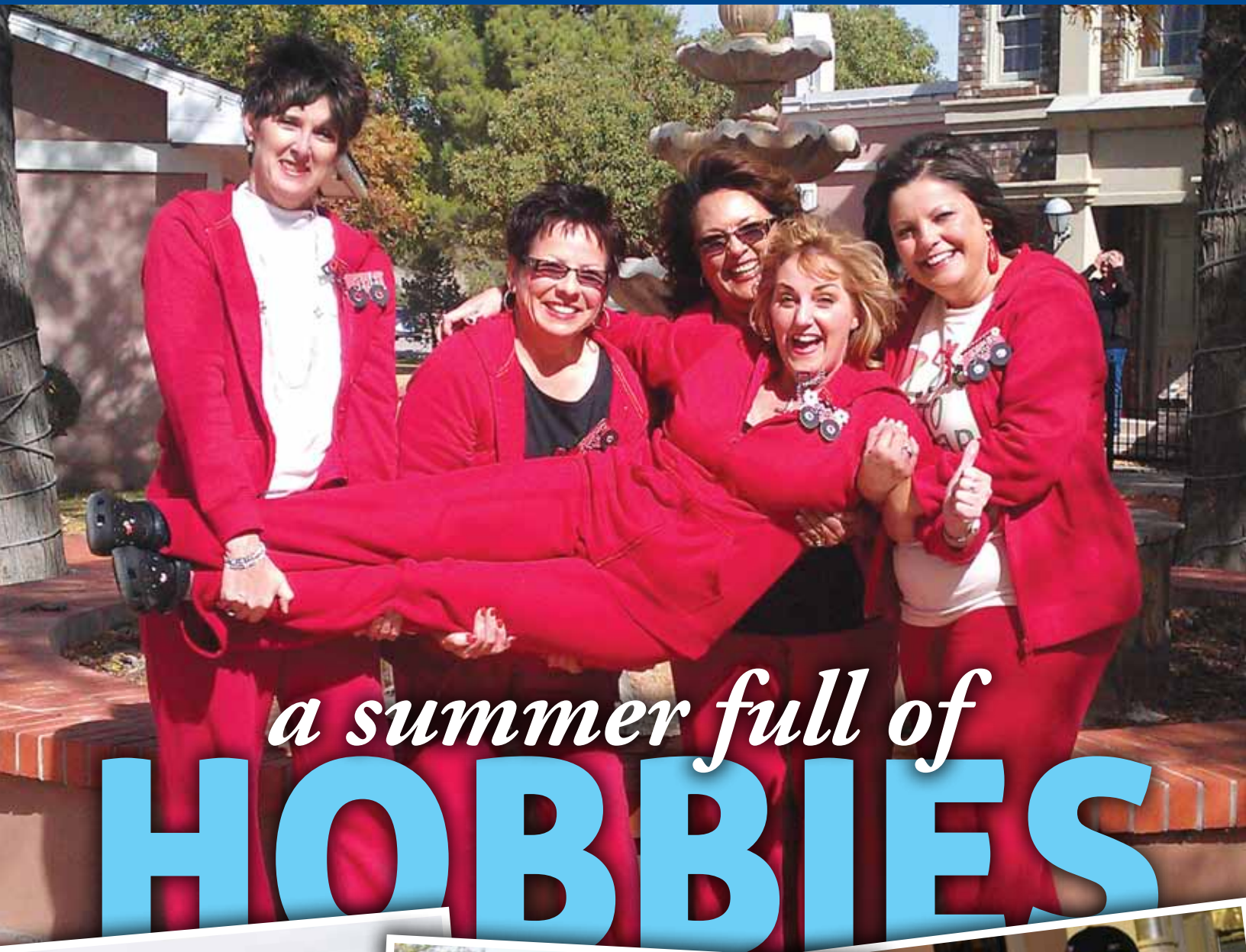


# FOCUS

ON CARLSBAD

A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2012



*a summer full of*

# HOBBIES



# THERE'S NO WRONG WAY TO Scrapbook

by John Safin



here are very few activities where it's as much fun doing it by yourself as it is with hundreds of people. The Pamplona Running of the Bulls comes to mind...

although, that might not qualify as fun. Maybe croquette, but one person playing would be considered practice and the urge to abuse the mallets is tremendous. The only pastime matching the description is scrapbooking. It's been a leisure activity for over two hundred years and millions of people have taken the simple pleasure of creating works of art from scraps.

