



Christmas is coming! As I write this letter, we are just about two months away from the big day. Wow. What does this mean for us as crafters? If you love to make gifts for your friends and family, now is the time to get started.

Although fall is usually a busy time for many of us, the weeks before Christmas are even busier. So now is the time to get cracking on any Christmas projects you want to attempt. Wouldn't it be fun to set aside a Sunday afternoon and have a few friends come over to make a dent in everyone's holiday "to-make" projects? You might even get a few new ideas. Or, take turns hosting a different holiday craft project that can be given as gifts. Things like ornaments, "jar" gifts with cute altered tags describing how to make the treat inside, or altered picture frames are all great, inexpensive gifts to make in mass quantities.

If you prefer to craft solo, try scheduling time for yourself to make your holiday gifts and then stick to it! Think about squeezing in crafting time while the kids work on their homework, or while everyone is still sleeping early in the morning.

Once December rolls around, you'll be glad your Christmas crafts and gifts are checked off your to-make list!

Merry Christmas!

Paula



Meet Crystal {October Guest Designer}



Hi, my name is Crystal and I'm so excited and honored to be a Guest Designer for Back Porch Memories!

I live in Wisconsin with my husband and our two beautiful daughters Mackenzie (7) and Alyssa (5). I'm very lucky to be a stay at home mom. This year I'm trying to adjust to a new schedule with my girls being in school all day.

I first started scrapbooking almost 10 years ago when I made my wedding album. Over the last few years it has been a big addiction for me when I'm not able to scrapbook I'm thinking about what I will do with my next page. Scrapbooking is a good hobby for me I get to be creative and at the same time preserve our family's memories. I also enjoy photography and my girls are always giving me something to photograph daily; it's never boring with them.

You can see more of my layouts on my blog <http://crystaljustus.blogspot.com/>

Layouts in 15 Minutes {or Less}

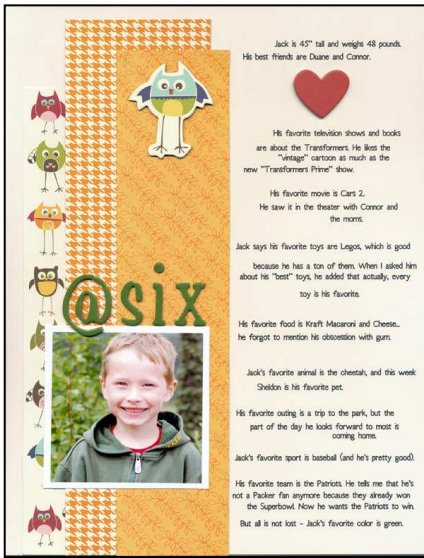
by Margy Eastman

10 Minutes

Ingredients

Cardstock – Bazzill Walnut Cream
Bella Boulevard Leaf Pile (back)
Bella Boulevard Borders (back)
Bella Boulevard Hoot
Thickers – Nutmeg from October 2011 Solo kit
Bella Boulevard Finally Fall Icons
Font – Emma Sophia

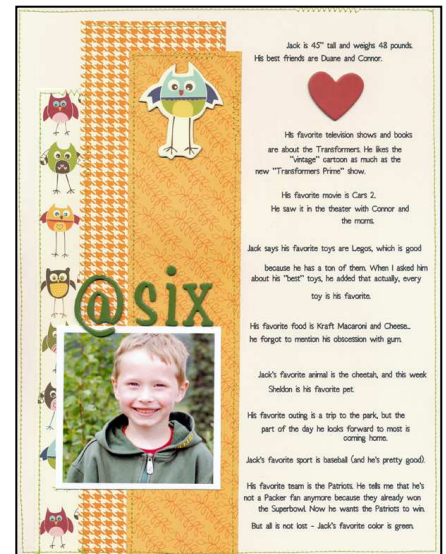
I asked Jack these questions on his sixth birthday this summer. Thank heavens for little notebooks! I must confess that I scrap-lifted myself, but it did go together pretty quickly, using just strips of the patterned papers and the cardstock as my background. I used Photoshop Elements to do the journaling, but you could use Word just as easily.



15 Minutes

The 15-minute version has machine-stitching... a good thing as I was getting low on adhesive! The little owls are so cute.

I have big plans for the rest of those papers!



