

NEWSLETTER



June 2011

Well here it is, January already and my tomato plants are huddled together for warmth! Boy if I had known the weather was going to be like this in California I would have stayed in the U.K! (And I know some people wish I had!) But I guess we will have to make the best of it.

PHOTOBIE

I have always believed that Adobe products are not the only way to improve or manipulate images and that there are many talented people who have produced very good programs (and often free or at little cost to you) which do not get a lot of attention. One such program is Photobie. It is free software for photo editing, scrapbooking, animation, screen capture, web design together with a worldwide club of enthusiasts and professionals who share their expertise. They are quite an amazing group, unlike so many who setup and after a very short time fizzle out this group seems to be very viable. The web site is very well laid out and has a lot of downloads, tutorials etc. plus connections to all the features and members. I am still working through the site but I recommend that you all take a look at the site. I think this might be a good topic for one of our meetings. Go to <http://www.photobie.com>.

HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE



You may have seen articles recently about the “high dynamic range” (HDR) photography and wondered what it was about. Basically HDR is taking a series of images, combining them, and adjusting the contrast ratios to do things that are virtually

impossible with a single aperture and shutter speed.

Some critics say that it can make the images look artificial (see the above image of Hong Kong I found on the web) but when done with realism in mind it can be very effective. There are a couple of software programs, Photomatix and DXO Images come to mind but both coast \$100. However there is a feature in Photoshop Elements that does a credible job although it isn't really HDR it does allow images to be merged and produces a very credible outcome. In the example to the left, two images were taken one focusing on getting the people correctly exposed and the other with the tower correct. Opening these images in Elements and going to File>New>Photomerge Exposure the image at the front was produced. Not exactly HDR but it does give a very nice result. When doing the same with landscape scenes more images can be used (up to ten) but remember to use a tripod to prevent "ghosting" due to camera shake. Experiment with setting a manual aperture or aperture priority, changing the aperture for a series of shots changes the depth of field and you may get blurring.



Below I show a couple of images I found on the web which supposedly were created using the method described above. They are pretty impressive.

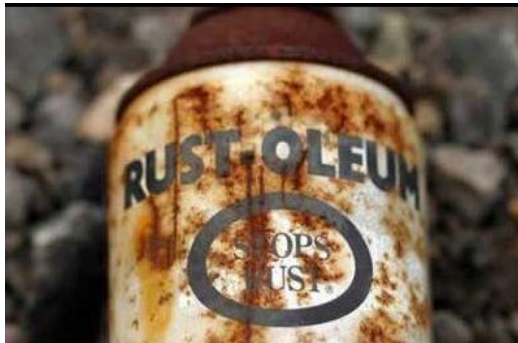




As you know I like to play with everyday objects and create “visual puns” as I like to call them, (an example is shown on the left), and I am always looking for others to add to my collection.

I have not had a lot of inspiration recently, this example initially started out with my thinking what an image would be like to show “putting one’s foot in one’s mouth” but it turned out as shown with a tentative title of “The Thinker” but if you can think of a better one I would love to hear from you.

A friend of mine sent me a couple of images recently I thought I would share with you. Although they aren’t puns I think they deserve a laugh just for the irony. I don’t think they need any explanation.



TEXT TAMERS

Peggy Johnson was kind enough to give me a very useful primer she found called “Elements best kept secrets” which is a wonderful set of mini tutorials. Rather than drop them all out at once I am going to reproduce them individually over time. So thanks to Peggy for this tip:

Text Tamers

Track Your Letters

You can change the amount of space between lines of text (called *leading*) in the Options Bar, but there's no command to change the space between letters (known as *tracking*). You can, however, create a "fake" version of tracking using a Type preference called Asian Options. Open the Preferences dialog by pressing Ctrl-K (Mac: Command-K), choose the Type category, turn on Show Asian Text Options, and then click OK. Now use the Horizontal Type tool (T) to highlight the text you want to track and click the Asian Text Options icon in the Options Bar. A small dialog will pop up. Use the percentage menu (circled) to tighten the space between the letters of your selected text. The higher the value, the tighter your tracking will be.—DC



Overlap Text Layers

Ever tried adding a new text box very close to some existing text? If you have, you'll know that Photoshop Elements "helps" by assuming that you want to edit the existing text rather than letting you add a new type layer. Of course, you could add a new type layer further away and then move it into place, but that's not necessary thanks to the Shift key. Just hold down Shift as you click with the Horizontal Type tool (T) and you can place the new text exactly where you want it, even on top of the existing type layer.—DC

Getting overlapping text like this can be difficult without the help of the Shift key.

