



THE COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT CAMERA CLUB'S
e-NEWSLETTER FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

NOVEMBER 2003

Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of *e-focus*, the supplement to the Coachella Valley Desert Camera Club's Newsletter (*In Focus*). *e-focus* is devoted to those club members interested in digital photography.

e-focus will *only* be distributed electronically by email in Adobe Acrobat's pdf format (readers can download the free Adobe Acrobat viewer from **Adobe's website**). This will allow for more digital photography material to be presented, and in greater depth than can normally be included in *In Focus*. The assumption is that anyone interested in digital photography can receive and open documents as email attachments. *e-focus* can, however, be printed on regular US Letter size paper for those readers who prefer to print it out for themselves.

e-focus will not as a rule duplicate material found in the regular Newsletter unless there is a special reason to do so (such as announcements of meetings of DIPSIG, the Digital Image Photography Special Interest Group). The regular Newsletter is also distributed electronically to club members, but is additionally available in print form to those who prefer to receive it that way. Conversely, the regular Newsletter will not normally contain material concerning digital photography unless it is of interest to a more general audience.

As editor, I want to make *e-focus* as lively and interesting as possible to a wide range of readers. Only you can decide whether I have succeeded. As such, I need your feedback. Please tell me what you like and what you dislike, and what you suggest for improvements. And I need your contributions. Please share your experiences in this exciting new world of digital photography. Write *Letters to the Editor*. Anyone interested in writing a regular column?

Above all: *enjoy!*

Stuart Lynn, *e-focus* editor

This Month's Feature Article

CUTTING IT SHORT

by Stuart Lynn

Software for image enhancement – such as Photoshop and Photoshop Elements – include very powerful “tools”, such as Crop, Zoom, Magic Wand, Lasso and others. These tools allow us to work our image to our liking.

Most new “digigraphers” use these tools by clicking on the graphic of the desired tool in the Toolbar or by selecting from the appropriate entry from a “pull-down” menu¹. This is relatively intuitive and easy when starting out. But after awhile it becomes slow and tedious to select tools this way.

Fortunately, most image processing software provides *shortcuts* to enable you to go right to the tool with one keystroke, or a combination of two keystrokes. That’s the good news. The bad news is that you have to remember which keystroke to press. Often, however, the right keystroke is easy to remember because it is the initial letter of the name of the tool: pressing “z”, for example, at any time selects the Zoom tool, or “c” selects the Crop tool. Much quicker than dragging the cursor over to the graphic of the Zoom or Crop tool and then clicking on it.

Shortcuts save time. A little effort to learn the most useful ones now will repay great dividends later.

Also, some of the same shortcuts work across different image processing packages, so you do not have to learn new shortcuts if you use different software. They have become almost universal. And, if you happen to forget the shortcut, many of them are right there to be found. When, for example, you access Hue/Saturation through the appropriate pull-down menu², you can see the shortcut printed right next to the menu entry – just waiting for you to re-memorize it. Or place your cursor over the Crop Tool on the Toolbar (don’t click on the mouse), and both the name of the tool and its shortcut will pop up.

I do not try to remember all possible shortcuts. There are far too many of them to memorize. But I do memorize the shortcuts for the tools and menu entries that I use most frequently, creating my own “memory palette” of shortcuts. I have listed some of my favorites (through experimentation you can find your own) in the Table on the next page. I have underlined for many entries in the Table the letter that can help you to remember the shortcut. Incidentally, I do not list typical shortcuts that work on almost every piece of software, like Ctrl-P for Print (Command-P on the Mac).

(continued on next page)

(Footnotes)

¹ Enhance, Adjust Color, Hue/Saturation in Photoshop Elements; or Image, Adjustments, Hue/Saturation in Photoshop.

² See Footnote 1.

SHORTCUTS: A USEFUL STARTER SET

Keystroke or Keystroke Combination	Tool or Effect (<u>underlined letter</u> is to help remember the shortcut)	Note
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Elementary Shortcuts for Toolbar Tools (easiest to memorize):

Note: Where there are several variants of the tool on the same toolbar entry (such as Lasso and Magnetic Lasso), the shortcut will normally access the variant currently displayed.

m or M	<u>M</u> arquis (selection tool)	See note above.
v or V	<u>M</u> ove	
l or L	<u>L</u> asso (selection tool)	
w or W	Magic <u>W</u> and	
c or C	<u>C</u> rop	
b or B	<u>B</u> rush	The shortcut will select the Pencil tool if it is active. See note above.
s or S	<u>S</u> tamp	
t or T	<u>T</u> ext	
e or E	<u>E</u> raser	
g or G	<u>G</u> radient	
l or l	<u>E</u> yedropper	
z or Z	<u>Z</u> oom	
x or X	Exchanges foreground and background colors.	
d or D	Makes foreground color black, and background color white.	No easy way to remember!
h or H	<u>H</u> and	Regardless of which tool is currently active, pressing and holding the Spacebar will select the Hand tool for so long as the Spacebar is depressed. Very handy when you want to move to a part of your image that is not visible!

