introducing
PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 12
MIKE RODRIGUEZ

get your
NEON ON
LARRY BECKER

can I get an
EXTENSION PLEASE?
DIANA DAY

make your own
HOLIDAY CARDS
MICHELLE STELLING

the
DYNAMIC DUO
CHUCKIE DELANO

advanced
PORTRAIT EDITING
ERIN PELOQUIN

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2013
From the Editor

It’s that time of year again, hot cocoa by the fire, cookies in the oven and Adobe’s release of the newest version of Elements, Photoshop Elements 12. If you haven’t looked over the new features yet, then check out Mike Rodriguez’s article “Introducing Photoshop Elements 12”. For a closer look at some of the new features, stop by The Learning Center on the website. To help get you in the spirit of the season, Michelle Stelling’s “Tis the Season” article walks you through making your own greeting cards. From there jump on over to Matt Kloskowski’s article on how to print your greeting cards.

There’s always something more to learn and/or a different or better way to do accomplish something. In Diana Day’s article “Can I Get an Extension Please?”, she shows you several different ways to extend the edge of your image. Chuckie Delano’s “The Dynamic Duo” article spotlights how the Spot Healing Brush tool and the Clone Stamp tool can be used together to remove unwanted objects from your images. Some techniques take a little longer to perfect, but practice and patience are key. Erin Peloquin’s article “Advanced Portrait Editing” is a wonderful article that shows you some great techniques and gives you some general guidelines to keep in mind when editing your portraits. We hope you enjoy “Get Your Neon On” an article on how to make your own neon text effect by Larry Becker. There are also some fantastic “Extras” up on the website this month including videos by Larry and Erin to accompany their articles.

With the Holiday’s fast approaching, we at PET, would like to extend our warmest wishes, to you and your loved ones, for a Happy Holiday season.

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Contents

Volume 10 | Number 6

November | December 2013

04 Introducing Photoshop Elements 12
Take a look at some of the new features in Elements 12.
by Mike Rodriguez

07 Get Your Neon On
Create a neon text effect to add to your designs.
by Larry Becker

11 Can I Get an Extension Please
Learn how to expand the edges of an image.
by Diana Day

29 Printing Tips
Print out your own holiday cards with these printing tips.
by Matt Kloskowski

31 The Dynamic Duo
Combine Healing and Cloning for better photo repair.
by Chuckie Delano

34 Tablet Talk
Get the most out of your Wacom tablet with these tips for Elements users.
by Weston Maggio

36 Behind the Lightroom Preset: Fall Color Presets
Go behind the scenes and see how to create a Lightroom Preset to enhance fall colors.
by Matt Kloskowski

39 Subscriber Showcase
Presenting some of the best work created by our users.

FEATURE:
Advanced Portrait Editing – Beyond Bright Eyes and Sparkly Teeth
Learn the techniques needed to edit your portraits like the pros do.
by Erin Peloquin

FEATURE:
Tis The Season to Make Your Own Holiday Greetings
Create holiday cards with your own personal flair!
by Michelle Stelling

SUBSCRIBER SHOWCASE
Along with the seasonal changes, we welcome Adobe’s release of the latest version, Elements 12. This version features some tweaks and fine-tuning to the major changes unveiled in Elements 11, so let’s introduce you to some of the prominent things you’ll see in version 12.

THE ORGANIZER
For those who use the Organizer as your vehicle of choice for cataloging your images, the enhancements in Elements 12 should streamline your workflow even more.

Visual searching receives some enhancements and now returns more accurate search results when conducting Object Searches.

FOLDER NAME SEARCH
You’re now able to search based on the name of a folder, along with album and tag-based searches available in previous versions. You can use the full text Search box, or by going to Find>By Details (Metadata) and choosing the Folder Name item from the drop-down menu.

A welcome addition to how your media is sorted is Alphabetic Sorting. It is available across all areas of the Organizer, and is accessed from the Sort By menu or from the View menu.

NEW TAG FILTERS-PLACE AND EVENTS
Elements 11 introduced the People tags section in the Tags panel, and Elements 12 adds two new tag sections, Places and Events, for further organizational enhancements and options.
THE EDITOR

The three areas of the Editor also enjoy some new features. Here’s an overview of the major ones:

Quick Edit

If you’re a fan of Quick Edit, you’ll enjoy some big changes. You now have the ability to not only make adjustments to your images, but also add effects, textures and frames via the new Effects, Textures, and Frames panels, located in the bottom-right corner of the screen. They share space with the Adjustments panel. To access a panel, simply click the one you wish to view.

Guided Edit

The Guided Edit area also welcomes in some new additions. We now have Restore Old Photo, in the Touchup section, the Zoom Burst Effect under Photo Effects, and the popular Puzzle Effect, located in the Photo Play category.

Expert

The Expert area of the editor has a few new additions, which, while small, are very nice additions to the already feature-packed editor. As more people discover the editing power in Camera Raw, we now have a much simpler way of opening an image in the Camera Raw plugin. Simply go to File>Open in Camera Raw, select your file, regardless of whether or not it is a RAW file, and click Open.
If you’re relatively new to the Expert area of the editor, and are looking for a straightforward place to start, check out the new Auto Smart Tone. Located under the Enhance menu, it allows you to make visual changes, and has the ability to “learn” from your editing choices and get more “intelligent” for future sessions.

Another interesting feature is the Content Aware Move tool, which uses the Content Aware technology and offers two different modes, Move, which allows you to reposition objects within an image, and Extend, which will increase the size of an object (such as a building, for example). Simply draw a selection around the object and drag it to the desired location or position. (NOTE: This tool works best when working on a consistent background).

**Revel**

Finally, Elements 12 introduces integration with Revel, Adobe’s social media platform. Both the Editor and Organizer offer several features around Revel integration, such as working with shared libraries, exporting RAW and PSD files to Revel as JPEG files, and integrating your Organizer albums within Revel.

With the bulk of updating completed in Elements 11, version 12 focuses on refining the product to offer that much more to the tools available to us in the digital darkroom. If you’re contemplating an upgrade, especially if you’re still using Elements 10 or early, version 12 definitely deserves some consideration.

