

Treasured Memories

-Alex Stein

As time goes on, we forget more and more. Even at seventeen, I can't fully recall all the moments of my childhood. Our memories, our adventures, our birthdays become fleeting thoughts of the past. Weekends at the zoo or Thanksgiving at the grandparents' house slowly fade from memory. We can take pictures to preserve these memories but the feelings and the details of those moments are lost forever.

A few weeks ago, I was cleaning my house and stumbled upon a box full of old family videos. Considering they were never updated to DVD, they were tucked away and forgotten. It had been a long time since I had watched them so I hooked up the VCR and relived my childhood in front of my television. My mother always had a camcorder attached to her hand so I had an abundance of videos to choose from. Events that I once thought were fleeting memories were now again vivid moving images.

While we haven't invented time travel yet and Doc Brown hasn't brought the flux capacitor to Marblehead, this is the best alternative to going back in time. We can close our eyes and visualize these events but they can't replace the actual images. Home videos preserve a piece of us that we may have forgotten over time. It's quite unique when you get to live in your old house again and relive your 5th birthday party. Even seeing the small things made my eyes light up, like how I used to lose it whenever someone sang "happy birthday" or how I had this infatuation with this plastic camera that would make music. I had forgotten how great my Halloween decorations were and my brother's tantrum in the North Shore Mall wearing his spider costume. It brought back memories of family traditions such as yearly visits apple picking, the Topsfield Fair, holidays, New York during Christmas, and every trip to amusement parks. When I think back on how stupid it was when my grandfather videotaped me in my basement playing basketball in my imaginary "Boston Garden" I am now thankful that memories like this were preserved. Yet, I am sorry that I said, "no more" or "enough" to my mother every time she wanted to video or take pictures because now I wish there were a whole lot more. I wonder what I can't remember or never be recalled again.

After I discovered these tapes, I brought them to my grandparents' house because I remember them saying they would really like to watch them again. I realized that these tapes are a part of who we are. When my grandmother was reduced to tears after seeing her mother, my great-grandmother, at a party for me when I was born, I realized that these videos are the keys to the past, reuniting us with people who are no longer with us and more of a treasure than being given any sum of money. When my cousins visited last week, they wanted to watch the videos as well. My Uncle's face lit up when he saw his dog that died very young many years earlier. Only

a fleeting image of “Louie” carelessly walking around their backyard pool was enough to stir a response. These home videos do a lot more than entertain us, but also show us who or what has gotten us to this point in our life.

It is funny to look back and see people who you forgot all about, people who died, and people you still (or don't) talk too. Through my travel back in time, I caught glimpses of school mates who were once good friends and now we barely acknowledge each other. For those you've forgotten, you get to be momentarily reunited with them and wonder where they ended up. For those who died, it is a chance again to be with them, hear their voice, and remember the times that were special. And for those people you still talk too, you get to watch them make a fool of themselves like at the Eveleth School Fashion Show or the kindergarten Thanksgiving sing-a-long.

I mentioned a few weeks back that there are television shows that are currently on that take us back in time and remove us from today's hectic world. The same goes for home videos. It is quite refreshing to be taken back to a time when applying to college was not a thought and *Blues Clues* was a major priority. If I am ever given a wish I would, without a doubt, want that remote controller given to Adam Sandler in *Click*. No amount of money would be equal to going back in time and seeing people who are no longer with us or sitting down to dinner in a house that I don't live in anymore. Luckily, these memories are easily accessible in a box tucked away in the closet.

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