

Rye Reflections

The rewards and costs of having hobbies

Excitement, fun and challenges of being involved

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Have you noticed how time seems to fly by when you're having fun?

All through life I have had hobbies. My dad had a saying: "It's astounding *the amount* people spend on their hobby." I guess within each of us there is a basic need to search out, pursue, and obtain the respect for ourselves as well as receive it from others. Money, time, and sacrifice are of little consequence when combined to achieve the goal through activities we love to do. The main one for me is providing for my family.

Christmas is a special time. There are presents to shop for, photo opportunities to record and participation in the excitement and anticipation of the event. There comes a satisfaction that living the joys, challenges and *the amount* spent this past year has been worth it.



The family gathering - an experience of joy in sharing

This past June I had all sorts of plans for various projects to be accomplished during the warm weather months. At the end of the period I had started only a few and hadn't finished any of them. I looked back to see, "what happened?" Where did my motivation go to deal with them? Where did I spend my time?

I know where it went. The motivation and time went into meeting the challenges I chose to undertake at the expense of my well-laid plans. I guess my value system has been the basis of my decisions and caused me to alter my priorities. I became consumed in some community projects where the utilization of my love of photography, computer graphics and history could to be used. I developed a new hobby, that of writing for *Rye Reflections*. I feel gratified that this "C" student in English can actually pump out a story. In a way, though, I

became too enthralled and bypassed some of the responsibilities of daily life.

This caused me to look at the nature of hobbies. Sometimes, we can get caught up in the process. It's like a workaholic in business. There is raw material to acquire. Sometimes it's free, such as unique scenes to a photographer's eye or expensive when building or creating something. Then hardware (fixed assets) and labor are needed to massage the raw material into suitable form. The familiar event in all of our lives these days, "The old technology is outmoded, we need a new one," is put forth as a rationale for a new purchase. It may be a camera, power tool, sewing machine, golf clubs or a computer. The excitement of putting these new acquisitions to use becomes paramount often overriding the normal routine of life like putting supper on the table with, "Why don't we have Chinese tonight?" or let's go down to view the river so I can test out my new camera.



Happiness is putting the new machine through its paces

Inventory is accumulated where the amount is never enough of the right kind. There seems to be an insatiable appetite to add to the pile. A good friend of mine and I joke about a competition we have, who can acquire the most pictures? Often, as in many situations, overriding demand doesn't match the supply, so more is required to be created -- more time, more attention, more sacrifices.

Finally, there comes an exchange. Goods are sold, bartered, gifted or presented so others can see or receive the benefits of our efforts. Appreciation, gratification and satisfaction are achieved. But there is a cost and often never fully realized until we look back at what could have or should have been.

THE SEASONAL FAIR; Hobbies galore

Have you ever been to a hobby convention? You have if you've attended a seasonal fair. It's the chance to participate and exchange in a big social event and move into the spirit of a season. It's the opportunity to show one's hobby, purchase the product of a hobbyist, and have some fun.

There are handmade articles such as paintings, hand-sewn items of clothing, floral displays, and pieces made of wood, stone, glass, and any of a number of other materials. Some are purchased for collections such as dolls, dishes, pictures and items where there is satisfaction in just having them. Others may be for gifts or decorative accessories for the home.

For the seller, the hobbyist, it starts with the accumulation of saleable inventory. Hidden costs begin to emerge. The ring of the telephone brings a request, "Are you going to participate in our fair this year? It'll be \$75 for the space, and we need it by tomorrow." Bins are needed to store, hold and move inventory. Shelves, tables, and racks are required to properly show what's available. Posters, signs, price sheets are needed to aid the "exchange" process. As with any hobby there are a lot of fun things to do but to complete the process there's a large load of necessary chores.

One woman I know works diligently all fall preparing for the season to come. She loves to sew. She offers items in the baby market for fathers and grandmothers. The items are made of fleece and come in a variety of material designs, product styles, finished shapes and sizes. Hopefully, the anticipated requirements turn out to end up being sold rather than leftovers for the next fair. Grandmothers love the special pink and blue handmade items and what better gift to give a young baby or child than a quilt with Red Sox and Patriot logos all over it from Dad?



Red Sox Baby Blanket



Fleece Vest

I believe one of the main purposes of all of these fairs is to share cash, assurance, praise, chit-chat on the activity, and exchange judgments on the worth of the items offered. Just being there and participating seems to be part of the gratification process.

The big day arrives. It's Saturday morning. For the seller, going to the fair presents an opportunity for a morning physical workout with trips to find out where the booth will be, then back and forth from the car or van to the assigned space. It's bin by bin, piece by piece and finally movement of the necessary furniture and fixtures to display the items. When the initial activity is done it's time for those not involved but supporting the cause to sit down with a donut and a cup of coffee. New friends are easily made. Most often it's between significant others who are along for the ride where each of them would rather be doing something else, their hobby.

Activity is brisk and everyone seems to be enjoying him or herself. Groups of families move about the floor with the leader selecting the booths to spend time in. "What's available?" "This one would look nice." "Can you make one special for me in this size but of that material?" The existing inventory is insufficient. Special orders are taken. Appreciation is well received.



The proclamation



Even the little ones need attending to



Everyone has a project

Sales activity peaks then diminishes and pleasurable thoughts particularly to those who have been biding their time signal the process may finally be coming to end.

Questions are asked, "How did we do?" To the buyers it's a review of purchased items and satisfaction knowing they have acquired desired and pleasing possessions. To the sellers, part of it is a monetary analysis. How much was taken in. There never seems to be an account of *the amount* of time, funds, and sacrifices necessary to complete the process.



Has it been worthwhile?

An appraisal is made of what remains. There is a huge amount of raw material, inventory that didn't sell, and hardware which will probably be outdated by new technology in the coming year. I heard her remark, "I really could have used a machine that embroidered items so I can put names on clothes." "Also, a machine that is programmable via a memory card and that utilizes software off the Internet would help bring in more sales and dollars." With the finished inventory I guess there is always the eBay route but with regard to the acquisition of newer technology, we can always dream.

Has it all been worthwhile? As we look at own hobbies, cars, real estate, photography, writing, shopping at a fair, or the acquisition of handmade items, we can appreciate that each has a story behind it. *It's special* having been created, formed, and implemented with the person and those involved putting themselves into it. *It's personal*. A hobby can indeed be expensive in time, money, and sacrifice, but extremely satisfying and gratifying as well.

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