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

e-focus

DECEMBER 2003

Table of Contents

This month's e-focus is largely devoted to the subject of "layer masking" following on the presentation at the November DIPSIG meeting; and how it may be applied. The aim is to remove some of the mystery.

This is a potentially huge subject, and we only scratch the surface to get you started, But, as Dolly Dupree points out in her article on how she plunged in after the meeting, the only way to learn is practice, practice, practice. A little investment of time now will save hours later. It becomes less intimidating the more you challenge yourself!

Next month, there will be a couple of follow-up articles. This month, we also cover the essentials of how to improve your portrait photographs, again following up on the talk given at DIPSIG.

Enjoy – and all best wishes for the holiday season. – *Ed*

Layer Masking: The Basic Concepts

by **Stuart Lynn**

The subject of layer masking often inspires fear into the "advanced beginner". It seems like one of those mysteries that only truly advanced digerati use. The purpose of this article is to banish all fears and remove all mysteries!

The concept is really quite straightforward. In this article, I will describe the basic concepts. In other articles in this and future issues I will show how layer masks are put to work.

First, an admission. Layer masking is most useful in Photoshop. Its use in Photoshop Elements is much more restrictive, although the basic concepts still apply. In a separate sidebar article in this issue of e-focus (see this month's Beginner's Page: Layer Masking in Photoshop Elements *)*, I will describe how the concepts described in this article apply in Photoshop Elements.

For me, the more general use in Photoshop makes the steep cost of Photoshop over Elements worth it, just because of the amount of my time that it saves. But the difference is significant, and it does not make sense for every one.

What is a layer mask?

So what is a layer mask? Simply speaking, it is simply a tool for defining how much of a layer that sits on top of a pile of layers should show, and how much of the bottom layers should show.

To illustrate the basic idea, suppose you have two layers, one entirely red and the other entirely blue with the red layer on top. Only the red layer shows – the blue layer is hidden. Now think of a layer mask as a piece of cardboard which is painted in various shades of grey ranging from black to white. Although it is formally "attached" to the red layer, think of it as sandwiched between the two layers, But this is no ordinary piece of cardboard: it has magical properties.

What is so magical about this piece of cardboard ? Here's the key (see figure at top of next page):

- Wherever it is painted *white*, only the top red layer will show in your image;

- Wherever it is painted *black*, only the bottom blue layer will show in your image;

- Wherever it is painted *gray*, a purple mixture of the red and blue layers will show, the precise hue depending on the particular shade of gray.

That's essentially all there is to it! In one sense, the layer mask acts as a kind of "super-eraser" – wherever it is black, the top layer is "erased" to show the bottom layer.

Except that it is not an eraser at all, because you have never really erased the top layer: it is always there. You are just

| TOP LAYER | + | LAYER MASK | + | BOTTOM LAYER | = | RESULTING IMAGE |

controlling how much of it shows. So you can always re-reveal parts of the top layer again, if you like, just by "repainting" the piece of cardboard or layer mask with white "paint".

Indeed the real magic and beauty of layer masks arise because you can paint the layer maks with shades of gray any way you like it. *And at any time you can change your mind and repaint the layer!* Suppose you have painted a given area of the layer mask black to show the bottom layer. One hour later, after you have made other changes to your image, you say Whoops!, I exposed too much of the lower layer. No problem. Just use a "white" paintbrush to paint out those black areas of the layer mask you wanted to be white, so the top layer showed. Wow!

That's very different than using the *Undo (*Ctl/Cmd-z*)* tool repeatedly or even the *History Palette* to change your mind and go back. Because if you use these tools you lose all the other work you have done in between. With layer masks you have very precise control, and at any time.

By now you will have recognized, I am sure, that the layer mask attached to a given layer controls, to a greater or lesser extent, how much shows of anything that lies on *all* lower layers. Imagine that all the lower layers have been flattened into a single layer, compounding all the effects of blending, opacity and lower level layer masks that have modified how much of each lower layer shows through – and how. The layer mask controls how much shows of this flattened layer.

Layer masks can be used, for example, as one way of making selections (see forthcoming article *Making Selections with Layer Masks*, January 2004 *e-focus*).

And one nice use of shades of gray is that they can be used to blur the transitions between how much of the top layer shows and how much of the bottom layer shows (see forthcoming article *Tranisition Masks*, January 2004 *e-focus*).

