Focal Plane

March 2006 Calendar

From the Editor

The gardener in me is dreaming of spring time. The seed catalogs are arriving and the days are getting longer.

In this issue you can read Joe Placer's article about his own personal approach to digital photography using Adobe Elements. As most of you surely have experienced there usually is more than one way to achieve a certain result.

It would be nice if somebody else would share their way of dealing with a particular workflow.

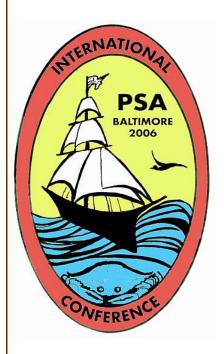Books alone are not enough to learn about anything that complicated.

Jerry Fornarotto told us how he got that beautiful shot of a skimmer. I think the most important step of getting that image is the sneaking up part.

Who ever missed the showing of the Ridgewood International winners missed a great show beautifully compiled by Florence and Stanley Kantor. The whole project of the international was made possible by a band of dedicated members of our club working under conditions strictly controlled by our Chick Chakarian.

In this issue you also find for the first time ever a totally blank page. The reason for that is I NEED HELP FROM YOU our members to fill these pages. Tell us about a trip you have taken, a particular photographic experience or some do's and don'ts.

Sorry about the harsh approach

Dieter.

Please welcome two new members

| **Jim Morris** | **your Sponsor is** | **Marie Kane** |
| **Andrew Ludke** | **your Sponsor is** | **Jerry Fornarotto** |

Focal Plane

Totals Slides/Digital

Class B January 2006

	P	A	N	T
J. Placer	62	61	19	142*
S. Szostak	64	44	7	115
L. Spina	67	39		106
M. Badala	54	43		97
C. Gottlieb	46	31		77
K. Kruger	38	23		61
L. Lembo	21	19		40
F. Lopez	38			38
D. Salamone	19			19

Class A February 2006

	P	A	N	T
V. Kempf	66	19	75	160*
J. Fornarotto	69	18	72	159*
R. Gheno	63	24	71	158*
T. Vari	64	25	69	158*
P. O'Malley	64	22	69	155*
A. Parseghian	67	19	67	153*
F. Kantor	62	17	73	152*
D. O'Malley	66	17	69	152*
M. Kane	61	18	69	148*
M. Molino	60	19	67	146*
D. Steinmeyer	61	15	65	141*
A. Gunther	61	16	63	140*
S. Kantor	58	17	65	140*
N. Merena	60	18	62	140*
B. Bain	54	20	61	135*
C. LaPlaca-Post	63	19	52	134*
G. Hall	66		65	131
M. Forrest	64		63	127
J. Levine	53	17	56	126*
C. Fox	43	15	63	121
A. Simpson	59		44	103
A. Chakarian	58		17	75
F. Alam	40	16	18	74
K. Licht	18	17	38	73
F. Helfst	62			62
A. McDonough	19	18	18	55
J. Schilling	20		20	40
M. Schwartz	17		23	40
D. Phillip	18		21	39
D. Goodell	-	-	27	27

Jerry Fornarotto shares some of his experience with us.

I took this image at Delnor-Wiggins County Park, Naples, Florida. It was a clear March day with a steady breeze. The Black Skimmers were gliding in the wind over a sandbar. Slowly I worked my way down the sandbar closer to the birds without disturbing them. To capture the photo I was using a Canon 1D Mark II camera with a Canon 600mm IS lens. With patience, this image could have been captured with a handheld 400mm lens. My camera recorded the technical information as follows; Exposure 1/1600, f7.1, Shutter Priority, ISO 400, Spot Metering Mode.