Mike Rodriguez holds a masters degree in Educational Technology and has over twenty-one years of classroom teaching experience. He currently teaches high school photography, video, and graphic arts. Along with his work for Photographic Elements Techniques, he also maintains a portfolio of stock photography at www.istockphoto.com/mrod. For more of Mike’s photography, visit his website at www.mikerodriguezphotography.com
Photoshop Elements does lots of things well. It has amazing tools, filters, and effects... but the built-in neon effects are really lame for creating the look of a glowing neon sign. Instead we’ll tackle the look of neon by using a few simple layer effects and blending modes, and you’ll have enough control to get exactly the look you want.

Most of us think of neon signs as being on a brick wall, so we’ll use a simple built-in brick pattern from Elements as our background. (If you want to be a little more convincing from the start, grab your camera and snap a shot of a brick wall near you.)

1 **Start by putting Elements** in Expert mode and press Ctrl-N (Mac: Command-N) to bring up the New document dialog. The size of your document doesn’t really matter, but based on the proportions we’ll be using later in this tutorial, if you want to have good measurements to go by, start with a document like ours at 1500 x 900 pixels at 200 pixels per inch.
When it comes to which typeface to use for your neon lettering, you should choose one that’s a consistent width throughout the stroke of each letter. Another tip for the best results in this tutorial, is to use an almost white color for the type, but have just a hint of the color of your intended neon glow. We’ll be creating orange neon, so a very pale white-with-a-hint-of-orange is our foreground color. I like the look of cursive in neon signs so we chose Caflish Script Pro Regular. Because of our file size the text is best at 130 points with 110 point leading.
3 **Next click on your foreground** color chip to set your foreground color to a very pale version of the color neon you want (blue, red, orange, etc.). Then press T to access the Type tool. Choose your typeface and point size settings, and then just click in your document area and type in the text for your sign.

If your Effects palette is still showing on the right side, click on the Layers icon to switch back to the Layers palette, and then click the Create new layer icon to add a new empty layer above your type layer. Now Ctrl-Click (Mac: Command-Click) on the thumbnail of your text layer in the Layers palette, so your text loads as a selection.

Now press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill the selection with your pale orange foreground color. Then click the eyeball beside your original Text layer to turn off its visibility. Don’t deselect that text yet…

4 **Next choose Select>Modify>Contract...** and in the Contract Selection dialog, enter 7 pixels and click OK.

Now press the Backspace key (Mac: Delete) to delete the middle of your text and then press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect. At this point lots of people might want to try applying some kind of neon glow from the Effects panel, but none of them look convincing at all. We’ll be using some Layer Styles to create a much more convincing look. Choose Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings...
From the Style Settings dialog, check the Drop Shadow checkbox and move the Size slider to 10 pixels, the Distance slider to 10 pixels and the Opacity slider to 75%. Then check the Glow checkbox, check the Outer checkbox, and then set the Size to around 60 and the Opacity to 100%. Finally, click on the color chip for the outer glow and choose a vivid orange. Then click OK.

Next, click on the Create a new layer icon to add a new, blank layer, above the vignette you just created, and reduce the brush Size to 300 or 400 pixels. Click the foreground color chip and pick a vivid orange. Now paint a wash of color in the area of the text. Be a little irregular but try to follow the pattern of the letters somewhat. Then press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to make a duplicate copy of the orange paint layer you just created.

In the layers palette, click on the bottom paint splash layer (titled Layer 4) and then, from the Blending Modes menu, select Color. Finally, select the top paint splash layer (titled Layer 4 copy) and set the blending mode to Soft Light. Now dial back the intensity by reducing the opacity of the selected layer to around 50%.

At this point you have a pretty convincing neon glow and since you know how you created each of the effects in layers, you can repeat this project with other colors, different fonts, and on different backgrounds. Experiment with different fonts and even try skewing your type next time to enhance the “stereotypical” neon sign style.
CAN I GET AN EXTENSION PLEASE?
How to expand the edges of an image

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A SHOT YOU LOVE FOR A PARTICULAR PROJECT, BUT IT’S JUST NOT COMPOSED TO WORK WELL FOR THAT PURPOSE? PERHAPS YOU NEED TO CROP A PHOTO TO PRINT IN A DIFFERENT ASPECT RATIO, OR TO CHANGE ITS ORIENTATION, BUT THE PHOTO FALLS SHORT OF FILLING THE NEW DIMENSIONS. I’VE HAD INSTANCES WHERE I WANTED TO USE A PARTICULAR PHOTO WITH A COOKIE CUTTER OR CLIPPING MASK SHAPE BUT IT WOULDN’T FIT INTO THAT SHAPE WITHOUT GAPS. SOMETIMES I’VE NEEDED MORE ROOM ON ONE SIDE OF THE MAIN SUBJECT TO ADD A TEXT PHRASE, OR TO CROP FOR A BETTER COMPOSITION THAN THE ORIGINAL PHOTO ALLOWS. I’LL SHOW YOU SOME OF THE WORKAROUNDS I’VE USED IN THESE SITUATIONS.

INCREASING CANVAS SIZE
Invariably my workarounds begin with increasing the canvas size of the photo. It’s important to understand the difference between Image Size and Canvas Size. Upon opening a photo, you have one layer – the background layer. At that point the image size and the canvas size are one and the same. The background layer is the canvas, on which the image sits. You could think of it as the canvas being a painter’s canvas and the image being the “paint.”

When you increase the dimensions of the image, the size of the canvas also increases. But when you increase the canvas size, the size of the image doesn’t change; you are simply enlarging the working space around the photo.

TIP
The default color of a canvas extension is white. To get a transparent extension, which is what I prefer to work with, drag the padlock in the background layer to the trash icon before increasing the canvas size.
THREE METHODS I USE TO EXPAND THE CANVAS

The Image Menu
In working with my projects, I usually use one of three ways to expand the photo canvas, depending on the situation. The conventional method is going to the Image menu to select Resize>Canvas Size. The resulting dialog gives you options to enter new canvas dimensions or, by checking the Relative box, to enter the amounts you would like added to the Width and Height. With the Anchor setting, you can indicate which side(s) you wish to have the additional canvas added.

The Crop Tool
The method I use most of the time is the Crop tool. You may be asking, “The crop tool to add canvas?” Yes, and it works great. Simply drag to select the whole image, and then with the bounding box handles, drag outward on the edges to extend them the amount you want added. Click on the green check mark, or press Enter to add the canvas.

Create a New Document
When I know exactly the size canvas I need for a project, I may start out with a new transparent document that fits my needs, and then Use File>Place to import the photo and position it on the blank canvas.