The difference between Photoshop and Photoshop Elements is that in Photoshop layer masks can be attached to *any* kind of layer, whereas in Photoshop Elements they can only be attached to special kinds of layers, namely the Adjustment and Fill layers permitted by Photoshop Elements (see sidebar article). These restrictions severely limit how they can be used. z

Attaching Layer Masks: *it's not that hard!*

So how do you attach a layer mask to a given layer? In the *Layers Palette*, just highlight the layer to which you want to attach a layer mask (I assume here that you have at least two layers in your image, otherwise you don't need a layer mask!). Then click the *Add Layer Mask* from the tool palette at the bottom of the window. That's the second button from the left at the bottom of the *Layers Palette*.

Note that, in the *Layers Palette*, this adds a rectangular *white* box icon – representing the layer mask – on the *selected* layer (indicated by the double lines surrounding the icon) to the right of the icon of the layer itself. It is initially all white so that, according to the above description, only the top layer will be visible in your image.

Layer Mask Icon Selected
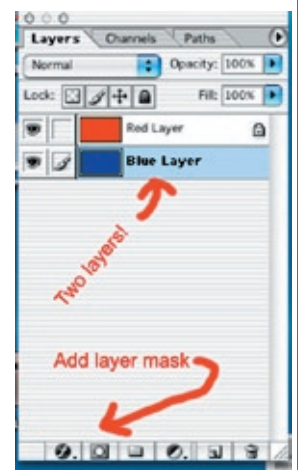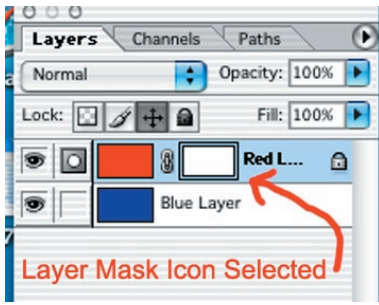
Two other important points to note. *First*, this box is automatically selected, because Photoshop/Photoshop Elements assumes that you want to start modifying the layer mask by painting in areas of black or gray. If you want to modify the actual layer image itself and ignore the layer mask, you will need to select the image layer icon by double-clicking on it (this will automatically *deselect*) the mask – and vice-versa. Often I forget this and have the wrong icon selected – so I paint a big swatch of black onto my image thinking I had the layer mask selected! Thank the software designers for *Undo (Ctl/Cmd-z)* and the *History Palette*!

Second, the foreground color has been changed to black and the background color to white, again assuming you want to get to work in painting your layer mask and "erasing" parts of the top layer. Incidentally, at any time you can make this happen by just typing the shortcut "d" on your keyboard – try it! And if you want to switch the foreground and background colors, just type "x". These shortcuts are almost essential when you work with layer masks, and are reworking the mask, perhaps to correct for mistakes.

OK, so how do you modify the layer mask? Make sure the layer mask icon is selected. Now, to illustrate the idea, select a blurry brush (key in the shortcut "b") of medium size (see this issue, Tip of the Month for a quick way to do this!*)* and, making sure the foreground color is black. just paint a big black stripe in your image. Two things happen. *First*, no black paint actually appears on your image (provided you selected the layer mask icon in the first place – see above!), but instead where you painted, magically the bottom layer shows through, as by now you would expect.
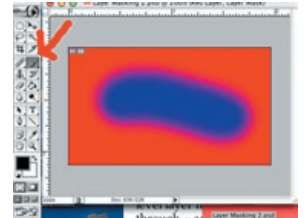

Now if you had chosen a hard brush, just the bottom layer would show through where you had painted black into the layer mask. But if you had chosen a blurry brush as suggested, at the edges of the stroke you would see

a mixture of the two layers – as in the illustration – because the edges of the brush are using shades of gray.
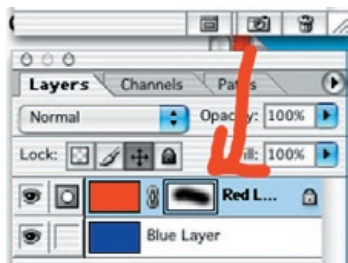
Second, in the layer mask icon itself, you will see the black stripe appear. You have modified your layer mask so as to affect the interaction of the top layer with the layers below it.

Whoa! You just realized you made a mistake, and painted areas of the layer mask black which should have been white, so that too much of the lower layer shows through. You already know what to do. Make the foreground color white (type "x"), and then use your brush now loaded with white "paint" to paint over the black areas of the mask that you want to change back.