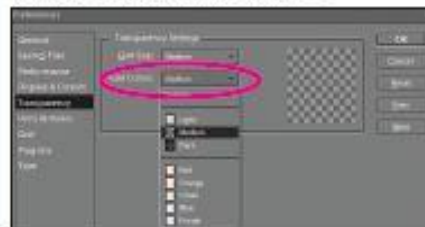


Select All Type Layers at Once

If you have a lot of text on the page and later decide you want to change your font, you don't need to hunt down every text layer individually in the Layers palette. Click on one type layer and choose Select> Similar Layers. Elements will select every type layer in the document. Don't want every layer? To deselect layers, Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the unwanted layers. Now simply choose a new font.—KT

Make White Text Easier to See

The default transparency grid is white and light gray, which can be a challenge if you're trying to work with white text on a transparent background. But you can change the color of this grid—and make white text easier to spot—by going to Edit> Preferences> Transparency (Mac: Photoshop Elements> Preferences> Transparency). Click on the Grid Colors pull-down menu and choose Medium or Dark, or click on the color swatches below the menu to open the Color Picker and customize your colors.—DC



Default Grid Colors



Medium Grid Colors

3 to Remember

Dragging with the Horizontal Type tool (T) will create a text box for multiple lines of type. You can easily change the size of the text box by dragging one of the corners or side handles. As you do, the text will reflow within the box. If that's not what you want, you can modify the behavior of the text by holding down different keys:



Shift This constrains the proportions of the text box as you drag; text will reflow accordingly. (Tip: Start dragging before pressing the Shift key.)



Ctrl/Command Text gets larger (rather than reflowing within the box) and resizes non-proportionally, depending on which direction you drag the mouse.



Ctrl/Command and Shift Holding down both keys as you drag the handles resizes the text proportionally; text does not reflow.—DC

Try out Different Fonts

Here's a great way to quickly test different fonts to decide which one you want to use. With a Type layer active in the Layers palette (the text doesn't need to be selected), click once in the Font field in the Options Bar so the font name is highlighted. Then press the up-arrow or down-arrow keys to move up or down in your list of fonts.—DC

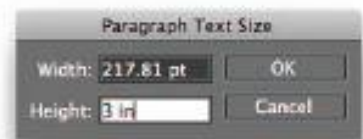
Position Warped Text

Sometimes when you're using the Warp Text options (accessible by clicking the Create Warped Text icon in the Options Bar), it's hard to know what settings to use because the warping causes the text to change positions in your document. If this happens, moving your mouse away from the Warp Text dialog will cause your cursor to change to the Move tool, allowing you to reposition the warped type.—DC



Measure Text Boxes with Precision

To make a text box a specific size, Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) anywhere in your document with the



Horizontal Type tool (T), then set the Width and Height values in the Paragraph Text Size dialog. Note: The Width and Height values default to whatever units of measurement you've defined in your Units & Rulers preferences (accessible by pressing Ctrl-K [Mac: Command-K] and choosing the Units & Rulers category). However, you can override this default by typing in the measurement you want—for example, "3 in" for 3 inches. The dialog will then convert your custom measurement into the default units (so 3 inches would become 217.81 points).—DC

Rotate Text as You Type

If you want your text to appear at an angle, begin typing with the Horizontal Type tool (T). Once you have at least part of the text written out, press the Ctrl (Mac: Command) key to make the transform handles appear. While still holding the Ctrl/Command key, move your cursor to just outside the transform box and then drag clockwise or counterclockwise to rotate the text. You can even turn it entirely upside down. When you release the Ctrl/Command key, you'll be able to continue typing right where you left off.—KT



Well that is all for this issue of our quarterly newsletter, thanks to Walt for sending in the six handy tips for getting around Elements which Peggy distributed last month.,

One thing I didn't mention in the section on HDR images is that there is a free program available for "full dynamic range" images called FDR, which is not shorthand for a previous president by the way. You can see more at their website at: www.fdrtools.com

I'll leave you with a couple more ironic pictures.

