

NEWSLETTER

December 2007



Christmas Greetings to all Elements SIG members. I hope Santa is generous to you all this year, even if you don't deserve it!

My Christmas came early as I treated myself to an Epson PictureMate. You may remember I e-mailed everyone about these being on sale at Fry's for \$29.99 on November 21st. The big advantage of these is that you can print your 4" x 6" pictures direct from your camera if it is equipped with "pictbridge" capabilities or from the memory card. You can also hook the printer up to your computer with a USB cable. I bought myself one and also I bought one for an old friend (84 years) who has a digital camera but has no interest in downloading pictures to his computer. Usually he takes the memory card down to the drug store and gets them to print out a set of prints. Then as he told me, "I throw away 60% as out of focus, ugly (pictures of me), can't remember why I took that shot etc." With this printer you can look at the picture on a two square inch LCD and select the ones you want to print. You can also do rudimentary adjustments such as brightness and contrast and red eye removal. Then you print the ones you like. I calculated, with the print pack, the cost is about 24¢ which is competitive with the drug stores when you figure in the discards. I also think the quality of the prints is superior to the drug stores.

If you missed out on the sale you can still get a unit for about \$99 or less on the web, check out NewEgg and Amazon.

I also sent out an e-mail regarding the availability of a free copy of Camtasia. This is a great piece of software for creating tutorials as you can capture your keystrokes and screen at the same time as you narrate what you are doing. For any of you that have taken an on line course in Elements (such as offered by DVC) this is what they use. I am going to try recording a tutorial (some time after the holidays) and post it on my web site. Look for details. If you didn't need Camtasia the other free offer for Snagit was a no-brainer if you don't have the software already. It is great for capturing your monitor screen, areas of the screen, scrolling areas etc. with minimum effort. Try it you will like it!

As I mentioned in the last newsletter Adobe was due to release the next version of Elements (6) in time for Christmas and sure enough it was released at the beginning of November. For those of you that missed the quick rundown at the November meeting here is a synopsis of the changes from version 5.

Photoshop Elements 6 incorporates many of Photoshop's powerful features without being too overwhelming to the novice user. A guided editing mode helps users get started, and automated features simplify many tasks, such as posting online photo galleries and stitching multiple

photos to create panoramas. The user interface is friendly to beginners, but not "dumbed-down" to the point that it frustrates experienced users. Photoshop Elements also includes a powerful photo organizer, drag & drop photo creation layouts and artwork, and many sharing options, which makes it a perfect all-in-one solution for photo hobbyists. The rather somber color scheme is a little strange but it seems to go along with a color scheme that is applied to most new Adobe products.

Version 6 offers several new features including:

1. Redesigned User Interface
2. Guided Editing Mode
3. Quick Selection Tool and Refine Edge Dialog
4. Photomerge Group Shot and Photomerge Faces
5. Convert to Black and White
6. Smart Albums
7. More Quick Fixes in the Organizer
8. New Project Templates and Artwork, Larger Thumbnails in the Artwork Palette
9. Improved Slide Shows

TIPS

SENDING PICTURES BY E-MAIL

Most digital cameras capture your pictures at a size large enough for quality printing. But when sending pictures by email, it's important to reduce the size of your pictures so they transfer faster and are more viewable on the recipients screen. Windows XP has an automated function that will resize, optimize, and email a group of pictures without altering your originals.

Here's How:

- Open My Computer and navigate to the folder containing the pictures you wish to email.
- In the toolbar at the top of My Computer, make sure Search and Folders are not selected so you can see the tasks panel to the left of the files list.
- Select the group of files that you wish to email. Use Shift or Ctrl to select additional files.
- In the tasks panel, click on **E-mail the selected items** under File and Folder Tasks. The Send Pictures by E-Mail dialog box will appear.
- Select: **Make all my pictures smaller.**
- Click: **Show more options...**

- Choose a size for your pictures. The small option is suitable for most purposes and will give you the best reduction in file size. If you know your recipient has a fast Internet connection you may want to choose Medium or Large.
- Click OK.
- A status bar appears as Windows resizes the files, and then a new message is opened in your default mail program with your pictures attached.
- Windows inserts the file names into the subject field of the message. You will probably want to change this.
- Fill in the recipients email address, add a personal message, and you're ready to send.

OFF BRAND PRINTER INKS

You can purchase an ink jet printer for as low as \$60 today and then pay the same to buy a set of refill cartridges! Here is a point of view expressed on a forum I read regularly and which in this case I tend to agree with the writer:

What about low cost third-party (i.e., made by another company) ink cartridges? Be careful! Here's why:

Color: Third-party inks may not be a good color match to the original inks. Reds may still be red, blues blue and greens green, but exact color shades may differ. This will affect your prints' color accuracy.

Fading: While original ink manufacturers like Canon, Epson, and HP now make inks that resist fading for decades, some third-party inks may fade much faster, perhaps in a year or less.



Clogging: The most serious problem with third-party ink is potential clogging of the print heads. Once clogged they can be very difficult or even impossible to open up again.

So is it worth it? Probably not if you want accurate color, long print life and reliable photo printing. The printer manufacturer's ink may be the best value in the long run.

CHANGING BLEND MODES TO CREATE A DREAMY EFFECT

Sometimes a great picture can be made even more dramatic with a little tweaking. This is a technique I have used frequently on floral pictures which I think adds a dreamy yet dramatic effect:

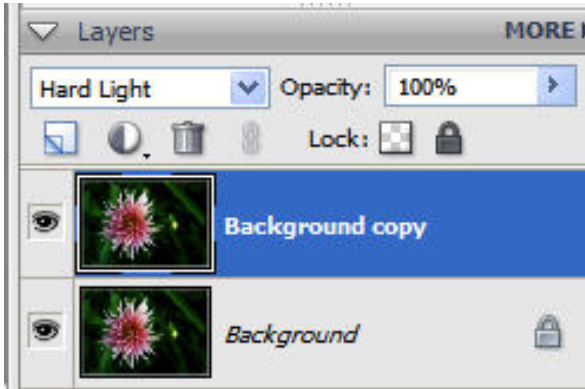


Open the picture and create a duplicate layer.



With the duplicate layer selected go: Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. In the radius field set the value to around 25 for a 3 – 6 megapixel picture for less use around 10. Experiment!





Go back to the layers palette and activate the blend mode drop down and select Hard Light. The result is shown above. If the effect is too overwhelming adjust the opacity slider to modify. To save you moving up and down here are the before and after pictures side by side.



Well that is all for this newsletter, have a great time and I hope to see you all next year when we continue our monthly meetings!



Merry Christmas from Dixie!