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Editor's File ..... *by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS, CGL* 4
Homepage *The News You Need* 5

FEATURES

Ins and Outs of Online Shopping..... *by Linda Woodward Geiger, CGRS, CGL* 7
Purchasing a New PC..... *by Richard S. Wilson* 11
Digital Gadgets for Genealogists..... *by Michael John Neill* 15
Basic Graphics Editing ..... *by Jerry Hale* 19

COLUMNS

Cybrarian: A Comparison of Desktop Search Tools ... *by Drew Smith, MLS* 23
Innovator: Ronald Jackson..... *by Jake Gehring* 27
Mac Corner: iPhoto vs PS Elements..... *by Laura G. Prescott* 31
Bits & Bytes: Is It Time for an Upgrade? ..... *by Candace L. Doriott* 48

REVIEWS

PAF Companion ..... *by Rhonda R. McClure* 37
Family Tree Maker 2005 ..... *by Gordon Gray* 39
London Visitation and Glasgow PO Directory ..... *by Sherry Irvine, CGRS* 42
Alumni Dublinenses and Dublin Directory ..... *by Richard M. Doherty* 43
New Hampshire Military Records, 1623–1866 ..... *by Gary Smith* 44
World Place Advisor ..... *by Barbara Schenck* 44
NYG&B Record, 1870–1899 ..... *by Donna M. Moughty* 45
Scottish Highlands and Baronage ..... *by Melvyn Douglass, FSA Scot* 46

Basic Graphics Editing

DEATHS

Corby Arnett

DAYTONA BEACH — Corby Joseph Arnett, 67, Taylor Road, a welder at Cape Canaveral, died Sunday at home.

Mr. Arnett was born in Valdosta, Ga., and came here as a child from DeLand. He was a member of Masonic Lodge 270 F&AM and he enjoyed hunting and fishing.

Arnett

Survivors include his wife, Emma; a son, Guy, Florence, Miss.; two daughters, Ethel Driggers, Daytona Beach, and Gwendolyn LeVere, Port Orange; eight grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Woodward, Holly Hill, is in charge.

figure 1

by Jerry Hale

Now that you have a scanner and can scan documents and photos for inclusion in the scrapbook of your genealogy program, you're ready to learn a little graphics editing so you can enhance your scanned images.

There are many good graphics editing programs on the market; you probably received one with your scanner. The one I use is Ulead's *Photo Impact,* but you may find that the ideas presented here will apply to any program you might use. If you don't yet own such a program, you can find *Photo Impact 6.0* on the Internet for as little as $10 (use PriceGrabber.com.)

www.pricegrabber.com

Figure 1 is a typical document you might find in your own files—an obituary with a photo that has been clipped from a newspaper and taped to notebook paper. Handwritten notes have been added. Figure 2 shows the *Photo Impact* work space.

Getting Started

The first step in image editing is to scan your document. To do this, place your document on the scanner face down. In the software, set the scanner to grayscale for a newspaper clipping. Open *Photo Impact* and click the Scan icon on the program's top toolbar. The scanner will do its job and the image will open in *Photo Impact*. (see figure 3)

Before you begin editing the image, you'll want to save a duplicate of the image in case you want to discard your editing work and start over with the original. Click on the Edit menu. Select "Duplicate," then select "Base Image with Objects." (The shortcut for Duplicate is CTRL+D.) A duplicate of your scanned image will appear. You'll want to minimize or close the original image to get it out of the way.

In order to enhance and clarify this document, your first impulse may be to increase contrast and decrease the brightness. But this approach is not the best since there are three distinct areas of the document that will each respond differently to your efforts: the photo, the handwritten notes, and the printed portion of the obituary. The document should be converted instead into three objects and edited separately.

The Set-up

Begin by selecting the photo. The selection tools take various forms, but we will use the Standard Selection Tool (SST) in this case. It works well for rectangular areas. Use the Lasso tool for irregular areas. Click the SST then place the cursor at the upper left corner of the photo and, while holding the left mouse button down, drag the cursor down and to the right. A "stretch box" or "rubber band box" of dashed lines will follow your cursor.