FILLING IN THE EXTENDED CANVAS
After expanding a canvas, the main issue is how to fill in the added blank space. This can be done in various ways, depending on how complex the background of the photo is, and how the resulting image will be used. In this example, I had a photo of two friends taken at our church, which I wanted to crop into a shape for use in a collage. When trying out the Cookie Cutter shape on the photo, I realized there wasn’t enough space around the subjects to crop, in the shape I wanted to use, without cutting into the faces. Naturally, not all situations are alike, but hopefully sharing the steps I used in this case will give you some ideas that may apply to similar situations you encounter.

Go online to the Magazine section for the November/December 2013 issue at PhotoshopElementsUser.com to download the example photo to follow along with, and to find additional examples and tips on extending and filling in a blank canvas.
1 To expand the canvas, drag the background layer's padlock to the trash icon before starting. Then select the Crop tool (C) and drag to select the whole photo. Drag outward on the bounding box edges where the extra canvas is needed. In this case, I needed extra space at the top and left edges. Press Enter to execute the crop.

2 First, we'll fill in the gap on the left side of the pew. Many times in a photo there are sections of pixels you can copy and paste to fill in gaps. In my example photo, there is a section of the brown pew on the right side that I was able to copy and paste, to fill in a portion of the gap on the left. With the Polygonal Lasso tool (L), at the gap on the left side of the photo, make a selection in the shape needed to fill in the gap, overlapping the existing pew a little. From the Select menu, choose Transform Selection, which puts a bounding box around the Lasso selection. Using the right arrow key move the selection over to the brown pew section to the right of the girls, and press Enter. To copy that selection to a layer, press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). With that new layer active, press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) for the Free Transform command, and then use the left arrow key to move the copied pixels over to fill in the gap at the left. Press Enter to complete the move.
What do you do when there is only a small area of matching pixels to use as a fill-in? Here are a few other options.

• Make a selection around an adjacent area of matching pixels, as large as you can, and copy the selection to a new layer with Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) and then move and position the copied section where needed. Drag out the bounding box handles to stretch the section within reasonable limits (stretching too much may look distorted). This, of course, won’t work if you need to match an obvious pattern.

• After selecting a section of matching pixels, press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) several times to make multiple copies of the section. For each layer of copied pixels, press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to individually move the multiple copies into place, overlapping them a little, to fill the gap. Once the gap is filled, select all the fill-in layers by pressing Ctrl-Click (Mac: Command-Click) on each of them, and then press Ctrl-E (Mac: Command-E) to merge the multiple layers into one layer.

• The Clone Stamp tool (S) can be used to carefully clone pixels to fill in the gap. In the Clone Stamp tool options, make sure the “sample all layers” box is checked. Create a new blank layer to clone the pixels on. When you need to limit cloning to a specific area, select that area to make it easier to “color inside the lines.” In this example, I used the Polygonal Lasso tool (L) to select the area before starting to clone pixels from the adjacent area. With the Clone tool selected, press the Alt key (Mac: Option key) then click with the Clone brush on adjacent pixels to take a sample. Move the Clone brush over to the blank area and click once to stamp the sampled pixels. Repeat the sampling and stamping steps as many times as it takes to fill the blank area.

**TIP**
Color matching the filled-in area – If the color tone of a pasted or cloned section doesn’t quite match the area where you pasted it, with the filled-in layer active, press Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) to open the Levels dialog and then drag the middle slider under the histogram slightly left or right to adjust the shade. Use the Clone Stamp tool (S) to touch up any areas as needed, such as lines where the filled-in section joins the original image.
3 **We’ll use the Gradient tool** to fill in the wall section of the blank canvas with a gradient similar to the existing wall. Create a new blank layer below the image layer. Click the foreground color chip and from the Color Picker, sample a color on the upper left corner of the wall. Then click the background color chip and sample a color from the lower right side of the wall. Select the Gradient tool (G), make sure the first gradient (foreground to background) in the Default gradient set is selected, set the gradient mode to Linear Dodge, and then drag from the upper left corner of the wall to the lower right of the wall in the photo.

For more details about using the Gradient tool, check "Grasping the Gradient Tool" in the May/June 2011 issue of Photoshop Elements Techniques.

4 **Now we need to mask out** the old wall. In the layers panel, click to select the image layer, and then click the Add Layer Mask icon to add a mask. Press D on the keyboard to make sure the foreground and background are set to the default of black and white. Select the Brush tool (B) and choose a soft-edged brush, resize it as needed, and then start painting on the image starting at the top and left edge of the wall, to remove it. When you get close to the girls’ hair and the pew, zoom in on the image and lower the size of the brush to continue painting out the background. If you should paint out part of the hair or pew, when done with the wall, press the X key on the keyboard to toggle the foreground color to white and paint over the hair and pew to bring those details back in. Use the X key to toggle the foreground color between black and white to fine tune the border between the hair, pew, and wall. The rule to remember when painting on a mask is **black conceals** (hides the old wall), and **white reveals** (brings back details you inadvertently painted out with the black).
5 Before going any further, Save the image one final time. Since our image has multiple layers, let’s create a duplicate image in which to flatten the layers, before applying the Cookie Cutter. That way we can still keep our layers intact in the original image. From the menu, click File>Duplicate. Notice that the duplicate is renamed with “copy” added to the end of the filename. Once the duplicate file is created, close the saved original. Flatten the duplicate image by selecting Flatten Image from the Layer menu.

6 Apply the Cookie Cutter tool and save the image. Press Q to select the Cookie Cutter tool and in the Tool Options Bar, select a shape. I chose a puzzle piece shape from the Objects set. Draw the shape on the image, adjust as needed with the bounding box handles, and then press Enter to crop the photo to that shape. I saved my resulting image, with its transparent background, in .PNG format to use in a collage. With a .PNG file, the color of the background will show through when placed in a collage.

Diana Day is a self-taught Elements user, and she teaches Elements to members of her community by hosting a PSE Users Group, presenting at meetings and workshops of photography groups, and tutoring Elements users one-on-one in their homes. Diana also performs photo editing services for photographers and does photo restoration for genealogists when called upon.
YOU’RE A SMART ELEMENTS USER. YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT BRIGHTENING EYES WITH LEVELS AND WHITENING TEETH WITH HUE/SATURATION. WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW IS SERIOUS RETOUCHING. HOW, EXACTLY, DO YOU KNOW YOUR SKIN TONE IS RIGHT? HOW DO YOU FIX A NOSE THAT HAS TAKEN A HIT IN ONE TOO MANY HOCKEY GAMES?

