

Well, another year has flown by and is nearing the end. My hope is that 2015 has been a wonderful year for you, filled with mostly happy experiences.

Perhaps the memories of the past year that you've made and captured can now be easily organized for sharing. If you're like many of us, that activity will take a bit of time.

Will those organization and summary efforts be worth it? **Absolutely!** In addition to enjoying the review yourself, there are many others who appreciate the information.

One of my college roommates used to complain about such annual summaries saying "you only see the good things going on in their lives!" Well, I for one like seeing favorable news in this world, especially from friends and family (made even better when accompanied by a picture or two.) We hope those summaries come with plenty of positives – vacation highlights, jobs obtained plus updates on kids, parents, grandkids and more. Even when the news is something we might not wish for them – losses of loved ones, job downsizing, etc. – it allows us to share sorrow in thoughts, prayers, notes or whatever response seems most appropriate.

In doing such summaries, we're helped by ever-increasing electronic tools, should we feel motivated to use them. Timeline and/or Posting Summaries provide Facebook users with good thought-starters. For the rest of us, we can accumulate/review pictures (from smartphones, shutterfly, flickr, Google Plus, etc.); videos (from YouTube, smartphones, etc.); saved ticket stubs; letters/emails; and countless other materials. Then the task becomes how to share the summary with others.

For our family of four, that annual summary now comes in the form of an email (with a few copies "snail mailed" to those not as comfortable with the electronic age.) The email includes internet links to pictures, videos and websites to make the content as rich as most recipients desire. And I also make this comment at the beginning: *"Please read on if you want some family highlights of this year..... or just move on to your next email and know that we're thinking of you as we start the new year!"*

Our mom has been doing an annual summary since at least 1959 - usually in rhyming prose. It's a great way for her kids, other family members and friends to see what has happened in the past year (and to see whether she can find a word that rhymes without stepping a bit too far... 😊)

Maybe you'll consider assembling such a document if you haven't in the past? And if you've always done one, maybe your recipient list this holiday season will include new people based on thinking of neighbors, former teachers and others who deserve a "thank you" and/or hello?

With your summary completed – even if it's just a paragraph or two of musings on the past year – consider sending it to treasured family and friends. My guess is that you will appreciate the experience and will get many 'fringe benefits' as well.

Enjoy the day...and the memories!

Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, describes himself as an "aspiring memory missionary." He and his wife Kim are having fun with their Long Memories efforts (www.LongMemories.info), focusing on helping others in "Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!"