BLUENOSE FOCUS

Cover Photo by Joe Szostak

BLUENOSE FOCUS
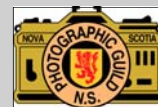
In This Issue

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome your submissions to Bluenose Focus and will do our best to make sure the best submissions make it into print - or at least virtual print in this digital age!

Articles should be submitted using MS Word 97 or higher in DOC or DOCX formatted files and any imbedded images should be JPEG format, sRGB colour space and 300 dpi.

Submitted images should be JPEG format, sRGB colour space and at least 2550pixels wide (300dpi for printing at 8.5 inches wide) or 3300 pixels tall (300 dpi for printing at 11 inches tall.

Submission should be e-mailed to mike@mccarthyphotographic.com

The Photographic Guild Of Nova Scotia

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Visit www.photoguild.ns.ca for more information

Editor's Corner

By Mike McCarthy

Welcome to the chilly Winter 2011 edition of the Bluenose Focus!

It may be the dead of winter here in Nova Scotia, but it promises to be a pretty hot time in the ol' town with the 2011 Canada Games coming to town from February 11th through 28th. There are many winter activities to keep us active and don't forget about those New Years' Resolutions!

Have you forgotten about yours yet?

Although I stopped making resolutions a long time ago - I find it's a lot easier to not break them if you don't have any to break - I very much want 2011 to bring some new and interesting things my way.

For one, I plan to take more pictures of more things than I ever have. I want to stretch my abilities and try lots of new things.

How about you?

This time around you will find photos of winter things and activities from our members as well as results from external PSA and CAPA competitions, a report on the successful Fall Show and the first in a mini series of tutorials in retouching portraits with Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom.

It's only a little more than a month away from our annual Digital Imaging for Photographer's workshop day on March 5th at St. Mary's Burke Education Centre.

I am always interested in hearing your ideas about articles and would very much welcome your submissions in future issues.

Watch for the annual Eagle Watch field trip and join us at the regular meeting place on February 6th where every one gets to be a judge and see what it's really like sitting in those three hot seats. I believe it will be very educational for everyone.

See you next time!

President's Message

By Dean Hirtle

I hope you and yours had a great holiday season!

Our 2010-11 Program is well underway. A few of the events so far this year that come to mind:

Our Fall Show in November drew an exceptionally large audience. Laszlo Podor did an excellent job in organizing the show with a great program and lots of door prizes. My thanks to him as well as Hubert Boudreau, Joyce Chew, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Peter Steeper, Teunis Obdam, Carolyne and Ken Renton, and John Wm Webb for their efforts in putting the show on. "Images from the Ancient Tea-Horse Trails" by Yau-Sun Tong and "Sable Island Thru the Lens" by Nanciellen Davis along with our best Guild member images and silent image presentations made a memorable show.

On December 5th we had a very informative evening with presentations by Len Wagg on "Shooting at Night" and by Ken Renton with "An Approach to Creative Imaging".

Once again our Christmas Party at Ashburn was an enjoyable evening. Thanks to Etta Parker and Edie Greene for organizing the event and also to John Wm Webb for sharing stories (with some help from Hugh McKervill), and some wonderful images, from Cuba.

We got the new year off to a great start with Mike McCarthy's "Basic Portrait Retouching with Lightroom 3 and Photoshop CS5".

I hope all new members of the Guild are enjoying our Program. As always, don't hesitate to contact any member of our Executive if you have any comments or questions.

I encourage all members to spread the word about the Guild and to let prospective new members know they are able to attend our meetings at the Museum if they want to learn more about us.

A new endeavor for our club this year will be putting on a Print Exhibition at Viewpoint Gallery in June. Stay tuned for details.

I would like to wish everyone all the best in 2011 and a great year with your photographic pursuits!

CAPA Report

By Joyce Chew

Summary- CAPA Interclub Fall Results

Hello all, I hope you had a great holiday and got out to do some shooting. Please remember that CAPA has included a time limitation of 24 months prior to the competition deadline when images should have been taken. So for the Spring competitions, images shot for Altered Reality must have been taken after Jan 20, 2009; after Feb 20, 2009 for the digital theme "Footwear" and for the Nature, Pictorial and Print competitions, images must have been shot after Mar 20, 2009. Images submitted in "Altered Reality" must be heavily manipulated and obviously creatively enhanced. This includes use of composites, creative filters, etc.

