

Photoshop Creative Elements Community Newsletter

June 2008

Happy Father's Day!

Vol. 1 No. 7



CONGRATULATIONS TO JANE AKA WAGS

FOR DESIGNING THE WINNING HEADER FOR THIS MONTHS ISSUE.



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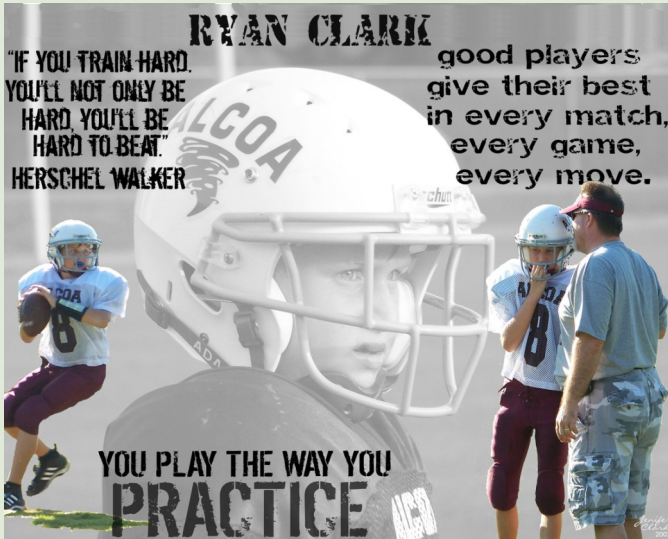
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PCEC Newsletter 7 Question and Answer

Jen Clark aka JenClark (just imagine me interviewing myself.....no I'm not/yes I am...I like playing a Gemini ((twins)) because I'm a Capricorn which is NOT a twin it's a goat.....ha!)

1. Will you tell us a little about yourself? Location/Career/Spouse/Children I grew up as a Navy brat moving up and down the East Coast every 3 years. Living on the beach all my life I really and the beach type. Now I'm far from the ocean in the Smoky Mountains and I really enjoy not living on flat ground. I live and will retire in Alcoa, Tennessee with the love of my life, Tom. He is a Captain at our Fire Department and we live/breathe/sleep FIRE. I work part-time at a Title company closing real estate transactions. I have 2 children, Regan is 13 and Ryan is 10. I do have a job here at home but I can't tell much about that until I am done.....like to keep you guessing! Just know that it's having to do with photography/scrapbooking and it's really turning out nice thanks to a special little angel whom will remain nameless until opening.
2. What was the first thing that made you want to start using a camera? (Special photo, the equipment, or anything that sticks out in your mind)I bought a digital camera years ago because I needed a new camera. I loved the advantages of digital but the camera only did a few things and it was slow. I didn't catch the photo bug until my son started playing baseball and my little digital couldn't keep up.
3. How did you find your way to Adobe Photoshop Elements/CS? Last year I looked at a few different photo organizing programs and kept coming back to adobe elements. I had no idea what it would or could do but the organization is what really interested me. I dove in after reading the reviews and learning how strong adobe was. When the program arrived I was glued to the computer with setting up my categories and moving around in the program. I was hooked. It didn't take long for me to know that I wanted more. I did upgrade to PSE6/PE4 and created some great slideshows and then looked at CS3. I just happened to accidentally buy it one day.....just by accident you know and have not looked back. I use it more than the others but it's great to have elements to go to if I need it.
4. What, if any, are your favorite plugins for elements/ CS? For elements I love Shutterfreaks but for CS3 I love filters unlimited, alien skin and snap art. They are easy to use and the results are fantastic.
5. What books are in your personal library dealing with photography and photoshop? Do you favor one over the other? If so, which one and why? I seem to refer to all of them for one thing or another but my first and most used are Scott Kelby's books "Adobe Photoshop CS3 Books for Digital Photographers" And the same one for Elements. Beside, this statement can change at the drop of a few dimes with Amazon when I find a new book or two or three.....
6. What is your favorite person/place or thing to photograph? Why? My favorite person's to photograph are my kids/ husband, Fire Department action and sports. Whatever they are doing at the moment is my favorite. There is always so much action and they aren't posing or paying attention to me and the camera, they are all candid. Now candid shots are the best.
7. What was the one thing in photography have you had a hard time learning? I have always had a hard time and will continue to have a hard time learning the settings. Manual and I will never be if I don't get with the program and learn it. There are so many different factors that I never seem to get a good shot. I like to use AV and TV....majority of the time it's AV for me.
8. What does your camera bag consist of? (list all lens, filter, books, even gum wrappers!!) I have a red (favorite color next to green) Tamrac bag with my Canon 40D, 28-135mm 3.5-5.6 IS Kit lens, 50mm 1.8, and my favorite 85mm 1.8 (fast action for sports), Micro fiber cleaning rag, extra battery, extra 4gb extreme III CF card and last but not least my USB cable. I keep the fast card reader on my desk.
9. What is the next thing on your must have list? I really, really want the Canon 70-200 2.8 IS lens for football this fall but I'm not sure about that and I want a tripod since I can't find mine. I have searched this house many times over and NADA, ZIP, ZILCH.....gnome must have taken it.

