

## Hands On Newsletter

April/May 2008

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### Blame it On Portland

Some of you may have noticed that there was no April Edition of this newsletter. Others may have noticed that this is a joint April/May issue.

What gives? I spent all of April on a consulting project in Portland, Oregon – an incredible city. Removed from my studio, I could not do the kinds of product tests and articles that usually fill this newsletter.

The up side of being away? I used the late nights in my hotel room to explore some of the training DVD's that have been piling up on my shelf. While watching one of those DVD's I discovered Dean Collins. I was blown away.

This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to the work and memory of Dean and to those who carry his torch in the classroom and profession.

[The "Portland" sign is made from six images, shot hand held with a point and shoot, stitched together in CS3 (File>Automate>PhotoMerge) and diddled with in Photoshop using some of the techniques that Jim DiVitale taught us.]



## Dean Collins

(1954-2005 )



Photo by Tony Corbell

I now have an answer to a question I never quite understood.

“If you could go back and meet someone who is no longer here, who would that person be?”

I’ve always found that an odd question.

But, if I were asked that question, today, my answer would be simple, “Dean Collins”.

At this time of my life, a time when teaching photography has become so important to me, Dean Collins would have been a source of knowledge and inspiration.

Just as you can often tell the quality of a book or movie by those who recommend it, so too can you tell the quality of a man and his work by those who speak fondly of him.

I was led to Dean Collins by two people for whom I have incredible respect, two of Dean’s closest friends, Jim DiVitale and Tony Corbell.

As Jim and I became good friends, he would constantly tell me things like “You should have known Dean” or “You would have loved Dean”. Or we’d be talking about a photography concept and Jim would tell me that the very words we were using were those coined by Dean in his effort to define the pedagogy of the photography classroom.

I’d heard many good things about Tony Corbell, especially from his good friend Doug Box. While looking to expand the “family” of teachers for the *Hands on Seminars*, many of those I trust most told me to try to bring in Tony. Tony, I was told, carries the Dean Collins torch.

The week I was leaving for Oregon, independently, both Tony and Jim sent me Dean Collins DVD’s. The message was too strong to set aside. My time had come to meet Dean Collins.

During my month in Oregon, I used the DVD’s as a late night treat – like some people use the M & M’s or plump cashews from the mini-bar, I used the DVD’s to reward myself for surviving the work day and to take my mind to its creative place.

By the end of my stay, I had watched all of the video's, some more than once. I came home feeling wiser, confident, and inspired.

Simply stated, Dean was an incredible teacher. His passion and exuberance drove every segment. He was a magician – give him one light, a diffusion panel, a gobo, and a mirror, and he would create and control light in ways that did not seem possible.

By watching Dean and his team<sup>1</sup>, we learn why things work and how to take creative control over light.

And, therein lies what I find so important about Dean's teaching. He gives us what we need to know, not to master one lighting pattern but, to master lighting itself.

The educational philosopher Ryle drew a distinction between "knowing that" and "knowing how". The idea was that "knowing that" – knowing facts, was of limited value. True knowledge required "knowing how" – how to use what one knows.

I guess the modern day equivalent is found in "give the man a fish and he has one meal, teach him to fish and he will eat forever."

In photography terms, give a photographer one lighting pattern and he will have one lighting pattern. Teach

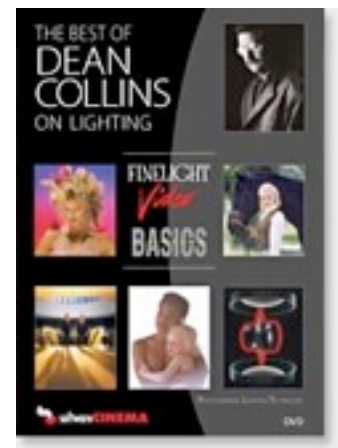
him to control light, and he can photograph anything.

Good lighting teachers, like good teachers of all kinds, teach "knowing how". They focus on why things work, how to control them, and how to adapt them to fit our needs. By the time we are done with Dean's videos, we understand how to use and control light.

As Dean put it on one of the videos "Once you understand the craft, your imagination can go wherever you want it to go."

If I were to own one Dean Collins DVD, I'd own ***The Best of Dean Collins on Lighting***. It's a 4 DVD set – 2 on portraiture, 1 on commercial, and 1 on "the basics". It seemed a bit odd to me that the "basics" DVD is at the back of the set. Knowing what I know now, I'd have watched it first. It sets forth a consistent vocabulary and approach that are used throughout the 24 photo sessions, each of which is a separate lesson.

The format is compelling. This is not a talking head lecture. It's a video of a real photo sessions. First, we see the finished image. Then, with a narrator giving a full explanation of what is being done and why, we see the set up.



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<sup>1</sup> In one lesson, a young Tony Corbell substitutes for a woman whose portrait Dean is about to take while the team sets up the lights.

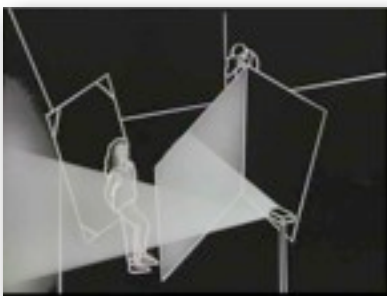
The shoot follows. And, then, a wrap up by Dean pulls it all together.

The wrap ups are magical. It is here that we truly meet the man.