Some useful Menu Item and other Shortcuts (these are harder to memorize but worth the effort):

Note: I show the shortcut for the PC. For the Mac, substitute "Command" (the Apple or Flower key) wherever the Ctrl key is indicated for the PC.

Note: The key combination Ctrl+d means that you press the "d" or "D" key (case does not matter) while pressing the Ctrl key.

Ctrl+d	<u>D</u> eselect a selection	
Ctrl-0	Enlarge image to full screen	That's "zero" not "O"!
Ctrl+u	Opens the <u>H</u> ue/Saturation window.	
Ctrl+t	Invokes Free <u>T</u> ransform on a selection or a layer	
Ctrl+j	Copies the current selection to a new layer (or duplicates entire layer if no selection is made).	Photoshop only (see next for Elements).
or Ctrl+c followed by Ctrl+v	Copies the current selection to a new layer (to duplicate entire layer in Elements, use Ctrl+a, Select All, first)	That is, doing a Copy followed by a Paste.
Ctrl+b	Opens the <u>C</u> olor <u>B</u> alance window	Photoshop only.
Ctrl+l	Opens the <u>L</u> evels window	
Ctrl+e	Merge Down. That is, merges selected layer with one below it.	
Shift+Ctrl+i	<u>I</u> nv <u>E</u> rt selection	A useful three-key combination!
Ctrl+f	Re-apply last filter used with same settings	Shift+Ctrl+F allows you to change the settings (Photoshop only).
Shift+Ctrl+n	Launches a <u>n</u> ew layer	
Shift+Ctrl+b	<u>A</u> uto color	Photoshop only. Use with caution!

[PRINT OUT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE]

(This Month's Feature Article continued from previous page)

Start off by learning the easiest shortcuts first, such as those associated with tools on the Toolbar several of which are listed in the first half of the Table. Add one shortcut at a time until its use becomes second nature. Some shortcuts are a little more advanced, but still worth the effort to memorize. Gradually expand your repertoire. You might, for example, want to work through the shortcuts indicated in the second half of the Table.

Try one shortcut the next time you use Photoshop Elements or Photoshop – and become a shortcut addict! Your productivity will increase – guaranteed!

the dipsig page



by Joe Ramsey

DIPSIG is the Digital Photography Special Interest Group of the Coachella Valley Desert Camera Club. It meets monthly (except July and August) at 6.30 pm at the Courtyard Marriott at the corner of Cook and Frank Sinatra in Palm Desert

PORTRAIT RETOUCHING BACK FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT!

Last month's presenter (Stuart Lynn) for our new "How I Used Photoshop" feature was unable to make his presentation (his grandchildren took priority for some reason!) and has promised on a stack of Photoshop CD's that he will deliver it this month at our November meeting. The subject is Using Photoshop to Improve Portraits.

At last month's meeting, the subject of layer masks was lightly introduced. In the course of this presentation, Stuart will also explore this subject in greater depth, showing how he uses layer masking to improve portraits.

THE LONE RANGER MIGHT LOVE THESE MASKS BUT TONTO WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE THEM

The heart of Photoshop processing is Layers but did you know that Layers can also have masks? Masks are a very useful selection tool. And, in fact are very easy to use and modify. They can also be saved with an image file where they can be revised at a later time if desired. Masking functions are built in to Photoshop and to a limited extent in Photoshop Elements.

REMINDER: BRING YOUR OWN PORTRAIT!!!

Following Stuart's presentation DIPSIG members are invited to bring a portrait that was processed in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements using any or all of the Photo Retouching techniques covered in last month's meeting – or even using new techniques that we can all learn.

Be prepared to discuss the techniques you used to obtain your final print. Your portrait may be either a print or on a CD.

Beyond Stuart's presentation, we'll show you how to use masks in all versions of Photoshop and work on a few additional examples to help explain their application. If you have Photoshop 6 WOW Book and the companion CD refer to Quick Masking and Blending on page 160 and Blending Images and Type on page 168. In The Photoshop Elements Book refer to Chapter 5, page 112 Making Selections Using a Brush.