Competition was fierce in the Fall Round of Interclub competitions. In the Digital Division we achieved ninth place out of 27 clubs with 137 points in the Open Category. In Digital Nature we received 129 points and were in sixth place out of 28 clubs, missing a Club Honour Award by only one point. Lastly, in the Print Division, the club competed against 10 clubs and earned 126 points.

Congratulations go out to Marian & Paul Boyer, Joyce Chew, Viki Gaul, George Mitchell, and Charles Plant who helped represent Canada in the Four Nations Cup Competition. Canada came in 4th, 3 points behind New Zealand with a score of 1004. South Africa won with a combined total of 1063 and Australia was in 2nd with a total of 1051 points. If we have time during one of our club meetings, we can view the ProShow presentation of images from the 2010 competition. The exciting news is that this year CAPA will be hosting the 2011 Four Nations Competition! This is an OPEN competition and once again individual CAPA members may submit images for consideration as one of the 80 images to represent Canada. There is no limit to the number of entries, but only one image per individual will be chosen. The files should be in jpg format and the image dimensions are restricted to a maximum of 1024 pixels wide and 786 pixels tall. The image resolution should be 180 pixels/inch or higher and must follow the naming convention:

Image_Name –Photographers_Name .jpg

CAPA Report

By Joyce Chew

Example: **Great_Red_Egret-George_Brown.jpg**

It has been 4 years since the last Canada Camera Conference, but in 2011 there will be one in London, Ontario at Fanshawe College from June 29 to July 3. This is a great opportunity to meet and learn from photographers across Canada and around the world. The keynote speakers will be Ellen Anon and Nevada Wier. There will be workshops on topics like Infrared Photography, Portraiture, Landscapes, Nature, as well as computer labs on CS5, Lightroom, Nik software, Proshow Gold and Proshow Producer. You do not have to be a CAPA member to attend, but members have discounted conference rates as well as special discounts on Photodex Proshow Gold, HDRSoft Photomatix software as well as Photoshop plug-ins from Topaz Labs (http://www.topazlabs.com/). Keep checking the London Camera Club (www.londoncameraclub.on.ca) and CAPA's websites (www.capacanada.ca) for up to date information on field trips, speakers, workshops and registration details.

Happy Shooting!

Open Digital
Hosted by Foothills Camera Club

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Bald Eagle Claire II - Paul Boyer	23
Graceful Gull - Viki Gaul	24
Temple Monkeys - Tanya Elson	23
Sad M - Eugene Mio	24
Bleeding Hearts 3 - Ken Renton	20
Freemans Barn - Laszlo Podor	23
Total Score	137

Nature Digital
Hosted by Chilliwack Camera Club

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Yellow Warble on Lava Rock - Tanya Elson	22
Great Egret with Chicks — Marian Boyer	20
Spotted Sandpiper — Jen Fried	21
Great Egret with Fish — Paul Boyer	20
Talons Out — Ken Renton	25
Ichneumon Wasp — George Mitchell	21
Total Score	120

Print
Hosted by Abbotsford Photo Arts Club

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Dorothy Catholic Church, AB - C. Campbell	21
Clouds in Haleakala Crater - George Mitchell	21
Emilia Burano - Keith Vaughan	21
Eagle - Jen Fried	21
Purple Iris on Green - Marian Boyer	21
Peggy's Blues - Laszlo Podor	21
Total Score	126

PSA Report

By Joseph Szostak

Results from PSA Competitions to date

Photo Travel
Hosted by Lake County Camera Club

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Pow Wow 2 - Mike McCarthy	12
Fallen Roof Ruin - John Wm. Webb	12
Curiosity - Clive Elson	11
South Kaibab Trail - Colin Campbell	11
Kashgar Sheep Market - Nanciellen Davis	7
Bakhtipur Street Sweeper - Tanya Elson	5
Total Score	58

Pictorial (October)

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Perched Chicadee - Marian Boyer	11
Calla Lily - Tanya Elson	11
Mating Storks - Tanya Elson	11
Cathedral Rock 1 - Colin Campbell	10
Lonely Tree In Bryce - John Wm. Webb	10
Butterfly On Thistle - George Mitchell	9
Total Score	63

Pictorial (November)