10. What is your favorite photo and why? Was this a planned capture or a chance shot? (Please include the photo)
 My favorite photo...well, this is a hard one. I have many and too many to post here. I will show you the one that really got me hooked. It's of my son playing football last year and I worked hard on this one to get it just right. I used every trick I knew back last fall but now know I could have don't this same layout in record time knowing the tricks and CS3.



11. How much time would you say you average on photography each week?
 I would have to say between using my camera and spending time playing in photoshop.....about 4 hours a day.

12. What are your hobbies/interest (including the obvious, photography) and in what order would you place them in from favorite to least favorite?

Some of the things I love to do are ride our motorcycle with my husband. We have a Honda Goldwing and I sit in the queens seat and relax. Scuba diving, walking on the beach and anything in the water is fun for me. I have several other hobbies that I love but are now on the back burner to photography. They would be quilting and embroidery. With my hands the way they are right now I have not been able to really embroider too much. I do play on the computer and design embroidery layouts much like scrapbooking. It's quite fun to have a design that is made just for you. I also do the embroidery for the UT Sororities every year and love doing that. Here are 2 of my favorite quilts that hang in my home. The first one is called "At Home in the Woods" and it took me a few months to put together. The second one is "A Season in Time" and believe it or not I did that in 1 week. Now you have seen my life in a nutshell..... hope it was somewhat interesting. Thanks for reading about me!



Using Depth of Field Effectively

By

Charles H. Young III aka Chas3stix

Depth of field can be defined as the area in front of and behind a given focal point. Sounds scary doesn't it? It really doesn't have to be. As a matter of fact, using depth of field to its best advantage can make your photos really "pop".

Depth of field depends on the choices you make when making a photo. It will change with the lens you have on your camera at the time of exposure. I will go into this in a little bit. Some SLRs and DSLRs have a depth of field preview button on them enabling you to actually see the depth of field of the scene you're photographing.

Depth of field is dependent on two things:

- 1.The focal length of the lens .
- 2.The f/ stop you're using.

Lets talk about lens focal length first. A long lens (telephoto) has a narrower depth of field than a wide angle lens for a given f stop. Just remember that closing down the

Aperture (f/16 or f/22) increases depth of field. Opening up the lens (f/2.8 Or f/4) does

just the opposite. Just as an example....you focus on a wildflower 40 feet away. At

f/2.8 everything would be acceptably sharp from 38 feet to 44 feet. Same lens different

f/ stop...f/16 your depth of field would extend from 18 feet to 80 feet. It's a different ballgame with a wide angle lens mainly because wide angle lenses have such a wide depth of field to begin with.

An example of a wide angle lens' wide depth of field would be a photo of a boulder in a stream with a mountain range in the distance all in focus. A photo taken with a telephoto lens wide open of an eagle's head can be used for an example of the depth of field available. The eagle's eyes are in focus but the tip of its beak and the background isn't.



