



## GET WITH THE TIMES #1: Current Times

- Introduction
- Onto the page: current times
  1. Then and now
  2. In your home
  3. Body and health
  4. In the law
  5. In your town
- Triggers

“Not keep a journal! How are your absent cousins to understand the tenor of your life in Bath without one?” --from Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*, 1818

### INTRODUCTION

One thing I’ve noticed more and more since having children, is that changes happen quickly. Even the act of giving birth to those children has changed: my mom was put to sleep to have me, and here, 41 years later, there are all sorts of options for childbirth. When did that change?

It’s easy to imagine that the way things are right here and now are the ways things always were, but a quick look back through my scrapbooks and photo albums reminds me that this is not so. I find myself thankful that I’ve documented the few items that I have. I think those bits of information and history add value and interest to my pages. A good lesson to remember as we embark on a new year together.

**WAYS TO INCLUDE CURRENT TIMES ON YOUR SCRAPBOOK PAGES****1. Compare the then and now.**

Time changes so rapidly. There is no set rule on when is then and when is now. It could be the comparison between today and yesterday, so quickly could our lives change. It could be that what we deem a normal routine is suddenly something completely different.

Chances are the things we consider "current-time" today will be vastly different just ten years from now. The ways that changes come about could be subtle or intentional, coming from government, schools, technology, or something else. Things that feel normal today might have seemed preposterous ten or even five years ago. My 13-

year-old, for instance, comes home from school with rules and regulations, lingo and politically-correct verbiage that never would have crossed my mind as middle school student, and, yet, to him this is a normal way of life. For him, it's current.

Fascinating really, if you think about it.

In this particular layout, "10," it struck me after taking his 10-year photo, how different my life was from his at this same age. It's something I felt was important to document.



How I compared then and now in "10:"

- ◇ Design. If you visualize the page in vertical thirds, the photos cover 2/3 with the journaling on the other 1/3.
- ◇ Photos. This set of photos was from a shoot we did, hoping to get one that would be his ten-year photo. It wasn't – we reshot. The incident that triggered the memories in the journaling, and this particular shoot – happened within days of each other making them hold each other up well in support. In short – they worked.
- ◇ Embellishments. I'm not a real big embellisher, I find that I often add subtle bits of support if needed, but embellishments are always a last step for me and only if necessary. In this case--in wanting to add balance to my layout, I adhered the chipboard A (for Allan) to the upper right. Then, still wanting just a little bit more to ground my photo and journaling blocks – I very subtly stamped (meaning – I used a versa mark stamp pad, or an ink pad that is just one shade off from the cardstock color) a visual triangle – upper left, upper right, lower center.
- ◇ Journaling. What I wanted to document here were the differences between Allan's life at ten and my own at ten. I did that by comparing our freedoms and by journaling one of his rare experiences with freedom. I mentioned technology (or lack thereof), my walk to grade school, the fear of our current times and the lack of worry in my childhood. I brought both times together – to compare.
- ◇ Title. I wanted my title to be simple and concise. I didn't want to take anything away from the story and the photos. In adhering some travel papers in neutral colors to my numerals, I rounded out my layout with a title that supports, giving you a starting point for the layout, becoming an embellishment – all at once.

**JOURNALING for "10:"** I remember being 10. I grew up in a quieter, gentler time in a quieter area than we live now. And I had freedom, complete and total.

I think sometimes on the freedom that I had compared to what Allan has. I walked six blocks to first grade, alone. I wandered town aimlessly while still in grade school...ending up at a friend's home, shopping, picking blueberries. I only had to be home in time for super. We didn't have cell phones, my parents couldn't call me to find out where I was... and they didn't worry like I worry nowadays.

I had freedom, and it absolutely 100% breaks my heart that Allan hasn't had what I had or Greg had. He mentions it sometimes... he hears us talking about our childhood experiences and he's envious, he knows that he's missed out on something special.

But times are different now. We live in a busier area, in scarier times.