Also known as "cropping," scrapbooking can be pages bound together with yarn or out of bounds with shoe boxes, bottles, or whatever. Scrapbooking gives you the freedom to color inside, outside, and over the lines. Translation: any talent level can crop, which is especially good to know for those of us who are challenged to distinguish between a glue stick and a butter stick.

The first scrapbooks were created from hand written poems, letters

and personal notes, religious items, newspaper clippings, and items passed between family members and friends. That was a couple hundred years ago. The materials used in scrapbooking evolved as the world did. George Eastman's Kodak Camera made it easier (and cheaper) to use photographs in scrapbooks. New tools and materials continued to develop through the years with ideas expanding along with participation surging in the mid-90s. The 2010 US Census reports over 15 million people consider scrapbooking a leisure activity (yes, the US Census keeps track of everyone's leisure activities). Chances are you know at least one person who scrapbooks.

One place you'll find several dozen friendly faces is the fourth annual "Crop 'Till U Drop," a three-day croppathon held in Carlsbad. Nearly one hundred croppers will bring their crafting supplies to the Pecos River Village Conference Center to learn new techniques, create masterful works

of art, and share the scrapbooking experience. Crafting supplies is more than a few sheets of paper and scissors. Each person uses a dolly, cart, or wagon to bring a couple dozen crates of adhesives, paper, cutting tools, protectors, pens and markers, punches, ribbons, and whatever she or he might need during the event. Good luck to anyone trying to get through airport security with their materials (not that anyone would anyway, but you get the idea).

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"Crop 'Till U Drop" was started by five friends known as The Scrappy Chicks: Barbara Davis, Christine Tamison, Staci Carrell, Angela Najera, and Jenifer Hilliard. While they have been friends of many years, they started scrapbooking as a group a few years ago. It happened the same way friends

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share a bottle of tequila: one takes a sip and passes it to the next person. Scrapbooking started as a hobby with Barbara. Christine, as she puts it, was "dragged and forced into it" by Barbara. Christine introduced Barbara to Staci. The three of them shared the scrapbook "bottle" with Jenifer and Angela. Drunk on their new scrapbooking synergy, the five friends had the idea to create their own cropping event.

"We wanted to have a crop the way WE would want a crop to be," said, almost simultaneously, all the Scrappy Chicks. They must be doing something right. The Scrappy Chicks have a high level of fame in the scrapbooking world. Their annual event has been sold out each year with women and men coming from all over New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

"Crop 'Till U Drop' is the best crop you'll find on this side of the Mississippi River," proudly stated by Christine. "This year's event has a waiting list. Almost all the tables were reserved by people who came last year." Because of the space needed for all the croppers and their supplies, the event is limited to eighty people. Besides all the materials and small crafting tools, many

**Photo Left:** Crop 'Till U Drop at the Pecos River Village Conference Center.

**Photo Center:** The entire Crop 'Till U Drop group.

**Photo Right:** The Scrappy Chicks: Jenifer Hilliard, Christine Tamison, Barbara Davis, Angela Najera, Staci Carrell - Founders of "Crop 'Till U Drop."

bring their own electronic cutters, which go waaay beyond scissors.

"It's shaped like the average computer printer with a tray for paper at the bottom and a mini keyboard on top," Barbara explained. "A design cartridge is inserted into the cutter like an ink cartridge, except this will cut stencils in the paper into practically any shape imaginable. Put in a stencil cartridge, pick your pattern, put in the paper, press the start button, and you can cut anything from a simple flower to a complicated lattice work." If you're near the Internet anytime, do an online search for "quilling flowers." This is one of Barbara's scrapbooking talents and it's not for those of us with fat thumbs. You will definitely be amazed!

"We build lots of fun into the crop!" said Staci. "We have contests for prizes, challenges to create something based

on a theme or technique, awards for different accomplishments, and serve a lot of food." The menu from the last crop is too long to detail. The Chicks all agreed that Christine makes the best coffee."

