# NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Here is the second quarterly newsletter, I will try to produce these every three months. If you have any tips, interesting pictures, websites that can help the cause or anything pertaining to Elements let me know, (elements@bkbrown.net) and I'll publish it here and on the website.

TIPS

Lost Cursor

Have you ever started to make a selection with the magnetic lasso tool or the lasso tool, or using any other tool only to find you can't see your cursor? It happens to me all the time. The cursor can easily "hide" itself in the background and frantically moving the mouse around sometimes seems to be the only way to find it! Relax, there is an easier way.
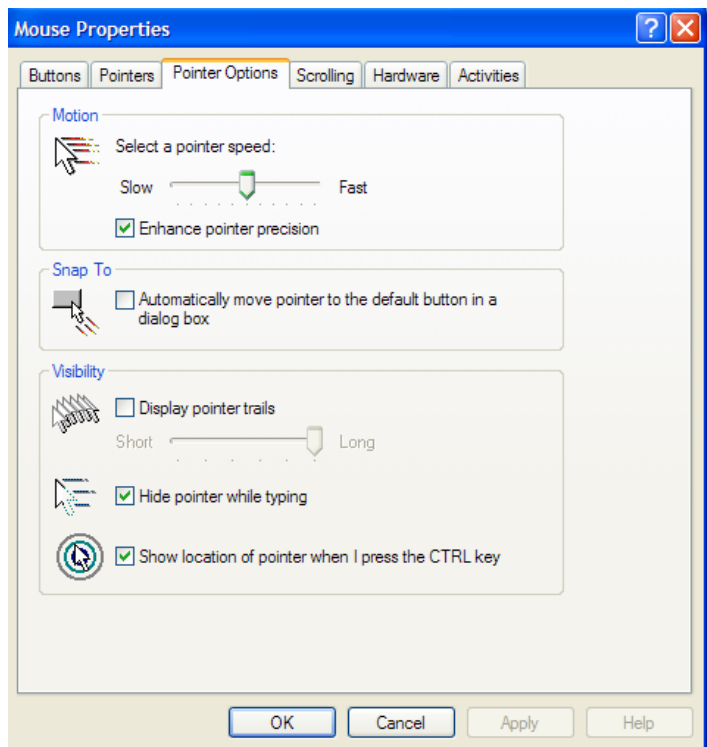
Just go to the control panel in Windows and (for XP) click printers and other hardware> mouse and bring up the mouse properties box.

Click on the pointer options and at the bottom there is a check box for: "Show location of pointer when I press the control key". Click apply>close and now whenever you click the control key on the keyboard a diminishing circle will appear shrinking to the position of the cursor or pointer. This will work in any program you are running under Windows, not just Elements. It is a handy way of immediately locating your pointer.

Also, for convenience, I also check the box above this one to hide the pointer when I am typing. My "hunt and peck" is bad enough without the distraction of the pointer!