Whoa! You just realized you ma...
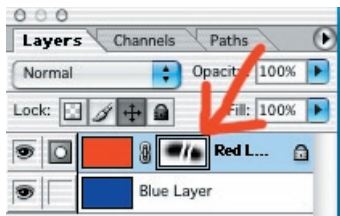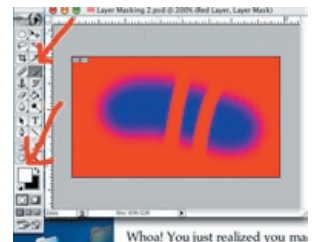
And then, of course, you can paint with shades of gray wherever you want to blend the two layers.

The Power of Layer Masks

I think you can imagine the enormous range of control that is at your disposal with the power of layer masks. The more familiar you become with them, the more you can do. All it takes is practice! Other articles in this and future editions of *e-focus* will demonstrate the power of layer masks when put to work.

By the way, in Photoshop, there's more to the story: use of Quickmasks, for example, or viewing your layer mask in *Channels View* (particularly useful if you want to fine tune your layer mask, such as precise blurring of black-white boundaries to create smooth transitions). But that's for another article.

I used layer masking, and I'm still here to tell the story!
by Dolly Dupree

It's official. I am now an avid Digital Photographer and Camera Club Member.

My first adventure with Adobe Photoshop Elements was a rewarding learning experience with some frustrations. The outcome left me with some new techniques and a proud photograph that I gave to the person who was the subject. The reason I joined the camera club is so I could learn from experts, and DISPIG, the *Digital Photography Special Interest Group,* members helped me learn photo techniques, enhancements and manipulations.

After my first DIPSIG meeting, even though I didn't remember everything – there's so much to learn – I thought I could do the project I was planning. I was anxious to experiment with layers and the various techniques covered at the meeting (see articles, this issue, on Layer Masking: the Basic Concepts and Ten Digi-Steps to Better Portraits).

I sat down at my computer, put in the CD with the photograph of my subject, a student from my high school dressed in his Halloween costume, and launched the Adobe Photoshop program. After bringing up the student's photo, I thought, "OK, now what was it I was supposed to do to start a new layer?" My frustration meter was growing, and I decided to try it later. Lucky for me my husband, Jerry, has a great deal of experience with layers and Photoshop. I asked for his help, and he very graciously worked with me until I was able to understand the way layers work. *You can't learn something until you actually do it yourself!*

After Jerry's tutoring, I was able to produce a collage with my student in the foreground, in a different background. I was so proud of my photograph. The next day I brought an 8 X 10 photo to the student's mother (she works in the computer department of our school.) She seemed very impressed and thanked me for her son's picture.

Jerry and I went on a travel/photo trip over the Thanksgiving holiday. With my new knowledge I took loads of photographs, and I'm anxious to start editing them in Adobe Photoshop.

the d ipsig page

by Joe Ramsey

December 8 DIPSIG Meeting: Turning Day Into Night!

Use Photoshop to make your daytime photos look as if they were made at night. At the DIPSIG meeting on December 8, we'll show you how to get the right appearance that will make your photo look like a night exposure. In addition, we'll show you how to make starry skies and add a moon from scratch even if you don't have a moon photo to start from. Remember Norman Bates? Well, we're going to show you how to get that stormy effect you saw in Psycho using Photoshop where the only damage is to pixels. You'll learn how to give your photos of haunted mansions or ghost towns a really eerie appearance by adding stormy skies and even rain. Then we'll light the lone window of the room where Norman kept his mother.

Photos Using Layer Masks

To follow up Stuart Lynn's presentation on Layer Masks at our October meeting all DIPSIG members are invited to present and discuss their images made using Layer Masking. Show us how you applied the mask(s) and the results with before and after images.

Practice Images

As always we will have CD's with practice images for use during the meeting. Bring your own images to work on if you prefer.

Don't forget your laptops and power cords (useful, but not required) for this fun session.

Report on November DIPSIG Meeting
by Jerry Dupree

Stuart Lynn gave a presentation on layer masking and on portrait touch up. He gave an overview of the basics of layer masking techniques and how they can be used, particularly in Photoshop (see This Month's Feature Article: "Layer Masking: The Basic Concepts").

In his main presentation on portrait touch-up, he outlined ten steps to improve portraits (see "Ten Digi-Steps to Making Better Portraits", this issue of *e-focus)*. This included blurring, darkening, and/or desaturating the background, and lightening the portrait, to separate the portrait from the background; removing blemishes; sharpening certain features such as the eyes and teeth; adding catchlights to the eyes (he demonstrated a technique of painting the highlights on separate layers that can then be moved around to the best location); and other techniques. He also showed how to "clone" out offensive shadows such as those that arise from using flash.