12 good reasons to use adjustment and fill layers

By MichelB

1. They don't alter the original file, that means really 'lossless' editing.
2. They don't increase the file size significantly.
3. You can toggle the visibility on/off to check the before/after effect and vary their opacity,
4. You can change the settings afterwards if you want to reedit the picture.
5. They have an integrated mask.
6. You can change the blending modes. This can be used instead of duplicating a layer with a blending mode like softlight, screen, multiply... This takes less space and offers masks.
7. They can be used to work around the lack of mask in ordinary layers in Elements. This is often called 'highjacking an adjustment layer mask'.
8. You can edit the layer name in the layer palette to reflect its settings and purpose. This is an excellent way to record the editing steps, in the layers palette. Then you can make a screen copy to show your steps or archive them.
9. They can be dragged from one open file to another, which means you can store useful sets of layers in a library of psd files.
10. Adjustment layers can be combined together for different purposes like creating colour adjustment setups, luminosity masks, extracting channels...
11. If you take advantage of the last two advantages, saving them and combining them, you have got a substitute for the lack of recording of actions in many cases.

Because Elements must have a certain degree of compatibility with Photoshop, you can even drag adjustment layers made in photoshop into your Elements file... For instance you can drag curves adjustment layers. Normally you cannot alter the settings after the import, but with PSE6 Windows, you can use black and white adjustment layers made in CS3, and Adobe forgot to disable the editing interface... They soon realized this, and in the PSE6 Mac version the editing interface has been disabled.

Please note that solid color fill layers have many of those advantages and can be combined with adjustment layers. That will be part of tutorials in the next newsletters. Don't hesitate to practice and ask questions in the forum, you'll soon understand why pro retouchers commonly use several dozens in their work. You'll also like it when someone shows his layer palette to explain his workflow.

The important idea is that adjustment layers help make your edits recorded and accessible if you want to change something. That's why it is recommended to use them every time they can replace an enhancement tool or filter, to rename them to show your settings or purpose and to save an unfinished work frequently as a PSD file. Just imagine a computer problem after you have been working for an hour or more on an edit! You can always flatten the layers and save as jpeg when you are finished with your work, but before, be prudent.

And if you wonder what you cannot do with adjustment layers, think they do a global transformation of the image and don't have a local effect like dodging and burning, painting, cloning, sharpening. For the rest chances are they can do the job.

Digital Photography and My New Frontiers.

By MichelB

My present new frontiers.

Like everybody else here, I am striving for better photography and better editing. The following is to tell you what are a few of my present investigation themes, my questions, some of my findings... I hope this will kindle curiosity and prompt others to share their own questions and ideas.

1. What is the final digital image?
2. What are the limitations of digital to reproduce a given scene
3. Should photography reproduce the physical scene or its representation in our brain?

How different is our visual system (eye/brain) from other representation techniques like photography or painting?

1. What is the final digital image?

Before the digital era, this question was easy, it was the printed photograph or the slide itself. If a photograph was afterwards printed in a book or paper, it was considered as a reproduction just like that of a painting. Now there is the ambiguity of the destination of the digital file. It may be printing on photo paper, on an offset press, displaying on the Web or a computer or TV display. Many consider the final edit is achieved when they are satisfied with the look of their edits on their own display. The problem is that for a good output, you have to edit differently depending on the targeted media, which means editing and saving different versions of your picture with different sizes, dpi, sharpening, color spaces, profiles and the like. What is also new is that we want to keep the possibility of better editing later on, when we have better software, printing media... or skills. That means we want to keep several versions: the raw files, the layered full edit, the printed version and the Web one... Yes, we could do the same before with a negative, but that was not so frequent. Which one of those files is the final one? It's up to you to choose... or to keep all those versions. Anyway, it is worth thinking about archiving and backup before a possible computer crash!

2. What are the limitations of digital to reproduce a given scene?

I feel the most common frustrations of digital shooters are about dynamic range, especially the difficulty of capturing bright highlights; choosing the right colour spaces, sRGB vs aRGB; editing in 8 bits or 16 bits; I do not even mention the frustration of not having full frame high end DSLR with pro lenses and maybe having only Elements instead of the full CS3 plus Lightroom...