But this weekend Allan got a taste of freedom. He went to Aaron's house after church. Both of them 5th graders – both of them 10 – both of them on the cusp of outgrowing that fun fun age of complete childhood innocence. And they had freedom.

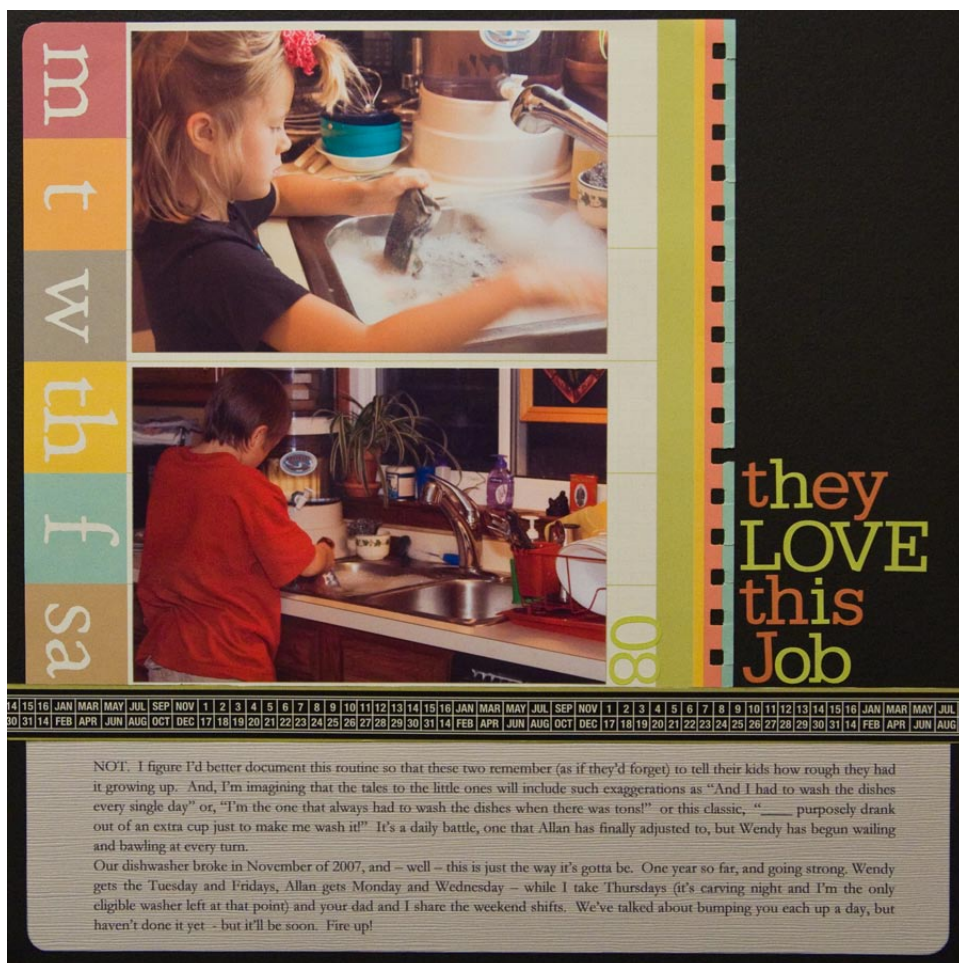
They walked, these two, alone... from Lassila's to the party store by way of the railroad tracks. They walked, chatted it up, collected pop cans on the way, and they went to the store all by themselves. They had freedom. Allan bought some imitation chewing tobacco (beef jerky) which he enjoyed teasing me with, and he was so proud.

While a part of me cringes; they did what? They went where? Alone? The other part of me is So glad that he had this taste of freedom, of total youth. And I wish that times were different so that he could experience it more often.