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Red Admiral - Viki Gaul	13 HM
Arches National Park 1 - Nancy Johnston	12
Upper Calf Falls - John Wm. Webb	11
Cow In The Mist - Jen Fried	10
Tear Drop - Nick Honig	9
Peace Sign - Mike McCarthy	8
Total Score	63

Photo Journalism
Hosted by St. Louis Camera Club

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Pride Day - Mike McCarthy	15 HM
Hot Curves - Clive Elson	13
Number 9 At Truro - Nanciellen Davis	13
Neck and Nick - Ken Renton	12
Plowing The Paddy - Tanya Elson	12
Where There's Smoke - Joe Szostak	11
Total Score	76

Nature

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
Sally Lightfoot - Clive Elson	11 HM
Bee with Tongue Extended - George Mitchell	10
Snow Buntin - Jen Fried	10
Red Tailed Hawk with Cotton Mouth - Margaret Nolan	9
Young Hummer at Pink Flower - Marian Boyer	9
Hairy Woodpecker Feeding Young - Vicki Gaul	9
Total Score	58

Creative

Image Title - Photographer Name	Score
First Love - Mike McCarthy	14 AM
Rose Centre - Ken Renton	9
Golden Edged Tulips - Jen Fried	8
Champagne Breakfast Toast - Viki Gaul	8
Mandolin Solo - Viki Gaul	8
Claret Cup Cactus 1 - Colin Campbell	6
Total Score	53

Fall Show Report

By Laszlo Podor

We had our Annual Fall Show held at Burke Theatre "A" at St. Mary's University on 27th November. The program was very interesting and we had over a dozen door prizes provided by our sponsors. we were well in the final stages of the preparation when it turned out that I would not be able to facilitate the event due to my duties at work. Thanks to our President, Dean Hirtle and one of the key people at our shows, Joyce Chew, the event was a great success.

The show opened with **You-Son Tong**'s presentation, "**Images From the Ancient Tea-Horse Trails**". Yau-Sun Tong, a native of China, now resides in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Yau-Sun has traveled extensively throughout the world with camera in tow, but the remote areas of southwest and northwest China have a special appeal for him. Looking through the lens revitalized Yau-Sun's view of the land of his birth, thus he undertook to rediscover China through photography. Particularly drawn by the mystical untouched nature of western regions and other remote areas of China, he became interested in communicating his impressions to a Western audience.

 For Yau-Sun Tong, feeling the spirit of the place is foremost; taking the photograph is secondary. As a result, these compelling images unveil the unique characters of many places he explored, particularly in the vast Western China region - overpowering, majestic, boundless - culled from remote, seldom traveled areas. The portraiture in the series is freshly candid, reflecting a depth of rapport with his subjects that produces an intriguing cross-section of local cultures and religious life. In Yau-Sun's words: "**To Capture the Moments of Truth in Nature and Culture**."

Our second presenter was **Nanciellen Davis** with hew images from her trip to Sable Island - "**Sable Island** - **Thru the lens**". Nanciellen Davis was born and educated in the United States but has lived most of her adult life in Maritime Canada. She did her post-graduate studies in cultural anthropology and taught anthropology for many years. Her courses typically included film and photographic resources and she taught a course in visual anthropology.

In the last several years she has combined her interests in travel and photography, most particularly in photographic trips to western

China. She has taken photography courses at NASCAD and participated in workshops given by Stephen Scott Patterson and PGNS. She has exhibited her work at Harris & Co Gallery, on the Eastern Shore, and has successfully competed in international photographic exhibitions.

After the break, our audience could see the top Silent Slide Essays from our annual Silent Slide Essay competition. In the Silent Slide Essay competition, entrants submit up to 12 images that develop a common theme, story or idea. These images are judged without any music or narrative but music was added for this presentation.