The presentation was so fascinating, unfortunately there was no time for members to show their own projects. I understand that the next meeting will allow time for members to show what they have done with their own portrait projects.

There was also a discussion of some of the new features of Adobe Photoshop CS (see article in this issue of *e-focus:* "The new Photoshop CS...better than I thought ").

REMINDER (AGAIN!!):
BRING YOUR OWN PORTRAIT TO DIPSIG!!!

In addition to images that use layer masks (see article, previous page), if you have underline portraits you processed in Photoshop (using any technique including those described at last month's DIPSIG meeting) that were to be shown last month, please bring them again. We'll make a special effort to show them this month. Prints or CD's are acceptable.

Apologies to attendees last month that we ran out of time. It's tough to schedule everything!

NEW CLUB WEBSITE!

The Club has launched a new website. It can be found at **http://www.cvdcc.org** (cvdcc stands, of course, for Coachella Valley Desert Camera Club). As of now, the website is only up in skeleton form, but you should see it taking shape over the next few weeks.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the site is to make it easier for members (those, of course, who have electronic access) to access Club information. Don't remember the creative subject for next month's competition? It will be there. Want a copy of the latest competition guidelines? They will be there, too.

Or you can **download** the latest or back issues of *In Focus* and of *e-focus*. Or (eventually) see the latest and past winning images from Club competitions.

Generic Email Addresses

Another change you will see is that we have introduced "generic" email addressers for Club officers and committee chairs. So instead of, say, using Joe Ramsey's personal email addresses, you can send email to **prex@cvdcc.org** ("prex" *is* slang for "president", but is less to type!). There are two reasons for this: (a) to protect our members whose email addresses must be posted on the web; and (b) to make it easier to maintain the site and our publications when we change officers and committee chairs.

A complete list of generic addresses can be found in the "**Contact Us**" page of the website.

Comments and contributions on the website from members are very welcome – and can only improve the site for our members. Send comments to **webmaster@cvdcc.org**.

Layer Masking in Photoshop Elements
*by Stuart Lynn*

In this issue's Article of the Month "Layer Masking: The Basic Concepts", I described the fundamentals of layer masking. Readers of this article may wish to read that article first.

In that article, I stated that the full power of layer masking could only be exploited in the full-blown Photoshop. But it has important applications in Photoshop Elements, too. This article will highlight one or two of those applications. You will also learn something about adjustment layers in the process.

First, what is the big difference between Photoshop and Photoshop Elements with regard to layer masking? The key point is that in Photoshop, layer masking can be applied to *every* kind of layer, whereas in Photoshop Elements the technique can only be applied to *two* kinds of layers: Fill Layers and Adjustment Layers.

What are they, you might well ask. Open an image in Photoshop Elements. (Before we start, you may want to drag the *Layers Palette* off the *Layer Well* so it does not keep closing every time you leave it. Just drag on the *Layers* tab and ull the *Layers Palette* free.)

Click on the **Layers** menu entry, but do not release your mouse button. You will see two entries in the pulldown menu: *New Fill Layer* and *New Adjustment Layer*. Run your mouse over *New Fill Layer* (still not releasing the button) and you will see the three kinds of Fill layers at your disposal: *Solid Color, Gradient, and Pattern*. More of those later. Now run your mouse over *New Adjustment Layers* and you will several kinds of *Adjustment Layers* available, including *Brightness/ Contrast* and *Hue/Saturation*. We'll concentrate on the second of these to give you the idea. So just release your mouse button on the *Hue/Saturation* entry to launch this new *Adjustment Layer*.
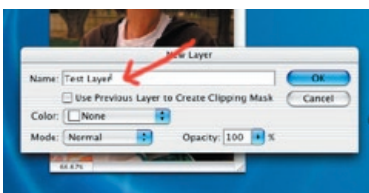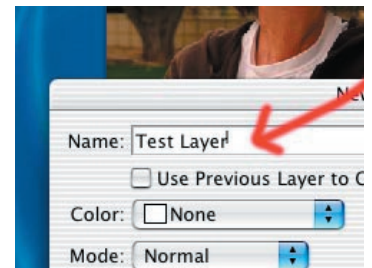
This launches a window called *New Layer*, giving you the opportunity to rename the layer and other options that we will not concern ourselves with. Rename the layer for convenience, say "Testlayer" and click OK.