Scrapbook Shortcuts {Using Paint as Mats}

by Alissa Trowbridge

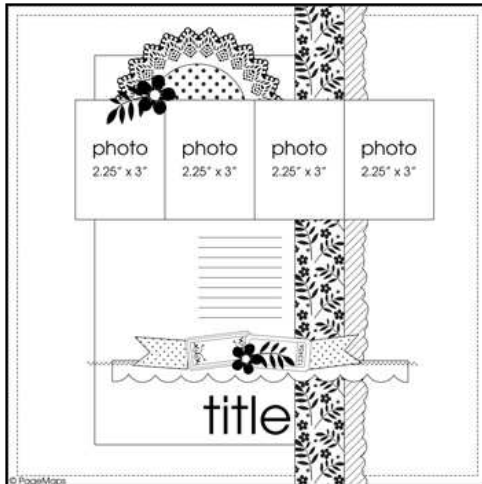
Matting your photos on cardstock or patterned paper takes time. You have to crop your photos and then attempt to cut all of your mats just perfect to fit behind them. It's not too hard, but it does eat into your scrapping time!

My solution is to use acrylic paint along the edges. I love to swipe the Ranger Paint Dabbers along the edges, because the foam tip applicator means I don't have to get out (and later clean) a paintbrush. So easy! The trick is to use a thin layer so it dries quickly. They will be "matted" and ready to add to your layout almost instantly!



{October Sketch}

selected from www.pagemaps.com



October Sketch



Margy Eastman



Danielle Price



Crystal {Guest Designer}



Want to be Our Next Guest Designer?

Each month, we open up a spot on our Design Team to one lucky guest. All you have to do is create a layout based on the exclusive sketch by Becky Fleck (posted in our forum under “contests”). The contest is always due on the 10th of every month, with the winner being announced around the 15th.

Guests are given full designer privileges for the month they design with us. You’ll receive a kit to design with compliments of Back Porch Memories. Plus you get access to our private Design Team forum, where we discuss all the behind the scenes stuff – what products are coming out in the next kit, what to put in our newsletter, who is working on the sketches for the month, etc. It’s really fun!

Don’t be shy – submit your layout to our contest and maybe YOU will be our next guest designer! Good luck!

Journaling Tips

by Danielle Calhoun

Whether you journal on every layout, or rarely journal, writing a little something on each layout can be such an important part of your memory. Even if I don't journal much on my page, I like to always pat the date and the place that the memory took place.

There are so many different ways that you can add some excitement to your journaling, or make it more interesting. A few tips that I have found are to journal around the edges of the paper, hide your journaling behind a photo or in a pocket or envelope, make lists, use a poem or a quote, or type your journaling out.

If you are like me, you don't always scrapbook those photos immediately after the memory took place. Tips that have helped me are to keep a paper journal handy and write down thoughts & memories while they are fresh in my mind. Keeping a blog has also helped me a ton. I often look back on my blog to refresh my memory.

Journaling is such an important part of your memory, enjoy!



Clipboard Mini Album

by Danielle Price

For this month's mini-album, I chose to make one out of a small clipboard. They can be found in any office supply store. It is super fun and super easy. I hope you all will try and make one. Here is how I did it:



Paint the clipboard on both sides with whatever color you want. When it is dry, distress the edges if you want. I left mine alone. Remember to punch two holes to the bottom of the clipboard so that you can attach your pages. Trim chipboard to measure 5 x 7. Depending on how thick your embellishments are will determine how many you will use. I only used four on this one because those pom-pom flowers are puffy! Also, punch holes in your chipboard that are the same as your clipboard. Using the clipboard, I used a pencil and marked the holes on the chipboard and then punched them out.

Using cardstock, attach them to the front and back of the chipboard pages. Remember to punch out the holes each time you attach a piece of cardstock.



Continues next page.



Add photos, patterned paper and embellishments.

This is how they look after you attach them to the clipboard with the silver rings.



For the front of the album, layer as much as you want. I used the light blue paper strip with the purple fabric strip woven inside for one of the layers. I loved the effect. I also rolled the yellow ribbon from the kit into a rose that I placed by the pom-pom flower. Don't forget to add ribbon to the silver clip of the clipboard. All of the ribbon used is from my stash.



I would love to see what you all make! Don't forget to post it in the gallery.