The explanations are like jazz riffs – compelling in their content, seemingly complex because of their depth, but actually quite simple, when listened to more than once. For me, that was the real key to getting the most out of these DVD's. I listened to the wrap ups over and over, stopping, pausing, playing them back until I was sure I understood what Dean was saying.

And, they are practical. We learn the “how” and the “why”. We aren’t learning “light patterns”, we are learning how to light. Listen to Dean and you will never have a problem doing high key lighting, or product lighting, or outdoor lighting, or creating a beach picture in the studio – without an ounce of water or grain of sand.

At the end of each lesson, Dean includes a diagram of the lighting set up and one more explanation of why it worked.



This is a one light, high key set up. One light? Yes. It's amazing what you can do if you know

what you are doing.

Here's another image from that session. Notice anything surprising? Yes, that's



a film camera. The lessons in these sessions come from the film era. Actually, I found that refreshing. It allowed me to focus on the lighting and not get tied up in the technology of the camera – something I do when I shoot digitally.

And, something else? Collins is using scrims or light panels. He does that throughout the lessons.

And, therein lies one of the incredible Dean Collins lessons: **You do not need a ton of equipment to light well.** If you understand the principles of lighting, you can do a lot with one light, some panels, some gobos, some reflectors and some odd stuff like mirrors. **If you truly understand what you are doing, and know how to control light, lighting is simple.**

Does that mean I'm going to get rid of my 10 Profoto lights, and my 4 old studio Fresnels? No way. But, I do know how to use them more creatively having studied Dean's lessons.

Actually, I learned to light with panels. Hot lights and diffusion are used on film and TV sets. And, my first Texas School teacher, Scott Smith taught the use of diffusion panels.

My first light modifiers were panels I made from PVC pipe. I used a pamphlet called *Tinker Tubes* that I'd found on the 'net to design them. My friends called me the King of PVC. I made panels, light stands, and a back drop stand, all out of PVC. Inspired by *Tinker Tubes*, I went wild. While I was doing that, I had no idea that I was working under Dean's strong influence. I did not know until, yesterday, while doing research on Dean for this review, that Dean was the author of *Tinker Tubes*. You can get the pamphlet [here](#).

As I wrote in [last month's newsletter](#), I still use diffusion panels on outdoor shoots and, sometimes in the studio. But, as I wrote, I've stopped using the PVC tubes. My tube designs were complex; the tubes could be used in many ways to create different sizes and shapes. The problem was that there were so many tubes and joints that it took me too much time to figure out how put them together and they were too bulky to carry around.

I've switched over to the [Photoflex LitePanels](#) – reviewed in last month's newsletter. They are versatile, light weight, and fast and easy to erect and take down. Now that I've seen some of the ways Dean used them, I'm going to buy more.

As one who loves to tinker, I have to show you the next Collins inspired piece I will add to my collection. He calls it a "board pod"; it's a way to mount your camera for low shots. You simply take an old ball head and mount it on a piece of plywood. For me, it will serve double duty; I hate putting my camera down on the ground while going to make other adjustments on the outdoor set.



Why do I mention all of this? Because many of you who read this newsletter or take our classes do not have endless budgets for equipment purchases.

Our advice to you has always been that you can do a lot with a really good 2 light kit and some light shapers. I recommend the [Profoto Compact 600 Pro Kits](#), some of which come with accessories. Dean proves that point. Most of the work on these DVD's is done with no more than 2 lights.

There's a great section on the Basic DVD called the *Portfolio* in which Dean takes us through the creation of the shots for a models portfolio and Zed card.

In this section, we see the importance of "pre-planning" knowing what you



want to get before you set out to get it. You would think that a photographer as great as Dean would just be able to show up and shoot. But, Dean tells us that he didn't. That much of his greatness came from his planning.

Dean tells us that his research included talking with the model, her agency, the stylist and the MUA to determine what looks needed to be captured. This portfolio was born in the planning which preceded the execution.

Why the heavy emphasis on planning for the 9 shots? As Dean tells us:

“This requires a good understanding of light control because we are not going to just go out and shoot lots of pictures and then find 8 or 9 we like. This is going after 9 or 10 definitive photographs where you have to have a full understanding of light control.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Portfolio Sessions* replicate much of what we all do – both indoors and outdoors. No “golden hour” shooting here. Just pure mastery of the light – in its raw harsh state.

Perhaps, the best example of dealing with “bad light” comes in the “Outdoor” Sessions. Once more, we see the use of panels – especially outside where they are used to create a soft, diffused light source.

Here is a set of examples that illustrate the point:



First, the model in raw, harsh sunlight.



A panel is put in place to diffuse the light. Notice the holes to let the wind through.

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<sup>2</sup> Sound familiar? It's the same process we use in our small shooting seminars, like the *Fashion/Glamour* shoot or the *Street Shoot* in which the students are given a homework assignment – they create storyboards of their shots complete with themes and lighting diagrams.



Here's the result. The panel has diffused or softened the harsh sunlight. In this image, the source of the light is the panel; the origin of the light is the sun. Just as with any softbox, by moving the panel close to the model, Dean got a softer light spread; another way of saying the same thing is that the transition between light and shadow on her face is more gradual. Or, as Dean would put it, the contrast between the "diffused value" or true tone of the subject and the shadow area was reduced.

Deans comment:

"Normally, in this situation, this light would be useless. Without the panel, you have this hard light ... by dropping a panel in there ... you can actually make the light wrap around the face ... to create that very natural wrap around quality."