Camera Download

Do you get annoyed by Elements jumping in and wanting to download your pictures from your camera, memory card, jump drive etc.? If you want to turn this feature off, which by the way is on by default, in the Organizer (not in quick fix or edit) go to Edit > Preferences >Camera and Card reader and remove the check mark from the box. Remember there are a lot of preferences to set in both Organizer and Edit modes so check them out!
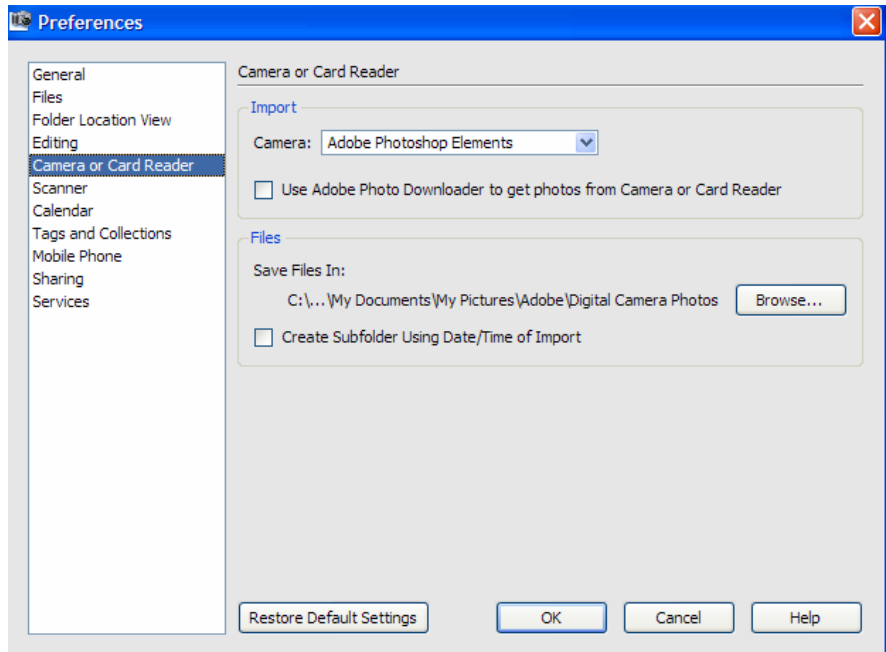
Save Selection

Have you ever spent ages making a selection, only to lose it?
You can guarantee that this will always happen after you've just spent 10 minutes selecting something in minute detail. You've used marquees and magic wands, tolerances and feathering, and finally your masterpiece is ready to be used! You use Copy>Paste and move it around and then go on to select something else and copy it. The last item you copied is now history and a few minutes later once you've discarded it, you'll be kicking yourself when you need it again. Here's a really simple tip to prevent this from happening. Just pick 'Select>Save Selection' from the main menu. Then give the selection a memorable name, so that you will know what it is later on.

Suppose now that you do some other work, edit some other parts of the image, and then want to come back to your selection. Simply pick 'Select - Load Selection' from the menu.

Extra Options

If you didn't have anything else selected when you reloaded the selection, the only option you'll see in the dialog box will be 'New Selection'. This simply loads the selection you saved, with the option to invert it as well if you like using the check box.

The three other options are only available if you already had a selection when you picked 'Load Selection' from the menu. These allow you to combine the saved selection with the current selection, for example by adding them together.

'**New Selection'** discards the current selection and selects everything in the saved selection.
'Add Selection' simply selects everything that was in either of the selections.
'Subtract Selection' selects what was in the current selection minus anything in the saved selection.
'Intersect with Selection' selects only the pixels that were selected in both selections.

The great thing about this is that the selections are actually saved with the .psd document. This means they are persistent even when the document is closed. This won't work for .jpg files or other standard images though, only Photoshop files.

The biggest draw back of saving selections is that they are only available for the image where they originated; you cannot transfer them to another image. However you can save selections by making a selection and then copy it to the clipboard. You than go File>New>Image from Clipboard and this will give you the selection on a transparent background which can be saved as a new image with a new name. This can then be used in any image by selecting and doing a COPY+PASTE.

Fast Document Switching

Often when working with multiple images, you'll want to swap between them frequently and rapidly. Photoshop Elements provides several ways to do this effectively.

The first is the 'Photo Bin'. This is a small bar at the bottom of the Editor window which displays thumbnail images of all the documents you have open. This allows you to quickly see which window is which, and swap to the right document. If the Photo Bin is not displayed, go to 'Window - Photo Bin' to turn it on.

Another way is to use an easily remembered shortcut.

You may know that in Microsoft Windows, holding down the 'Alt' key and pressing the 'Tab' key, cycles through the open windows. Most people don't realize that another variation on this is to hold the 'Shift' key at the same time, which cycles through the windows in the opposite direction.