As always practice images will be available on CD at the meeting. Bring your laptops and power cords.

TIP OF THE MONTH

As Joe Ramsey pointed out (see meeting report, right) at the September DIPSIG meeting, you can limit the effect of many of Photoshop's or Photoshop Elements' tools to the area contained within a selection. So if you want to lighten, blur, sharpen, change color etc. of just a portion of your image, select that portion first using the lasso and/or any of the selection tools to create a selection of the area you want to modify *before* applying your tool of choice.

This works for the stamp and healing tools, too. This becomes particularly important if you want to remove blemishes just within a selected area (such as pimples on a face!) while making sure not to modify other surrounding areas.

For added protection and ease of manipulation, you can also create a new layer of the selected area – just hit control-j (PC) or command-j (Mac) after making the selection. One advantage of this is that you can also work with the Opacity slider between layers to combine the modified layer with the original layer. And use the different modes of blending. It also makes possible the use of layer masks in Photoshop. This will be discussed in more detail at the October DIPSIG meeting.

All this depends on making good selections in the first place! But that's another story. – MSL

Report on October DIPSIG MEETING

by Jerry Dupree

At the October DIPSIG meeting, Club President Joe Ramsey gave a presentation on portrait retouching. He demonstrated some of the processes using a duplicate layer to remove lines, blemishes, lighten teeth, remove wrinkles, and color hair.

Body contours can be adjusted with the liquefy tool, wrinkles and blemishes can be removed with the clone tool or the healing and patch tools in Photoshop 7.0. Teeth can be lightened by selecting the teeth to make a mask and by using the desaturate function.

By overlaying a duplicate layer many touchup functions can be accomplished with the brush tool to reveal or enhance by painting with white or black.

It's like performing virtual plastic surgery and it is possible to take years off of a person's face, or remove unfortunate scars and blemishes. Many creative digital enhancements can be done using Photoshop or Photoshop Elements.

Stuart Lynn will be presenting more on this subject at the November meeting (see accompanying announcement).

REMINDER: GET READY FOR NOVEMBER 25 CLUB MEETING!

At the November *regular* club meeting on November 25, members are invited to give brief presentations of collections of their images. These may consist of prints or, of more interest to DIPSIG regulars, on CD's. This will provide an opportunity to present your images as digital slideshows, using any of a growing number of software packages to construct your presentation.

This is a time to be creative with your digital prowess!. Add music, titles, fades, and – for the really ambitious – include a voice-over narrative.

Each presentation should be timed to last for no more than about 6 minutes.

At the DIPSIG meeting on November 18, we will spend a few minutes discussing some of the options available to produce their slideshows.

Photoshop Rolls On (...and On and On)!

by Stuart Lynn

No, it's not Photoshop 8.0. Adobe has broken with tradition in releasing its new version of Photoshop and named it Photoshop CS. This is to reflect a key feature of the new release, namely seamless integration with other Adobe products (also using the CS moniker), such as Adobe Illustrator CS and Adobe Acrobat CS.

This seamless integration is of most interest to graphic designers who use many of these products in harness. But what does Photoshop CS offer to serious digital photographers? Here is a summary of what I have learned thus far:

- **Increased support for 16 bits.** In one of the most significant product enhancements, Photoshop expands its support for 16-bit images to include support for layers (very useful), painting, text and shapes. Normally we work with 8-bit images in Photoshop. Many digital cameras and scanners, however, have the ability to create 16-bit images with a far wider range of colors.
- **Stitching.** Among other new plug-ins now included with the product (instead of having to purchase them separately from third-parties) is one that facilitates stitching separate photos together seamlessly, such as in creating panoramic shots. A similar feature already exists in Photoshop Elements, but is limited to low resolution 72dpi.
- **A filter gallery.** Instead of poking through a pulldown menu, users can select filters from a gallery of choices and immediately visualize in a special window the combined effect of multiple filters.
- **Text on a path.** For those who like to play with text in their images, text can be curved along a pre-defined path (just like the "dipsig page" heading on Page 4 of this issue of *e-focus*).
- **Matched colors.** This enables you to apply a series of color corrections you have made to one photo to a batch of photos (at a previous DIPSIG meeting, Joe Ramsey showed how to use actions to achieve the same effect).

