

I remember getting my very first camera. I ran around that first Christmas taking pictures of everyone and everything, much like my own children do when presented with my camera and told to take pictures. When I look back at the pictures, it's funny to see what I deemed important for a photo; the presents under the tree, a plate of cookies, my grandpa, my arm, the list goes on. Glancing through some of those family shots from Christmas, I found that every single picture of my grandpa has the top of his head cut off! I think for my eight year old hands, that particular camera was a bit heavy for me. Another time, on vacation, I remember hiding in the back of the van and snapping a picture of a cactus blooming so I could tell my mom that I got the picture before she did! These experiences have shaped how I take pictures and the cameras I've bought through the years. I have always steered clear of larger cameras that had any weight to them because I was convinced that I wouldn't get any good shots because it would be too heavy for me. Never mind, that I was now an adult and could handle more weight. All of those pictures with the tops of the heads cut off have stuck with me.

I have always had a camera and have always taken pictures, but it has been something that kind of comes and goes for me. I have been known to take tons of pictures on a vacation and then not again until some major holiday. Until, I had children. Now, of course, I'm suddenly tripping all over myself to get all of the amazing things they do recorded so I won't forget them and so that everyone else can see how wonderful my babies are. Within this last year, however, I have discovered that I appreciate certain types of photographs more than others. For example, I really like photos where there is a strong center of focus and a blurry background. So, I have been trying to take them with my own camera and failing miserably. Not being able to accomplish this with my point and shoot, I realized that maybe it was time to advance to a camera with interchangeable lenses. The fact that they are larger cameras did hold me back for a few months, at least, but, in the end, my husband said to just do it and I did. I hardly notice the weight of my new camera now and I absolutely love it. I purchased a Nikon D40 which is a slightly older model, but very capable of creating all the shots I want to try.

Learning a new camera takes a lot of trial and error and lots and lots of pictures to figure out new ways to get shots, but I am rewarded with some amazing pictures. I still take pictures of my family, but have come to also appreciate taking pictures of trees, flowers, landscapes, whatever and wherever I see beauty with my camera in hand. Even without my camera in hand, I notice that beauty more and more, taking mental pictures in my mind and kicking myself for not bringing my camera. You might say photography has become a joy and a passion for me that has evolved over the years and is still evolving.

Here at the Waverly Public Library we are celebrating Joys over the next year. January is the Joy of Photography. To help celebrate this passion, we are holding a photography contest. Please bring in a matted 8x10 photograph to the library by January 23, 2009. There will be three chances to win: a People's Choice, A Staff's Choice, and a Professional's Choice (judging by Nichole Priebe). The winners will be decided by the end of the month. The photos will be on display for at least a couple of weeks following the judging. So, even if you are not a photographer, stop in and enjoy someone else's joy. Or, if photography is an evolving passion for you, as it has been for me, stop in and check out our photography section and explore where you want to go with it and what brings you joy.