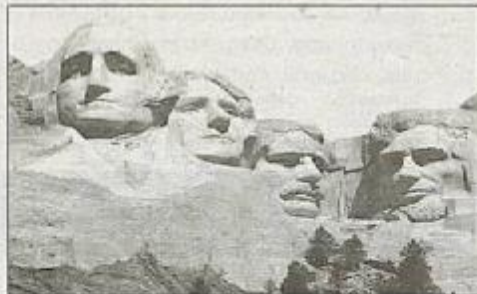


Digital Doctor

Basic Editing Techniques

By Stu Gershon

In my "Introduction to Digital Photography" class, I only teach two words — "Crop" and "Enhance". These two words will cover about 95 percent of all your photographic needs.



Crop means to change the size of your photo. When you learn to crop you can change the entire meaning of a photo. You can take a scene that has two people, and make it an image about only one of them. You can take an image that looks like beautiful scenery and change to focus on just one object within the scene. Of course, the more resolution (megapixels) you have, the more you can crop because you need the digital information to "zoom" in on the object.

This is the reason I tell people to

always shoot "wide," make the subject between 1/3 and 1/6 of the total image. When you're editing, you can always zoom in and make the subject more prominent. There are other reasons for shooting wide. When you are close to a subject, the more pronounced features appear (big nose, large ears, etc.). So stand back about six to 10 feet when shooting people. The second reason to shoot wide (especially indoors) is the closer you are to the subject, the more extreme the lighting from the flash appears.

When learning how to crop, you also have to consider how you are going to display your images. If you are going to have your prints done at a places such as Costco, Wal-Mart or a professional lab, leave your photos in the format that they naturally come in (usually 4 x 6 inches). The reason for this is that most of these places have their machines automated so they cannot make any adjustments to your original image. However, if you are going to print your own photos at home, then you should crop to change the size of the photos to 4 x 5 inches. This will



make it more economical to print because four prints will fit nicely on a full 8 x 10 inch page.

After you've made the photo the size you want you can then enhance it. In virtually every program there is a one-button-fix that automatically adjusts the color, contrast, tone, etc. to "optimum" appearance. In some programs this function is called enhance, but in Picasa, it is called "I'm Feeling Lucky," and in some others it's called "Auto Fix," "Smart Fix" or "Photo Doctor." Regardless of name, one click of the mouse gives you

a representative photo. Look at the examples below:

If you are not pleased with the automatic fix, you can then do some manual adjustments, which leads us to next



month's column — Intermediate Editing Techniques!

Stuart Gershon is known as "The Digital Doctor." He has given over two hundred classes at 53 different libraries in Nassau and Suffolk. You can get more information and the schedule of his classes at: www.DigitalDocOnline.com.