

December 9, 2010

Dear Readers:

### **Presents from the Past**

How many times have you asked yourself, "What do you get the person who has everything?" I know I feel this way with certain people who are hard to buy for. One can only use so many ties, shirts and sweaters. Although, my wife says one can never have enough jewelry!

I think I actually have an answer; ***Presents from the Past***.

Last Christmas, I gave my mother an ***empty box*** from [www.scanmyphotos.com](http://www.scanmyphotos.com). The idea was she could fill this box with as many photos of any size or shape as she could fit into the box and they would turn these pictures into digital images for a flat fee. We crammed over 2,400 pictures into the one box and sent it off.

Even the process of going through all the picture albums, envelopes and boxes of photos to get them ready to send off was a fun family event, with about a thousand laughs and a few tears. This is not the time to be too picky about which pictures stay and which ones go. Put them all in, for they are all a part of who you are. You can sort out the really bad ones later. The process of putting them back into their proper albums is an entirely different story! I think we're leaving that to the younger generation.

About a week later the photos were returned along with a CD of electronic images of all the pictures we sent. We then spent the next several hours looking at the newly digitalized images slowly run across the computer screen. My wife tweaked the images to make them look like new, even those that appeared to be on their last leg. Those are the ones that are really special. What was most interesting was the stories these pictures brought to mind. We had a wonderful time sharing the story behind each photo. What a great insight into the persons in the photos. Many of these have long since passed and are no longer able to tell their story. We need to keep these stories alive by retelling them to our children and children's children. They are the threads of the tapestry of the lives we now lead.

We then loaded the CD into my Mom's digital picture frame she received as another gift and now 24 hours a day 365 days a year these pictures provide a series of digital snippet's of our family that everyone enjoys and stares at for long periods of time. I often catch her stopping in midsentence to watch what's going across the screen. I'm sure she's lost in some place in the past.

We also made copies of the CD and gave each of my brothers (4 of them) and each of her grandchildren (5 old enough to enjoy) copies of all of the pictures. One of my brothers is sorting the pictures into sub-folders based on person, event, location, season, etc. Since they are digital he can put one picture into as many sub-folders as he wants.

I loaded the CD onto my laptop and desktop computers and made the file my source for my screen saver. Now when I am on the road and alone in my hotel room I let my computer run all the time and the pictures of my life click by every 20 seconds in a never ending stream. It's almost like I have my family with me on the road. I also leave my desktop on at home in my office and the same pictures flash across the screen and I often find myself staring at the screen waiting to see the next memory flash by.

These pictures bring back a flood of memories; happiness, inspiration, reflection, memory of a loved one who has passed away. One thing that brings a great sense of enjoyment and laughter is looking at all the hair styles and clothing styles that family members have passed through, it is really quit humorous. Many of these presents were long-ago forgotten, except in your sub-conscious and these pictures flowing through your brain revitalize so many more memories than I even knew I had.

I asked my wife to give me an *empty box* this year for Christmas, so I can digitize all of our family photos, I may need two boxes. I hope she understands that the empty box is not really the gift!! I'm also hoping she'll be the one to gather all the pictures from the many albums we have. More importantly, I'm hoping she'll be the one to put them all back again. This may cost me another piece of jewelry, but it'll be worth it!

If you don't give this gift of wonder to someone you love at least give it to yourself, you'll be glad you did.

Thanks for reading.

See you next month.

If you would like to add a friend, co-worker or family member to my monthly newsletter mailing list please send me their e-mail address.

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