Here is my take on those limitations: yes you should be aware of those, but please, be coherent. Think of Web galleries which will be seen mostly on non calibrated, non colourspace aware displays; of superb pictures taken by pros with pro gear in raw, aRGB, processed with CS3... and then be converted to 8 bits jpeg in CMYK for offset printing on a less than optimal paper for magazines!

You really have to weigh where to improve your workflow, and it is always best to improve the weakest part of the editing chain. May I suggest that without calibrating your display and without targeting your edits to a given media, the other questions are negligible?

Keep in mind that all printed materials have very limited dynamic range; the best wide gamut displays are not perfect to reproduce all the colours our eyes can see. Negative and slide have also their own limitations.

3. Should photography reproduce the physical scene or its representation in our brain?

I could have put it like this: is photography a form of art? The reason I have chosen the wording of that question is that there is room for a lot of investigations and discoveries about our vision which may help both the artists and the technicians to achieve better results. I have worked as a customer with professional photographers, art studios and printers and I know how difficult it is to meet the customers expectations to help them sell a product. There are also excellent photographers who will tell you they have to nail every parameter right when shooting and that digital editing is incompetence. I am quite confident that part of their skills is unconsciously choosing their scenes and lightings so that they fit within the possibilities of their cameras and films. They would never think of shooting if there is too much contrast or a mixed lighting. Same thing for those who pretend cropping is incompetence. They don't shoot a scene if it does not yield a good composition within a fixed height/length ratio. That's second nature for them. But... if you want to open new frontiers, it sure helps to understand more about our vision and experiment to widen your scope. Imagine a pro has to shoot an interior landscape for home decoration. He uses HDR (high dynamic range) techniques to produce an excellent rendering of very contrasty scenes: is it art, is it technique? It may be both, but anyway it is based on a solid understanding of our vision.

4. How different is our visual system (eye/brain) from other representation techniques like photography or painting?

I have been reading a lot about our vision system, especially our colour vision (I have yet a lot to discover and understand). What happens in our eyes (retina) is rather well known; on the other hand, the way the information of our eyes is transmitted to our brain through our neurons is far more complex and subject to discussions. And then explaining what happens finally in our brain: is it anything more than speculations?

I suppose this theme would need several books... To illustrate this topic I'll only take two different points of view... about our vision. The first one will be a simplified observation of what we know about our perception of colour and luminosity, the other one is a practical situation where photography (silver or digital) cannot render a scene whereas painters have no difficulty.

Since Newton, we have made great progress in understanding light and colour. We know that daylight is made of a infinity of light frequencies (hues), but that we can reproduce all the rainbow spectrum by combining only 3 basic hues: red, green and blue. It is no surprise that our cameras have sensors with cells to capture those 3 basic colours, just like our monitor displays... and our eyes. Part of the cells of our retina account for colour perception, but unlike our cameras and displays, we also have another kind of cells to perceive luminosity, particularly in very low light. What seems very strange is that there are much less neurons than retina cells, which means that colour and luminosity information must have been already compressed and coded before reaching our brain.

One particular observation is that there is a close analogy between the way this coding is made and the L*a*b colour space which was built from statistical measures of how a sample of many subjects perceive colour. Unlike your usual RGB mode, it describes colour and luminosity by 3 numbers defining the position in the blue/yellow axis, the green/magenta one and the luminosity component. Those of you using ACR or any other raw converter use the white balance or colour temperature sliders to adjust colour temperature and tint on those color axis. The mystery is how our vision can correct white balance automatically.