What happens is that the *Hue/Saturation* window pops open. Now move the *Saturation* and *Lighten* sliders to the left to desaturate and darken the image. The portrait does not look so good, does it? It is OK to desaturate and darken the background for sure (see this issue of *e-focus*: "Ten Digi-Steps to Better Portraits"), but you do not want that to happen to the face! That is where layer masking comes to the rescue.
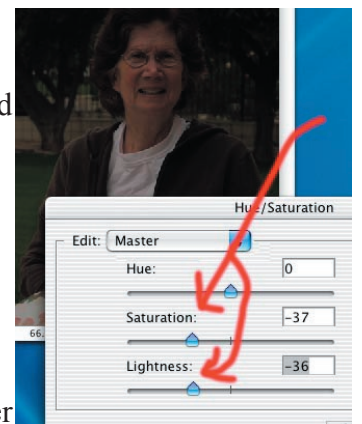
Look what has happened to your *Layers Palette.* You will see the new layer, "Testlayer", highlighted and seated on top of the original Background layer. But there is more: a layer mask icon has been added to "Testlayer" to the right of another
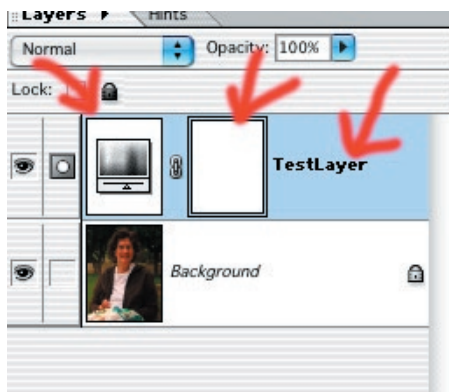
icon that symbolizes the *Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer*. The layer mask icon is pure white and has been selected (as you can tell from the double lines surrounding it).

Also, in your *Tool Palette*, the color black has been chosen for the foreground color. If you have read This Month's Feature Article ("Layer Masking: The Basic Concepts"), you will know exactly what all this means. Photoshop Elements is waiting for you to paint into the layer icon.

Just select your *Brush* in the *Toolbox* (remember the shortcut to make selection quicker: just type the character "b"). Make sure you have a decent sized blurry brush (see this month's article: "Tip of the Month" for neat ways to do this easily and quickly). Making sure that both "Testlayer" and the layer mask icon in "Testlayer" are still selected, paint a over those areas of the portrait that you have made too dark (the face etc).

What happens? Not a big black smudge as you might expect, but the bottom layer shows through wherever you painted black in the layer mask icon, just as you would expect from This Month's Feature Article on layer masking. And in the layer mask icon, you can see exactly where you painted black. You don't have too lighten the entire face – just those parts that you wanted to. In this example, I tended to leave the right side somewhat darker.

So you have total control as to where your *Hue/Saturation* mask has an effect and where it doesn't. And you can always change your mind by repainting in white, those areas of the layer mask icon that you had previously painted black – or shades of grey to mix the two layers. You can get some neat effects this way. For example, it's a great way to create interesting vignette effects for portraits! Use a very blurry brush for this purpose (see this months' "Tip of the Month").

And of course you can apply all the other techniques to how your two layers interact, such as using the *Opacity* slider in the *Layers Palette*, or how the top layer blends with the lower layer by using the pulldown menu in the *Layers Palette*. And there's more: you can *Duplicate* the *Hue/Saturation Layer* (from the *Layers Palette* menu), and then invert it (Ctl/Cmd-i or **Image:** *Adjust; Invert*) to create another *Hue/Saturation* adjustment layer and associated layer mask. If you double click on this adjustment layer, the *Hue/Saturation* window opens. Now move the sliders to the right of center and watch what happens: you are now *lightening* the face, that is, the areas painted white in the mask!
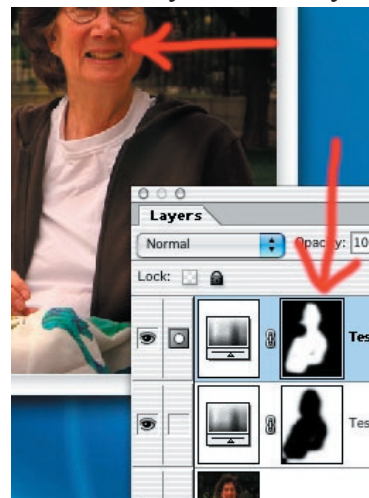
Why use an *Adjustment Layer?* Because you can make all the changes you want without actually changing your original image. And you can always readjust this special layer at any time. And adding a layer mask just gives you powerful controls at your disposal.

