

## LIGHTEN UP #5 – Family Lore

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*The family is one of nature’s masterpieces. - George Santayana*

### INTRODUCTION

I think you have all seen by now that I have an interesting family, to put it politely. Guess what? That’s just my immediate family. My extended family is a whole new ballgame.

My father-in-law recently passed away at the age of 79. At his memorial service, instead of tears, there was laughter. Why? My husband and his siblings requested that people “bring stories” to the service. In the place of a eulogy, we had people come up and tell stories about my father-in-law that literally had us in tears, but from laughter.



Even the children in our family are quirky! My daughter has a cousin who is six days younger than her. When they were 2 years old, I wanted to take some photos of them together. They weren't interested in posing – all they wanted to do was pick their toes.

Journaling for “It Must Run in the Family:” Ella and Geneva would not let me take their photos standing together, but once they took off their socks and started picking their toes, it was happy snapping. Yeah, you can tell they are cousins.

I'm guessing you have some stories from your families that you'd like to document. Here's your chance! Let's delve into our quirky family histories, shall we?

## **APPROACHES TO SCRAPBOOKING FUNNY FAMILY LORE**

### **1. Document funny family memories.**

I grew up an only child and so did my mom, so we actually didn't have a lot of family stories to draw on—but my husband is the complete opposite! As you'll see later, his family puts the “fun” in “dysfunctional.”

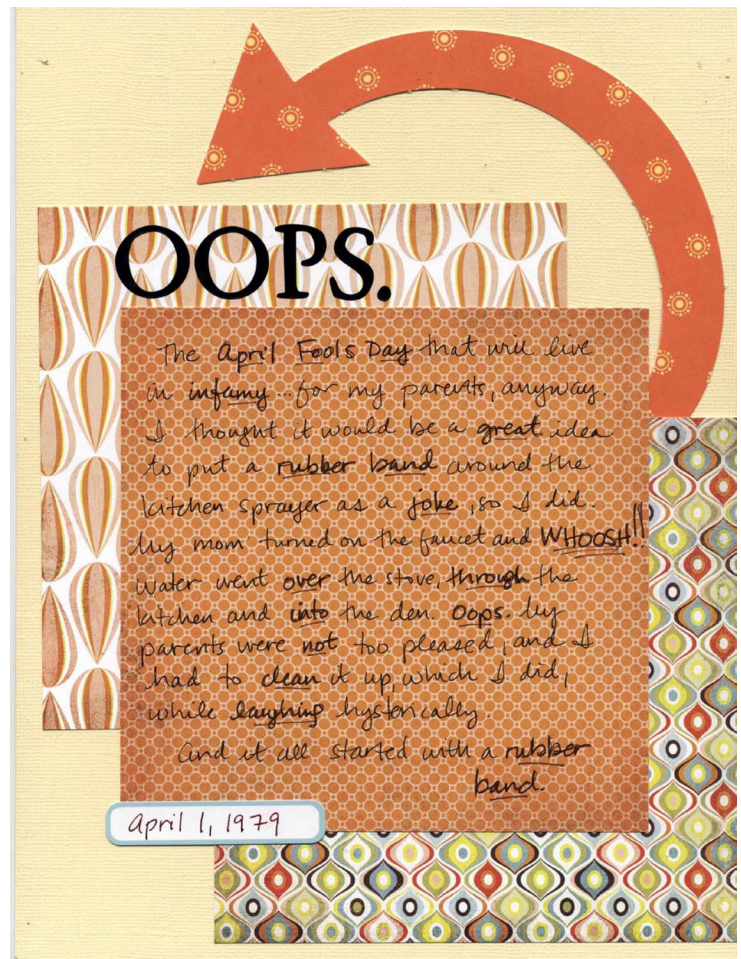
I do, however, have a story about something I did when I was about 10 years old, and it's something my mother still remembers to this day--thirty\*mumblemumblesomething\* years later.

“OOPS.” is a layout that tells the story of an April Fool's Day prank gone bad – at least my parents thought it did!

How I scrapbooked my amusement with myself in "Oops:"

- ◇ Photos. I bet you noticed the photo on this layout...there is none! I know this is extreme, but I honestly didn't have a photo that would work with this layout, and every now and then it is perfectly OK to do a layout with no photo. Just find other ways to make it interesting.
- ◇ Embellishments. Pretend there is a rubber band on this page. There was supposed to be, and there even WAS one, at one time, but someone (I am guessing my 6 year old) took it off and did something with it. Work with me here, people.
- ◇ Journaling. I hand wrote the story of the rubber band, and I bolded and underlined some words for effect. I think this is a good way to narrate a "homegrown" story – much less formal.

Journaling for "Oops:" The April Fool's Day that will live in infamy – for my parents, anyway. I thought it would be a great idea to put a rubber band around the kitchen sprayer as a joke, so I did. My mom turned on the faucet and WHOOSH! Water went over the stove, through the kitchen and into the den. Oops. My parents were not too pleased, and I had to clean it up, which I did, while laughing hysterically.