The upgrade price from any (I believe, but have not verified) previous version of Photoshop is \$169. This does not apply to owners of Photoshop Elements. The full new price is \$649 continuing the tradition of a wallop to the wallet, particularly if you are starting from scratch and not upgrading. There are also package deals available for those who want to acquire other products in the CS family.

Tentative Verdict: Unless you absolutely must take advantage of the features mentioned above, there is not a whole lot worth having in this particular upgrade as far as the prosumer digital photographer is concerned. However, keeping up with the Adobes may just be a way of life because sooner or later you may well find compelling reasons to upgrade. So stay tuned for more!

Beginners' Page

(or for anyone who wants to learn some more!)

Editor's Note: I plan for this to be a regular feature directed to members who are new to digital photography. I welcome any submissions from new digirati particularly showing how they are using digital capabilities to produce exciting images. Letters to the Editor raising questions are also welcome. Experienced digirati can skip this column (but, who knows, if you sneak a peek, no one will tell!

This column will not address basic matters on how to use your PC or Mac. It is expected that readers can turn elsewhere for advice, such as to friends or to many of the short courses given across the valley by adult learning programs at the Desert Community College, various senior centers, and elsewhere – MSL

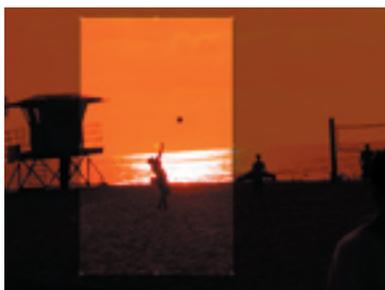
CUTTING YOUR PICTURES DOWN TO SIZE – EXPLORING YOUR CROP TOOL

[Note: portions of the text in italics – thus – can be omitted on first reading]

There are essentially two ways to crop your images to the size you want: the *easy* way (in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements) using the Crop tool; or the *hard* way by printing out your entire photo and cutting it down to size with your paper cutter. We'll discuss the easy way!

Let's assume you have your favorite image open in Photoshop Elements (in this column I will rely on Photoshop Elements as the imaging software of choice for beginners – and even for many advanced users since it is far cheaper than Photoshop!). You want to eliminate pictorial elements that detract from the main center of interest.

Invoke the Crop tool, either by clicking on the Crop icon on the Tool palette, or by using the shortcut: just press the "C" key on the keyboard (see this month's Feature Article on Shortcuts on Page 2 of this Newsletter). Now just drag your cursor over the area of your image that you want to keep – don't worry if this is not precise since, as you will see, this selection can be adjusted.



Presto! The area you want to keep remains visible, whereas the area that is to be eliminated is covered by a dark grey shadow. *[Note you can make this shadow area darker or lighter by adjusting the Opacity slider in the toolbar right above the window – just click on the arrowhead to the right of the window and move the slider to the left (lighter) or right (darker) while holding down your mouse button. Making it darker will lessen the distraction of the eliminated pictorial elements. You can also change the color of the shadow by clicking on the Color*

(continued from previous page)

window next to the Opacity slider, and selecting another color.]

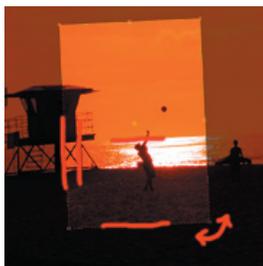


Now if you want to make adjustments, just click on one or more of the four handles on each side of the image and move it in or out to contract or expand the selected area. Or grab one of the corner handles to move the two adjacent sides in or out together. [If you hold down your shift key while doing this, the rectangle will increase or decrease while retaining its proportions.] You can also move the entire selection around by grabbing it with your cursor in the middle of the selection and moving your cursor while keeping your mouse held down.



Once you are happy with your choice, just double-click inside the selection, and lo! the edges will be chopped off according to your instructions.

[By the way, if at any time you want to “release” the Crop tool after you have made a selection (but before double-clicking) and return to the original image, just press the Escape key. If you have already made the selection, you can achieve the same result by using the Undo command of the History palette.]



Before finally double-clicking, you can even rotate the selection by moving your cursor just outside one of the corners of the selection (a small semi-circular double-headed arrow will replace your cursor when it is at the right spot) and rotating the image around the center point. This is useful if you want to make horizon lines parallel to the edge or vertical building lines parallel to the edges. When you double-click, the rotated selection will automatically line itself up with the edges of your screen. Try it!