Silent Slide Essays from our members were shown as follows:

Ground Cover of a Jack Pine, John Wm. Webb, 6th Place

Beautiful Butterflies, Marg Nolen, **6th** Place

Laps of Honour, Keith Vaughan, **5th** Place

Las Dunas Ica Peru, Clive Elson, **5th** Place

Making Pictures in Yellowstone, Viki Gaul, **4th** Place

Fences, Eugene Mio, **4th** Place

Exuberant Blooms, Tanya Elson, **4th** Place

Yellowstone in May, Nanciellen Davis, **4th** Place

Adventures In Windsurfing, George Mitchell, **3rd** Place

Frosted, Jen Fried, **3rd** Place

Inca Impressions, Yau-Sun Tong, **3rd** Place

Speed, Mike McCarthy, **2nd** Place

The Transformation, Laszlo Podor, 2nd Place

Birds in NS, Cliff Sanderson, 2nd Place

Rust on Route 66, Colin Campbell, 1st Place

As the last presentation, we had the "Best of 2009-2010" show presented. This included some of the top scoring images by the members of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia, compiled by Laszlo Podor.

Thanks to our generous sponsors (**Atlantic Photo Supply, Black's Photography, Carsand-Mosher Photographic and Henry's**), we drew many door prizes. The prizes included gift cards, memory cards, coupons for large size prints and even a photo printer. Although the theatre was full, our audience had a high winning rate of one in ten.

The show could not have been a success without the invaluable help from our presenters and volunteers: Hubert Boudreau, Joyce Chew, Teunis Obdam, Dean Hirtle, Carolyne Renton, Ken Renton, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Laszlo Podor, Peter Steeper, John Wm Webb, Fred Greene, Yau-Sun Tong and Nanciellen Davis. Thanks for all of our members for their stunning images, you made it easy to compile the "Best of 2009-2010" show.

The preparation has begun, stay tuned for our next Annual Spring Show in April 2011.
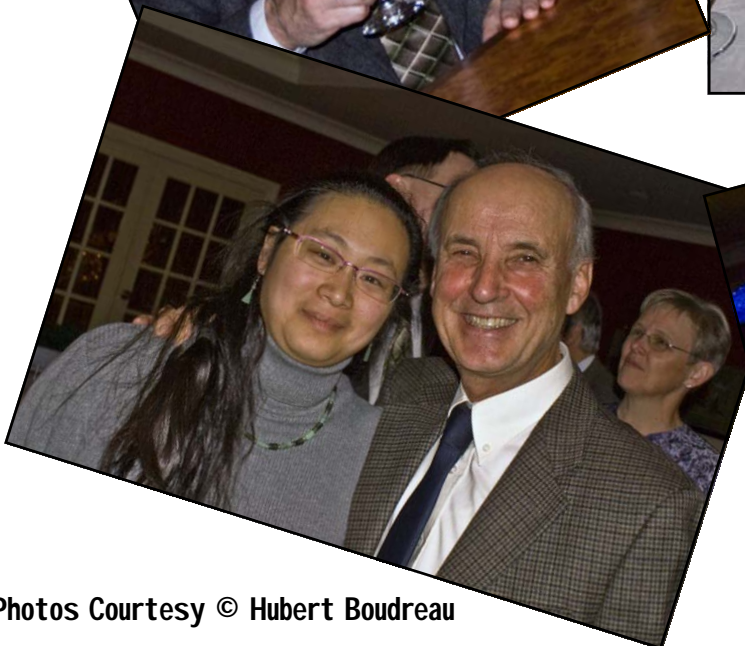
Laszlo Podor
VP

2010 Christmas Party

Photos Courtesy © Hubert Boudreau

Basic Portrait Retouching
(Part 1)

By Mike McCarthy

After presenting a recent mini-seminar during a Guild evening, there were many questions and comments on the topic of retouching people and specifically, portraits. This article will be the first in a two part series that will cover skin, eye and hair retouching using Photoshop CS5 and Lightroom 3.

First of all, let me be clear that there is no single correct way to retouch portraits. There are as many ways and styles as there are portrait retouchers. Everyone will develop their own style and workflow that suits their personal style and purpose. I hope to show you a few basic techniques that you can then adapt into your workflow.

Next, there are a few standards that should always be kept in mind, depending on the style of the image you are retouching.

Glamour images should have flawless skin without looking "plastic", this includes removal of blemishes, tattoos, some types of body jewelry as **well as** moles / birthmarks. Usage of the liquefy tool to "perfect" the body shape is expected as well.

All other styles of portraits expect blemishes and temporary features to be removed but things like moles, some tattoos and birth marks **must** be left alone. Unless specifically requested to remove a tattoo, braces or some other noticeable feature, such as a scar, it should be left alone. Removing a scar or tattoo that a person is self conscious about makes the subject even more self conscious.