## 2. Document the current times in your home

My kids aren't very much in love with chores. Who is, right? I remember not being real appreciative of the dishes myself as a kid. Some things do stay the same. What we have now though is a broken dishwasher. It's been broken for well over a year. I also have a son who will very soon be working, attending more activities, that sort of thing, and it will be harder and harder to keep a regular dishes schedule. On the other side, I have a soon-to-be four-year-old who will eventually be rotated in. What I've scrapbooked here is what it is, today.



**JOURNALING for “They love this job:”** NOT. I figure I'd better document this routine so that these two remember (as if they'd forget) to tell their kids how rough they had it growing up. And, I'm imagining that the tales to the little ones will include such exaggerations as “And I had to wash the dishes every single day” or, “I'm the one that always had to wash the dishes when there was tons!” or this classic, “\_\_\_ purposely drank out of an extra cup just to make me wash it!” It's a daily battle, one that Allan has finally adjusted to, but Wendy has begun wailing and bawling at every turn.

Our dishwasher broke in November of 2007, and - well - this is just the way it's gotta be. One year so far, and going strong. Wendy gets the Tuesday and Fridays, Allan gets Monday and Wednesday - while I take Thursdays (it's carving night and I'm the only eligible washer left at that point) and your dad and I share the weekend shifts. We've talked about bumping you each up a day, but haven't done it yet - but it'll be soon.

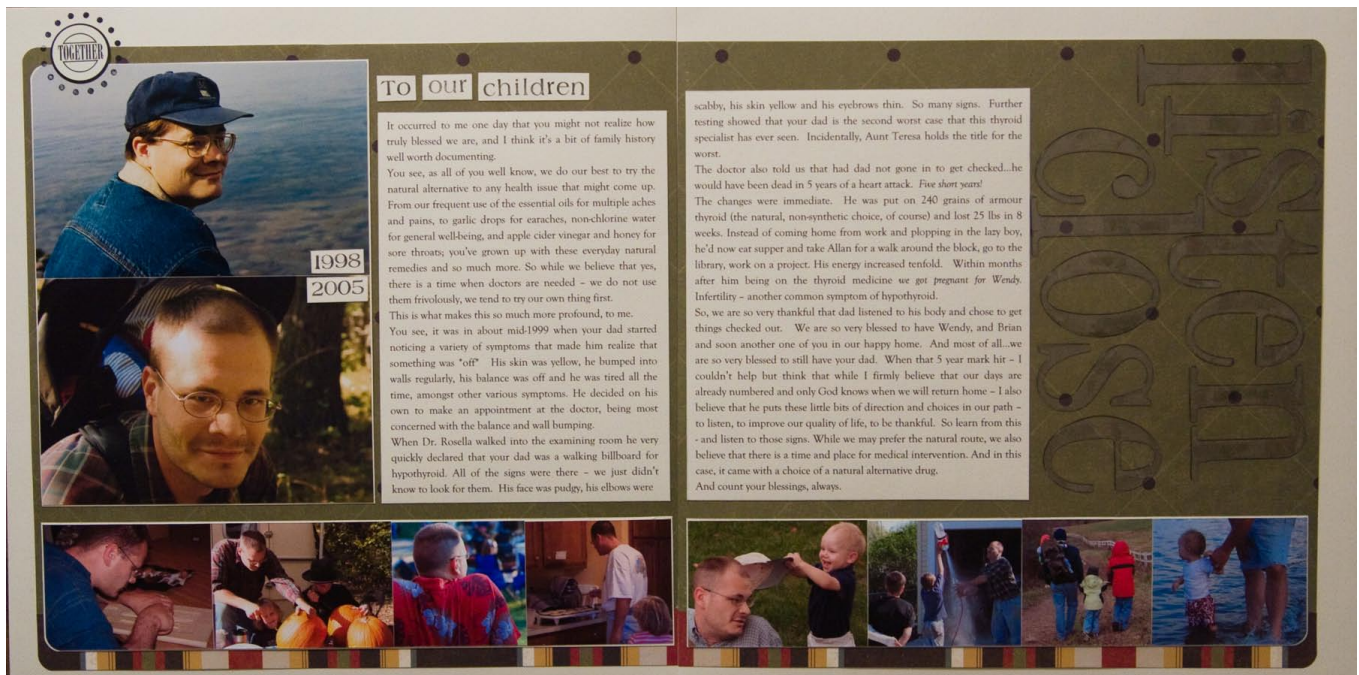
Fire up!