IN SHORT, HOW DO YOU EDIT A PORTRAIT SO THAT IT’S WORTHY OF PUBLISHING IN THE MOST GLAMOROUS FASHION MAGAZINE?

This article will give you the tools you need to compete with any airbrush master. You’ll find that my favorite tool is Levels. I use it whenever possible because of its flexibility – I can adjust it after the fact and it comes with a built-in layer mask. And what if you need a refresher in eye brightening and teeth whitening? We’ll cover that too.
OVERALL SKIN TONE

Great skin tone = great exposure + good white balance. Red tones in skin are much less visible when exposure is bright enough, so begin your edit by tweaking exposure. Add a Levels adjustment layer by clicking on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon, located at the top of the Layers palette, (it’s the half-blue/half-white circle icon) and then select Levels from the pop-up menu. In the Levels dialog, drag the Midtone Input slider (the gray one in the middle) to the left, until the skin is bright but not overexposed.

Check for overexposure using the RGB measurements in the Info Panel (Window>Info) as you move your cursor around over the skin you’re editing. Each color channel should measure less than 240. Focus especially on the red channel. The Red value of fair to medium Caucasian skin should be, in general, between 200 and 215. Very dark skin of African origin can have Red values as low as 40 to 50. With such a wide range of measurements possible for proper skin tones, it’s best to glance at this Info Panel often during your edits to become familiar with the measurements when skin tones look good. This will help you know how to edit when skin doesn’t look so good! After adjusting overall white balance, look at the Info panel as you move your cursor over the skin in your image and get a feel for the average color ratios.

SKIN TONE GUIDELINES

Proper skin tones, regardless of ethnic origin have red values greater than green, and green values greater than blue.

In general:
• Red is at least 10-15 points greater than green.
• Green is at least 10-15 points greater than blue.
• Asian and Hispanic skin can have more yellow (a lower blue number)
• Skin of African origin can have more blue (blue would be closer to green).

When skin doesn’t look right, use the above guidelines to know which color channel needs adjusting. Add additional Levels Adjustment Layers for each separate area that needs color adjustment.

The most important thing about editing with these tips is to know that they are guidelines and broad generalizations, and that your eye is the best judge. If skin looks good but the numbers don’t fit into the guidelines above, ignore the numbers and trust your eyes.
2. Adjust overall colors and fine-tune skin tones.

Use the Color Channels in Levels to adjust white balance, then fine tune skin color. First for this photo, I reduced the red in her skin. So let’s add a Levels adjustment layer by clicking on the Create new fill or adjustment layer icon, and select Levels from the pop-up menu. Choose Red from the Channel pop-up menu, and then drag the Midtone Input slider to the right. Since we want to keep the red in her hair, click on the layer mask thumbnail, grab the Brush tool (B) and paint over her hair with black. Add another Levels adjustment to remove the yellow color cast reflecting on her chin and neck. Refer to the Levels Color Channels Sidebar and note that Blue is the opposite of Yellow, so select Blue from the Channel pop-up menu, and slide the Midtone slider to the left. Now invert the mask by pressing Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) to fill the layer with black, then switch your foreground color to white and paint over the yellowish areas. Repeat these steps to remove the green tint from her hair. Finally, I further reduced the red in her skin by adding a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer and desaturated the Red Channel for some particularly red areas on the side of her face.

LEVELS COLOR CHANNELS

Levels give us three Color Channels to adjust: Red, Green and Blue. And each of these colors has an opposite.

- **Red** is the opposite of **Cyan**
- **Green** is the opposite of **Magenta**
- **Blue** is the opposite of **Yellow**

Reducing Red is the same as increasing Cyan, and vice versa. This relationship holds true for all color pairs. To adjust a color pair, select the appropriate channel from the Levels menu. Move the Midtone slider to the left to increase the color the channel is named for. Move it to the right to increase the opposite color. Assess the appearance of your photo and adjust the color channels appropriately. A photo with good white balance usually has good skin coloration as well.
REMOVE BLEMISHES AND SCULPT

3 **Remove Blemishes.** Flatten your image, Layer>Flatten Image, and add a blank layer above Background by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Grab the Spot Healing Brush tool (J) and size it so that it’s a hair larger than the blemish you are trying to remove. The [ key makes the tool smaller and ] makes it larger. Drag the tool over the blemish and Content Aware will take over to fill the area with pixels from the surrounding area.

Spot Healing generally works great except when the blemish is between two dissimilar areas and PSE doesn’t know which to replace the blemish with. In this situation, grab the Clone Stamp tool (S). Set a source for “good” pixels by holding down the Alt (Mac: Option) key and clicking. Release the Alt (Mac: Option) key and click the “bad” area to replace it with the “good.”

**TIP**

Zap dark circles with the Clone Tool. Change its Blend Mode to Lighten and reduce its Opacity to about 30%.

4 **Plastic Surgery.** Use the Liquify filter to adjust noses, widen eyes or move skin that’s not as firm as it used to be. Flatten the image and duplicate the background layer, then go to the Filter menu and select Distort>Liquify. Use the Bloat tool to enlarge eyes. Size your tool to be as big as the entire eye and click once or twice.

5 **Contour.** Add a Levels adjustment layer with Midtones moved to the right. Invert the mask and choose a white, soft round brush at 25-30% Opacity to darken under cheeks, under chins and the sides of the face. This burning effect creates a shadow that contours the face and thins the subject. To display your layer mask over your image as a red overlay, hold down Alt and Shift (Mac: Option and shift) and click on the layer mask. The same keyboard combination toggles the overlay off.
ADD MAKE-UP

6 Soften Skin. Flatten your image and duplicate the Background layer. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass. Type in a pixel value somewhere between 1 and 20. 20 will provide more skin softening and 1 provides very little. Click OK, and press Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) to invert this filter. Change the Blend Mode of this layer to Soft Light. If the effect is too strong, you can reduce the Opacity of the layer. If it’s too weak, undo these steps and redo with a higher pixel value in the High Pass dialog. Hold down Alt (Mac: Option) and click the Add layer mask icon to add a black mask. Using a white, soft round brush, paint this skin softening to the areas where you’d like it to appear. For minor skin imperfections, you can sometimes soften skin rather than cleaning up those blemishes using Spot Healing or the Clone Tool.