The same ideas apply to all the other *Fill Adjustment Layers* (the *Solid Color* adjustment layer, for example, just adds a solid color laer on top of your image, and you can use layer masking to "paint through" how much of your priginal image you want to show). Do experiment with these techniques. You will be surprised at what you can accomplish!

Resizing Your
Image For *In Focus – and for computer projection!*
**by Lillian Roberts** *(Editor of In Focus)*

The following applies mainly to sending me your winning competition photos for publication in *In Focus*, but I hope it will also open a door into the many image sizing possibilities offered by Photoshop and Photoshop Elements as well as theiroffshoots. You *can* do this is virtually any image editing program on the market, but the specific instructions will pertain to Photoshop and Photoshop Elements.

First, open your image. You have probably saved it as a *tiff* file for printing and enhancing purposes, and it's probably a pretty large file if you sized it for printing for competition. Click **Image** on the menu bar, then *Image Size* in the pull-down menu (in Photoshop Elements, you will need to select **Image***: Resize; Image Size*). The box that pops up will be one you've seen before, but might find somewhat intimidating. It gives you a number of choices for parameters.

For printing, you probably have it set to about 16 inches on the longer side, and 300 pixels/inch. Have you ever looked at the top box, where the number of pixels are listed? As long as you have checked "Constrain Proportions" at the bottom, if you change one measurement, the other will automatically adjust to retain the proportions of the image.

When you send me your winning images, I first save them in a folder for the year-end slide show – those can be much larger than I have room for in the newsletter. Since I can easily resize downward, but enlarging degrades a photo, I am now requesting images be sent as follows:

- If your picture has a horizontal ("landscape") orientation, it should measure 1024 pixels *wide*. This is the widest image that will fit on an average computer screen, and the projector can only see what fits on the screen.

- If your picture has a vertical ("portrait") orientation, the pixel count should be lower – 768 pixels *high*. That's because normal computer screens are not as tall as they are wide, so images have to be shorter in order for the projector to "see" the entire photo.

- Don't worry about the shorter side, it will take care of itself.

- Save it as a "high" or "medium" quality jpeg image *with a different name* than your original – this is very important so you don't lose the original! An ideal finished file size is about 150-200k. Then close the image, open an email, attach the image file and send it to infocus@cvdcc.org.
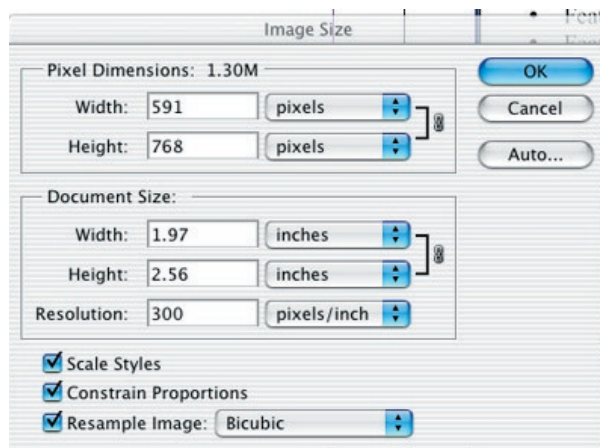
That's really all there is to it. For this purpose, you don't have to worry about inches per side, pixels per inch, etc – that's all vitally important for printing but won't change anything I do. If you need help, just email me or call me on the phone and I'll talk you through the first time.

Ten Digi-Steps to Better Portraits: Make Them Snap!

by Stuart Lynn

Note: This article summarizes a lengthier article that can be downloaded separately from the Desert Camera Club's website*. This will make it easier for those who do not wish to download or read the entire article. This article focuses on* what *to accomplish; the lengthier article focuses on* how *to accomplish it.*

Image processing software makes it easier to make your portrait photos really snap! This article outlines some of the tools and tricks I use. And some *caveats* about what not to do.

The article focuses more on what you might want to accomplish and less on the specific Photoshop or Photoshop Elements tools to use. Once you know what you want to achieve, you will find your own way to implement your ideas. Different digerati use different approaches. There are many ways to skin a cat. The important thing is to know what you want to achieve and find the best way to make that happen, using the various tools at your disposal.