"Christine is the official cook for the crop," added Angela. "Each of us has a role at the crop. I'm the shopper and organizer of the prizes. Staci is the emcee, Jen is the idea maker for the challenges, and Barb does whatever needs doing. Everyone thinks "Crop 'Till U Drop" is the perfect scrapbooking event!"

Now, you're asking, "What is a perfect crop?" This would include large tables to work in comfort, plenty of time to craft and socialize (which are both done at the same time), and a chance to learn new techniques. "People outgrow the materials and want to learn new creative skills," stated Jenifer, the Scrappy Chicks' resident gadget guru. "We teach each other and other people new ideas and show how to use materials in a different way. Part of the fun is creating something new."

Cropping events are a great place to learn something new whether you're



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a beginner or a veteran. *If you are a beginner, get the basic items:*

- Paper, any type and style
- Scissors, paper trimmer, or both
- Adhesive, glue stick to spray-on
- Album, or you can make your own from thicker paper
- Pens, the more colors the better

For those of us in the “is this butter or glue” category, Catherine Shelton at Treasured Moments in downtown Carlsbad can help you. “I bought the store in 2006 after the previous owner said she would close the store. There are so many people in the area who rely on Treasured Moments for art and craft supplies I didn’t see any other option.”

Wandering through the cozy store, you’re dazzled by the seemingly endless array of colors, patterns, and shiny baubles. Some things were obvious as to their use and others were a bit mind boggling. “Scrapbooking supplies can be used for other hobbies,” said Catherine. “People who build model cards, cosmetic jewelry, even materials for some home remodeling projects can be found here.”

There was a scrapbooking party happening in the lower level with about a dozen people. Each person was working on a different type of cropping: gift albums, house books, photos from a first ocean cruise, and a decorated box to hold scrapbooking supplies. Jane Cornwell, who has been scrapbooking for about twelve years, wanted to preserve family photos in a special way. “My first (scrapbook) project was about a Disney cruise taken in 2000.” Her photo album projects are centered on a theme, such as Christmas or family milestones. While talking, Jane was using a spray called Perfect Pearl, which

adds a shimmer to paper, wood, or fabric.

“Right now, I’m working recipe cards as part of a monthly recipe swap. There are many of us who will make recipe cards based on a subject, like cakes or appetizers. The recipe card, now shimmering with the Perfect Pearl, was for white fudge. “We make one card for each person in the swap and any who want to participate can contribute.”

One of the most popular items is greeting cards – more of a gift given the amount of time, thought, and effort to personally handcraft a message (Note for the men: you’ll score extra points for making an anniversary card). “We have couples come in to make their own wedding invitations or baby shower announcements. Several of the high school clubs will come here to complete their assigned projects. Holiday books are also popular as a family activity. For the more frugal, a personally created birthday card is less expensive than buying one that was massed produced (Note for the men: you’ll have extra money to spend on beer).

“Last Valentine’s Day, two young ladies from New York and Moscow stopped in the store. They were traveling around the country and Carlsbad was a destination point. They had never seen a scrapbooking store and were invited to join a group of croppers who were in the store. Everyone had a great time and they simply loved it.”

Getting started in scrapbooking is



**Photo:** Catherine Shelton (center) owner of Treasured Moments with two scrapbooking enthusiasts.

easy,” offered Catherine. “Come in, make yourself at home. There is always someone ready to share the fun of scrapbooking.” To really get in on the cropping action, Treasured Moments has a weekly newsletter. “Sign up at the store or send an email to [treasuredmmnts@yahoo.com](mailto:treasuredmmnts@yahoo.com).”

Even someone who lacks artistic ability can scrapbook. Putting together a photo album, decorating a box, designing a greeting card, or whatever you want to create will always be YOUR work of art. And like any skill, the more often you scrapbook, the larger your talents will grow. ■

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *John Safin has a background in business operations, marketing, event planning, and public relations. Originally from Upstate New York, John moved from Glendale, AZ, to Carlsbad, NM, which he now calls “home.” [www.johnsafin.com](http://www.johnsafin.com)*

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