**Digital Photography**
# Special Projects
**Stu Gershon**
**February, 2010**

## Stitching

"Stitching" is the technical term for making panoramas.  The process involves taking a sequence of pictures (either horizontal or vertical) and let the software "stitch" them together to make one scene without the "stitches" showing.

"Stitching" relies on two techniques:
   1.Move the camera horizontally (or vertically) on the same plane.  This is more easily done with a tripod and just move the camera from the left to the right as you take the photos.  This keeps the camera parallel to the ground.
   2.The second technique requires "overlapping" so that the software can "stitch" on a reference point in each photo.  For example, if one of your frames has three people in it and you aim the camera at all three, the second frame should have the third person on the opposite edge of the photo!  This means the person on the right (in the first shot) and the person on the left (in the second shot) provide the software with the same colors, shapes, textures, etc.  If you don't "overlap", you won't get a "stitch"!

Horizontal "stitching" is easier because usually the distances are similar (except at the extreme edges) and will  prevent distortion.

Vertical "stitching" is very difficult because if you're taking a picture of, let.s say, the Eifel Tower, the distance to the top is very much more than the distance to the base and this will cause distortion called "parallax" which means not only are the distances different, but the size is also different which makes it very difficult to "stitch" a tower!


## T-Shirts

Making a T-Shirts is one of the most fun Special Projects you can do with Digital Photography.

You need "Iron-Ons" which can purchase from Staples, etc.
You need n Ink-Jet Printer.
You need your computer.
You need your digital camera.
Take the picture.  Edit it on your computer.  Put "text" on the image (every program is different).
Once you"ve got the image and text you want in the correct colors and place, you must find a way (in your software) to FLIP the picture horizontally.  This will show up as a "mirror" image with the text backwards.  In Picasa, after you've put it the text hit Ctrl-Shift-H and you will "Flip" the image.
Following the instruction on your "Iron-On" sheets, put the blank T-Shirt on a smooth and solid surface, place the Iron-On on top of the T-Shirt, cover the entire object with a smooth sheet and iron.  THIS PROCESS REQUIRES LOTS OF PRACTIVE!  You have to learn the power of your printer (how much ink will it put on the iron-on), and what setting the iron should be set at!
PRACTICE with an old T-shirt and a few iron-on BEFORE you make the final!

# Collages

Collages are a group of pictures on the same page.  You can use them as a family photo collection or a view of a place on your vacation or just about anything else you want to present.

Collages are made by putting more than one photo on a "canvas" - the final image you want to present.

In all collages you must select more than one image.

Many programs handle the making of collages differently, but in *Picasa 3.1*,all you really have to do is select a few pictures and put them in your "Picture Tray" (you can keep them in the tray by hitting the "Hold" button on each one) and then hit the "collage" button (on the bottom of the screen).  You are given four different choices - Picture Pile, Multiple Exposure, Contact Sheet and Picture Grid.  You can experiment with each of the setting to see what you can get.

A Collage might also be considered a Scrapbook page WITHOUT  cutting up all the parts!

# Fun Stuff

Since I teach my classes with PhotoSuite 4.0 Platinum, I have shown many of you what the program calls "Fun Stuff"!

You can make many things including Calendars, personalized Book Marks, Greeting Cards and many other projects.

If you don't have PhotoSuite, the program that came with your digital camera may have some of these items that you can create.

Also, if you do not have any of these alternatives, you can purchase inexpensive "stand-alone" products made by American Greeting Cards and Hallmark.

Virtually all of these products work on a similar principle that I call "template and insert".  Most of them work on this principle - you select the main page "template" from a selection of greeting cards, calendars, etc and then "insert" the appropriate photo.  Some of these programs give you an opportunity to modify the text by changing the font (style of lettering), size of the text, and some other parts of the "Template".  When doing this type of project, the only limit to the project is your imagination!

# Slide Shows

In my opinion, slideshows are the best way to present your photos.  they are all in sequence, you can add transitions and special effects in most programs, you can add music (MP3 or Wav files) and you can put them on CD or DVD so they will last much longer than putting them on print paper!

There is no set way to make a slide show since many programs handle them in different ways.  However, I will include some basic concepts that you should be aware of.

A slideshow has to include the photos that you want to show.  They should be in order of appearance.  The program can include two types of special effects: transitions and special effects.  *Transitions* are the "wipes" from one corner or another, fade-ins and fade-outs and other effects.  The newest *special effect* is what is called "Pan and Scan" which can be seen in the Ken Burns films where he moved the camera in and out (zoom) and side to side (pan) to give the effect that the objects are moving, when in reality, they are really still pictures!  In most of the new programs (not Picasa 3.1) there is a way to incorporate music into the program. Every program adds music in different ways, however they all seem to incorporate MP3 files , which are compressed versions of regular music files.  If you have an MP3 player, there is usually a program included to "rip" the files from a CD, that is, to convert an individual track into MP3 format (which takes up a lot less space).  Roxio EZ Media Creator includes a "ripping" program because Roxio owns Napster and

wants you to subscribe to their music service. There are other "legal" music services where there is a monthly fee (about $5) or a per song fee (from $.79 and up). Many of you have asked me about this process and I have refused to instruct you on doing something illegal, but almost any teenager knows where and how to get music from the Internet! Once you've compiled the slideshow (with the music and effects) you can "burn" it on to a CD or (in some cases) on to a DVD. This will allow the slideshow to last much longer than print photos since paper can bend, yellow or crack, while a CD or DVD can last for years! Also, if you've made a DVD of a trip or event, you can show it on a regular DVD player that can be viewed on a tv which makes the presentation of your event much easier to show and to view.

Look on the **Preserve** and **Convert** pages for examples of simple slideshows.

## Recommended Software

**Learning software is like learning anything else - trial and error.**

The easiest software to start with is a FREE program called *Picasa3.1* which is distributed by Google. You can download it by going to *http://picasa.google.com/index.html*  and clicking on "Free Download", then SAVE (to a specific place on your hard drive) and then double click to install it.  *Picasa3.1* is constantly updated and is designed to work with the current version and updates of Windows, so if you don't do "Automatic Updates" regularly, update BEFORE you install *Picasa 3.1*.  You can update your computer by going to START , HELP and click on the *Windows Update* icon.

If you consider Picasa 3.1 your "training wheels", the next program you should move up to is the software that came with your digital camera. You should do this for two reasons - they gave you an instruction book with your camera (that's your best friend) and the "800" number that comes with your camera, also supports the software (usually for the first year). Ask them all the questions you can!

Once you understand all the concepts and are familiar with "cropping" and other ways to modify your image, you might be ready to step up in software. The "end-all" of Digital Photography is "Adobe Photoshop" which costs over $700 and is very hard to maneuver through. The more complete and easier programs will be listed below. All of them are less than $100 and they can do just about everything to the image. The one different program is Roxio EZ Media Creator, which not only does your digital photos, but has programs to write DVD's, Video editing and audio editing (Roxio also owns Napster and they offer a free trial of that music service).

The programs (newest editions came out recently) are:

*Adobe Photoshop Elements 7.0*
*JASC Paint Shop Pro X2*
*Roxio EZ Media Creator 2009*

There are other software programs also available, but I don't recommend them because I have not used them. If you have a program that "works for you," continue to use it until you want to move up to something more sophisticated!

**You can send me email questions and also check for my current Schedule and Services at www.DigitalDocOnline.com**