Step one of any portrait retouching should be general color and exposure correction, cropping and other basic editing. We all do this anyway as part of our workflow, so I will not cover that topic here. Once you have a final edit completed, then you are ready to start retouching the skin and face.

Before we begin, there are several Photoshop and Lightroom plug-ins available including Imagenomic Portraiture and Portrait Professional to name a couple of the better known packages. These software plug-ins help reduce the time spent on retouching but by no means completely replace the photographer's eye and experience. I do use one of these plug-ins in my workflow as a final step to skin retouching only to save time. Manual retouching, as a complete process, typically takes me anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes per photo. Using a plug-in to help automate the task typically reduces the process to between 5 to 15 minutes. If you find you work on a significant number of images on a regular basis, you may find the $100-200 price tag worth the investment. NAPP members and PSA members may be eligible for special discounts from the software manufacturer.

Lightroom is a very powerful digital asset management and photo editing software, but it is not so great at portrait retouching in some ways. If you are working on an image of someone with great skin, you can do a lot in LR3. However, if

you have to deal with blemishes or stay hair, then you might be better off jumping directly into Photoshop.

In LR3, you have the Spot Removal Tool (Q) in the Develop module. While a powerful tool in its own right, it's really not designed for fixing a large number of blemishes or removing stray hair in a portrait. If you only have a few blemishes to remove, press Q or click the tool and start editing!
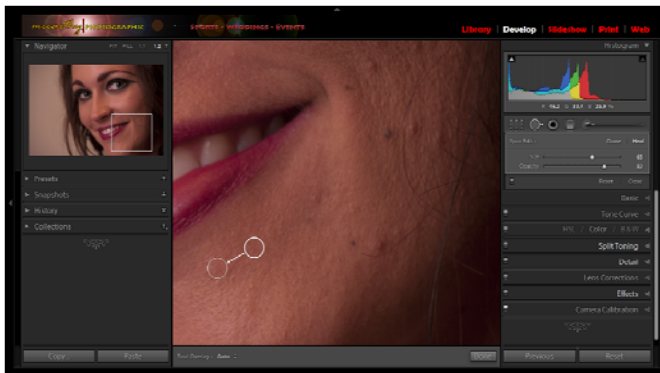
The Spot Correction Tool is a very simple tool with only a few options. For our purposes, make sure the tool is set to "Heal" and adjust the size so that it is slightly larger than the area you want to heal and "click." You will see a small circle appear close to where you clicked with an arrow pointing at a circle located exactly where you clicked on the photo. This extra circle is your **healing source**. If you're not happy with the result, you can click on the source circle and drag it to a new location or you can click on the outline of the original circle to resize and make the correction area smaller or larger. Do this for every blemish you want to correct.

In Photoshop CS5, select the Spot Healing Brush Tool (J) to select the new content aware capable healing brush. This tool has been dramatically improved in CS5 and is now what I consider to be a "smart" tool. When you click

on an area Photoshop looks at the surrounding area to try to decide what should actually be there and then intelligently clones in a matching texture. To use this functionality, make sure "Content-Aware" is selected in the tool's options at the top of the screen.
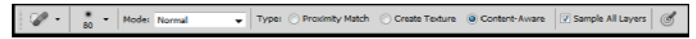
This brush will also erase stray hairs that aren't in the middle of a highly detailed area like an eye.

Before / Brush Stroke / After:

This is the time consuming part of the skin retouching because you want the most consistent texture you can achieve and that will include using the healing brush many – and I mean **many** – times. The new content-aware brush cuts this time dramatically, but it still requires an investment of at least several minutes for an entire face.

This same technique can be used to remove any number of skin imperfections however things like sunburns or large birthmarks or scars will also require the use of the patch tool to select a larger sample area with the affected area. If the skin is sunburned evenly, a layer mark with reduced red saturation might be a better answer, but that is a more advanced technique and will require a future discussion.

Once you have all the skin imperfections cleared up – pardon the pun – you are ready to move on to softening the appearance of the

Basic Portrait Retouching

(Part 1)

By Mike McCarthy

skin. This is a relatively subjective topic and really depends on your own personal style and taste. My own preference is that the skin should still show a pleasing texture that is consistent and even. It should not look so even that it appears to be plastic. My number one rule of Photoshop is that the final image should not look like it **is** Photoshopped.

