



# Confessions of a Scrapbooker's Husband

I pulled my truck onto our gravel drive after a long day's work, with the anticipation of being greeted by my lovely bride and our three children – clean, well mannered and ready for bed, awake only because they had begged to stay up long enough to say good night to Daddy. It was a pleasant, wholesome image and made me smile as I made my way to the front door.

All the lights were on, and as I opened the door, I was greeted by my two-year-old, who was decidedly not ready for bed, but was, in fact, wrapped rather impressively in embellishments. I bent down and looked at him closely. Yes, that was some Creek Bank Creation Twill E Dee twill tape wrapped around his chest, and a woven label that said “All Yours” was stuck on his forehead. Various other pieces of ribbon, cloth and fibers completed his predicament. This was probably the work of my four-year-old daughter, but it might also be my wife's handiwork, particularly if my son was being meddlesome, which he generally was.

“What's doing, Luke?” I asked.

He paused from licking the filling out of a tiny s'mores cracker, carefully placed the licked cracker halves back in the box and smiled at me. I thought I detected a few photo tabs stuck in his hair.

“Where's Mom?” I asked.

“Scrappin' 'oom,” he said, returning to his crackers.

Ah, scrapping room... of course. I needn't have asked.

I rounded the corner to our room and paused in the doorway. There was product everywhere. My wife is extremely talented, but she tends to be one of those people who take their creativity from the chaos around them.

The room had two eight-foot folding tables set up on a fairly permanent basis, and our four-year-old was sitting on one of them amid heaps of my wife's discarded pictures and embellishments. Beka, our daughter, also scraps, rather well actually, and she uses just about anything she finds, but particularly items my wife doesn't need from whatever layout she was currently working on. She was cutting out something with deckle-edged scissors, and her little brow was furrowed in deep concentration. My wife was sitting at the same table, studying a type gauge sheet over a layout.

“Hi, Honey, I'm home.”

She turned around, an excited smile on her face. Hmm. This was good.

“Guess what!” she demanded happily.

“What?”

“I won the Regional Pseudo-County Scraptopia Contest!” Or something like that. Uh-oh. Now was the critical moment. I knew she had mentioned something a while back about a contest her scrapbook store was having, but I couldn't for the life of me remember any details. However for the health of my marriage and my own happiness, I always tried to appear to know what she was talking about. I thought quickly, but absolutely couldn't remember what she had said about this contest! I was running out of time. I had to say something, something appropriate, and fast.

“Wow, Honey! That's great! The Regional Scrapseudotopia... Wow! That's great!”

She started telling me about the contest. Whew. She was so excited; she didn't see me dancing like Fred Astaire.

“... and do you know what I get for winning?”

More product. “What?” I exclaimed.

“Dinner for two at Feliciano's!”

Hey! Now we're talking! Maybe there was something to this whole scrapbooking thing after all. Wow! A night on the town. We'd get my parents to watch the kids, maybe take in a show too... This'll be great. I was starting to get excited about scrapbooking.

“Isn't it great? They call it Dinner and a Crop. I'll take Shannon for the dinner, then afterwards, we'll go straight to the store for an all-night crop!”

The romantic music playing in my head came to a screeching halt with the sound of a record needle being dragged across the vinyl. Shannon? Midnight crop? Oh well. I embraced my love and gave her a big hug. “Congratulations, Honey, that's really wonderful. I'll watch the kids; just tell me when.”

The really crazy thing was that I couldn't help getting caught up in her enthusiasm. I glanced around at all the tags, labels, ribbons, photos, eyelets, rivets, stencils, stamps, papers, inks, paints, pastels, cutters (a technical term), squeezers (another technical term) and I couldn't help but think it might be fun. Of course, I was the guy who wrapped my wife's Christmas present by setting it in the middle of the wrapping paper, gathering all the ends together and wrapping them tight with duct tape – sort of the pineapple approach. But still.

“So, Honey,” I said, putting my arm around her as we walked out to get the kids ready for bed, “do men ever go to these crops?”

“Yeah,” she said, looking up at me. “Some. Why? You interested?”

“Maybe,” I allowed. “But I'd need something. Maybe if I could wear my John Deer hat, then it might be okay.”

She laughed. The dog went by with a Paper Bliss fish stuck in his tail. Yeah, I could really get into this. I started making plans to get the bed out of the scrapbooking room. Who really had time to sleep, anyway? - Joel Doherty