One particular *caveat*: nothing substitutes for getting it right in the first place! You cannot make silk out of a sow's ear. Nothing beats composing your shot correctly in the camera's viewfinder, using the right exposure etc. And if you apply *all* the following techniques at one time, the result will most likely look artificial. The objective of these techniques is to correct, *not* replace – to improve *not* substitute for a mediocre shot in the first place.

You will need to know how to *Select* the full portrait. Selections are a separate subject not covered in either this summary or the fuller article. Suffice it to say that you need to select the entire portrait, including other surrounding objects in the same focal plane, and to save that selection for repeated re-use – and to *Feather* the selection by a few pixels before making the selection so as to slightly blur the transition between the portrait itself and the background.

By the way. You are not likely to use all the following tricks and tools on a single portrait. They simply represent a grab bag that's at your disposal. If you use them all. you could worsen the result.

So here goes with the ten tips:

1. "Background" the Background

Photographers have long advocated – almost as a cardinal rule – using a telephoto lens and a large *f*-stop (small depth of field) when shooting portraits. And making sure the portrait is properly lit. This nicely separates the person from the background, placing the focus right on the center of interest. Depth-of-field effects, however, are often not as dramatic on many digital cameras. Or you may have forgotten the cardinal rule because you were so intent on correctly positioning the subject or the lighting.

Not to worry. You can accomplish the same end in the digital lightroom by other means. The objective is to create emphasis on the portrait itself, and de-emphasize the background. Here's how:

Select the background to the portrait (best way is to reload your saved selection of the Portrait, and then invert the selection). Then, more or less according to your taste: (1) blur the selected background[1] using **Filters:** *Blur;Gaussian Blur*; (2) darken the selected background using **Enhance:** *Adjust Color; Hue/Saturation* in Photoshop Elements or **Image:** *Adjust; Hue/Saturation in Photoshop,* adjusting the *Lighten* slider; and / or (3) desaturate the background using the *Saturate* slider in the same panel. Don't overdo it!

2. Lighten the Portrait

You can achieve even greater separation from the background by lightening the Portrait. Again, load your saced selection. Then just use the *Lighten* slider in the above *Hue/Saturation* panel to lighten your image. There are better ways to do this for more advanced users (see fuller article). Depending on the conditions udner which the Portrait was taken, and the White Balance settings used on your camera, you may also want to increase the saturation of the Portrait slightly.

3. Remove Any Color Cast

You may want to remove any unnatural color casts in the image, that is, any overall color bias (remember, though, that there is usually a natural color bais at certain times of day that you would expect!). The automatic tool in Photoshop Elements (**Enhance:** *Autocolor Correction)* or Photoshop (**Image:** *Adjust; Autocolor)* for correcting any color cast works quite well, but often goes awry where large areas of flesh tone are involved, such as in a portrait. One compromise trick I have found useful under these circumstances is to *Autocolor* a duplicate of the original image on another layer, and then adjust the *Opacity* slider in the *Layers* palette down to combine the original and the color corrected image to about 50% or to taste.

4. "Airbrush" Out Any Skin Blemishes

Out of courtesy to the subject, you may want to digitally "airbrush" out any harsh skin blemishes (I did not have to do that on the illustrated photo of my wife, because she is already perfect ;-)). Use the *Healing Brush* or the *Stamp Tool* to clone areas of unblemished skin over the blemishes. Selective blurring might also be helpful.

5. Soften Cheeks and Other "Smooth Areas"

Particularly for the ladies and for children (but not for masculine beards!), you may to use the **Filter:** *Blur; Gaussian Blur* tool to soften selectively cheeks and other smooth areas.

6. Sharpen Eyes, Teeth, And Hands – and (maybe) whiten teeth!

In contrast to the previous item, some Portraitists advocate slightly sharpening eyes, teeth and hands. Carefully select these areas and use **Filter:** *Sharpen; Unsharp Mask,* but don't overdo it! Oversharpening can cause noise in the printed result. You can use selections and layers (and layer masking for those of you who use Photoshop) to carefully control the areas you would like to sharpen.

Some portraitists like to whiten the teeth. This dental cosmetic fad is making teeth phosphorescent and glow in the dark (as is dramatically – or not so dramatically – demonstrated by some movie stars in recent films). A little whitening can help, but don't go too far! Just use the *Lighten* slider in the *Hue/Saturation* palette to the carefully selected teeth (see fuller article for more details).