Get too much wrap around? Need to put some shadow on the unlit side of the face because it is shadow on light skin that give depth and dimension to the image? Simple. Use what Collins calls "negative fill" – a light panel filled with dark cloth to absorb some of the light.



And, finally, one last touch. Adding some specular highlight back into the hair by aiming some sun on it with a mirror.



In this case, the subject is lit by both direct and diffused sunlight.

And, here's the final image.



Some of you might be saying “That’s a long way to go to reach this result. Why not just back light her and use fill flash?”

For a couple of reasons, not the least of which is that Dean liked this background. As we learned from John Woodward, great photographers build their images from the background forward.

And, obviously, Dean created this session to teach us several light control techniques at once – diffusion, negative fill, and the use of the mirror to bring back un -diffused sunlight into the image.

And, that’s the beauty of the entire series of DVD’s. The scenarios are carefully crafted to create great lessons

in light control. This layered approach<sup>3</sup>, combining mini-lessons within one large lesson, teaches the “why” as well as the “how”.

I’m sorry I never had the chance to see Dean in person. But, I feel blessed that his lessons live on with these DVD’s. I highly recommend them to photographers at all levels of the learning curve. If you are just setting out to learn lighting, you may need to watch some of these segments more than once, and to take notes on the explanations. If you are very experienced, you will probably have to do the same. There is just too much here to absorb in one quick sitting – and that’s what makes them so great.

### **But Wait, There’s More**

For a while, I’ve wanted to embed video in my newsletters. In fact, I’m planning on creating series on teaching videos of my own to be posted on the website.

Until then, I can think of no better place to start than with one of the basic lessons from Dean Collins. With the kind permission of the very good people at Software-Cinema, who are allowing me to use this copyrighted work, here’s an 8 minute lesson from the DVD compilation.

A few words on how this works: I found it too complicated to actually embed the video in the newsletter. This video is 8

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<sup>3</sup> I guess it’s no surprise that Jim DiVitalo uses this same “layered” approach in his teachings. Some look at his lessons and say “I’ll never do a displacement map”. What they fail to see is that each step in the process is itself a lesson in a technique that, on its own, is worth knowing.



minutes long and takes a lot of bandwidth.

So, I've posted it on a part of my website. When you click on the image below, you will be taken to the website and the video will start to load. **THIS MAY TAKE UP TO A MINUTE.** When it is loaded, you'll get a video player interface.

To start off, click on the image below. It is "hyperlinked" to the video on the website.



We are going to put some work into this feature – the best is yet to come.

## **And Even More! A Big Discount Offer**

Dean Collins pioneered the use of video training materials. **Software-Cinema** is the production/distribution company resulting from his efforts.

Today, **Software-Cinema** represents the work of many of the world's best photographers and Photoshop guru's – people like our own Jim DiVitale and

Tony Corbell, and such greats as Julieanne Kost, Eddie Tapp, and Katrin Eismann – all of whom I've seen teach in person.

I own many of these videos – I like being able to play them over and over, work along with them, and go back and use them for reference.

**Software-Cinema** has created a discount program for our students and readers.

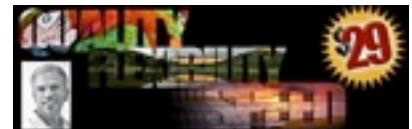
To receive a 15% discount on all of your purchases, buy them on the [Software-Cinema website](#)

using the following Discount Code:

**PRAIRIE08**

One last thing, Software-Cinema, and our good sponsor [onOne Software](#), are teaming up to bring Jack Davis to

Houston. I've attended several of Jack's classes and he is great. For more information, and to register, click on the Seminar Image above.



He's one of the guys behind the free PhotoPresets for *Lightroom* being given away by *onOne*. If you haven't done it yet, you might want to [download a set](#), now. And, don't forget that *onOne* offers a huge discount to our students and readers. See the discount coupon near the end of this newsletter.

## Follow Up Product Test:

Hoodman's UDMA Cards  
and  
RAW FireWire 800 Card Reader



In the [February edition](#) of this newsletter, I wrote about the new UDMA card technology – a technology designed to make the transfer of data from the camera sensor to the compact flash card faster.

Here's part of what I wrote:

When we push the shutter button, the shutter opens and closes and data is recorded on the sensor: the data from the sensor goes into a camera buffer where it is held until the camera “writes” the information to the compact flash card. If the data is coming in at a rate faster than is being written to the card, the camera's buffer fills – and when it is full, it cannot accept any more data. The shutter will not activate until there is room on the buffer for more data. The result – you may lose the “money” shot because the camera buffer is full.

Similar problems occur when we try to transfer the data from our cards to a computer. If the card or card reader is slow, it will take a long time to make the transfer.

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To solve the problem, the industry has created a UDMA protocol. To learn more about it, [click here](#).

In the newsletter, I promised to do a “real world” test to see whether, in fact, UDMA is faster. I did.

**The results: It is significantly faster.**

To fully take advantage of the UDMA protocol, you need a camera designed to incorporate it. My D3 is a UDMA camera.

Here's my test protocol:

- I put the camera on a tripod, put it on manual focus and aimed at a target. I used manual focus because I wanted to make sure that there were no activation delays caused by the camera's potential “search” for auto focus.
- I set the shutter activation for “continuous high” and set the frame rate for 11 frames/second. That's the fastest rate my camera will shoot.
- I set the shutter speed for 1/8000 second.
- I shot RAW, uncompressed images – the largest images my camera would shoot.
- During the test, I shot a 30 second “burst” finger on the shutter – peddle to the metal – never letting up.