Photoshop Elements adopts a similar convention, except using the 'Ctrl' key instead of the 'Alt' key. Press Ctrl + Tab to move through the available documents in one direction, and use Ctrl + Shift + Tab to view them in the other direction.

It's a really simple tip, but it can make life easier when working on a large number of documents.

Printer Supplies

We all know the best results for printing is to use the printer manufacturers ink cartridges and paper but in today's world where a set of ink cartridges can cost as much as the printer it is hard to resist the "compatibles" offered all over the web and at local stationary and computer stores. So are these compatibles good or bad? My experience with HP, Epson and Canon printers has shown me that although the replacements are sometimes half the cost of the OEM products the

results are not as good. Also I found I was cleaning printer heads more frequently with these inks which uses a lot of ink and tends to make the savings less significant. My solution is to buy my cartridges on line from a reputable distributor. At the moment my choice is **InkSell** based in Texas (www.inksell.com). Their prices are competitive and shipping is free on orders over $49 (which is very easy to reach!).Standard shipping normally takes just a few days. There is no sales tax charged (although I know all our readers will declare these purchases on their state income tax returns) so there can be a savings over local vendors. See the chart below for typical costs.

	CARTRIDGE PRICE			
PRINTER	STAPLES	OFFICE DEPOT	OFFICE MAX	INKSELL
HP DESKJET 845C BLACK C6615DN	29.99 (32.46)	29.99 (32.46)	29.99 (32.46)	29.45
COLOR C6625AN	32.99 (35.71)	32.99 (35.71)	32.99 (35.71)	32.45
EPSON STYLUS C86 BLACK TO44120	24.45 (26.47)	21.58 (23.36)	24.49 (26.51)	23.74
COLOR TO44320	12.69 (13.74)	12.46 (13.49)	12.99 (14.06)	12.34
EPSON PHOTOSTYLUS R200 BLACK TO48220	17.29 (18.72)	16.94 (18.33)	17.99 (19.47)	16.95
COLOR TO48120	12.19 (13.20)	11.97 (12.96)	12.99 (14.06)	11.95

- Prices are as currently quoted on each website.

- Red numbers in parenthesis indicate after tax price.

- For both Epson printers with individual color cartridges price is for each color.

Additionally, at the moment, you can get $5 off your order by entering the promotion code "Kim5off" on the order form.

Based on the above prices a full set of cartridges for an Epson R200 (black and 5 colors) would cost $83.33 at Office Depot (the cheapest local store) compared with $71.70 at Inksell a savings of nearly $12. If you are wondering the price at Fry's is normally greater than any of the office supply stores except when they have selective sales.

As for paper I have not found any great savings on the web yet so I keep my eye on local advertisements for specials at stores such as Fry's, Staples etc. If anyone has found a good source for paper please let me know.

Scrapbooking

Making up scrapbooks has become quite a cottage industry in this country and **Lynn Oakleaf** brought this website to my attention. http://www.scrappersguide.com/ This site has a lot of Elements tips and tricks for those of you interested in this.

Gaussian Blur

People are often confused by what is a Gaussian blur. To enlighten you here is the answer:
QUOTE

The **Gaussian blur** is a type of image-blurring filter that uses a normal distribution (also called "Gaussian distribution", thus the name "Gaussian blur") for calculating the transformation to apply to each pixel in the image. The equation of Gaussian distribution in N dimensions is

$$G(r) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}^N} e^{-r^2/(2\sigma^2)}$$

or specifically in two dimensions

$$G(u,v) = \frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2} e^{-(u^2+v^2)/(2\sigma^2)}$$

UNQUOTE
It's that simple! I'll bet you all will be calculating the blur for your photographs!

Future Meetings

I am planning on expanding on the repair and restoration of old and damaged photographs so if you have any that need attention why not make a scanned copy and bring them along to a meeting.

In the meantime I will leave you with a picture of a very patriotic Jaguar.

Details on how to achieve this will be revealed at the next meeting!