

## **SCUM Book Review**

### **“The Photoshop Elements 3.0 Book For Digital Photographers”**

**By Scott Kelby**

Review by Dan Bellack, SCUM

Like many of you, I’m impatient and lazy when comes to learning software programs. I usually acquire them to do a specific set of tasks and learn just enough to do those things and let it go at that. Like my own brain, I only put a small percentage of the powerful programs I acquire to work. What a waste, true, but there are only so many hours in a day.

Scott Kelby is my kind of author. First of all, he writes in a friendly, clear style that doesn’t bore me or confuse me when I face he daunting task of finding out how to do stuff with the programs that he writes about. Second of all, his books evangel me into digging a lot deeper into them than I intended to when I picked them up. This book is a great example.

I flipped through a copy of this book that Peachpit graciously donated to our SCUM library. The number and size of the four-color pictures, screen shots and other illustrations spread throughout its pages immediately blew me away. I could actually read the detail in the screen shots without a magnifying glass. I already understood the differences between the Windows and Macintosh versions of Elements 3. I knew that I had to just skip over Chapter 2 that covered the Organizer (that Kelby calls “one of the most compelling features.”) I was also willing to mentally substitute the Mac versions of the keystrokes for “Alt,” “Control” and “Backspace.”.

I was immediately drawn to the table of contents that contained a well-organized listing of “stuff-you-might-want-to-do” headings. My kind of book—one that invites you to just dip into sections without having to read all 431 pages. Try these on for size: “Cropping Into A Shape,” “Straightening Crooked Photos,” “Removing Love Handles,” and “Creating The Classic Vignette Effect.” Let me at it!

Using techniques that I picked up directly from this book, I created a Christmas card for our family that took photos that I had taken of our four grandchildren during the year and put their faces in vignette photos onto Christmas tree ornaments hanging on a tree. Inside the card, a screened-back version of the cover photo had a paragraph of “kid news” overlaid on each ornament.

As a footnote, the Christmas card project was done completely with Photoshop Elements 3, Microsoft Word and Scott Kelby’s great book.

The most recent example of using this book after browsing through the Table of Contents came from a section in Chapter 3 called “The Cool Trick for Turning Small Photos into Poster-Sized Prints. I have a little 3.2 Megapixel Nikon Coolpix camera that I got a couple years ago. I love the handy pocket size but realize its limitation when it comes to printing its photos in 8X10 and larger sizes.

I thought I would try Scott's tip with a candid shot of one of my favorite subjects, my granddaughter, Lauren. It involves simply increasing the size of the photo by 10% in a series of operations rather than using a single step to go from say a 5 inch by 7 inch format to a 8 inch by 10 inch format. I was really pleased with the results.

**The Bottom Line**

I could go on and on.

Let me just say that if you currently have a digital camera and want to explore the ways to get the most out of your camera, this book is a "must-have" for your personal library. Whether you want to play around with cropping, resizing, color correction, retouching, restoration or special effects, this takes an amateur digital photographer and turns him or her into one those folks who does stuff like the pros do.

"The Photoshop Elements 3 Book For Digital Photographer" is available from Peachpit Press at [www.peachpit.com](http://www.peachpit.com) for \$34.99 (remember as a SCUM member you qualify for a 20% discount on all Peachpit books)