When the photo is outlined with the dashed line box, release the left mouse button. The photo will remain outlined by the box. Now cut and paste the selected photo. The photo will become an object. (The cut shortcut is CTRL+C; paste is CTRL+V.)

Follow the above steps again, outlining the handwriting portion of the docu-

You're ready to learn a little graphics editing so you can enhance your scanned images.

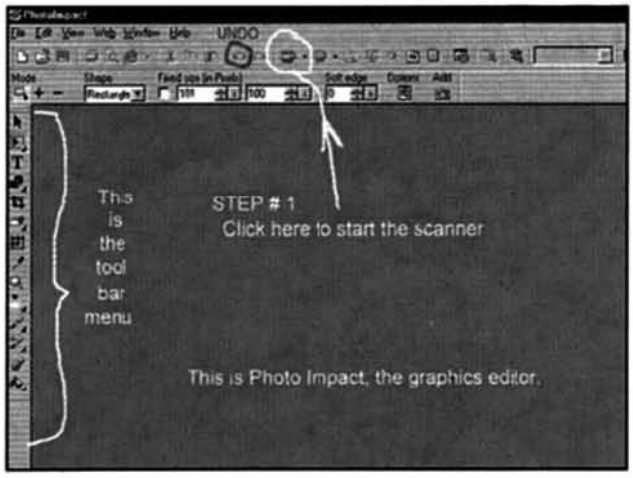

figure 2

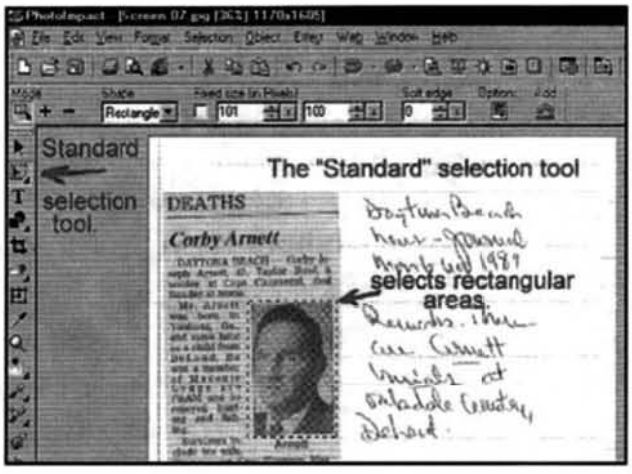

figure 3

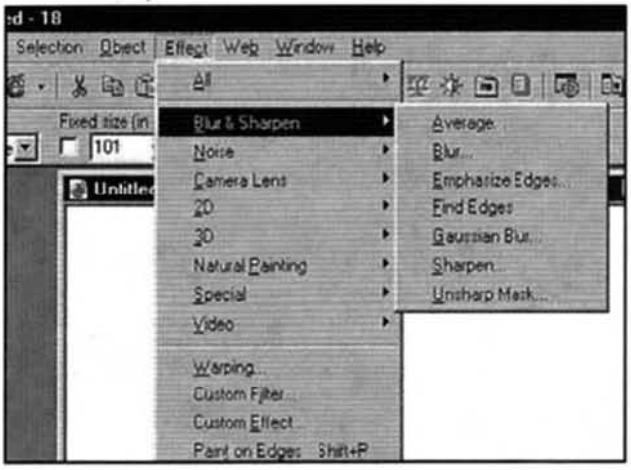

figure 4

ment and create a second object by again using the Cut and Paste sequence. Similarly, outline and create a third object from the printed part of the obituary.

You now have three distinct objects on three different layers. Move the objects around so that they overlap. The object which appears in its entirety is "on top" of the other two; move it aside and the next object that appears in its entirety is on layer two.

You may place these three objects, one on top of the other in various ways and you may change the layer of an object by selecting it and using the Order tool.

