some of the best tricks of the trade. We also cover tips for using digital cameras in Chapter 4.

Enhancing the photos you have

Your photographs reveal how you see things and what you think is important. The more you learn about photography, the more accurate and attractive your revelations are.

But you don't have to be an excellent photographer to make good scrapbooks. In Chapter 5, we show you some interesting ways to enhance your photographs (the good ones and the not-so-good ones) before you put them into your albums. Here are a few of those tips:

- ✓ If you haven't filled the frame in a photograph, but you like the photo and want to use it, you can *crop* it — that is, cut it or trim it to get rid of the excess so whatever you focused on stands out clearly.

Here are a few things about cropping (a *major* scrapbooking activity) to keep in mind:

- Make a quality print from the original. You make a copy of your original photo so you can crop the copy — and not the original. Never cut or crop a one-of-a-kind photo, especially when you don't have the negative.
- Scrapbookers often crop their photos into shapes that complement the themes they're working with. Make shapes by using a template (manufactured or handmade) and drawing around the shape you want to cut out. You also can cut the photo into any shape you want without a template.

- Although scrapbookers sometimes cut out people's heads or certain objects in a photo to use on their pages, cropping the photo to its bare bones is not the best idea, particularly when something in the background helps you tell the story or serves as a prompt for your journaling. (For the scoop on journaling, see the section on "Telling a Story with Your Scrapbook" later in this chapter.)
- ✓ Experiment with color tinting on your black-and-white prints.
 - ✓ Find out how to mount a photo on a page to show it off to its best advantage.

Taking care of your treasures

After going to great lengths to get great photos, you want to be sure that they're going to last. In Chapter 6, we talk about how to store and care for photos and negatives so you can preserve them for as long as possible.

Here are just a few important points to keep in mind:

- ✓ Negatives can last longer than prints, but they're more sensitive, too. Handle them with care! If you ever need more prints from your negatives, you'll be glad that you did.
- ✓ Store negatives in a dark, dry place, and to make sure they're not touching each other, put them in negative sleeves, or holders.
- ✓ Prints need to be kept dry, too, out of sunlight, and stored in an environment that doesn't have extreme temperature fluctuations.
- ✓ Use descriptors (names, events, or dates) to organize your photos, negatives, and digital images (using the same system on everything you have). Use a sticky note on the back of the photograph to date it and to identify persons, places, and things in the photo. Label photo dividers if you're storing photographs in archival-quality storage boxes. Don't organize them using a numbering system; you'll be hopelessly confused in no time if you try it.

When you shoot pictures with a digital camera, you just take your memory card to your local photofinisher to have your images printed on quality photographic paper, or you can set up your own home-printing system. You'll need a printer (Canon, Hewlett-Packard, and Epson make good ones at a reasonable prices) and photo-quality paper (read the package labels). You also want to make sure the printer you buy uses a pigment-based ink.



If you're shooting digitally, save your images on *two* backup disks — floppy or compact disks (CDs) — in case your hard drive or one of your disks fails. That way you'll still have your information. Keeping the two disks in separate locations also is a good idea.

Choosing Proper Materials and Tools

You don't have to make a huge investment of time and money to be a scrapper. You can simply start with your photographs, a good album, and page protectors, buy your paper, maybe some stickers, and a good journaling pen with pigment-based ink to journal, or write, with, and you're all set. We tell you about the basics and the more advanced tools and materials (shopping lists too!) in Chapters 7 through 10. But remember, you can do plenty of scrapbooking with only a few inexpensive items.

Materials

In Chapter 7, we show you some ideas and make some suggestions about how to determine which scrapbook album is right for what you want to accomplish. We also provide you with a couple of tables that help you decide which adhesives you need, and we give you information about how to pick a peck of page protectors to preserve your pretty pages.

Albums and page protectors

Albums and page protectors come in a variety of sizes, but the standard sizes are 8½ inches x 11 inches and 12 inches x 12 inches. You can choose from strap-hinged albums with side-loading page protectors, post-bound top loaders, three-ring and bound albums, and other kinds and types. Good-quality polyvinyl chloride (PVC)-free, lignin-free, and acid-free albums and page protectors won't destroy your photographs or your memorabilia.

We emphasize the importance of page protectors not only because they protect your pages from sticky fingers, acids, and spills, but also because they serve so many useful purposes in scrapbooking — not the least of which is their crucial role in the organization process, which we cover in Chapter 2.