There are a number of techniques that work well and I will cover a couple of them here.

The first is a time honored tradition of creating a duplicate layer and applying a Gaussian Blur filter and then reducing the opacity. This technique can work if applied sparingly along with layer masks to eliminate the blurring effect over eyes, eyebrows, jewelry, lips and teeth, etc. It is very important when using this technique to blend the blur effect using the mask layer so that the blur is not obvious.

Start by pressing [CTRL]-[J] to duplicate your image layer and then apply a Gaussian Blur from the filter menu. It helps to keep the "Preview" option checked so you can select a level that erases most of the texture. When satisfied, click OK or press [Enter]. It is better to add slightly too much blur as it is easy to reduce the opacity later.
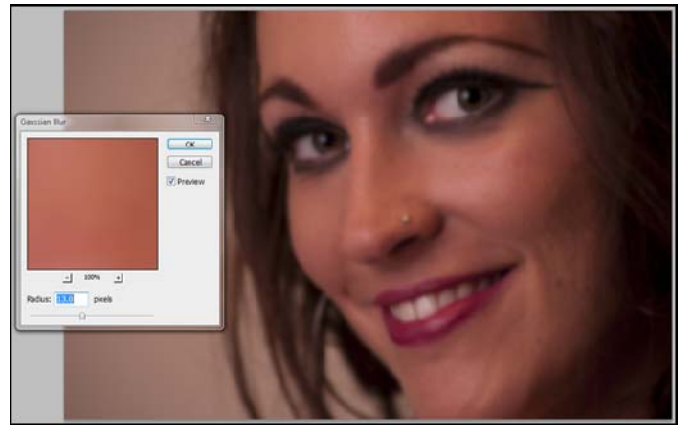
Next, click the "Layer Mask" icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel or under the Layers Menu select "Layer Mask -> Reveal All." Then select a very soft medium sized brush with black as your colour.

Power tip! You can always press [D] to reset the default colours (White Foreground and Black Background) and then use the [x] key to switch between them.

When painting on the layer mask, white reveals the layer while black hides the layer. Paint over the eyes, mouth, eyebrows, nostrils hair and any jewelry that is visible. Always paint with a relatively low opacity brush and paint multiple times to add to the effect. If you over paint in an area or paint where you should not have, switch to a white brush with the [X] key and paint again.
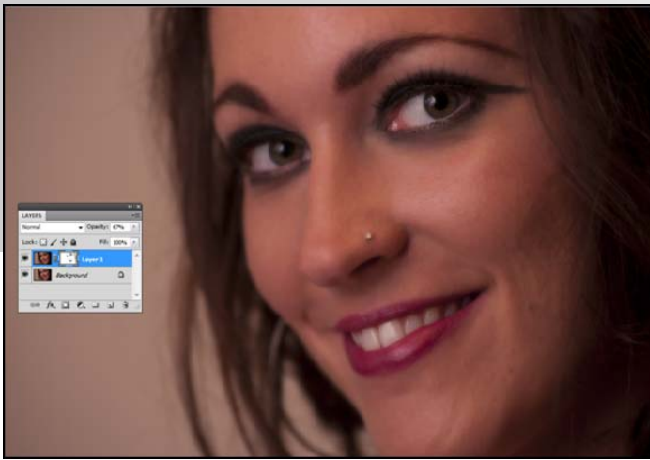
Although this technique has been around for many years, the newer and better version uses the "Surface Blur" in Photoshop rather than the "Gaussian Blur" along with the same layer masking technique.