This test was set up to test the cards in the most extreme situation. I cannot think of anything else I could have done to push the limits.

I tested 2 cards, my *Hoodman* 16g<sup>4</sup> compact flash card, and one



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<sup>4</sup> The people at Hoodman tell me that the 16g card is not as fast as their 8g cards. I tested the 16g because that's the card I use every day.

of my non-UDMA cards, a *Sandisk Extreme III 12g* card.

The results were as expected.

In 30 seconds, the UDMA card **recorded ⅓ more images** than the non-UDMA card.

Yes, I was still able to “stall” the camera, but I had fewer stalls of shorter duration with the UDMA card. And, the stalls were created by a very artificial situation – one that I would never encounter in the field.

I never shoot 11 frames per second. Never. A video camera shoots at 30 frames per second. A film/movie camera at 24. At 11 frames, I was shooting in a way that would allow “movie” playback – it might be a bit jerky, but it is a form of movie, nonetheless. And, I was shooting huge RAW files. If I had switched to .jpeg’s, particularly, small .jpeg’s, I might well have been able to shoot a “movie” on this card.

Who cares?

It depends on what you shoot.

On the “capture” side, the UDMA technology works best for photographers who shoot in “bursts” – sports shooters and photojournalists. If you are shooting portraits in a studio, you don’t need this “capture speed”.

But, on the download side, the UDMA technology works for everyone.

**UDMA cards, in a fast card reader, transfer information between the card and the computer at a much greater speed.**

I cannot tell you how many people tell me that they don’t want to shoot RAW because they hate to wait while the large files go between the card and computer.

My answer has always been to get faster cards and faster card readers.

I’ve got a Hoodman FireWire800/400 Compact Flash card reader. Hoodman also makes the same card reader in USB 2.0.

According to their web page, the FW800 is twice as fast as the USB 2.0.

That’s been my experience, too, in using FW v. USB storage devices.



I tested downloading both the Hoodman UDMA card and the Sandisk to my MacBook Pro which supports both FW800 and FW400. **Using the FireWire Hoodman card reader, the UDMA card downloaded to the Mac in half the time required by the Sandisk card. Said another way, the download speeds are twice as fast.** Same card reader – so the only difference was in the cards. UDMA is clearly faster.

**Bottom Line:** There is a good reason for all shooters to use UDMA cards. Some will get the benefit of fast transfers in the camera. All will get the benefit of fast downloads to the computer.



## The Story Behind the Image

In the February newsletter, I included this image of Model/Actress Jessica Flores. It generated several questions that I thought I'd answer in this edition.

The most common question was – “who is she and will she model for me?”

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<sup>5</sup> [Click here](#) to go to a website dedicated to Hurrell's work.

<sup>6</sup> Bull was known as the “man who shot Garbo.” For a short video on his work, [click here](#).

<sup>7</sup> To see some of Karsh's work, [click here](#).

<sup>8</sup> For more on Tim, [click here](#).

Jessica works in the complex where I have my studio. She is a pageant contestant who has moved into modeling and acting. This head shot was for her portfolio. If you are interested in working with Jessica, you can contact her at:

[jessicaflores.acting@yahoo.com](mailto:jessicaflores.acting@yahoo.com).

The second most common question was: “Who shot that image?” I did.

The third: “How did you do it?” Here's the story:

### Pre-Production

This image is a product of my fascination with the work of the great studio photographers of the '30's – 50's, people like George Hurrell<sup>5</sup>, Clarence Sinclair Bull<sup>6</sup>, and Yousuf Karsh<sup>7</sup>, and was done after I had taken a “hard light”, black and white, portraiture class at Texas School taught by Tim Meyer<sup>8</sup>.

This is the shot I set out to shoot. I usually don't go into the studio without a sketch (very rough) of a pose and a lighting plan. Before the session, I met with Jessica to explain the look I wanted to capture, to discuss her wardrobe, hair and make up, and to discuss the mood and meaning of the image.

I wanted a moody, dark look – pensive, thoughtful. This wasn't going to be a Texas pageant contestant photo – big hair and big smile. I wanted something deeper.

So, I asked Jessica to wear black clothing, minimal make-up except for her eyes and mouth. And, I asked her to wear false eye lashes because I loved the look I saw on a Garbo image in which Bull used the light on the top row of lashes to create a shadow beneath them.

Jessica came to the studio perfectly prepared – physically and mentally.

### The Lighting Set Up

I shoot most of my images “low key”. I like dark, moody, mysterious pictures.

So, in this case, I used my usual “low-key” set up with one major difference – I used a **special light** on Jessica's face – a light I'll discuss in a moment.