Another less known fact is that we can distinguish and interpret colour and luminosity separately. We can tell if a white object is white even if poorly lit while seeing at the same time a very bright coloured light source. Imagine a common street scene with red or green traffic lights, or a bright golden statue with very bright golden reflections. Even in the very bright spots, we have a strong sensation of colour. On your photographs, whether silver or digital, very bright spots will be white. Look at the R,G,B values: very bright means maximum values everywhere: 255,255,255... ie white. Maximum red brightness will be 255,0,0... only one third of the channels used for luminosity. The red street light will be darker than the maximum possible white! And think about it: the paradox is that this situation is no problem for painters, they'll know when they have to paint red without bothering with brightness, because our brain analyses the meaning of the objects we see with a lot of cultural references. Same thing for specular lights, be it a city night scene, a golden statue in the sun, stained glass, a silver watch or a jewel. Those difficult subjects are a challenge to the photographer just like any very contrasty scene. If you add that when looking at a scene, your eyes scan the different parts adapting their sensitivity to adapt to luminosity while scanning, and that the result is reconstructed in your brain just like a composite final layer, you can imagine why the painter is at an advantage over the photographer. And yet, the painter has the same output limitations: the red light cannot be more luminous than white on the canvas but its rendering is much closer to what our brain shows us.

Photographer, painter or both? It is up to you to choose: by using an editor like Elements, you have all the required tools to act also as a painter. This does not mean you have to use brushes! It does mean you have to see the subject with the eyes of a painter and know the differences between our vision and photography as well as the limitations of printed material or displays. Once you know where you are going it will be easier to use the right editing tools... and to improve your photography and editing skills. This understanding and knowledge should not harm your creativity, they will give you more freedom and tools to open new horizons.



[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD FREE ACR PRESETS](#)
[FROM SUZIB](#)

Frequent questions about using ACR with jpeg files.

1. Can I open jpeg files in ACR?

Yes, you can open them from the editor if you have a recent version of the ACR plug-in (at least 4.0) and at least Elements 4. However you cannot open them from the organizer, which is a pity. Updating the ACR module from Adobe's site is free.

2. How do I open them from the editor?

Instead of using the menu 'open', use the menu 'open as', then in the second line 'open as' choose the third option in the dropdown menu ' = camera raw (*.tiff, *.crw etc...)', not the first option (photoshop).

3. Do I get the same advantages as opening a raw file?

No. Simply because a jpeg file has already been processed, which means two things. First a number of choices have already been made about white balance, colour and tone style, sharpening, denoising... and you can't go back totally about them. Second, those choices may have resulted in the loss of part of the information in the original shot, and jpeg compression plus conversion to 8 bits will necessarily lose some data.

4. So, what are the advantages of using ACR with jpegs?

The first one is that the processing in ACR is lossless. When you process a jpeg in ACR and press 'done' at the end, the settings are saved as metadata in your original jpeg file. The pixel data are not changed, but the changes will be read the next time you open that file in the editor. The ACR module will open automatically recognizing the changes. However, another software or web browser will not be able to recognize the edits and will show the original version. If you want not to open in ACR in the editor, you'll have to use 'save as'... choosing jpeg instead of camera raw. It will ignore the embedded ACR settings. In the editor you can read those settings in the 'file/file info' menu, advanced section and ...camera raw settings.

The second important reason is that the changes you apply in ACR will be processed in a wider colour space and bit depth, which means smoother editing even with heavy exposure or colour corrections. You have the choice to output in 8 or 16 bits when opening in Elements, which may give you an advantage.

The third advantage is having two new adjustments not available in Elements: the clarity and vibrance sliders. Most appreciate as well as a simple and clean interface. However, you don't have all the advantages of raw, for instance capturing a stop or a little more of dynamic range, restoring clipped highlights....

5. Should I use ACR to open jpegs and when?

Most of those who have used ACR to process jpegs mainly find the advantage is a much powerful control over difficult lighting situations, severe underexposure, bad or mixed white balance. No doubt it is better to shoot raw if you can, but if you have a difficult picture or series of pictures, using ACR may save you the day.