Nature Competition
February 8 2006
Joseph Thomas was judging

Nature General Category
Honorable Mentions

Sunset Devil's Backbone ....T. Vari
Waterfall Harriman......................................B. Bain
Ringwood Stream ....N. Merena

Awards

Autumn at Cumberland Gap #2 ....F. Kantor
View of the Totem Poles ....T. Vari

Nature Botanical Category
Honorable Mentions

Wood Poppies ....D. Steinmeyer

Awards

Tree Mushrooms...M. Badala

Nature Zoological Category
Honorable Mentions

Double Crested Cormorant ....V. Kempf
Red Tail's Catch...C. Fox
Juvenile Great Blue Heron Begging ....J. Fornarotto
Green Heron ....F. Kantor
Rosy Billed Duck 2.......................................M. Kane
Tiger Lick ....K. Licht
Bald Eagle Portrait.......................................S. Kantor
Snow Goose Landing....................................F. Kantor
Quite a Mouthful ....M. Molino
Sandhill Crane in Flight...............................V. Kempf
Cormorant Mouthful.....................................S. Kantor
Great Blue Heron with Stick........................J. Fornarotto
Wood Duck...A. Parseghian
Reflective Swan...A Gunther

Awards

Burrowing Owl Cape Carol ....D. O'Malley
Snowy Egret Catching a Shrimp...................P. O'Malley
Julia 2 ....M. Kane
Immature Black-crowned Night Heron
About to Strike ....V. Kempf
Wimbrel with Crab.......................................K. Kruger
Streak Winged Red Skimmer ....R. Gheno
White Ibis in Grass ....J. Fornarotto

Assigned Subject Competition
February 15 2006
Dr Phil Echo was judging

Honorable Mentions

It's enough to make you cry...........................R. Gheno
Pepper Guts..R. Gheno
The Misfits...R. Gheno
Red Beans ....C. LaPlaca-Post
An Apple a Day ....M. Molino
Basket of Mini Pumpkins.............................P. O'Malley
Pumpkin Stem...P. O'Malley
Onion Face..T. Vari
Orange Slice..T. Vari

Awards

Lime Slice...B. Bain
Red Onion...C. Fox
Colorful Gourds ....J. Placer
Mini Tomato ....T. Vari

An Apple a Day   By Maggie Molino

Maries pick of the month

This page was left blank because I am waiting for your help to fill it.
There must be something somebody can write about photography or a photo trip
How about some gossip?

Photoshop Elements-A personal approach

At the outset I wish to emphasize that this article is about the way I approach an image in Elements, thus the subtitle a personal approach. Although Elements represents a stripped down version of the full version of Photoshop, the program is versatile and powerful enough to perform almost all of the functions of its big brother, is easier to learn and much less expensive to purchase.

Once the image is downloaded to my computer I make a duplicate and place it iPhoto (Mac). To open the image in Elements I drag it onto the Elements icon which simultaneously opens the program and the image. I hit command 0 (control for pc) and bring it up to full size. Assuming the image needs cropping, and it usually does, that's the first thing I do. As a general statement Elements often gives you several ways to perform a function and for cropping typing c brings up the crop tool while typing m brings up the marquee. For no particular reason I have gotten used to using the rectangular marquee (an elliptical) marquee is also available. Choosing normal from the mode box allows you to crop the image any way you choose; but be careful as this may give you an odd size and may call for cutting a custom mat. Fixed aspect ratio allows you to crop to a size you designate after you type in the appropriate numbers. You may also choose to feather the crop thus making it softer.

Once the image is cropped, (Image-crop), my next step is to make an adjustment layer (Layer-new adj.layer-levels). Levels is probably the most powerful and useful function in Elements as it allows you to take a poorly exposed image and alter it quite dramatically. However it works much better with underexposed rather than overexposed images. The histogram represents how pixels in an image are distributed from dark to light (tonal range). Shadow detail is represented by the left and highlight detail on the right end of the graph with grey tones somewhere in the middle. I move left slider so its under the beginning of the shadow pixels and the right slider under the beginning of the light pixels. I then play around with the grey slider which is more arbitrary to see if I get an effect I like. I then click ok and flatten the image (makes for a smaller file). I now, theoretically have a well composed, well exposed image. Usually however in my images there are occasional imperfections i.e. think tree growing out of head.