The basic set<sup>9</sup> up includes a black back drop (shown as grey in the

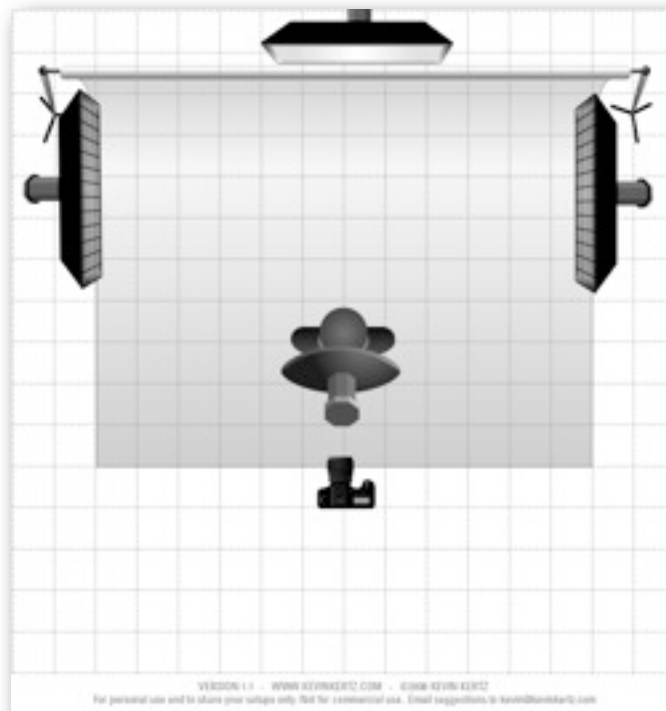
diagram) and the three light, rim light, set up taught by [John Woodward](#) and [Hanson Fong](#).

With “rim lighting” we put some light on the periphery of the subject, the hair and shoulders to give us separation from the backdrop and to make the hair “pop”. This is especially important when one is shooting black hair against a black back drop.

As you can see in the diagram, the “rim” is created by three lights – all in *Profoto* 1x6 strip soft boxes.

The hair light is mounted on a boom and is 12' above the floor. The bottom of the box is parallel to the floor. John Woodward teaches the benefits of using a hair light like this. First, and

foremost, the hair light, when placed parallel to the floor, does not cast light on the backdrop. To John, that is very important; he wants complete control of the background of his images. The hair is lit by “indirect light”, light



<sup>9</sup> Before going further, I want to give special thanks to Kevin Kertz, for creating and giving away a set of tools called *Lighting Setup* – tools that let us use Photoshop to illustrate our lighting set ups. You can get your own, very cool set of tools at [Kevin Kertz' web site](#).



reflected of the wall of the soft box.

The two other rim lights are in the same *Profoto* 1x6 strip soft boxes. Both have grids on the front to control the direction of the light and limit “spill”. Each of the lights is aimed at a 45 degree angle to Jessica, and feathered so that the light hits only her periphery and does not illuminate her face.

Inside all of the soft boxes are [\*Profoto\*](#) lights.

I’ve got a [\*D4 2400 Generator\*](#), and [\*4 Acute2 heads\*](#). I’ve also got 4 [\*ComPact Plus 600w\*](#) monoblocs.

I almost always use a combination of the two sets. That’s one of the good things about *Profoto* lights. They are absolutely consistent across the line – same output and same Kelvin or White Balance. Unlike other lights, I find I can mix and match these lights without concern.

In the hair light soft box is an Acute2 head powered by the D4. I use this set up for one, simple reason. With the light 12 feet in the air, I don’t have to go climbing to change its settings – that can be done on the ground at the Generator.<sup>10</sup>

The other two soft boxes are on ComPact heads. They are easy to walk

up and adjust – no climbing or contorting.

I usually don’t have to adjust any of the rim lights. I rarely move the light on the boom. And, I’ve got taped spots on the floor upon which to place the other two lights. I set all three for F5.6. That’s my standard “starting place” and I almost never change it. In my experience, setting my main light for F8 (a one stop difference) usually gives me the low-key look I want; if it doesn’t, I change the main light and leave the rim lights alone.

The “special” main light? A white *Profoto Softlight Reflector* which is also known as a “Beauty Dish”.



Normally, a light like this is placed close to the subject. As we know, the closer we put a light to the subject, the “softer” the light will appear. When we say “softer” what we are saying is that the transition between the shadows and highlights is more diffuse and that there are more gradations of color between the shadows and the highlights. (See the Dean Collins film clip in this newsletter.)

I wanted a “harder” soft look. So, I put the light farther away from Jessica’s face. I put it about 9’ up and directly in front of her face. It was tilted down about 60 degrees. (The diagram doesn’t

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<sup>10</sup> Actually, I tether the D4 to my MacBook Pro which I have mounted on my camera stand; I never have to walk to the generator. To change my output settings, I simply type on the computer keyboard. At the same time, I am tethering my D3 to the computer, controlling the camera with Capture Control 2 software and shooting into Lightroom. I’m going to do a story on tethering in an upcoming newsletter.

show the downward tilt of the light.) By moving it away from her face, I hastened the transition from shadow to highlight, giving me a harder edge where the two met.

The light was placed to create a form of “butterfly” or “Paramount” lighting (named for the look created by the studio’s glamour photographers of the / 30’s and ’40’s). The “butterfly” is the shadow thrown by and under the nose. There is also a slight “specular” highlight (a direct reflection of the light itself – as a shiny spot) on Jessica’s forehead. This, too, is characteristic of Paramount lighting. Had I used a true “hard light”, I would have had harsher shadow lines and a larger specular highlight.

The image was shot on my D2x with my AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.8D lens.

### Post Production

The image was processed and converted to a “toned” BW in *Lightroom*. By using the Grayscale sliders, I was able to leave a hint of color in the image. It took a short journey into Photoshop where I hit it with a light touch of Imagenomic’s [\*Portraiture\*](#). The harder the light, the more skin imperfections show. Jessica has almost flawless skin but I used *Portraiture* to remove some potential distractions. (I run this software, at low settings, on almost every “portrait” I shoot.) [For a discount on this and other Imagenomic products, see the discount section, below.]