Adhesives

Adhesives can be wet or dry. They can be removable, repositionable, or permanent (or a combination of two or more of the three). The big point with adhesives is to use as them as sparingly as possible in your scrapbooks. After that, remember that you use different kinds of adhesives for different tasks and adhering different items. For example, vellum adhesives work well for adhering vellum papers together. Metal adhesives work well for attaching metal embellishments, and other adhesives are better for attaching fibers.

Paper

In Chapter 8, you discover just how big of an item paper is in scrapbooking. Plain cardstock (a stiff paper) is the main staple for scrapbook pages. It's commonly used as the base (or foundation) page onto which photos and other items are adhered. Cardstock papers come in all kinds of colors, and

you use your album color palettes to choose the colors that suit your purpose. (You can also match your other accessories to your palette.) Papers can be purchased in individual sheets, in paper books, or in bulk.



Carry a small color wheel when you're shopping for your scrapbook supplies. It comes in handy when you're trying to decide what colors work well together. (You can check out a color wheel in the color section.)

You'll also find out how papers are used for making frames, borders, die-cuts, and other scrapbook page items. Die-cuts, sold in packages or individually, are shapes cut out of different kinds and colors of paper — animals, letters, packaged theme shapes (such as beach stuff like sea shells, seagulls, boats), and so on. Die-cuts are used as art elements on page layouts to help tell your story. You can make them yourself with your own personal die-cutting system, use the die-cutting machines at scrapbook retail stores, or simply cut them out freehand.

Punches are like mini die-cut machines, and they let you create more shapes out of papers in the colors and patterns you want to use. They come in small, medium, large, and jumbo sizes and in thousands of shapes.

Accessories

You'll soon guess that the most commonly used scrapbook accessory is the sticker. Scrappers love stickers — and you can find tons of them — everywhere! They come in single sheets or on rolls, and you can buy as many or as few as you like, relatively speaking. You'll find a sticker for every theme imaginable: sports, baby, school, holidays, music, cooking, sewing, national parks, monuments, and so on. Many scrappers use sticker letters, words, phrases, numbers, and borders as design elements in their layouts.



Never place a sticker on top of a photograph, because its adhesive will destroy the photograph over time.

Stamps are another great accessory. Their claim to fame is that you can use them again and again. Make sure, however, that you use a pigment-based ink with your stamps because it lasts longer than the regular dye-based inks. You'll also want to see how scrappers use colored pencils and chalks to accessorize their scrapbook pages. If you're like most scrappers we see at the convention crop parties, you're going to love the new embellishments: the fibers, yarns, tags, woods, and metals that are so popular now. (For more on accenting your scrapbook pages, head to Chapter 10.)

Tools

Industry manufacturers have created plenty of unique cutting tools for scrapbookers, and we tell you about some of them in Chapter 9. But you'll also see how you can complete wonderful albums with just a handful of simple tools,

including a small pair of fine detail scissors, a good-quality pair of long scissors, and a 12-inch-x-12-inch paper trimmer. You'll also need a ruler and pencils for dotting in grids and other tasks. And you'll need good pigment-based ink pens for journaling. These pens are light fast (the ink won't disappear after being exposed to light), fade resistant, and waterproof.

You may also want to get some decorative scissors and maybe a few templates for journaling and for tracing and cutting papers and photos. We tell you how to use cutting templates in Chapter 9 and templates for accenting your pages in Chapter 10.

Telling a Story with Your Scrapbook

Storytelling is an ancient art — and a natural impulse. What grandmother doesn't want to tell (and retell) stories about her grandchildren? The photos in scrapbook albums tell part of your story and make writing the rest of it much easier than if you had no photos to use as prompts.

The story is the beating heart of scrapbooking. Photos show it, journaling tells it, and scrapbook elements and materials enhance it. In Chapter 11, we talk with you about where scrapbookers get their inspiration to write their stories — even when they don't see themselves as good writers. You'll find out why writing from the heart is so important, and we'll show you how certain techniques can help you do just that.

In Chapter 12, we offer you tips on how to do the research for your journaling. You may be writing about yourself, your present-day family, or about your ancestors. If you're scrapbooking your own story, your research is within you. Remember that your opinions, perspectives, and life stories are so much more interesting to other people than you think they are. Almost everyone loves to read biographies and autobiographies, partly because they're touchstones for our own lives.