## 2. Scrapbook your legends in the making.

Have you seen that commercial for some wireless phone service that talks about your private jokes with family or friends? The gist of the commercial is that sometimes it just takes one word or phrase to crack you up, and other people won't get it.

I call these Legends In The Making (LITM), and my family has a lot of these!

"The Incident of the Bird Poop" is a layout about one of these LITM that happened a couple of years ago and still makes us howl to recall it.



Journaling for "The Incident of the Bird Poop:" The event that has gone down in family history: The Day The Bird Pooped On Bubba.

1. Bubba is running around with no clue he has bird poop on his arm.
2. Bubba realizes there is bird poop on his arm. He is appalled.
3. He tries to wash it off and smears it. He is even more appalled. We are rolling from laughter.
4. Finally..success with the hose. To this day, all we need to say is,"Remember the bird poop?"

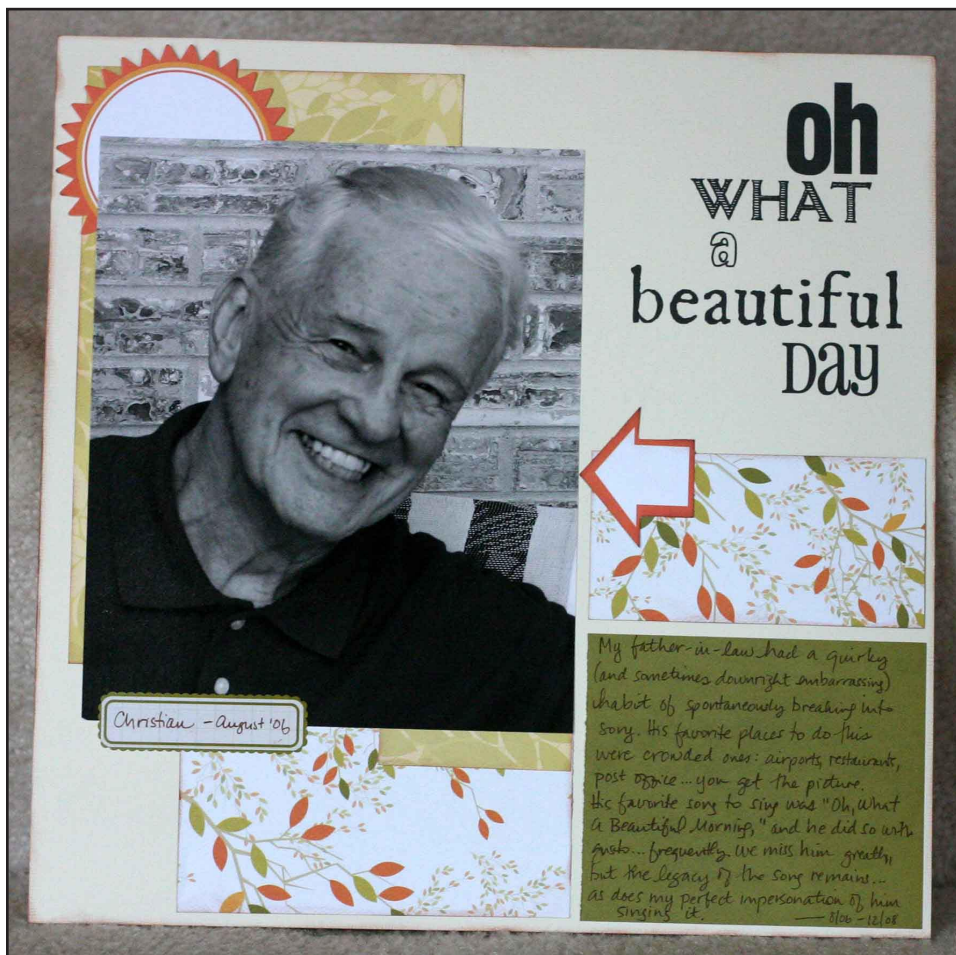
How I documented our LOTM in "The Incident of the Bird Poop"

- ◇ Photos. I used sequential photos that showed what was happening, and I tied them into the journaling by labeling them.
- ◇ Journaling. This is a "documentary" style layout: it tells what was happening and when.
- ◇ Embellishments. I love these little digital birds, and I thought they were the perfect touch for this page. Don't be afraid of whimsy – it can be fun at times!

### 3. Scrapbook your "famous" family members.

Do you still recall the story of Uncle Billy? The one who accidentally blew up the outhouse one Thanksgiving? How about Aunt Myrtle whose fruitcake was famous in nine counties...but not for good reasons? We all have the thorns in our family tree – now is the time to tell about yours!

I have mentioned my father-in-law already in this class. One of his most memorable habits (and trust me, he had many) was breaking into song in the strangest locations, and at the most embarrassing times. It was pretty disconcerting to me when I first met him, but now that he's gone it's a funny memory for the family.