### The Aftermath

Jessica loved the image. What did she notice first? Just what Hanson teaches she would notice first – her hair. She said this was the first time anyone had been able to make her thick, black hair look good. Thank you rim lighting.

The Miss Houston pageant people didn’t like the image. They said it didn’t look like Jessica the pageant person. And, I felt bad. When we took this image, I didn’t know that “Miss Photogenic” was determined by the head shot submitted, and that the winning images were always the full color, big hair, big smile, shots. I could have taken one of those and didn’t and feel like I let Jessica down.

But, Jessica’s positive response to it, and your feedback from when it was in the newsletter have bolstered my enthusiasm for it. I like this style of photography and will continue to try to master it.



### Quick Focus: Tips and Topics

**Blur and Grain:** Good friend and seminar instructor [Jim DiVitale](#) teaches that after one uses one of the blur tools, it is often essential to add some noise to the part of the image that has been blurred. If we don’t add the

grain, there is a jarring line between the blurred area and the remaining image – making clear the manipulation. In Photoshop, go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Jim suggests that 3% is a good general setting.

### **Heal and Clone – Follow the Lines:**

Graphic artist Mike Peyton, who I've worked with for almost 10 years, teaches that to make the results of our healing or cloning out hairs or wrinkles look seamless, we should always make sure we move the tool along the same lines that we are removing – not back and forth across them.

### **Public Service Announcement:**

Robert Stewart, a friend and student from the seminars, is starting a “professional level digital photography support group” which will meet to foster the professional growth and development of its members through camaraderie and mutual support and teaching. The monthly meetings will be free. For more information, contact Robert at [Robert@RLStewartPhotography.com](mailto:Robert@RLStewartPhotography.com)

### **Hanson Fong Posing Blocks at Discount Prices:**

Those who have taken Hanson's classes or who've read the [January Edition of this Newsletter](#)

know one of the secrets to Hanson's posing success: **you must avoid equal heights in your images.**



Hanson designed and sells a unique, lightweight, set of posing blocks. To “shape” our group shots, we put people on the blocks. Every time Hanson comes to Houston, he brings some blocks with him, and they always sell out. After his last seminar, he sent a couple of boxes of steps. Many are sold. There are some left over. All are for sale at the heavily discounted seminar prices. If you are interested, [email me](#).

## **Great Deals on Great Products**

### **From Our Sponsors For Our Students and Newsletter Readers**

Our sponsors are good people with great products. They are offering generous discounts to our students and readers. To take advantage of their kindness, use these discount codes when you make purchases from their websites.



[www.ononesoftware.com](http://www.ononesoftware.com)

**Discount: 20% and Free Upgrade to New Version**

**Code: PRFRE08**



[www.imagenomic.com](http://www.imagenomic.com)

**Discount: 10%**

**Code: PFP2007**



[www.software-cinema.com](http://www.software-cinema.com)

**Discount: 15%**

**Code: PRAIRIE08**

# Hands on Seminar News

## onOne Software e-seminar/Webinar



Our good friends at **onOne Software** are offering to do a private, free training seminar for our readers and students that will teach us the ins and outs of their entire product line. The seminar will be taught by Brian Kraft, *onOne's* VP of Sales. Brian is one of the guys you see at the trade shows demonstrating and teaching their products. The seminar will teach us how to use the products easily and effectively. For those who own *onOne* products, this is a great way to hone our skills. For those who don't, by using the free downloads, it's a way to learn before buying.

There is no better way to learn than to work along with an expert. And, Brian is that expert. How do I know? On my recent stay in Oregon, I visited *onOne*. Brian gave me a quick tutorial on a technique I needed to master; he made it simple. I'll share it with you in the next newsletter.

What's a "webinar"? It's a virtual classroom – a place we all meet while staying home or at work. All we have to do is pick a day and time. *onOne* does the rest. They send us an *Adobe Connect* URL and a phone number. All we have to do is connect and join in.

The seminar will last about an hour and participants will receive generous discount coupons for use when purchasing *onOne* products.

**Bottom Line: This is a free seminar taught by a nationally recognized expert. We don't have to go anywhere or do anything more than dial in. Who says there's no such thing as a "free lunch"?**

**If you are interested in having us set up this Webinar, please send me an email by [clicking here](#).**

I will create an enrollment sheet and ask those enrolled to help pick a date and time. Enrollment will be limited to 100 participants.



**You've Been Asking for a "Retouching" Seminar  
Here it is!**

**For the First Time  
in a Limited Enrollment Hands On Seminar**



**One of the Industry's Most Respected Image Doctors**

**Janice Wendt**

**2 Full Days – June 28 AND 29, 2008**

**\$350 for 2 Days**

**Bring Your Camera – Bring Your Computer For:**

**Retouching with the Master**

We all know we are supposed to “get it right” in the camera. But, when we shoot real people we face real problems – problems that we can fix if we know the tricks of the “image doctors”. And, no-one knows those tricks better than the Image Doctor to the Stars, Janice Wendt.

Why do I call her the Image Doctor to the Stars? Because, Janice has done the post production work for some of America’s best photographers on some of their best known images. People like her good friend Hanson Fong turn to her in their moments of need.