How I documented current times around my home in "They Love this Job:"

- ◇ Design. Sometimes I begin with the story, sometimes the pictures, and other times a page element. In this case, I had gotten a day-of-the-week page in a kit a year ago or so, and, in my mind, I knew I wanted to use it for some sort of chore page. It was from there that I designed my page. I use the thirds rule a lot. This one is divided into thirds horizontally, with the journaling on the bottom rather than the side, and the photos and title on the top two-thirds
- ◇ Photos. Last year I attempted the 366 photos a year project. I love the whole concept behind the daily photo, it pushes me to capture daily things that I might otherwise overlook, or--in this case--choose to not be too close to. Also, I enjoy the background in photos. I think they do their own job in telling stories. For instance, our water unit in the photo will remind me that this was the time frame when we used that. The plastic bowls, the broken dishwasher peeking in (teasing, almost), the baby bottle brush on the sink – they all have their own story to tell about our life right now in our home. I prefer to back up when taking my photos in order that those stories can be subtly included as well.
- ◇ Embellishment. In this layout, I wanted something to divide my journaling from my photo block and title. I chose a date strip. I felt it represented and supported the meaning of the page as well as divided my page into the thirds.
- ◇ Journaling. Within the journaling, I wove in many details: the kids' current moanings; the rationale for the schedule (Thursday is carving night – another current event); that our dishwasher broke in November of 2007 and still hasn't been replaced (which either tells the story of our current economy or the story of us secretly liking having the kids do the dishes – you decide); and how we're considering bumping them each up to three days a week (but wondering if it's worth the battle that will ensue. Shhhhh).
- ◇ Title. Secret. I struggle with titles. True story. I debated between the simple yet concise (and boring) "Chores" or the overused "Daily (fill in the blank)." I then decided on the more fun, tongue-in-cheek "They Love this Job." I kept my color choices tied into the layout at hand and bled my title right into the journaling, beginning that with the word, "NOT."

**3. Scrapbook your current health or a battle with it.**

As do those things in our home life change, so does our health or struggle to stay (get) fit. The advances that are constantly made in health care--both the advances in the medical field and the way our country institutes it--definitely put this subject in the current times category.



*Published in Creating Keepsakes, March 2007*

**How I scrapbooked a battle with health in "Listen Close:"**

- ◇ **Design.** On this page, my focus was my story. It took a lot of space to tell, so I did that first and let everything else fall around it. My design, again in thirds, is similar to that of my other layouts. (I'm starting to feel boring. Hmm.)
- ◇ **Photos.** It was eye-opening to look back on the before photos – before Greg was diagnosed with hypothyroid. HOW did we not see it? The difference between 1998 and 2005 is totally because of the medication. That was my main photo focus. Next, I wanted to border my layout with photos of him interacting and being a part of our lives – something that we are daily thankful for when we think of what might have been. I gathered those pictures that best demonstrated what type of person, father, and presence he is in our lives.



- ◇ Embellishment. Again, I keep this simple. My only embellishment is the “Together” sticker on the upper left to draw your eye and begin the path into the layout. I stamped around the sticker with a circle dot stamp to add just a bit more depth and layers.
- ◇ Journaling. There’s so much story shared in this one. Our choice to practice things alternative, the belief that sometimes we need medicine to intervene but to be open-minded, the dosage he began with, our subsequent pregnancy, the doctor that we used at the time – he’s a huge part of our lives. It’s all in there.
- ◇ Title. My title has double meaning. In choosing the words, “Listen Close” I decided to use the clear subtle letters to add to that message of seeing what otherwise might be looked over.