If you're concerned about the quality of your writing, be sure to read Chapter 13. In it, you'll learn how to use notebooks to brainstorm and free write until you find your voice. And when you discover that voice, you'll find the experience so liberating that you won't want to stop at just jotting down a few notes on a scrapbook page. You'll be telling longer stories that ultimately are preserved in page protectors for your posterity.

In Chapter 14, you see many of the ways scrapbookers incorporate journaling into their page designs — writing their quotations, comments, phrases, and stories by hand, on computers, with die-cut letters, and other materials. The main idea here is to coordinate journaling with your design scheme, and the scrapbook industry makes a wide, wide variety of products (journaling tags, blocks, die-cuts, and so many more) to help you achieve that goal.

Two ideas to throw out

When it comes to journaling, this kind of self-talk is common, but not productive: “It’s egotistical to make albums about my own life.” Or, “My life is boring, and no one cares about it.” Imagine having a scrapbook created by a beloved and admired grandmother or mother — about her

own life, written in her own handwriting. Would you find her life stories uninteresting? Would you think her egotistical for preserving her stories? We didn’t think so. Chances are, such a scrapbook album would be among your most prized possessions.

Getting Down to the Art of Scrapbooking

Making a scrapbook is fun and easy. Putting your talents to work to make an album of your favorite vacation is the game plan, and in Chapters 15 through 17, we stick with you all the way through doing just that — creating a vacation scrapbook.



You may want to find yourself a scrapbooking buddy, either someone in your family or someone who you know can commit to scrapbooking with you often enough that you both get something done. Finding such a pal works in scrapbooking just like it works in many other areas.

Organizing your items

In Chapter 15, we talk you through the details of the organizational process that goes into making your album. Your top priority? Organize your photos and memorabilia! Dig out those vacation photos, matchbooks, ticket stubs, and pressed flowers from their hiding places in shoe boxes and drawers; bring them into the light of day. We recommend that you organize your photos chronologically, so you can access them readily when you need to.

You also want to have all your supplies neatly organized around you, and your photographs close at hand. Don’t forget to wear gloves or wipe off fingerprints when you’re working with photos, so the acids from your body don’t destroy the emulsions on the front of the photos. Likewise, keep them away from extreme temperature changes, humidity, and (especially) direct sunlight, all of which also are harmful.

After you’ve selected the photos you want to use in a given scrapbook, we continue your organizational journey by having you put handfuls of your photos and memorabilia into page protectors either in a chronological fashion or by specific categories. Doing so makes it easier for you to use them when making good two-page layouts or sections of your album.

We suggest that you also store any of your journaling ideas (from your personal thoughts or notebooks) with your pictures and memorabilia in the page protectors. Later on, those notes can serve as prompts for your writing.

You may have so many vacation photographs that you can't possibly put them all in your album. If so, you'll need to be selective, choosing the images that mean the most to you and the ones that require the least amount of explanation. Fill in the missing parts of the story by journaling, and do something constructive with the leftover photos. You can mat a photo you like and place it in a frame to give as a gift, or you can make and give picture albums of various sizes as gifts. Simply sending your extras to family and friends along with small albums and some other materials is a great incentive for them to make their own little scrapbooks.

Creating a unified design

In Chapter 16, you discover the secrets of making a good-looking scrapbook album. We begin by reviewing different methods you can use to choose the color palette for your project. You start out by looking at the predominant colors in your vacation photos. After choosing your colors, you can pick out the album and other materials you're going to use for your vacation project. You'll love shopping for papers and accessories and designing your layouts.

But remember, you don't have to use accessories if you don't want to. If you're making your first scrapbook, you can opt to make it easy on yourself and perhaps put together a scrapbook that has only 10 to 15 pages. You can start with a simple title page, a dedication page, a table of contents, and then do a few two-page spreads. Use a title and include journaling on each page to go along with your photographs.

Laying it all out

In Chapter 17, you begin laying out your pages and creating your album. We show you how to divide the page into focal points with the tic-tac-toe grid and how to place your more interesting elements on those focal points, located where the lines of the grid intersect. You'll lay out your page elements, move them around until they look good, adhere them to the pages, slip the completed pages into page protectors, place the pages in your album, and showcase it so everyone can have a look.