7 Rosy Cheeks and Lips. Add a Solid Color Adjustment layer and invert the mask by typing Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I). Change its Blend mode to Color and reduce its Opacity to about 10%. Choose a color by Double-clicking on the color box. Either select the color of your choice using the Color Picker tool, or move your cursor outside this box to select a color from your subject’s cheeks or lips. Paint this adjustment in using a low opacity soft round brush to even out and increase color in cheeks and lips.

Hair Roots and Eyebrows. Use the same method to touch up roots, remove gray hairs and make eyebrows fuller.

EYES

8 Catchlights. Add a Levels Adjustment layer and move the Highlights Input slider (white arrow on right) to the left. Invert the mask Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) and zoom in to paint in the catch lights with a tiny white brush to add extra pop.
**Irises.** Add a Levels Adjustment layer with Midtones moved to the left and Shadows (Black arrow on left) to the right. Invert the mask and paint with a white brush to brighten the irises and add contrast. Avoid the pupil and dark edge of the iris.

**Iris rim, pupil, lashes, lash line and eyebrows.** Add another Levels layer and move the Shadows Input slider to the right. Invert the mask and use a tiny white brush (1-7 pixels wide, generally) to outline the iris, following the dark rim. Fill in the pupils as well, if they need darkening. You can also draw along the lash line and individual lashes with this brush to add eye definition. Increase the strength of the effect and brush size to add a mascara look. A larger brush is good for dark eyebrows also.

**TEETH**

*Add a Levels adjustment* layer and move the Highlight and Midtone Input sliders to the left to brighten. Invert the mask and paint the teeth with a white brush. This adjustment is often all you need. However, for particularly discolored teeth, add a Hue/Saturation layer, reduce saturation until the teeth look nicely colored and invert the mask. Paint in the teeth using a white brush.
PLAY UP THE DETAILS

Sharpen to complete the edit. Flatten your image and duplicate the background layer. Go to the Enhance Menu and select Adjust Sharpness. Click-and-drag so that the eyes are visible in the preview menu. Adjust the Sharpening Amount and Radius to suit your photo.

Amount governs the strength of the sharpening. Elements sharpens the areas of the photo that it considers to be lines – these lines can be hairs, eye-lines, the edge of a face, etc. The Radius slider governs how wide each of these lines are, the larger the radius, the more visible the sharpening. Sharpening artifacts appear when you can actually see these lines, and indicate that your radius is too high. Click on the Preview checkbox to see your image before sharpening, and release the click to see the sharpening applied. Add a layer mask to this layer and invert the mask, then mask out areas that don’t need sharpening, like skin and lips. I generally focus my sharpening on eyes, teeth, parts of the hair, jewelry and detail on clothing.

You probably won’t need all of these techniques for every portrait that you edit. However, using them, you can take a photo from snapshot to magazine quality. Be sure to stop by the PET member website to see my video and learn even more portrait editing tips!
With the Holidays just around the corner, it’s time to think about designing your very own personalized card. I create cards for not only Christmas or Hanukah, but for many other occasions, such as Birthdays, Valentines, Thanksgiving or even Thank You Cards. There’s nothing better than receiving a personalized card from your loved one. In this lesson, I will guide you through the process I used to create this simple personalized Holiday card with the help of a digi-kit called “Holiday Hoopla” by www.snickerdoodledesignsbykaren.com.
First, you will want to decide what size card you would like to create. I purchased some acid free heavy stock cards and envelopes from my local hobby or office supply store. They have various sizes and colors, so you will want to plan your purchase accordingly. In this case, I am using a 5.25” x 7.25” size folded card, so the size of the actual document can be a standard photo size, 4”x6” or 5”x7” leaving room for a small border (or you can cut the card to size). We will be using some of our “traditional” scrapbook skills to assemble the cards; however, this will only require glue dots or double stick tape. Here are a few samples.

Gather all the elements you want to use in your card layout into one folder. In this layout, we’ll be using one photo and a few pieces from a digi-kit called “Holiday Hoopla” by snickerdoodledesignsbykaren.com. A digi-kit is premade designs comprised of creative papers, ribbons, elements, word art, frames, etc. that are created by digital designers and can be purchased online. Just search “digital scrapbooking kits” and you will find many options. You may find free kits, or you can purchase them for around $2-10. The kits are downloadable and come in JPEG, PNG or PSD format, so they are 100% compatible with Photoshop Elements. Once you pick the kit you want to download, place the pieces that you want to use in the same folder with your other photos. This will help you stay organized.

Create a quick thumbnail of your card design. This will save you a lot of time and frustration in the long run. Here is a sample of what my thumbnail looks like, nothing fancy, but it will give you guidance as you create your card. You will also want to look at the pieces in the digi-kit and decide which papers, embellishments, etc. you will use and incorporate them into your thumbnail. I am going to keep mine simple with one photo and two lines of text. Note: The thumbnail is not done on the computer; it is simply done with a piece of paper and pencil.

Create a new blank layout in Elements, select File>New>Blank File. In the New dialog enter the dimensions for your layout. For this example let’s use 7” for the Width and 5” for the Height with a Resolution of 300 pixels/inch. Set the Color Mode to RGB color, the Background Contents to White and name your file (I named mine “holiday-card”) and click the OK button. Keep in mind that you can use whatever dimensions you choose for your card. If you prefer a portrait layout, you would enter 5” for the Width 7” for the Height.
5 **Place a background paper** from your digi-kit into your blank layout. Select File>Place, locate your paper, select it and hit the Place button. Normally digi-kits come with several different papers and backgrounds. I will be using this green modern snowflake paper (sd_hh_p14.jpg in Extras) for my background. You might need to reduce, enlarge, move or rotate the paper to the desired look. Next, hit the green check-mark to commit the change. In order to move the paper, you will use the Move tool (V), click-and-drag into place. Or you can nudge it into place by using the arrow keys on your keyboard.

6 **It’s time to add the photo.** I generally work from the bottom up, so in this case you will select the paper layer, this will ensure that the placed photo will fall above that layer. Go to File>Place, select the photo you wish to use, and click the Place button. The photo will automatically go on top of the layer that was previously selected. If you need to resize the photo make sure the Constrain Proportions checkbox, located in the Tool Options Bar, is checked and resize using one of the corner handles to maintain the scale of the photo and avoid image distortion. Go ahead and make sure the photo size and placement is adjusted appropriately and hit the green check mark to commit placement. You can use your Move tool (V) and left mouse button to drag the photo into place if needed. The arrow tools are great for small movements as well.