**JOURNALING for “Listen Close:”** It occurred to me one day that you might not realize how truly blessed we are, and I think it’s a bit of family history well worth documenting.

You see, as all of you well know, we do our best to try the natural alternative to any health issue that might come up. From our frequent use of the essential oils for multiple aches and pains, to garlic drops for earaches, non-chlorine water for general well-being, and apple cider vinegar and honey for sore throats; you’ve grown up with these everyday natural remedies and so much more. So while we believe that yes, there is a time when doctors are needed – we do not use them frivolously, we tend to try our own thing first.

This is what makes this so much more profound, to me.

You see, it was in about mid-1999 when your dad started noticing a variety of symptoms that made him realize that something was \*off\* His skin was yellow, he bumped into walls regularly, his balance was off and he was tired all the time, amongst other various symptoms. He decided on his own to make an appointment at the doctor, being most concerned with the balance and wall bumping.

When Dr. Rosella walked into the examining room he very quickly declared that your dad was a walking billboard for hypothyroid. All of the signs were there – we just didn’t know to look for them. His face was pudgy, his elbows were scabby, his skin yellow and his eyebrows thin. So many signs. Further testing showed that your dad is the second worst case that this thyroid specialist has ever seen. Incidentally, Aunt Teresa holds the title for the worst.

The doctor also told us that had dad not gone in to get checked...he would have been dead in 5 years of a heart attack. Five short years!

The changes were immediate. He was put on 240 grains of Armour thyroid (the natural, non-synthetic choice, of course) and lost 25 lbs in 8 weeks. Instead of coming home from work and plopping in the lazy boy, he’d now eat supper and take Allan for a walk around the block, go to the library, work on a project. His energy increased tenfold. Within months after him being on the thyroid medicine we got pregnant for Wendy. Infertility – another common symptom of hypothyroid.

So, we are so very thankful that dad listened to his body and chose to get things checked out. We are so very blessed to have Wendy, and Brian and soon another one of you in our happy home. And most of all...we are so very blessed to still have your dad. When that 5 year mark hit – I couldn’t help but think that while I firmly believe that our days are already numbered and only God knows when we will return home – I also believe that he puts these little bits of direction and choices in our path – to listen, to improve our quality of life, to be thankful. So learn from this - and listen to those signs. While we may prefer the natural route, we also believe that there is a time and place for medical intervention. And in this case, it came with a choice of a natural alternative drug.

And count your blessings, always.

#### 4. Document how a current law or policy has impacted your life.

I think the change in laws and policies is sometimes fascinating and sometimes sad. Always, though, it's interesting. In this case, the new booster seat law that was put into affect this past July in our state.



**JOURNALING for “Oh for cute:”** July 2008 You, my dear, are a product of your hand-me downs. I think I’ve finally managed to teach you not to wear stripes with stripes – or patterns with patterns – but, well, it seems like there’s still some learning to be done. I mean, corduroys (from Sue) – in, uh – July? The shoes, also from Sue, as is the sequined frog wallet. The pink shirt tho, that was from Matt. Allan, in pink? Can you imagine? You snatched that shirt right quick. But hey, you distracted me – this journaling was supposed to be about that booster seat. On July 1st 2008, just months shy of your 8th birthday and nearly four years since you’ve been in a car seat of any kind – Michigan instituted a new booster seat law. Namely, that you must be in one until you are eight or 4’ 9” – whichever comes first. As long legged as you look here, you’re sure to hit 8 years before you hit 4’9”. Enjoy!