You will notice that the photo has a moiré pattern (see figure 6). Moiré is caused by the way photos are printed in newspapers and magazines. Although *Photo Impact* has a specific tool to remove moiré, I have found that with newspaper photos, a slight blurring helps to make the picture clearer. To do this, first select the photo by clicking on it. You will see the dotted box around the photo indicating it is selected. Now open the Effect menu (see figure 4) and click on "Blur & Sharpen," then click on "Blur." The Blur menu comes up, with the medium blur (center photo in figure 5) selected. Click "OK." As you see in the before and after example in figure 6, blurring made the photo appear clearer and has removed the moiré pattern.

Straightening the Objects

To straighten an object, click on the Transform tool on the left side (see figure 7). This turns on the next two tools. If the object needs to be turned 90 degrees or more, use the Rotate and Flip tools at the upper right. If the amount of rotation needed is slight, use the Rotation by Degree tool (as shown in figure 7, #2 and #3.) You can select any amount of degrees for each step, then click on the Clockwise or Counter Clockwise arrows to rotate the object. I keep Rotation by Degree set at .25 degrees because most corrections are small.

I like to move an object to the top or to the right border and use the border as a guide so I know when an object is "true." The object selection lines can sometimes

make it difficult to see whether an object is true until you check the line at the top of the object.

Gamma, Contrast, and Brightness

The handwritten notes and the printed portion of the obituary can be greatly improved by using the Gamma, Contrast and Brightness adjustments, in that order (see figure 8). Select the written portion of the obituary and then click on the sun icon on the menu bar above the image (figure 9) or you can use the CTRL+B shortcut.

Always start by decreasing Gamma slightly. If you go too far the object will turn completely black. Concentrate on the printing—make it dark but not too dark. You will get the hang of it very quickly. Next, increase the Contrast. Keep going until the background turns pure white. If you go too far, the quality will deteriorate. Move the slider back and forth, observing the effects, and pick a point where the background is white or nearly white and the print is still dark and crisp. If you cannot get the background to pure white, you can increase the Brightness a bit.

If you make a mistake you can recover by clicking the Reset button at the bottom of the Brightness & Contrast tool. When the image looks right, click the OK button to make your changes permanent.

Once your editing is finished, move the objects back into their proper place and merge them into one document with the SHIFT+CTRL+M command. Save your work and then import it into your scrapbook. Figure 10 shows the finished product.

There is much more to learn about photo editing but these steps will get you started. While photo editing may sound like a complicated process, you'll find out that once you master the method, the work will go very quickly.

How to Use Shortcuts

Just a word about Cut and Paste. Although you can cut and paste using your mouse by first selecting an area you