Here are two images that Hanson Shot in his last Hands on Seminar. Check out Dr. Janice’s special touches.

And, now, we have her in a small format, work-along-with-the-teacher seminar.

Why bring the camera? Because all good images start with a good exposure. We will spend some time in the studio discussing lighting and posing and the other things we have to do to get it “right” in the camera. It’s not known to many people that in addition to being a world renowned touch up artist, Janice is an accomplished portrait photographer. The studio session will allow her to share those skills with you.

After an introductory lesson, you’ll shoot some images to work on during the remainder of the class. We will also give you some images that present special challenges and we’ll work, together, to solve them. Finally, if time permits, we’ll give you a chance to work on some of your own “problem images” with Janice’s help.

No one can get good results without careful color management. It starts in the studio and ends with the print. Although this will not be a course in color management, we will spend a little time on the concept so that you can use what Janice teaches you to your full benefit.

Some times we really screw up and our images need a “total rescue” – like what to do when something goes wrong in the camera – like when we use the settings for an outdoor shoot under tungsten light, or when we underexpose, or you get the idea, when we have gray moments.

**But, the bulk of our time will be spent on two tasks: (1) solving the kinds of problems we can’t completely cure in the studio – things like bad skin,**

wrinkles and asymmetrical features or making people thinner, taller, or filling in a partial smile; and (2) making good things better, like making eyes “pop” and teeth glisten – some of the tricks of the fashion/glamour trade.

At a time in this industry when it is critical to be both “better” and “different”, we’ll learn how to give our images an “**edge**” or “**style**” that not all photographers can achieve.

As we all know, there are a myriad of ways to do the same thing in post-production. There are a ton of tools from which we can choose. In class, we will discuss the alternative ways of doing things complete with the “pros” and “cons” of each approach.

Because of the generous support of our sponsors you will have the use of trial versions of the software from *onOne*, *Imagenomic*, and *Nik*.

**The Bottom Line:** Even the best photographers have to retouch their images. In two days, Janice will teach us an approach to image doctoring that will improve the quality of our work and the ease with which we do it.

More on **Janice Wendt**:

I call Janice the Nik Diva – she’s the woman at the trade shows doing those amazing things with Nik products. When she taught a session in one of my Texas School classes, I decided I’d make every effort to bring her to Houston. With Hanson Fong’s help, I finally convinced her to come.

Janice, who is from San Diego, California, is one of the industry’s most respected retouch and image enhancement artists. She is often called upon to “train the trainers” on numerous techniques related to digital imaging. She spends much of her time working on educational projects for Nik Software and educates hundreds of professional photographers each year nationally in subjects related to the digital capture process, digital workflow and offers a practical view of the film to digital transition or conversion process for professionals.

Janice has fine-tuned her craft over the years and has a foolproof way of getting the most quality out of every image. She possesses a full understanding of the photographic process and has positioned herself as one of the true leaders on the topic of digital image enhancement.

Janice is an experienced commercial and portrait photographer with over 20 years of working in film and digital photography.

## Is This the Class For You?

Although there has been a lot of demand for “work along with the teacher courses”, and although I understand that we learn a lot more from doing than seeing, I’ve been hesitant to offer this type of course before because it is difficult to make sure that all of the students get a quality experience.

Simply stated, it’s hard to balance the class in a way that the topics covered are within the reach and understanding of all who attend. For example, I don’t consider myself an “advanced” *Photoshop* user. I figure I’m closer to being a beginner. However, in reality, I’m probably on the line between “intermediate” and “advanced”. Some of my friends who took “work along *Photoshop*” classes at Texas School grumbled that their classes were held back by people who had never studied *Photoshop* or had no idea how to run their computers. I’m sure that those people, who initially signed up for these “intermediate” classes did so in good faith; I can only imagine how frustrated they must have been when they could not keep up.

So, how do you decide if this class is for you? Here are a couple of questions you might want to ask yourselves:

Are you proficient on your computer? Do you know how to turn it on, download files, open, close and save files? Is your computer “stable”? Has it been trouble free for a while? Can you deal with crashes and freezes? Unfortunately, we won’t have IT support on site.

Are you proficient in *Photoshop*? Do you know the basic tool set? How to open new documents? What layers are and how to create them? Do you have a basic understanding of masks? Have you ever processed a RAW image?

As to the *Photoshop* questions, if you want to take the seminar, you can build some proficiency in these areas by reading and working with books, online training, and DVD’s – before you come to class. We don’t expect anyone to be experts in these areas. We do think you will need to know how to open the gate to the arena we are entering.

Are you too advanced for the seminar? That’s hard to tell. I really don’t know anyone, including our instructors Dave Cross and Jim DiVitale, who are too advanced to learn new *Photoshop* techniques. As many of you know, *Photoshop* is a “black hole”; it’s easy to be captivated, fall in and never come back. There’s always something new, a bit more down the hole.

We are posting this seminar a month before it will be held to give as many people as possible a chance to bring their skills up to the level which we think will ensure a positive experience in the class.

### What Am I Supposed to Bring to Class?

Please bring a laptop computer, an extension cord, and a power strip and a card reader; if you have a tablet, you may want to bring it. I'm sorry, but we cannot support desktop computers or large external monitors; there's just not enough room in the classroom. You will want to bring your cameras, meters and Pocket Wizards (if you don't have a meter or a Wizard, you can use one of mine.)