Another more advanced technique uses the High Pass Sharpening filter. This is an edge sharpening filter, which at first consideration shouldn't have anything to do with a skin softening article. However, after creating a duplicate layer, if you invert the duplicate layer and then add the High Pass filter, the filter actually works to soften rather than sharpen the highlights.
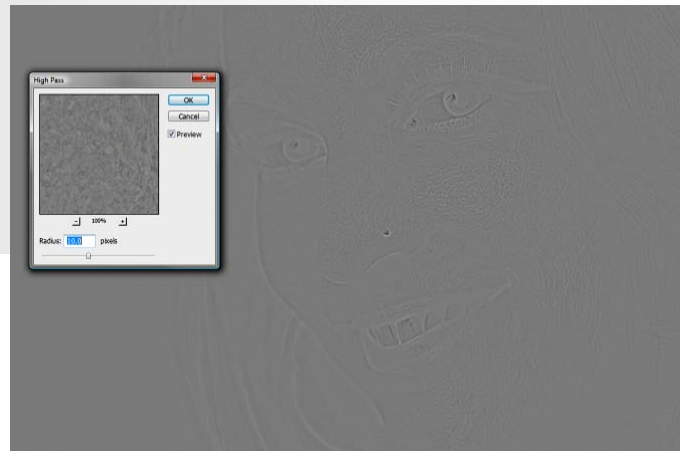
First invert the duplicate layer by pressing the [CTRL]-[I] keys. Your image will look like a negative. Then apply the "Filter->Other->High Pass..." Set the Radius to a value where you can see the highlights and some detail from your image and click OK or press [Enter]. Change the layer's blend mode to Soft Light or Vivid Light depending on the effect you prefer add a layer mask and paint back in the details as before. Very similar results, with a more consistent targeted blur.
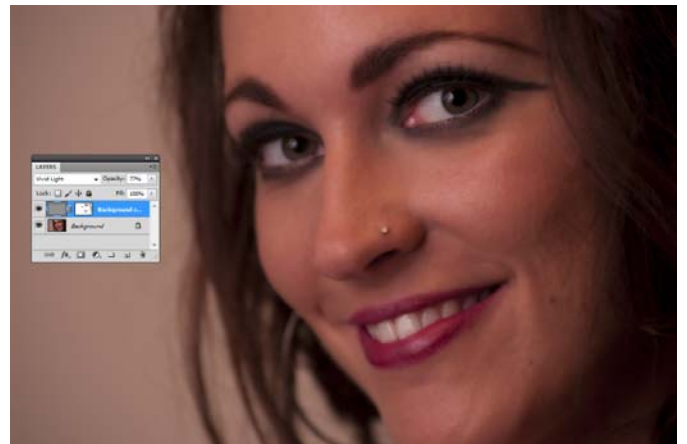
Basic Portrait Retouching
(Part 1)

By Mike McCarthy

Finally, you can also use one of the aforementioned plug-ins. I use Imagenomic's Portraiture 2 plug-in, so it's the one I will show here. The plug-in has a lot of available settings but I will just stick with the built-in presets for the purposes of this discussion.

With your main image layer selected, locate the plug-in under the "Filter->Imagemonic->Portraiture..." menu.

Using the built-in "Smoothing" presets at the Medium setting, I get very good results with this image. The plug-in offers presets for Default, Smoothing:Normal, Smooting:Medium, Smoothing:High and Enhance:Glamour. As you can imagine, each step will smooth the skin to more and more drastic levels.

The plug-in automatically protects the hair, eyes and mouth so you don't need to mask them out later giving the final result below in a matter of seconds. You should always select "Output to: New Layer" so you can adjust opacity and add any additional masking, etc. later.
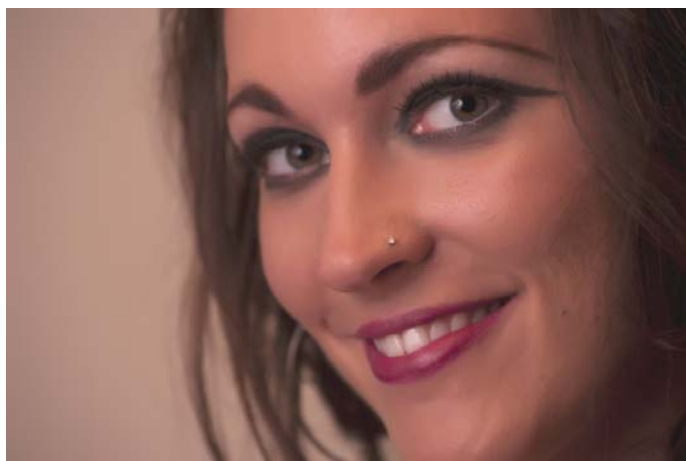
Next time, we will discuss retouching eyes, hair, lips and teeth.

Windhorse Farm Retreat

By Joseph Szostak

Shortly after New Years, I left home to go on a writing retreat at Windhorse Farm in New Germany, NS.

The farm was settled in the 1840s by Conrad Wentzell, and is owned today by Jim and Margaret Drescher. It is the longest standing demonstration of sustainable forestry in Canada.