Thank you MichelB for providing these facts for the newsletter

Freebie from Jen Clark

NL7 Freebies for PCEC **IBJC**

1 lg frame



1 burnt tag

personal use only

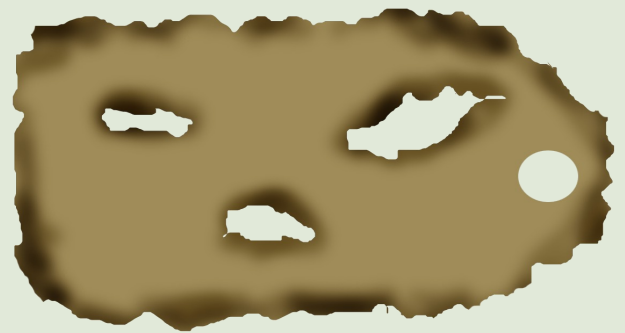
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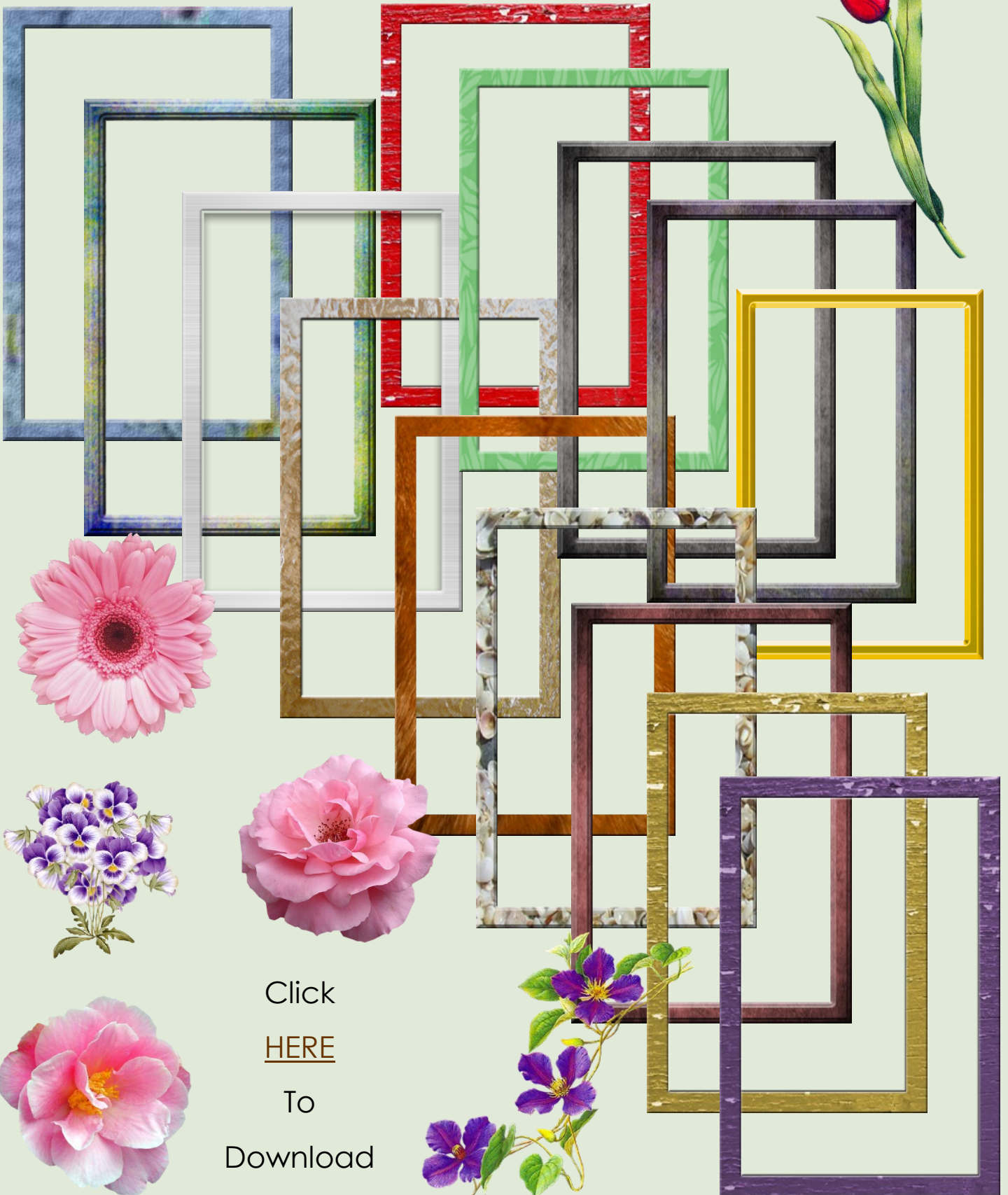
1 flourish