7 **Now let’s add some effects** to the photo. First, make sure that you have the photo layer selected. Then open the effects panel. There are several ways to do this: go to Window>Effects, hit the F6 key, or click on the Effects icon in the bottom right corner next to the Layers icon. Make sure the Styles tab is selected and Double-click on the style you want to apply. In this case, I applied a soft edge drop shadow.

8 **In order to create a white border** you will need to go back to the Layers panel and Double-click on the “fx” icon next to the photo, this will open the Style Setting dialog as seen here. Check the Stroke checkbox and then choose the Size, in this case we chose 10 with 100% opacity. At this point you can change the stroke color by clicking on the color box to the right of the Size slider. The Select Stroke Color dialog will appear and you can choose your color and click OK.
9 Let’s add a shape layer. Select the layer that contains the background paper (if you’re using the background paper from the digi-kit the layer is named “ss_hh_p14”). We will select a deep red color for the rectangle shape in order to keep with the color scheme of the house. Select the Color Picker tool (I) from the Toolbox and choose a color from your photo by clicking on the pixel. You might have to click around a few times to get the perfect shade. The color will appear in the Color Picker box, when satisfied click OK. Select the Rectangle tool (U) and draw a rectangle over the bottom 1/3 of the layout.

10 Now for the fun part! Select the photo layer and place both of the elves (File>Place: sd_hh_elf3.png and sd_hh_elf2.png) into our card design. Reduce and place them appropriately by using the Move tool (V). Remember, if you need to resize the photo, make sure the Constrain Proportions checkbox is checked and resize using the corner handles to avoid image distortion. You will need to click on the green check mark to commit. I placed one in each bottom corner. Feel free to put a soft drop shadow on them to make them pop off the page. (Please reference Step 7 if you would like to add a drop shadow)

11 Pick the color of your text. First you will want to select the Color Picker tool (I) from your Toolbox, next click on the foreground swatch located at the bottom of the Toolbox. Then, find a color in your layout that you would like to use for your text. I would like to use a shade of green from the background paper, so I will click my “eyedropper” there. This will then change the color of the foreground swatch to the color that you picked with the Color Picker tool.
12 **It’s time for text.** First, you will select the Horizontal Type tool (T), then choose a font from your list of font choices in the Tool Options Bar, I will use Kristen ITC for the top line of text and Brush Script MT for the bottom line of text. Next, choose the point size, in this case I selected 20pt with a leading of 26pt. Click on the green check mark to commit current operation. You might need to change the position of your text by using your Move tool (V).

13 **Save your layout File>Save.** I generally save both a PSD and a JPEG file. The PSD file will save the layers. It is very important to have the original PSD file in case you need to make changes to your layout. The JPEG file will compress the layers and therefore flatten them, which will make the file size considerably smaller.

14 **Print & assemble your card.** You can print your photos at home or at your favorite print store. Once they are printed you will tape them to the cover of your card stock, 2-sided tape or glue dots work great! To learn more about digital scrapbooking visit www.naods.com

Michelle Stelling is the founder of the National Association of Digital Scrapbookers. She has taught over 5,000 students worldwide the art of photo editing and digital scrapbooking. Teaching others how to create beautiful cards, personalized photos and scrapbook layouts using Photoshop Elements is her passion. Come check out her free weekly webinars and learn more about digital scrapbooking at www.naods.com
PRINT YOUR OWN holiday cards

HOPEFULLY YOU GOT A CHANCE TO CHECK OUT MICHELLE’S ARTICLE ON CREATING YOUR OWN HOLIDAY CARDS. IF YOU DECIDE TO MAKE A GO OF IT AND PRINT YOUR OWN CARDS, WE HAVE SOME TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOU, TO HELP MAKE THINGS EASIER AND HOPEFULLY SAVE YOU SOME TIME (AND MONEY).

Buy Scored Paper. I always hate fancy terms that make me guess. Well, if you decide to buy your own paper for greeting cards then the word “scored” is one of those terms you may come across. Honestly, it should just be called “Easy-to-fold Paper”. But instead, it’s called scored paper. The term scored basically means the paper already has an indentation to help you fold it. It may not seem like a lot of work to fold non-scored paper yourself. But trust me, if you’re printing a bunch of cards it can be a real pain in the neck. So... if you can buy scored paper (I really like my term, easy-to-fold paper better though) go ahead and do it. You’ll be happy you did.

Don’t forget to download the color profiles for the paper you’re using. In the last issue, we talked about paper profiles and just how important they are when it comes to printing. You download the paper profiles from the paper manufacturer’s website (not from the printer manufacturer). So if you’ve bought paper from say, Red River Paper, then you’d go to their website to download the profiles for the paper.

Once you install them, in the print dialog box you need to press the More Options button. Then choose Color Management and select “Photoshop Elements Managers Color”. From there, choose the profile for your paper from the Printer Profile list.

Which side to print on? If you plan on making cards and printing on multiple sides, then you need to keep in mind what kind of paper you’re buying and what you intend to print. For example, most papers only let you print photos on one side. That’s usually okay, since most people just want to print a photo on the front. The other side is typically just fine to print text on, or even hand write your text, if you want to make things easier. But what if you want to print photos on both sides? You’ll need to get double-sided cards. One more thing, before you print make sure you figure out which side you’re supposed to print the photo on (most papers will usually have something in the box that shows you, if it’s not clearly evident already).

NOTE
We covered printing more in depth in September/October 2013 issue of PET, so feel free to check out that article for more information on printing and using profiles.
4 Easy Layout. Elements has a little trick that will help you lay out a multi-sided card. Let’s say you buy 10x7” easy-to-fold (sorry, scored) greeting cards. What that means is that, once folded, the area that you’ll have for your photo is really 5x7”. Remember, you’re folding it in half, so half of 10 is 5. Well, if you create a new document in Elements that’s 10x7”, you’d normally have to guess exactly where your photo should go. First look to see if you have the Rulers turned on, if they’re not, go to the View menu and turn them on. Then go to the View menu again and select New Guide, in the New Guide dialog choose the Horizontal Orientation and set the Position to 5”. Now you have a visual reference to see just how much space you have for one side of your card.