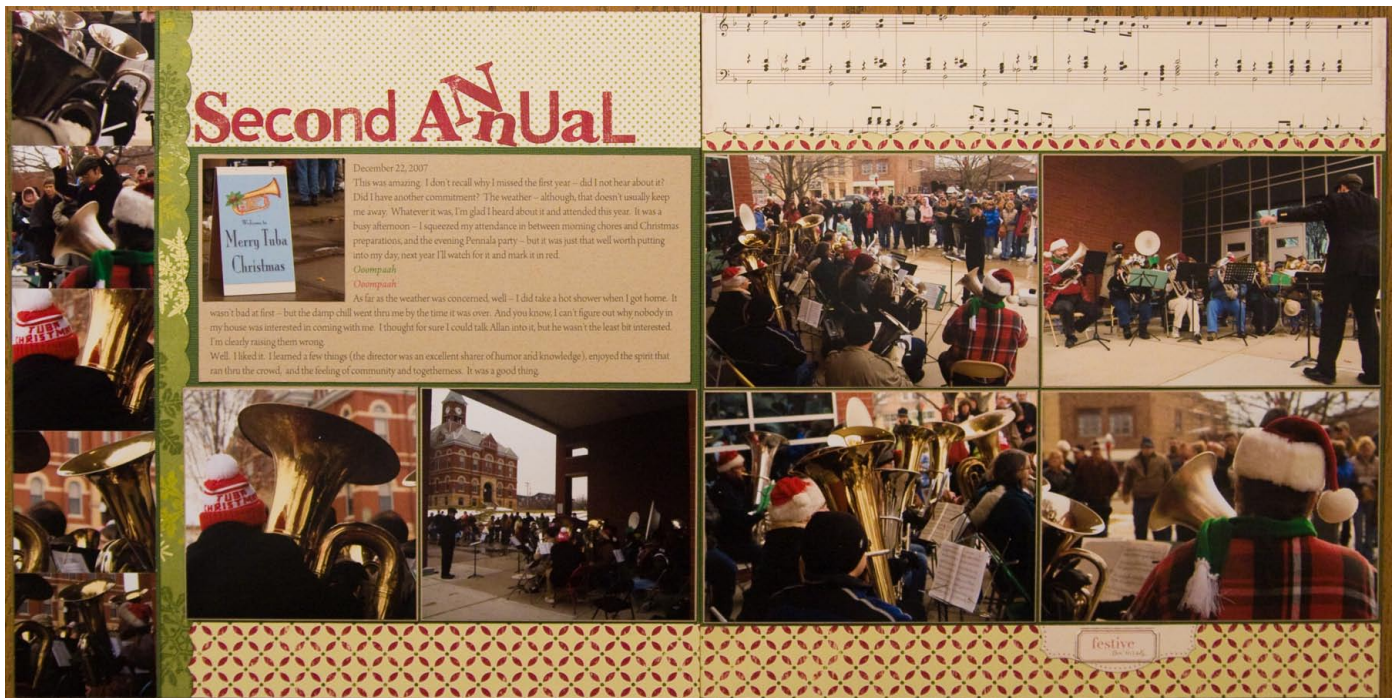


How I wove the details of a law into my “Oh for Cute” layout:

- ◇ Design. I debated going with an 8.5” x 11” layout for this one as I only had the one photo. However, I wanted to use the lines on the patterned paper for the journaling, and I enjoyed the idea of having a bit of room to spread my wings, so I went with the 12” x 12” format.
- ◇ Photos. I only have the one photo, and I considered making it larger – but didn’t. I considered cropping it closer - but, again, didn’t. As I mentioned earlier, I enjoy the context the rest of the photo provides. This one reminds me that we had three car seats during this time. Wow. We’ve never had that before. It also gives me a peek at our trusty old van (we’ll appreciate this more when we finally upgrade). I definitely enjoyed catching her entire fashion sense in the photo.
- ◇ Embellishment. Simple. To stretch my photo block just a little bit more, I lay a scalloped strip of pink along the bottom, and I cut a block from a set of stickers to add interest and support.
- ◇ Journaling. The journaling here wasn’t just about the booster seat, but about my daughter’s wardrobe as well. I wrote directly to her. This is something I tend to do a lot. There’s no rhyme or reason to my decision, I just go with what feels right at that time. In this case, it felt right to talk directly to her while sharing the details as I see them. I included the law, the hand-me-down facts, that she’s short of the height requirement, and the exact date that the law was instituted.
- ◇ Title. I chose a title that covered both aspects of my journaling. “For cute” is because her style choice is representative of her at this age – free as a bird and uncaring what others think. Also “For cute” works because, really, she looks silly in the booster after having been out of one for nearly four years. For the record, she didn’t mind it a bit.