I had a tiny little cabin in the woods next to a gurgling brook. The idea was to get away from all distractions and focus on writing. The camera was one such distraction, but I brought it anyway. In the afternoons, I'd stroll along tranquil walking trails that abound on the property.

One night it snowed, and the next morning, everything emerged sparkling and new, so I was more than willing to be distracted by the camera for a little while.

The aesthetics of Windhorse Farm show a strong Japanese influence: arched bridges spanning the brook, a Kami Shrine and a meditation gong deep in the forest, while around the farm house that overlooks Wentzell Lake, the style was more English, with a series of lovely country garden gates.

Inside my cabin, a little meditation shrine sat in one corner, with a crystal ball that inverted and reflected the forest outside. *(Ed: Front cover image)*

Photo By Joseph Szostak. Bridge to Kami Shrine

Stillness
Wordless now on my writing retreat
tongue tied and bored,
but the snow drifts down, coating the evergreens
and the twigs of small hardwoods
in a thin frosted layer.
Inside my tiny cabin
I coax heat from a reluctant
iron stove gone cold from the night.
My socks dangle from a meditation cushion,
the creek outside my window gurgles beneath the ice.
Otherwise, the forest is as still as my pen.

- Joseph Szostak

Photo By Joseph Szostak. Garden Gate

Member's Gallery

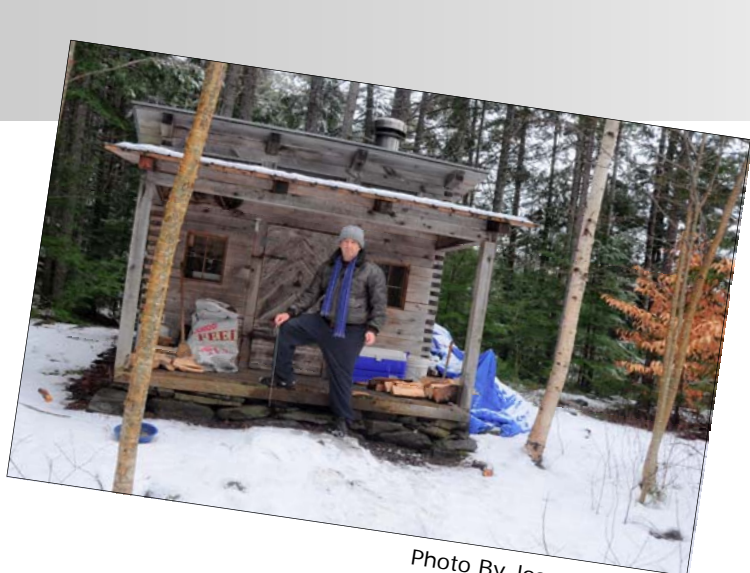*A collection of photographs submitted by you, our members!*

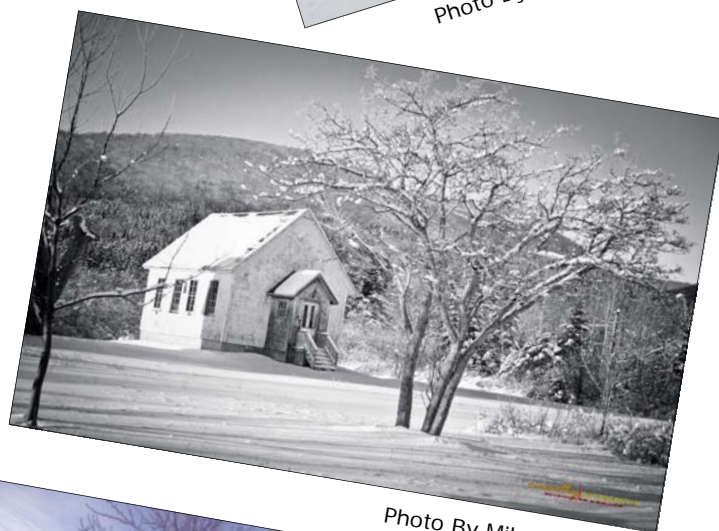Photo By Joseph Szostak

Photo By Joyce Chew

Photo By Mike McCarthy

Photo By Mike McCarthy

Photo By Joyce Chew

Photo By Douglas Ward