If you’re running low on creativity then try this. If all else fails, and the creative juices are running on low, then try templates. If you go to a site like Fotolia.com, and do a search for “Holiday Greeting Cards”, you’ll see you can download a pre-made template for just a few dollars. Once you have your template open in Elements, you can follow the steps from Michelle’s tutorial to add a photo on top of it and customize it for your family.

One last thing, if you’re printing your own cards, most paper manufacturers are really good about including tips, tricks, settings and tutorials on how to set up your printer for printing with their cards. Just check out their website and you can usually find a section with tutorials to get you moving along the right path.
If you’ve been taking photographs for any length of time, you have inevitably taken a spectacular image that you adore. But upon closer inspection, you noticed a glaring flaw. I’m not referring to a small hair or droplet of water, but rather an annoying object in your photo that causes the viewer to be distracted from the subject.

Fortunately, Photoshop Elements includes a host of healing, cloning, and selection tools that will eliminate the distracting element from your image. For this picture of Border Patrol, disc dog Riley and his trainer Jim, I was required to stand in a certain area, which caused many of my pictures to include a distracting pole.
Let’s start by removing the large section of the pole that’s against the sky. Select the Spot Healing Brush tool (J) from the Toolbox. In the Tool Options Bar, enable Content Aware and select a hard brush. Adjust the size of the brush so that it’s smaller than the object you want to eliminate. Using the Spot Healing Brush tool, start to paint over the pole.

Because the Spot Healing Brush uses pixels from close proximity, avoid healing areas next to objects like the trees, disc, and rooftop. If the area you are brushing picks up the disc or other unwanted areas, use a smaller brush.

Next we’ll need to select the objects we want to keep. Since the Clone Stamp tool can’t distinguish between the items you want to eliminate and the items you want to keep, you must select the areas you want to keep before using the Clone Stamp tool.

Select the Quick Selection tool (A) from the Toolbox and make a selection around the white disc that is in the air. Invert the selection using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-Shift-I (Mac: Command-Shift-I).

Now we’ll use cloning to get the smaller area of the pole below the disk. Because cloning makes a duplicate of the area you select, it is important to clone from an area that is similar in color to the area that you want to duplicate.

Select the Clone Stamp tool (S) from the Toolbox. Choose a soft brush and adjust the size so that the brush is smaller than the area you want to eliminate. Place your cursor over an area that is similar in color to the area you want to clone. Since your sample point, (that small little crosshair cursor) moves as you paint, it’s a good idea to choose an area far away from other objects. Hold down the Alt (Mac: Option) key and click to select the target area. Using the Clone Stamp tool, paint over the object you want to eliminate.
There might be multiple images that are in the way of eliminating an object, so you may need to make additional selections.

Select the Quick Selection tool from the Toolbox and make a selection around the dog. In the Tool Option Bar, click the Refine Edge button. Under Edge Detection, click the Smart Radius box. Choose Selection from the Output To dropdown then click OK. Next invert the selection using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-Shift-I (Mac: Command-Shift-I).

Again select the Clone Stamp tool from the Toolbox. In the Tool Options Bar, choose a soft brush and adjust the size so that the brush is smaller than the object you want eliminated. Set the target by Alt (Mac: Option) clicking on the left side of the image where the tops of the trees meet the sky and then brush over the last of the pole.

Although the Spot Healing Brush and Clone Stamp tools make eliminating objects fairly easy, it is still not perfect. Many of the areas that were spot healed will display faint lines where the Photoshop Elements Content Aware feature did not blend the pixels well. To reduce the noticeable lines, make some additional repairs with the Spot Healing Brush tool.

Select the Spot Healing Brush tool from the Toolbox. In the Tool Options Bar, select a soft brush and adjust the size so that the brush is smaller than the width of the object you eliminated. Brush over any faint lines using small strokes. Brush over additional times to increase the blending.

Many Photoshop Elements tools were created to use in tandem to correct images. Using the Spot Healing Brush, Clone Stamp, and Quick Selection tools together will assist you with eliminating distracting elements while restoring the image you intended.

Chuckie Delano is a military photographer and an instructor. He has taught photography and Photoshop at the college level. His work appears in numerous Department of Defense magazines and Websites.
If you’ve got a Wacom tablet but aren’t using it, or if you always wanted one, but just didn’t “get it”, you may not fully appreciate all that it has to offer. The list is long, but the number one benefit to using a tablet is the greater control that it brings to your retouching tools. This is accomplished through pressure sensitivity. Whether you are skilled at using a pen or you’re just curious about what it can do for you, the following tips on brush and tablet settings in Photoshop Elements will be a welcome addition to your skillset.

Nearly every tool in Photoshop Elements that behaves like a brush is, or can be applied with pen pressure. Doing so enables you to apply the tool’s effect with greater accuracy and efficiency. The Brush tool is the most obvious, as are any tool with the word “brush” in its name, e.g., Spot Healing Brush, Smart Brush, etc. But the Clone Stamp, Blur, Sponge, and Eraser are also pressure sensitive.

Now that you know the tools, here are the key areas that you should be familiar with to ensure that you are using the tools to their true potential.

First things first, select the Expert tab to reveal the Toolbox to the left of your display. Now, when you select any tool, options for that tool appear in the Tool Options panel at the bottom of your display. When the Brush tool is selected, the Tool Options panel reveals the Brush Preset Picker, along with some additional settings.

Start by selecting a brush preset; for example a 65px Soft Round Brush. The name suggests that the brush is 65 pixels in diameter, has a soft edge and is round. These attributes were set when the brush was created.

From there you can adjust the brush’s size and opacity to your liking by dragging the sliders. Additionally, clicking the airbrush mode will enable a constant flow of paint. The size and opacity sliders represent the brush’s maximum result. This will make more sense in a moment.

**Tablet Settings**

To the right of the Size and Opacity sliders, you’ll find the Tablet Settings button. Tapping this button reveals five properties that can be applied using pen pressure:

- **Size** – Diameter of a brush
- **Opacity** – Transparency of a brush stroke
- **Hue Jitter** – Transition of color from foreground to background
- **Scatter** – Distribution of a brush mark across a brush stroke
- **Roundness** – Brush shape; perfectly round to elliptical
Checking one or more of the boxes in front of a property will enable control by pen pressure. For example, a soft touch of the pen to the tablet will apply a subtle effect, while pressing harder will increase the effect. In the case of Size and Opacity, the maximum result of pen pressure is limited to the slider settings discussed above. I typically leave the Size and Opacity sliders set to 100%, as my intent is to adjust them using pen pressure. The result for Hue, Scatter and Roundness are defined by the slider settings found in Brush Settings.