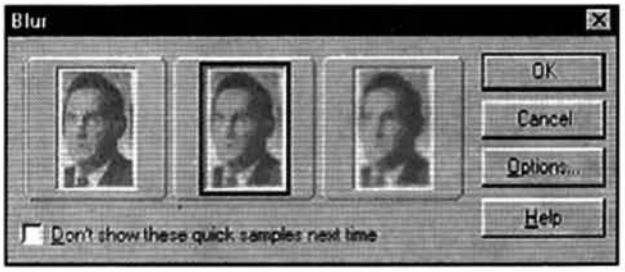

figure 5

figure 6

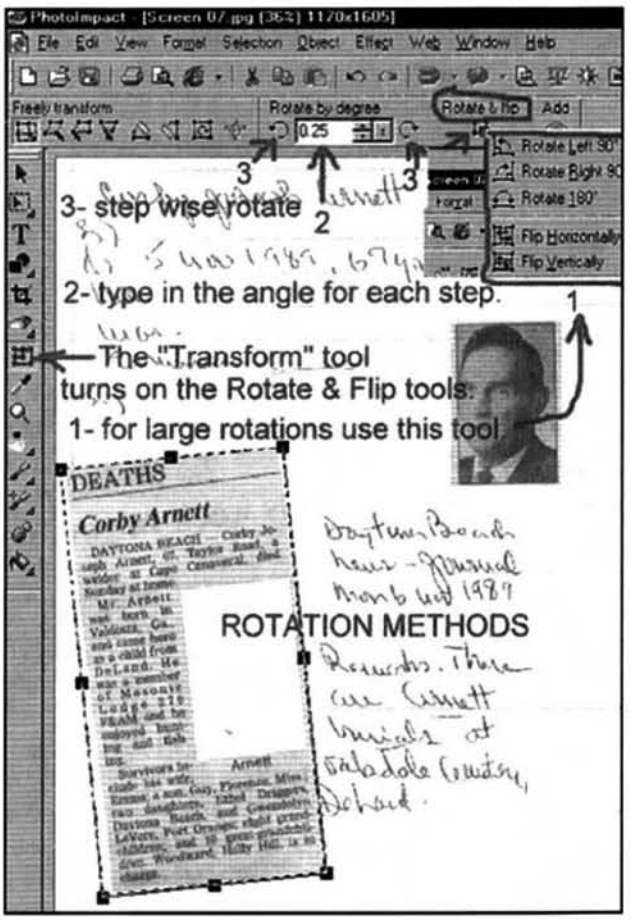

figure 7

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Survivors include his wife, Emma; a son, Guy, Florence, Miss.; two daughters, Ethel Driggers, Daytona Beach, and Gwendolyn LeVere, Port Orange; eight grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Woodward, Holly Hill, is in charge.

figure 8

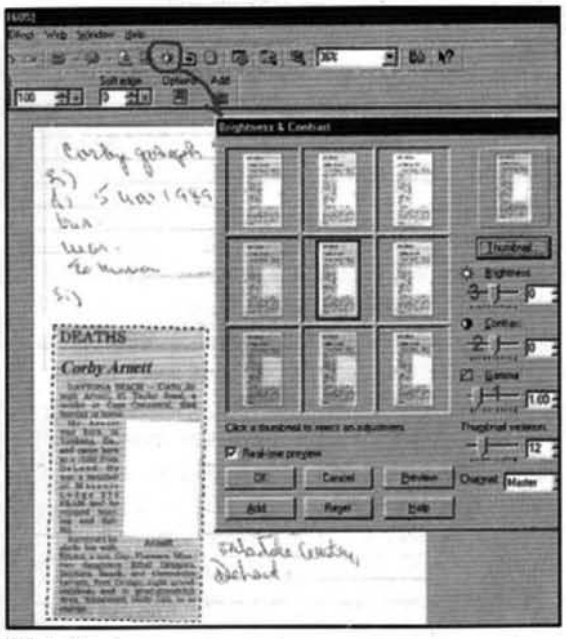

figure 9

wish to move, then clicking on "Edit," then clicking on "Cut," then moving your mouse to the desired location and clicking on "Paste," it is much quicker and more convenient if you learn to use the Shortcut commands.

In *Windows*, every menu has shortcut keys listed. Notice, for example, on the Edit menu the Shortcuts listed for many of the commands. All of the shortcuts begin with CTRL which means you'll need to hold down the CTRL key while simultaneously tapping the next key listed.

For Cut (CTRL+X), imagine the "X" key as a pair of scissors. The "V" for Paste (CTRL+V) is an arrow pointing to the place you want to paste what you just cut. The "C" reminds you that CTRL+C is the shortcut for Copy. Either the menu method or the shortcut key method will work to cut and paste items when editing with *Photo Impact* but using the shortcuts will greatly speed up the process.

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figure 10

Here is a partial list of shortcuts that will make *Photo Impact* easier to use.

CTRL+A	Select all
CTRL+B	Start the Brightness & Contrast tool
CTRL+C	Copy the selected area
CTRL+D	Duplicate the selected image
CTRL+F	Fill the selected area with chosen color
CTRL+R	Crop to the selected area
CTRL+V	Paste the previously copied or cut image as an object
CTRL+X	Cut the selected area

Jerry Hale retired from the U.S. Navy after 24 years. He is a member of the Iowa Genealogy Society and 2nd vice president of Roots and Branches Genealogy Society in DeLand, Florida. He is a volunteer in the Genealogy Room of the DeLand Public Library helping people pursue their family histories. He can be reached at iowagob1@juno.com.