But suppose you had wanted to restrict your selection to pre-specified dimensions, such as standard frame sizes. Such as if you want to restrict it to 5” x 7”. Quite easily done! Once you have selected the Crop tool and before dragging your selection, just enter the dimensions of interest into the dimension boxes in the toolbar. Then when you drag your selection, the marquis will be constrained to your selected dimensions. You can even specify the resolution of the cropped image – just enter the required resolution into the resolution box on the toolbar before making your selection. Photoshop Elements will make all the necessary

adjustments, inserting extra pixels if necessary if you request a higher resolution (doesn't turn a great low-resolution picture into a great high resolution picture, however!). But discussion of image resolution will have to wait for another column.

One final note: the more you crop your picture, the more you limit how large a print you can make and still have a great looking result. Why? Because you are losing pixels (image elements). It's as if you had taken your photo with a lower resolution digital camera in the first place. So it is still the best idea (as with film cameras) to do most of your cropping in the viewfinder, before pressing the shutter release!

Stuart Lynn

WHY I WENT DIGITAL – AND WON'T GO BACK!

by Jerry Dupree

I used to have a point and shoot 35mm camera that was more than adequate for the type of photography I was doing, which was kids, holidays, vacations, parties, etc. We were preparing for an extended vacation to tour Civil War battlefields in several states and I wanted to make a photographic record the trip to accompany a story I was going to write for a magazine. I took a course in photography so I could learn as much as possible about photographic techniques and types of cameras. After taking the first course I went to a camera shop and bought a Nikon N60 SLR camera and some lenses and accessories. I found out about another course, which gave me an opportunity to practice using the equipment I had bought.

After returning from our trip and processing over 20 rolls of film I discovered digital cameras. By today's standards they were primitive, but allowed for zoom photography with no processing and no problem of storing negatives and prints which had began to accumulate exponentially with my new found interest in photography. I still maintained my film camera and invested in a 400mm telephoto zoom lens for wildlife photography, which incidentally required a more sophisticated camera to operate the advanced electronic auto focus and vibration resistance.

I was off to experiment with my newly to photograph wildflowers. I shot a Antelope Valley, and dropped them I went to pick them up, the bright brownish on the finished prints. I could control the shot as well as the with my scanner and discovered that package which included Adobe designed for kids to make greeting heads from animals to people, and hooked! I was making collages from on the Internet, placing people onto on the moon, orbiting Saturn, and shooting through space leaving a trail like a comet.



purchased toys and went on a trip roll of pictures of poppies in the off with my local processor. When orange poppies had turned out decided to go digital, because I process. I had been experimenting it came with a bundled software Photoshop Deluxe. It is a program cards, funny pictures by exchanging many photo enhancing tools. I was pictures I had scanned and found different environments like dancing

I kept wanting to learn more and found out about the camera club, which to my pleasant surprise, had a Digital Imaging Special Interest Group who were learning the same things I wanted to learn.

A few years and a few cameras and Photoshop and here we are. And I'm

“I kept wanting to learn more and found out about the camera club, which to my pleasant surprise, had a **Digital Imaging Special Interest Group who were learning the same things I wanted to learn.”**

generations of digital software, and here I am; not going back!

The Imaging Resource Digital Photography Newsletter

An excellent newsletter to which some members may wish to subscribe is the Imaging Resource Digital Photography Newsletter. Its issues cover many topics of interest to digital photographers and its scope far exceeds what we can hope to cover in *e-focus*, particularly in reviewing new products to hit the market. I believe Woody Kaplan first brought this Newsletter to the attention of our community.

The Newsletter can be obtained either by viewing it on the web at <http://www.imaging-resource.com/IRNEWS/>, or by email subscription. To subscribe by email link to <http://www.imaging-resource.com/IRNEWS/index-subs.html> and follow instructions. Please note that if you are an AOL subscriber, the Newsletter subscription may arrive as a series of mail attachments (good ole AOL – cannot follow net standards).

Her is the Table of Contents of the latest issue:

- Feature: HP Photosmart 7960 -- More Than Enough Inks
- Feature: Sigma SD10 -- New & Improved
- New on the Site
- In the Forums
- Just for Fun: Discreetly Awarding an Ersatz Nobel
- Dave's Deals (note: this commercial does not appear on the website)
- We Have Mail
- Editor's Notes
- One Liners
- Signoff

Yes, this is a commercial site interested in sales. But they still have good stuff to read!



E-FOCUS IS ISSUED AS AN ELECTRONIC SUPPLEMENT TO
IN FOCUS, THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT CAMERA CLUB

This Month's Feature Article

Contact Information Has been Redacted For Purposes of
Web Posting. See <http://www.cvdcc.org/contact.html>