### To Get Ready for Class We Recommend:

1. That you download the trial versions of the software we will be using in class and familiarize yourself with what they do and how they do it. Proficiency is not necessary. Familiarity will be helpful:

We will touch on aspects of:

a. onOne Software – just click the link to download MaskPro 4.1, PhotoFrame Pro 3.1, Focal Point 1.0 and Genuine Fractals 5. This site has great video tutorials on each product. These are fully functional versions that expire after the trial period. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.ononesoftware.com/>)

b. Imagenomic – download and try Noiseware , Portraiture and Real Grain. These are fully functional trial versions – except they leave a watermark on your prints. You'll get to learn how to use them and see whether you like them, but you won't want to print the images. There are some excellent training materials on this site. (If clicking on the underlined text does not work put the following url in your browser: <http://www.imagenomic.com/>)

ALL TRIAL VERSIONS OF THE SOFTWARE HAVE A LIMITED "LIFE". **onOne** and **Imagenomic's** software expires in 30 days. **Nik's** expires in 15. PLEASE, BE SURE NOT TO START PLAYING WITH THIS SOFTWARE SO EARLY THAT IT EXPIRES BEFORE THE CLASS.

2. We will teach this course using *Photoshop* CS3. Most of what we do can also be done in CS and CS2, but we strongly recommend that you upgrade to CS3 if you can.



If you do not own *Lightroom*, you can download a free, 30 day, trial version from [Adobe](#).

3. When you come to class, we will give you a CD with the files we will be using in the exercises. So, you'll need a computer with a functioning CD drive and the ability to load the files.

4. We will also pass out trial versions of NIK software products.

This is a long description because we think we are offering a lot of class. We want to be very careful to let you know what we are going to be doing and give you a way to figure out whether or not you should take the class. We really don't want to discourage anyone. This class will work for people with basic computer and *Photoshop* skills.

Enrollment in this seminar will be capped at 15 students for the entire weekend. We expect this class to fill quickly.

#### But Wait, There's More

This seminar is being brought to you with the help of our sponsors – Houston Camera Exchange, the MAC Group, onOne Software, Photoflex and Imagenomic. Upon completion of the class you will be given certificates that allow you to purchase their products at discounted prices.

This seminar will be taught in the classroom and studio of:

PrairieFire Productions, Inc.  
7026 Old Katy Road  
Studio 162  
Houston, Texas 77024  
713.213.1133

**To Register For This Seminar:** [Click Here](#)

You will be taken to my website where you will fill out an enrollment form. After doing that, hit "submit", and you will see a "Pay Now" button from PayPal. When I receive your payment, I will send you a receipt and confirmation.

If you have any problems enrolling, please call me or send an [email](#).

This seminar will be taught at my Studio. Here's a [MAP](#).

If you have any questions, you can contact me by [email](#).

Thanks.  
Steve Herzberg.

Refund Policy: In these small classes, we do not offer refunds UNLESS we can fill the seat with another student. This often happens because we usually have a waiting list. But, there are no guarantee

## And Yes, There's More

### The Seminar Schedule for the Remainder of the Year

Dates:	Teacher:	Subject:	Comments:
<b>June 28 AND 29</b>	<i>Janice Wendt</i>	<b>Portrait and Fashion Photography: Capture and Retouching</b>	We've all seen her at trade shows and know her as the Nik Diva. Janice Wendt is actually one of the nation's best photographers and foremost image retouchers. We will start with capturing images and then, in the classroom, work along with her to make those images great. Bring your computers – this is hands on.

<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>July</b>	<i>Steve Herzberg and Mike Peyton</i>	<b>Pin Ups : The Entire Process</b>	In this seminar, we will create the art of the 30's through 50's, the stylized, romantic vision of the "perfect" woman. Blending the arts of photography and painting, we will run through the entire process. First we will conceive the shot, light it for green screen, pose and shoot it. Then, together, we will work on our computers creating the masterpiece. This will be a very low enrollment Hands On Seminar.
<b>Aug 30 OR 31</b>	<i>Steve Herzberg</i>	<b>A Little Less Talk -- And, A Lot More Action</b>	The seminar that pulls it all together – pure hands on. Small groups, you design the shoot, you work with the model, you light, you shoot, and you do the post production. All, with the close supervision and support of the creator and co-instructor of the Hands On Seminar series.
<b>Sept 20 AND 21</b>	<i>Jim DiVitali</i>	<b>Advanced Photoshop</b>	Bring your computer and work along with the master. All new lessons – tips and techniques.
<b>Oct 25 OR 26</b>	<i>Steve Herzberg</i>	<b>A Little Less Talk -- And, A Lot More Action</b>	The seminar that pulls it all together – pure hands on. Small groups, you design the shoot, you work with the model, you light, you shoot, and you do the post production. All, with the close supervision and support of the creator and co-instructor of the Hands On Seminar series.
<b>Nov 15 AND 16</b>	<i>John Woodward</i>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>Dec 13 AND 14</b>	<i>Tony Corbell</i>	<b>The Power of Light: 2008</b>	One of the nation's most honored and respected photographers teaches his first <b>Hands On Seminar</b> .

	<p><b>PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS</b></p> <p>Click Their Logos To Visit Their Sites</p>	
		
		
		
		<p><b>PHOTOFLEX</b></p> 

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are brought to you by:

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and not those of the sponsors.

To contact Steve, by email, [CLICK HERE](#).