Photoshop Tips

Tip #1:
Saving Images for the Web

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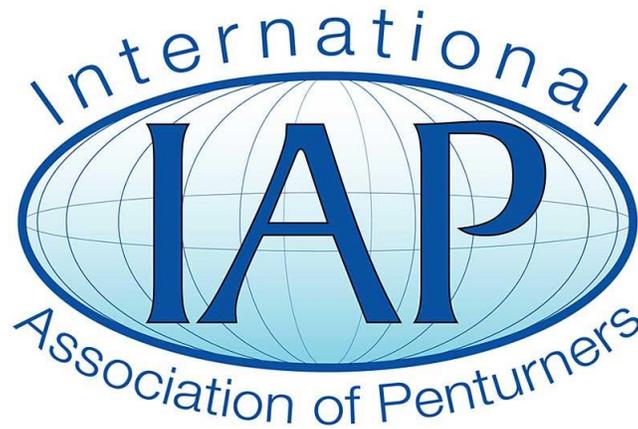
In Lewis Carroll's "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*", when the White Rabbit was reading evidence against the Knave of Hearts, the King instructed him to "begin at the beginning, and go on until you come to the end".

Well, I've always looked at things a little differently than most people, so I'm going to begin at the end instead. This mini-tutorial is about saving a photo for display on the world-wide-web. All the other photo editing tips I could give don't come to anything if you can't save your final image appropriately. This is a very simple and basic tip, but then much of using Photoshop is just a matter of knowing where to look.

I usually take pictures of pens so that I can post them on the IAP or put them on my website. For those purposes, I want an image that:

1. Is in a web-displayable format.
2. Has dimensions that will fit on the viewer's screen.
3. Is compressed to a file size that will download quickly.

There are many photo editing programs available that will produce such an image, but I will describe the process using Photoshop Elements 8. Other editors and other versions of Photoshop have similar functions, although the exact controls may be different. Also, there are several ways of making these changes within Photoshop - I'm going to discuss the simplest one.

Ok, let's say we have edited a photograph using Photoshop Elements 8, and want to save a version for posting on the web.

From the Photoshop main menu bar, select "*File -> Save for Web*".
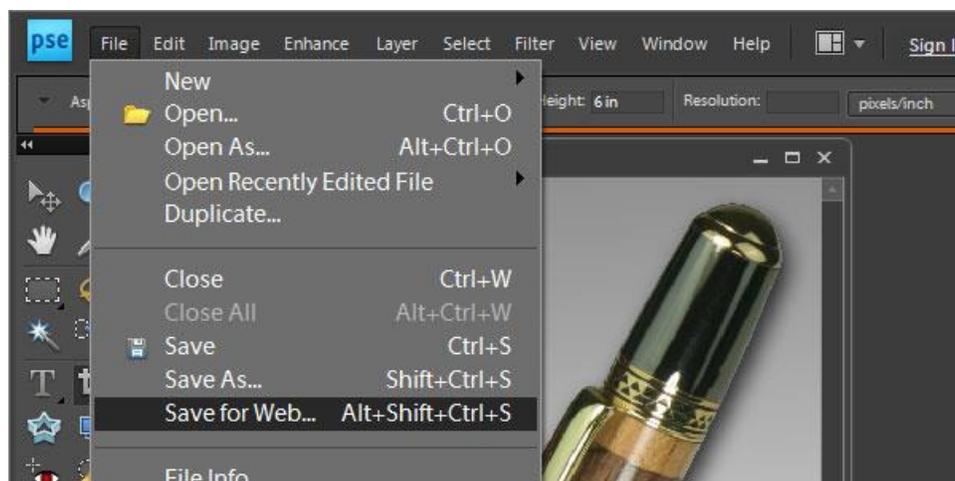
This will bring up a large dialog window.

This dialog shows two images, one in the current format (on the left), and one how it will look after saving (on the right). When you compress a photograph, you typically reduce picture quality. This preview helps you control the tradeoff between file size and image degradation. If you look closely, you can see the picture file type and size below each version.