IMAGES BY JENIFER CLARK

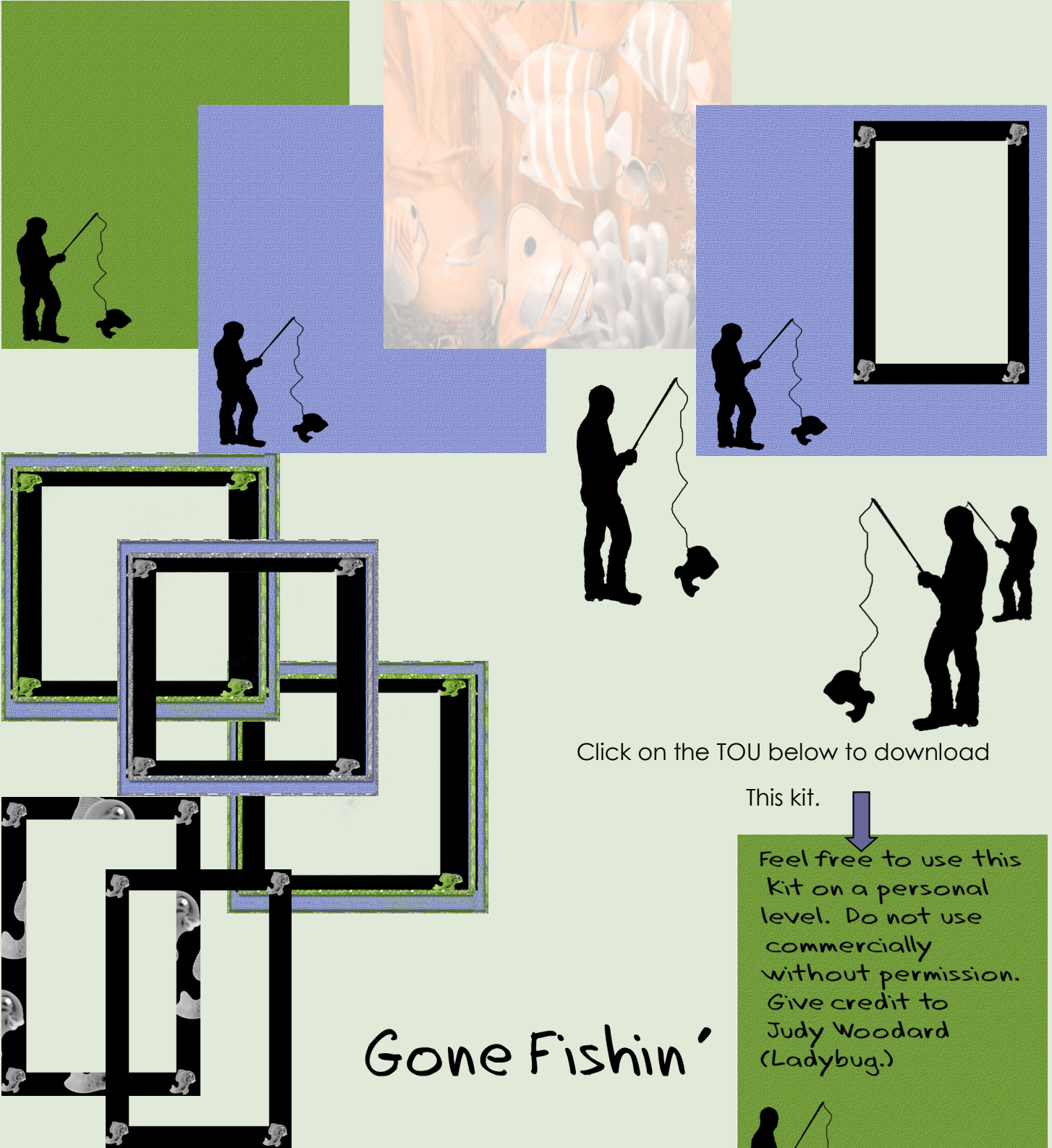


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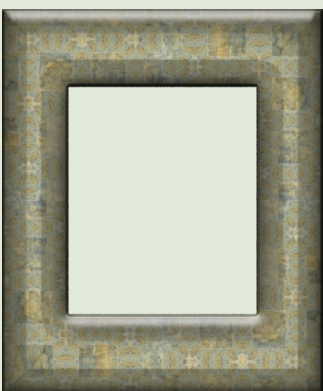
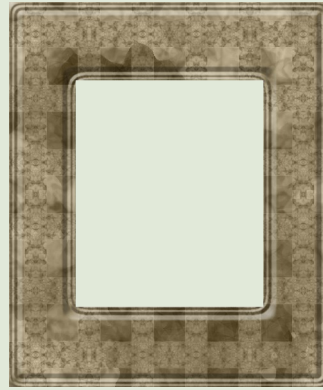
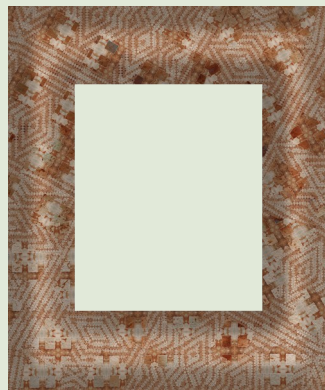
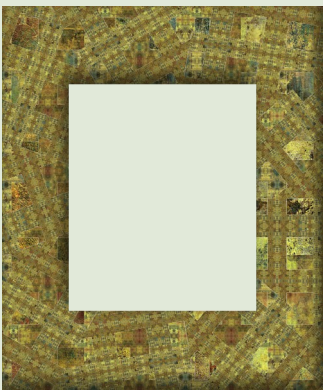
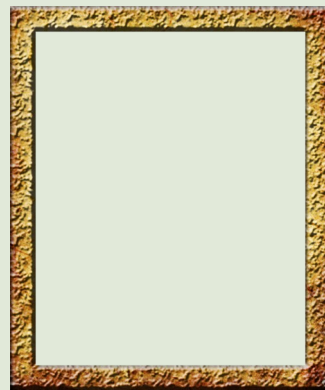
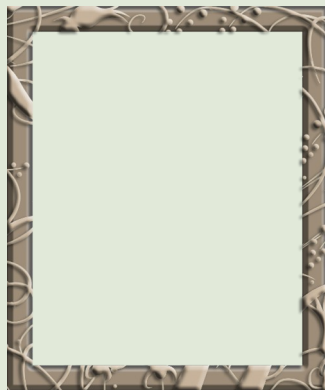
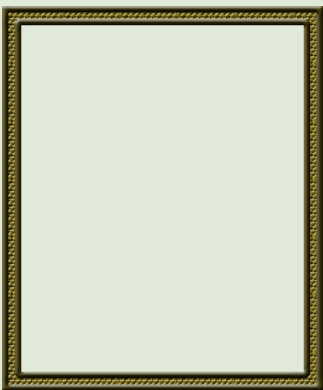
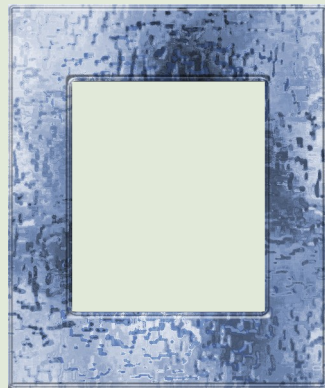
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Judy Woodard
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Fishin' with dad.

Freebie from Shari



Click on the frame to left to download frames,

Get Well soon Shari and good luck with your upcoming surgery.

Hall of Fame Nominations



Nominations for the
Hall of Fame
Image of the Month
For May are:
(on the left from top
to bottom)



Christell
Westiemom



KeV

TinaB

(on the right from
top to bottom)

GeneVH

SuziB

And SuziB again.



Turn to the next
page to 3 three
more outstanding
images that our
TAG judge, SuziB
chose for May's Hall
of Fame Images of
the Month