Journaling for "Oh What a Beautiful Day:" My father-in-law had a quirky (and sometimes downright embarrassing) habit of spontaneously breaking into song. His favorite places to do this were crowded ones: airports, restaurants, the post office – you get the picture. His favorite song to sing was "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," and he did so with gusto – frequently. We miss him greatly, but the legacy of his song remains – as does my perfect impersonation of him singing it.

How I remembered my father-in-law in "Oh What a Beautiful Day:"

- ◇ Title. I printed this title on the computer using a variety of fonts. I felt it added a humorous touch to the layout and made it more visually interesting.
- ◇ Design. The design is very simple, and the photo takes center stage.
- ◇ Embellishments. I kept the embellishments simple to focus on the photo. The arrow and the circle add another touch of orange, and the label completes the triangle.



**4. Document things that could only happen in YOUR family.**

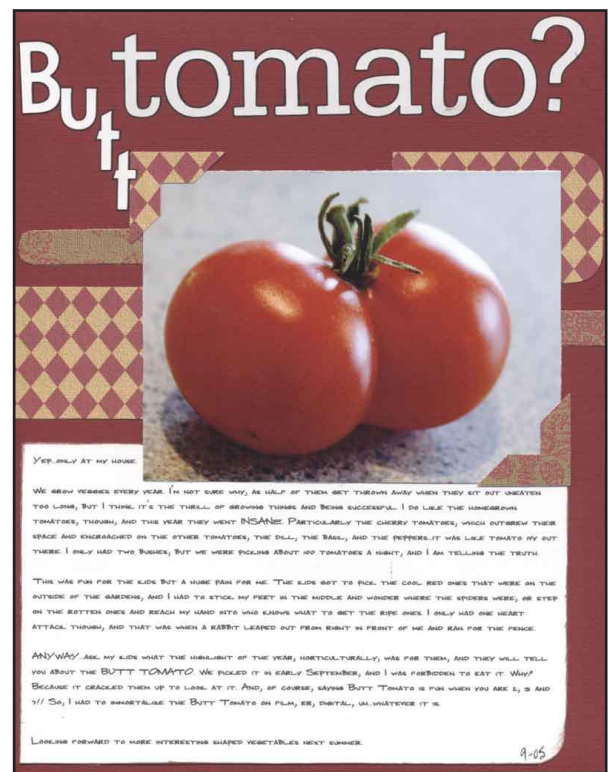
You remember me saying, "I could never make this stuff up." Another saying of mine is, "Only in THIS family." It just seems like things happen to us (or are made to happen BY us) that are just, well...strange.

For example, have you ever grown a butt tomato? That's what I thought. Well, I did. I didn't think anything of it when I brought it in with the 9,547 other tomatoes from my garden that day, but of course my kids zeroed right in on it and insisted I take photos of it.

As a sidenote, my tomatoes have been horrible ever since this layout was made.

How I cracked myself up with "Butt Tomato:"

- ◇ Photo. This is the one they made me take, so this is the one that got the center of the layout.
- ◇ Journaling. This is lengthy journaling for me, but I had to document the story, so the journaling makes up a large part of the layout.



Journaling for "Butt Tomato:" Yep, only at my house. We grow veggies every year. I'm not sure why, as half of them get thrown away when they sit out uneaten too long, but I think it's the thrill of growing things and being successful. I do like the homegrown tomatoes, though, and this year they went INSANE. Particularly the cherry tomatoes, which outgrew their space and encroached on the other tomatoes, the dill, the basil and the peppers. It was like tomato ivy out there. I only had two bushes, but we were picking about 100 tomatoes per night, and I am telling the truth. This was fun for the kids, but a huge pain for me. The kids got to pick the cool red ones that were on the outside of the gardens, and I had to stick my feet in the middle and wonder where the spiders were, or step on the rotten ones and reach my hand into who knows what to get the ripe ones. I only had one heart attack, though, and that was when a rabbit leaped out from right in front of me and ran for the fence. ANYWAY, ask my kids what the highlight of the year, horticulturally, was for them, and they will tell you about the BUTT TOMATO. We picked it in early September, and I was forbidden to eat it. Why? Because it cracked them up to look at it. And, of course, saying Butt Tomato is fun when you are 2, 5 and 7! So, I had to immortalize the Butt Tomato on film, er, digital, uh, whatever it is. Looking forward to more interestingly shaped vegetables next summer.



## **TRIGGERS**

### **1. Family photo albums.**

Look through the old albums, and I bet you will remember stories you thought you had forgotten. Zero in on your relatives, both close and distant. Tell an old story that made you laugh - what time of year was it? What were you wearing? Where were you? Who was there? Do you remember? Maybe even scan the photo and use it on your page.

### **2. The oral tradition.**

Talk to your family. Call Aunt Ethel and reminisce. Connect with your cousins on Facebook. Do you have family reunions? Write down the memories talked about. Holiday gatherings are also great times to remember stories. Send out a questionnaire or ask everyone the same questions to see if their responses are different. Just talk!