Elements gives you a powerful tool to combat these blights: namely the clone stamp. First I make a duplicate layer via Layer-duplicate layer, type z to get the zoom tool and zoom in on a particular offending object. Type s to get the clone stamp and by holding the alt/option key clicking on the mouse selects an area of the image used to replace the offending one by clicking on the latter. The size of the brush I choose depends on the size of the object I want to remove. There are many blending modes available but "normal" seems to work 95% of time along with a 100% opacity. If you look back at Layer-new adjustment layer you will see, in addition to levels, hue/saturation, brightness/contrast and several other options. I may use these functions latter depending on the image I'm working on.

My next step is to go to Image-resize-image size. If I've cropped the image to a certain size I will insert them in the width and height boxes with a resolution of 300.

My last step is to make a duplicate layer and Filter-sharpen- unsharp - mask. Making sure the preview box is checked I generally leave the radius at about 1, the threshold at 2 +or-1 and adjust the amount by watching the preview. Increasing the amt. will add contrast to the image and if done in too heavy handed a way will cause obvious halos to form around the image so you need to be careful with this filter. Before the final step I flatten all layers then I go to File-save as and I save it as a tif file on my desktop with no compression.

 You may have noticed that everything I did applied to the entire image however those same modifications can be applied to a portion of an image. In order to do his, you must make a selection. Elements provides us with several different selection tools. To discuss these tools I'd like to use as an example an image I entered in a competition several years ago entitled "Alaskan Caribou." The image was that of caribou of small size standing on the horizon against a washed out sky. The image probably should have been consigned to the round file however I thought it might have some potential in an imaging editing software. The first thing I wanted to do was to add a dramatic sky. Now there are several ways to add a new sky to an image but this is how I do it. In order to perform this action I ultimately want to have the foreground selected which I will then paste or move into a new sky image. I have on my computer many sky images in both vertical and horizontal formats that I have shot for just this purpose. The selection tools provided by Elements are the magic wand, polygonal, magnetic and lasso tools, the marquee tool and a selection brush. These tools work differently so that the one you choose depends upon what you wish to accomplish. The polygonal and magnetic lassos basically rely upon the difference in contrast between a selection and its surroundings, the former allows you to draw a straight line, the latter to trace a well defined edge: the lasso tool allows you to draw freehand around a selection. The selection brush allows you to "paint" a selection. All these tools have adjustable settings to help in make an accurate selection. For this image I chose the magic wand tool, which enables you to choose an area of a given color. I clicked on the sky because it is nearly all one color and was thus easily selected. You can change the sensitivity of the wand by increasing or decreasing the tolerance number; you can also choose contiguous or not, However it's the foreground that I want selected therefore Menu- Select-Invert and now the foreground is selected. Incidentally you can save and modify selections, under this same menu. I now chose an appropriate sky image making sure its the same size as the caribou image (Image-Resize-Image Size) and then moved the foreground selection onto the sky image. This incidentally creates a new layer and by using the transform tool (Image-Transform-Free Transform) I increased the size of the caribou while holding down the shift key to maintain the animal to scale. I flattened the layers and then File-Save As and gave it a title and saved it as a tif file. This new image can be further modified if necessary.

A word about layers: despite their somewhat confusing terminology, they are nothing more or less than a duplication of your original image. Their advantage is that they allow you to perform modifications without damaging the original image. Thus if an action doesn't work out you merely have to trash the layer and begin again. Once you're comfortable with layers and using selection tools the number of things you can do with an image is virtually limitless.

I would be happy to respond to any comments or questions you may have.

 My e-mail is mdpathjp@yahoo.com.

Assigned Subject for the 2005/2006 Season.
Fog:

**Like a foggy day in London Town, or a foggy day in Maine.
Or any other foggy place.**

We meet on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesday of the month at 8:00 pm
The Woman's Club of Wyckoff, 176 Wyckoff Ave. Wyckoff. NJ
Guests are always welcome at regular meetings

Ridgewood Camera Club

**19 Smithfield Rd
Waldwick. NJ, 07463**