Brush Settings

Once you have selected a brush preset, you can adjust its dynamics to refine its look or create a stylized brush stroke. To set brush dynamics, click on the Brush Settings button in the Tool Options panel to reveal the various dynamics. Dragging the sliders for each dynamic adjusts the appearance of the brush preview, giving you an idea of what the brush stroke will look like. Note: Brush Settings apply to brushes regardless of whether they are drawn with a pen tablet or not.

For tools other than the Brush tool, size and opacity control via pen pressure is defined in the brush preset.

With pen pressure, you gain a level of control that you simply cannot get with a mouse. Knowing where to locate the essential settings and understanding the fundamentals are just the start. Experimenting with the brush presets included with Photoshop Elements and adjusting the brush and tablet settings to create varied effects will enable you to work more efficiently and perhaps even more creatively!

**KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY**

**Brush Tool:** B - Selects the Brush tool. Repeated strokes of the B key selects the Impressionist Brush and Color Replacement tool.

**Brush Size:** [ ] - Increases or decreases the size of a brush.

**Brush Hardness:** Shift + [ ] - Adjusts the edge hardness in 25% increments.

**Overall Opacity:** Numeric keys (0-9) set the percentage of opacity for a brush.

**Tool Options:** F5 - Toggles visibility of the Tool Options panel.

**PRO TIP**

If your tablet is equipped with Express Keys, consider assigning them to some of the keystrokes above in the Wacom Tablet Properties!
By the time you're reading this, the Fall season has just about passed. As the leaves start changing, it opens up a whole new world of photography for us. The result? Beautiful, colorful photos of the outdoors. But there are some tweaks you can make in Lightroom to enhance those colors even more and really bring out the beauty in the fall. First, I always tend to move the White Balance Temperature slider toward the right a little to warm the photo a little. I'll even move the Tint slider to the right a bit to enhance the red color a little more.
After that, I move to the Clarity slider. Since fall photos tend to have a lot of details in them you can increase that Clarity slider to add even more detail and contrast to the photo. Then increase the Saturation too. Be careful though, because Saturation increases the saturation of all the colors so don’t go to high here.

Next, the Tone Curve comes in handy. Just drag the top right of the curve upward to enhance the bright areas and drag the bottom left of the curve downward to really add some depth to the blacks. It’s a great way to enhance the overall color and impact of the photo.

Here’s the big adjustment. Move to the HSL panel and adjust the Saturation of the key fall colors. Mostly, we’re looking to enhance the reds, oranges, yellows and even some greens in the photo. Then go to the Luminance part of the panel. This is where you adjust the overall brightness of the colors. Since we want the reds and oranges to stand out, move those sliders toward the right a little. It’s worth moving them to the left to darken a bit as well. It all depends on how bright and dark the colors are to begin with. You can even try this trick with the Yellows and Greens, but sometimes they look too bright.
While you’re in the HSL panel, experiment with the Hue and Luminance sliders for Orange, Yellow and Green. This can either be REALLY bad, if your photo already had some good saturated fall colors in it, or really good, if some of those colors were a little muted and the leaves hadn’t fully changed yet.

Finally, head to the Effects panel and add a vignette. This is a great finishing touch on all of your fall color photos, and it’s a really nice way to draw people in to the image. Just drag the Amount setting to the left. Somewhere around -30 works pretty good. Then adjust the midpoint setting so the vignette goes in toward the center more and the Feather setting to smooth out the transition a bit.

TRY CREATING MULTIPLE VERSIONS
This is a perfect preset to create multiple versions. I do this a lot with my presets. For example, I’ll typically go less on all of the settings and make a “Light” version. Then I’ll add a little more of each setting and make a “Medium” version. Then I’ll add the full amount and make a “Strong” setting. Here’s another tip. Presets are stored alphabetically. So if you use the names I used (Light, Medium, Strong) at the end of the preset name then they’ll appear in order in your presets panel.
Here is a selection of some of the best recent work by subscribers, showcasing original photos and completed projects from PET tutorials and videos, as well as the winners from our Family Photo Challenge.

**SMILE PLEASE [WINNER - PHOTO CHALLENGE WINNER]**

Wendy Engquist  
Port Townsend, WA

We were on, what will be an annual, combined family vacation of my son-in-law’s side of the family and our family. They had all of their immediate family present so I suggested I do a family photograph for them. They all have a copy of a photo with normal smiles. I thought this photo showed more of their charming personalities. I was lucky to capture this photo in-camera pretty much as I wanted it to appear. I believe I did a bit of brightening and shadow reduction using, of course, PE.

**TENDER MOMENT [WINNER - PHOTO CHALLENGE WINNER]**

Patti Pitzer  
Corona, CA

I took this photo last year at the Living Desert Zoo in Palm Desert, and used the instructions from the July/August 2011 issue of Photographic Elements Techniques for “Out of Bounds” effects to accentuate this tender moment.
A FATHER’S LOVE [WINNER - PHOTO CHALLENGE WINNER]

Christina Brashears
Chico, CA

This photo was taken at Bidwell Park in Chico, CA. I used the clone stamp tool for acne scars and whitened & brightened teeth article from the Photoshop Elements 9 Book. Under effects, I toned down Tint-Sepia to opacity 27% and applied it to the whole picture, then I used the selection tool to the faces and bodies and used the Deep Red filter at 19%. Cropped and then added Vignette by referring to the “One-Click Vignette” from Jeff Carlson on the PET-V8N6-tips-tricks.pdf Nov/Dec 2011 tutorial.

WANT TO SEE YOUR PHOTO IN PRINT?
Show us how you’ve put our tutorials to work in your images. To submit your recent work to Subscriber Showcase, go to this link and follow the instructions: www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests

The next deadline for submission to Subscriber Showcase is November 20th, 2013.
Each issue we give you a new photo assignment. Winners are announced online. A few may also get selected to appear in print. Our upcoming challenge theme is The Color Red. To enter the Photo Challenge, go to this link and follow the instructions: www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests

Smaller Trumpets
Dan DellaChiesa | San Lorenzo, CA

No Title
Doris Pacheco | Madera, CA