**5. Scrapbook the events that you currently attend.**

I'm fortunate to live in a town that hosts several interesting festivals. What's more, we're in walking distance to all of these. Through the years we've lived here, I've seen some things added, other things taken away, and all things adapted to our society right now. I've always enjoyed the addition of a few new events – like this tuba concert.



JOURNALING for “Second Annual Merry Tuba Concert:” This was amazing. I don’t recall why I missed the first year – did I not hear about it? Did I have another commitment? The weather? – although, that doesn’t usually keep me away. Whatever it was, I’m glad I heard about it and attended this year. It was a busy afternoon – I squeezed my attendance in between morning chores and Christmas preparations, and the evening Pennala party – but it was just that well worth putting into my day, next year I’ll watch for it and mark it in red.

Ooompaah Ooompaah As far as the weather

was concerned, well – I did take a hot shower when I got home. It wasn’t bad at first – but the damp chill went thru me by the time it was over. And you know, I can’t figure out why nobody in my house was interested in coming with me. I thought for sure I could talk Allan into it, but he wasn’t the least bit interested. I’m clearly raising them wrong. Well. I liked it. I learned a few things (the director was an excellent sharer of humor and knowledge), enjoyed the spirit that ran thru the crowd, and the feeling of community and togetherness. It was a good thing.

How I captured the sense of an event we currently attend in "Second Annual Merry Tuba Concert:"

- ◇ Design. When I design a two-page spread, I look at it as one large 24" x 12" layout. I laid the whole thing on my desk, and, as I began moving pictures around, I fell into this standard approach of mine: photo block plus photo strip plus journaling block. It works, right?
- ◇ Photos. I had so much fun at this particular event, that I wanted to include every bit of it in my photos and layout, yet – I only wanted one spread. I chose those photos that I felt best represented my memory and the mood, and used those in full. I then selected those that I felt were a little repetitive and pulled smaller elements from those, thus giving them a bit more focus.
- ◇ Embellishment. Again, just one. The right page was feeling like it needed just a little something for balance, so I added a bit of a layered sticker on the lower right, adding to the feel and mood of the page.
- ◇ Journaling. In my journaling I confessed that I missed the first annual, although I'm really not certain as to why. I wrote about the feeling of Christmas spirit and community that permeated the crowd, as well as details like the weather being damp, chilling me right through. Our winters have changed in Michigan since I was a child, so I think this is always a sign of what we were met with this particular December.
- ◇ Title. I'm actually feeling quite clever about this one. My main title is "Second Annual" for what I hope will eventually be the first of many annuals. On my journaling mat, I included a small photo of the sign that announced the event: "Merry Tuba Concert." Together, these form the entire title – "Second Annual Merry Tuba Concert." Let a photo or program announcement do some of the title work for you. I also purposely off-kiltered my n's just to add interest and balance. I was out of small n's, but didn't like the way the big one looked next to the small one – this technique made my lack of n's work in my favor. I like to think that they represent the musical notes.



## **TRIGGERS for scrapbooking current events**

- Compare your childhood to that of a young child now. What stands out to you?
- Stand back and take a closer look at your daily life. How much of what you do or how you live is a sign of our current times?
- Think about an event that you attend on a regular basis. When did you begin attending? When did the event begin? What does it mean to you?
- What current health or fitness struggles are taking place in your home? How much of that is controlled by current trends? ie: a new exercise class, a new drug, being limited in your choices because of a health plan.
- Look in the background of your photos. What else do they tell about your story, about your current lifestyle?