7. Imitate the Old Masters!

This is a slight digression. Ingres, the nineteenth century French painter, carried it all a little further. He was a master of how to represent line, particularly by blurring and sharpening the lines that separated the contours of the body from the background so as to emphasize the three-dimensionality of the form. He was not the first painter to do this by any means, but he perfected the approach.

When, for example, there was a soft cheek against the background that was not "turning" anywhere, he used a

soft, blurry line. But as the cheek turned under into the chin, he used a sharp line to emphasize the form.

Look at the section of the painting of Madame Moitessier by Ingres. In particular, look at the magnified sections of her left cheek/neck/shoulder and of her left forearm. Note how soft the line of the cheek is indicating a full, rounded form; how much sharper the line of her neck is where the form is less rounded and harder; and then the line of her shoulder which is somewhere in between. Look again at the different use of line on each side of her arm, the softer inside to the harder outside; the harder line of her wrist and the ultra-sharp thumbnail.[2]

You can imitate Ingres with your portrait. Just sharpen or blur sections of the line boundary between the portrait and the background using some of the techniques described above (or better still, in Photoshop use layer masking). Try it – and see the difference!

8. Catchlights in the Eyes

We are taught in photographing portraits that it enhances expression if there are catchlights (points of highlight) in the eyes. When we take portraits outside, particularly in overcast or shaded conditions, a common way to achieve this is to use fill-in flash, perhaps at reduced power.

O.K., so you forgot. The digital lightroom can come to the rescue. Just "paint" in the catchlights using a small blurry paintbrush and a neutral color paint. They are hard to see in the small, low resolution image to the left, but they are there! Trust me. The fuller article describes a neat trick on better ways to do this, positioning trial catchlights on another layer and moving that layer around until it looks right.

9. Remove Flash Marks

Flash, particularly when used indoors casts ugly shadows. Often you can use your stamp tool to soften the harsh shadows – or even get rid of them altogether. The fuller article describes other and more precise techniques.

10. Final Adjustments

So that's all there is to it ;-). Well almost! After you have flattened your image for the last time, do a final check. Is the color balance right or is there still a slight, unwanted cast? Do you need to saturate the entire image, just a little? Does it need a touch of sharpening? Do a proof print on smaller size paper before printing that 11" x 14", just to make sure you got everything right.

If you familiarize yourself with some of the above techniques, not only will you improve your portraits, but you will learn some basic tools that you can apply to other applications. Good luck!

(Footnotes)

[1]   Here, and with most of the tips and tools in this article, it is a good idea to copy the selection to a new layer and apply the indicated approach to this selected layer.

[2]   I am grateful to "Painting Techniques of the Masters" by H. L. Cooke (Watson-Guptill, 1972) for this illustration.

The New Photoshop CS........*better than I thought!*
by Stuart Lynn

In the last issue of *e-focus* I wrote a preliminary review of the new version of Photoshop, that is, Photoshop CS. I pointed out some of its new features, but overall was cool towards its value to digigraphers as opposed to graphic artists. Several club members, including me, have now upgraded to Photoshop CS. And I now find it was full of pleasant surprises that were not apparent from most of the reviews that I read. It is a real improvment over Photoshop 7.0 and provides digigraphers with some excellent new tools.

In my preliminary review, I had mentioned improved support for 16-bit images; a plug-in called Photomerge for stitching images; improved access to filters; ability to curve text onto a path; and making it easy to match the colors of one image to another. But there is much more, including:

- A plug-in for managing Raw format images from digital cameras. The Raw format is what your camera captures before making any user-specified corrections for white balance, saturation, sharpness etc. Why have your camera do this blindly when you can control the process in Photoshop?

- A tool for automatically cropping and straightening scanned images so that you do not have to worry about careful placement of photos on your flatbed scanner.

- A sophisticated tool for automatically lightening shadows and lessening highlights in contrasty images that you can adjust to suit.

- The ability to customize your shortcuts (see *e-focus*, November, 2003), so that, for example, you could assign Shift+Ctl/Cmd i to launch the image size adjustment panel.

- A vastly improved *browser* for managing , viewing and loading your stored images.

- A neat tool for *replacing* one color with any other color, such as if you wanted to saturate just one color in your image.

- A capability that essentially allows you to store in the same file *different states* of your image although in use it is much more sophisticated.

And there is more.

In short, this is a comprehensive upgrade, one which most Photoshop-using digigraphers should find appealing. I am already making use of some of its new capabilities.