The source image is in PSD format (which is not web-friendly) and is 18 megabytes in size. The output image will be in JPEG format and only 120 kilobytes. Increasing or decreasing the image quality will increase or decrease the target file size.
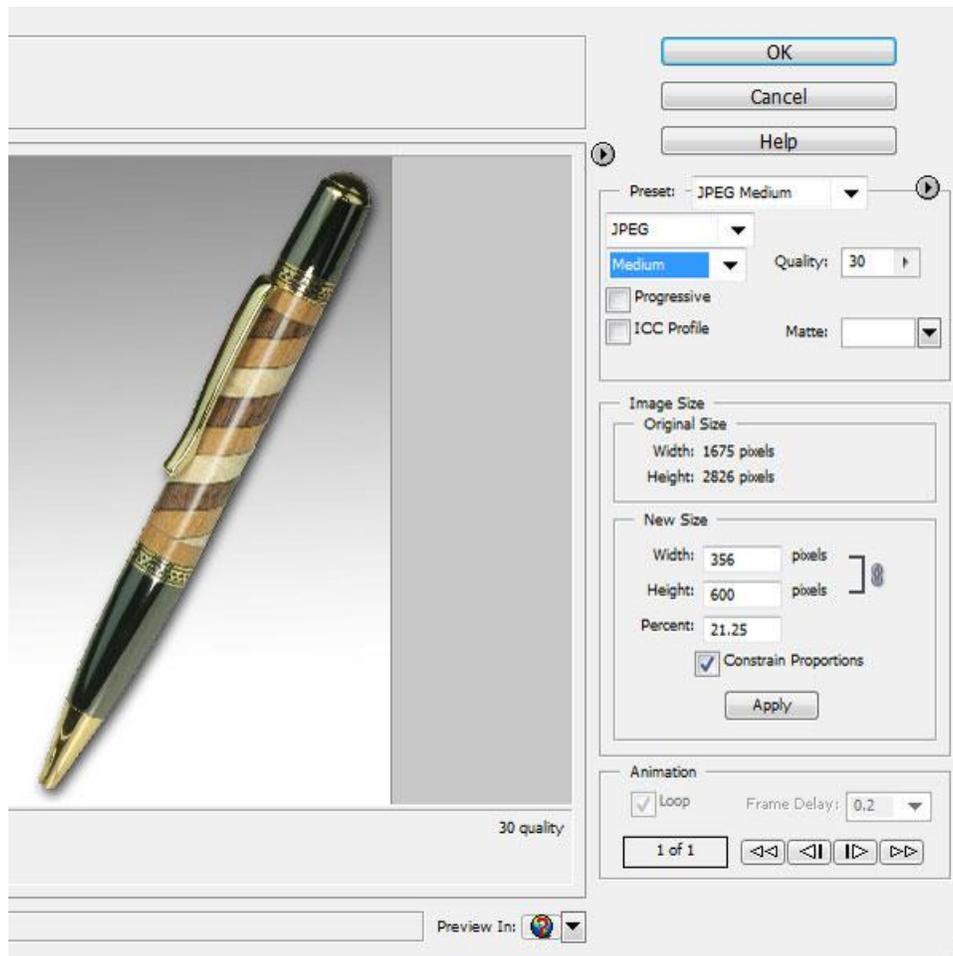
The right side of the dialog contains the controls. In the middle, you will see that the original image is 1675 pixels wide by 2826 pixels high. The version I'm saving will be 356 by 600 - a size more appropriate for websites. Note that the "*Constrain Proportions*" box is checked. That way, when I change one dimension, the other changes to maintain the photo's aspect ratio.

At the top, see that I've chosen the "*JPEG*" image type. This is the most common file format for photographs, and is supported by web browsers. I've selected "*Medium*" quality as a reasonable balance between image detail and file size.

When you get the results you want, click [*Ok*], enter the filename, and save the file. That's it!

Here's what the final result looks like: