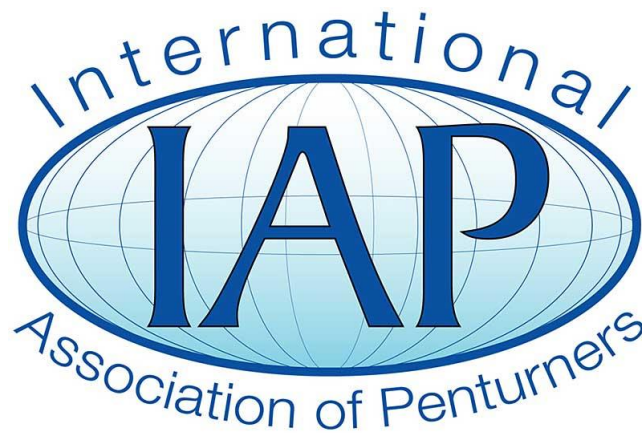


Photoshop Tips

Tip #9: Putting the Pieces Together

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This tutorial was downloaded from
<http://www.penturners.org>
The International Association of Penturners

I hope you've been reading my previous Photoshop Tip articles and have found them useful. Each one so far has focused on and illustrated a specific photo editing task using Photoshop Elements (I've used version 8, but the same functions are present in other versions and in other photo editing programs).

This tip is different. Instead of showing another Photoshop feature, I'm going to walk through a complete photo editing session, using the controls I previously described to turn an out-of-camera picture into one ready to post in the "Show-Off Your Pens" forum.

If you've followed along so far, but haven't managed to string all the pieces together, then this article should help.

The Starting Point

Here is the picture I'm starting with:

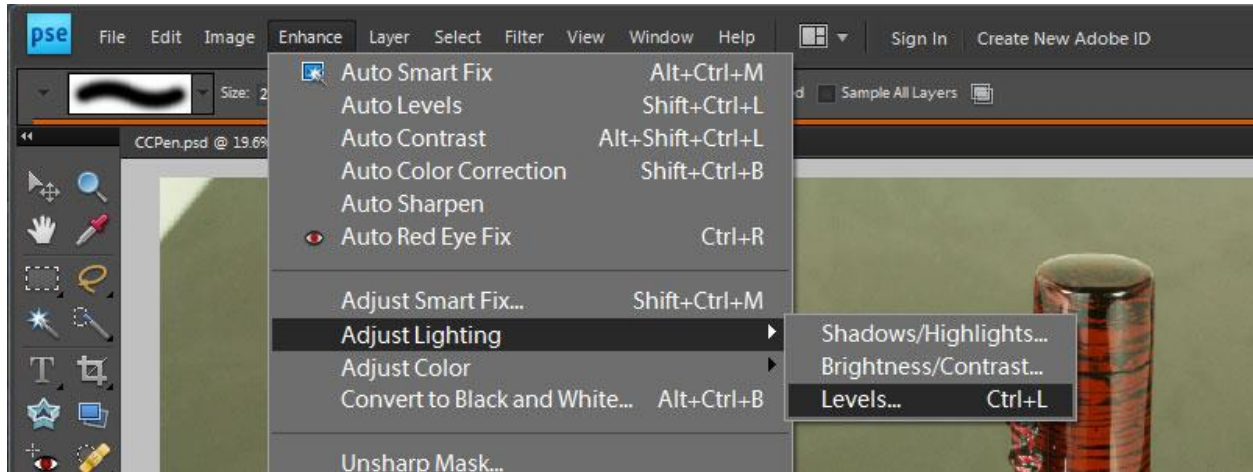


You can see that the white balance is off, and the shadow detail is muddy. It would be better to have taken the photo with the correct settings in the first place, but we can fix this in Photoshop.

Step 1 - Auto Levels

As shown in "Photoshop Tip #4: Dynamic Range", my typical first step is to normalize the photo's levels.

Click "Enhance -> Adjust Lighting -> Levels".



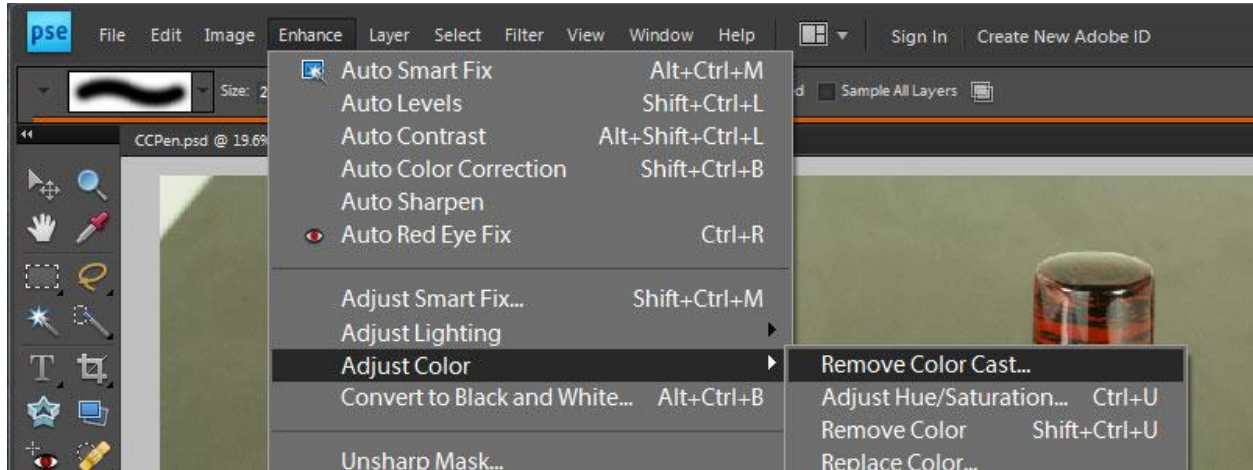
And then click on the "Auto" button. This is the result:



Step 2 – Remove Color Cast

The above picture is a little better, but the white balance is still off. I'll correct that using the method shown in "*Photoshop Tip #3: Correcting White Balance*".

Click "Enhance -> Adjust Color -> Remove Color Cast".



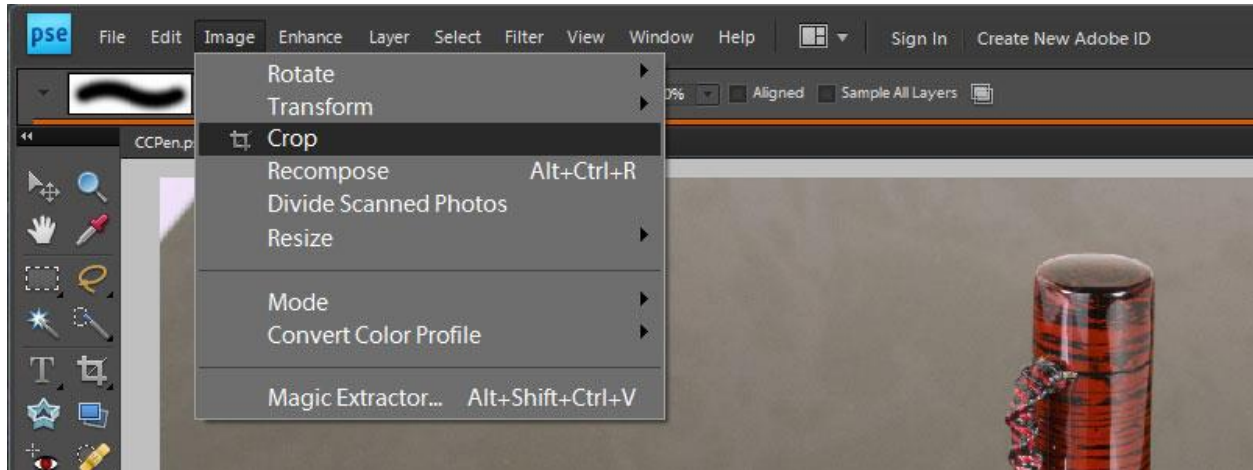
I then clicked on the background (which I want to be neutral gray) and selected "Ok". Now the photo looks like this:



Step 3 - Crop

There's still empty space and unwanted elements in the corners. I'll fix that using the technique described in "*Photoshop Tip #2: Cropping*".

Click "*Image -> Crop*" or click on the "*Crop Tool*" icon.



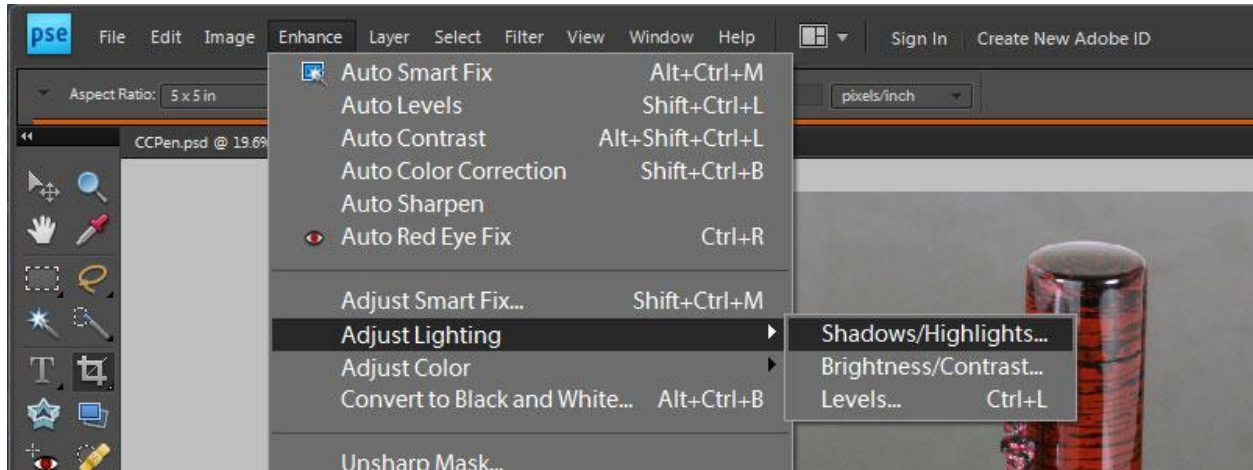
I've decided that this photo would look better in square format, so I chose an "*Aspect Ratio*" of "*5 x 5 in*" and cropped. This is the image now:



Step 4 – Shadows / Highlights

The shadow details are difficult to see. I'll bring them out as I did in "Photoshop Tip #5: Fill Light".

Click "Enhance -> Adjust Lighting -> Shadows/Highlights".



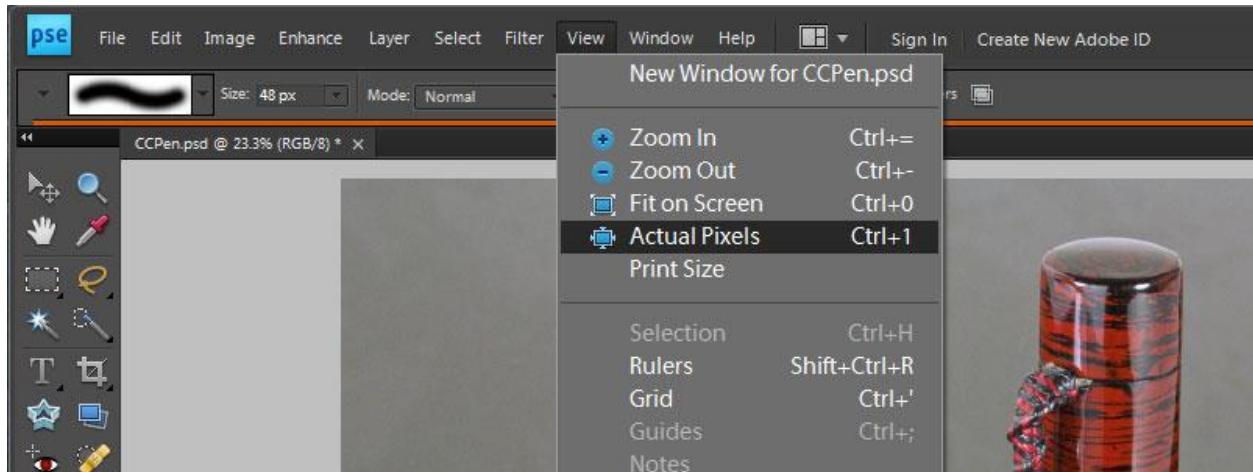
In this photo I adjusted the "Lighten Shadows" by 12%, the "Darken Highlights" by 3% and increased the "Midtone Contrast" by 3%.



Step 5 - Clone Tool

Unfortunately, bringing out the shadow detail also made the dust more visible. I'll delete the specs with the technique from "*Photoshop Tip #6: Fixing Small Defects*". I find this easiest to do working at the full photo resolution.

Click "View -> Actual Pixels" or press <Ctrl><1>.



Using the "Clone Tool", I removed the dust specs.

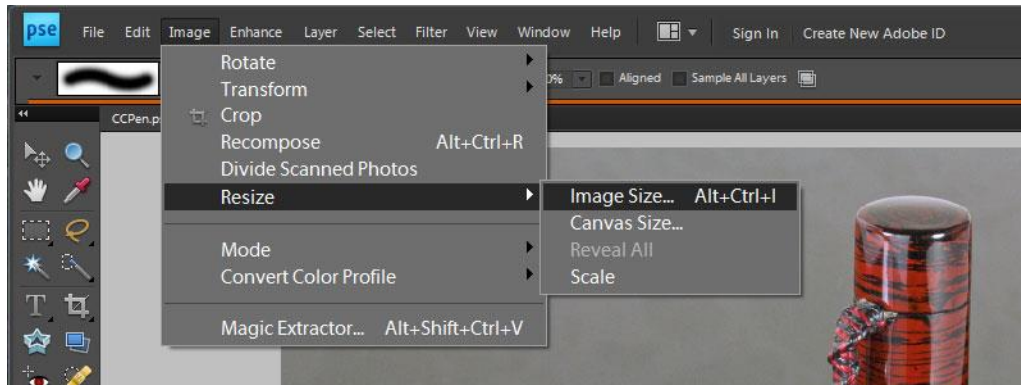


Step 6 - Resize

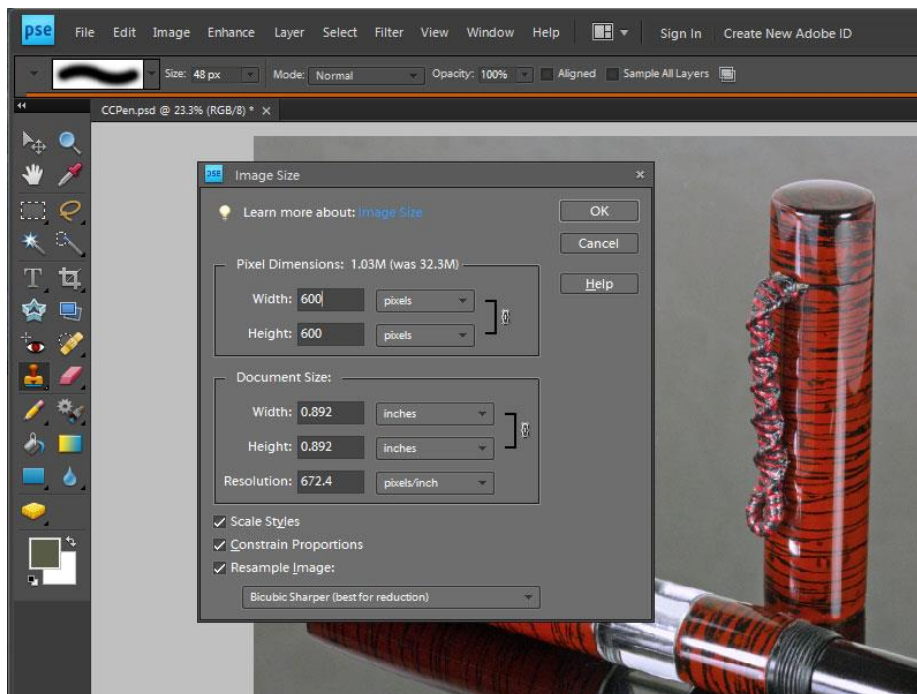
I could try to post this image to "Show-Off Your Pens", but its current size is 3362x3362 pixels. The IAP restricts image size to 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high. The IAP Upload Manager will resize the image, but it does a poor job. I don't want to display a blurry photo after putting in all this work.

Therefore, I'll resize the image myself using the way shown in "*Photoshop Tip #7: A Better Resize*".

Click "*Image -> Resize -> Image Size*".



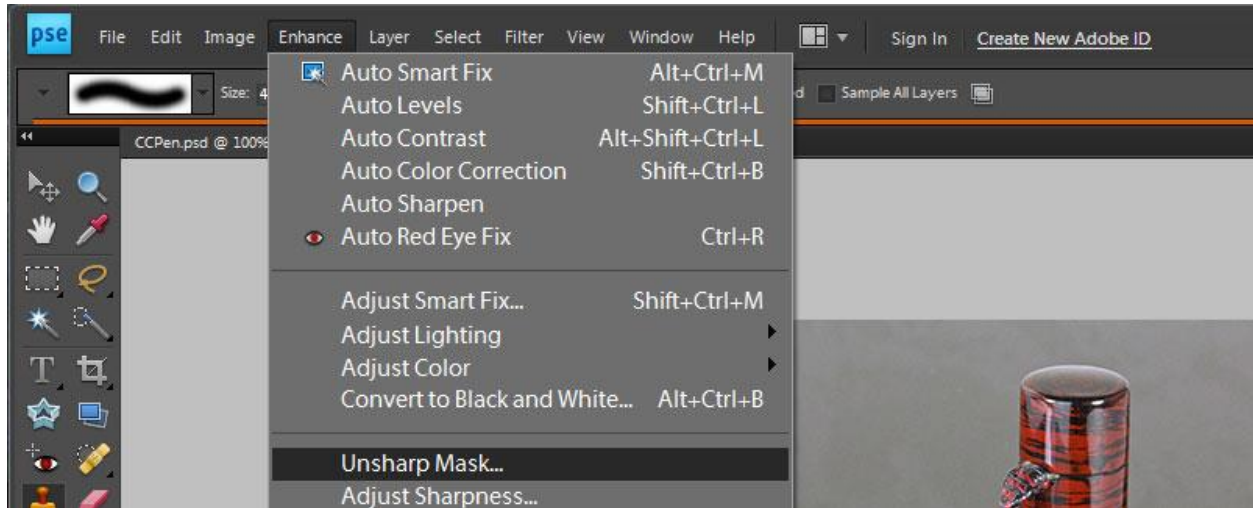
Select "*Constrain Proportions*", "*Bicubic Sharper*", 600 pixels high, and click "OK".



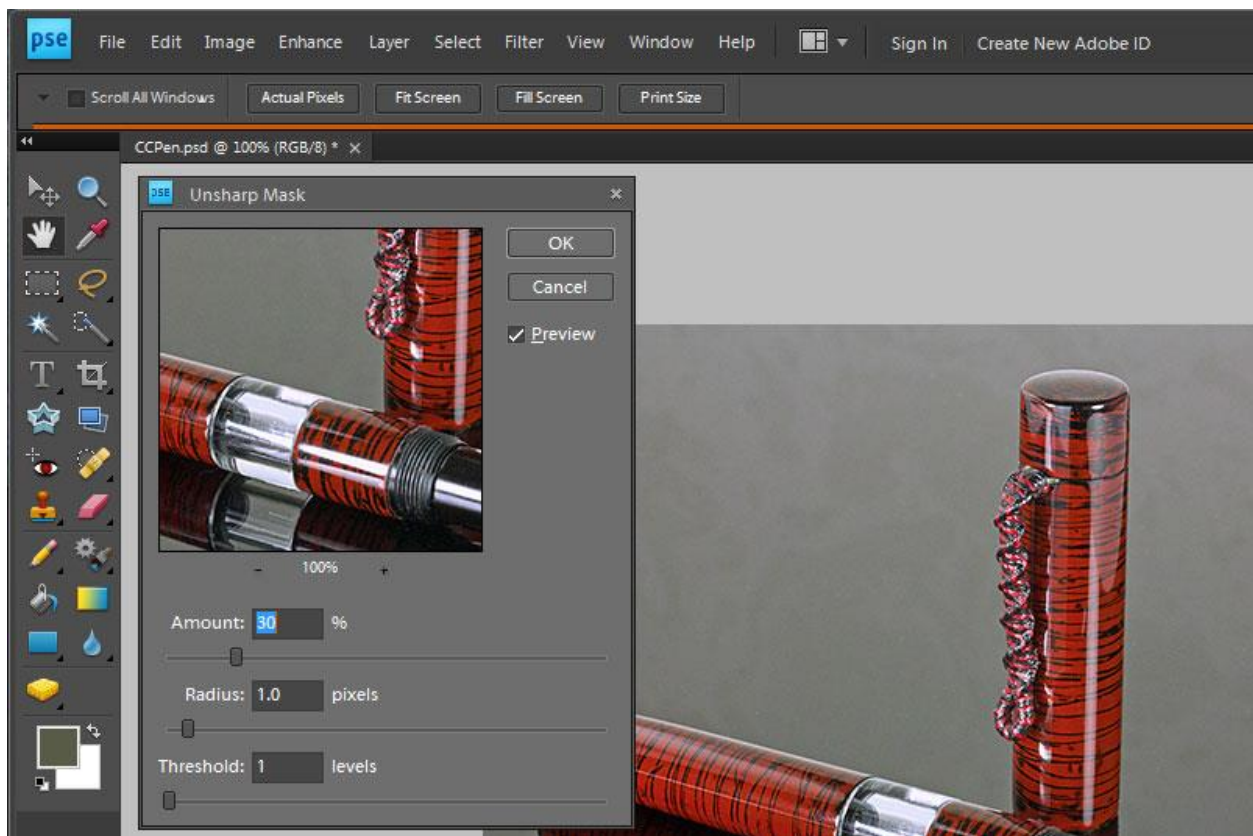
Step 7 - Sharpen

Resizing (even Bicubic Sharper) softens an image, so I'll sharpen it back up with the technique from "*Photoshop Tip #8: Sharpening*".

Click "Enhance -> Unsharp Mask".



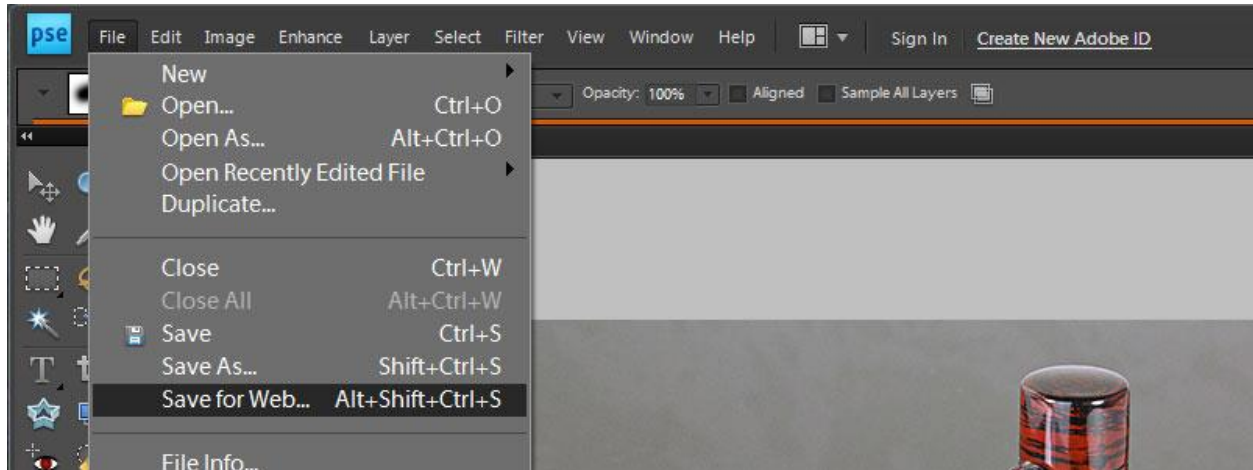
Don't over-sharpen, I only went to 30%



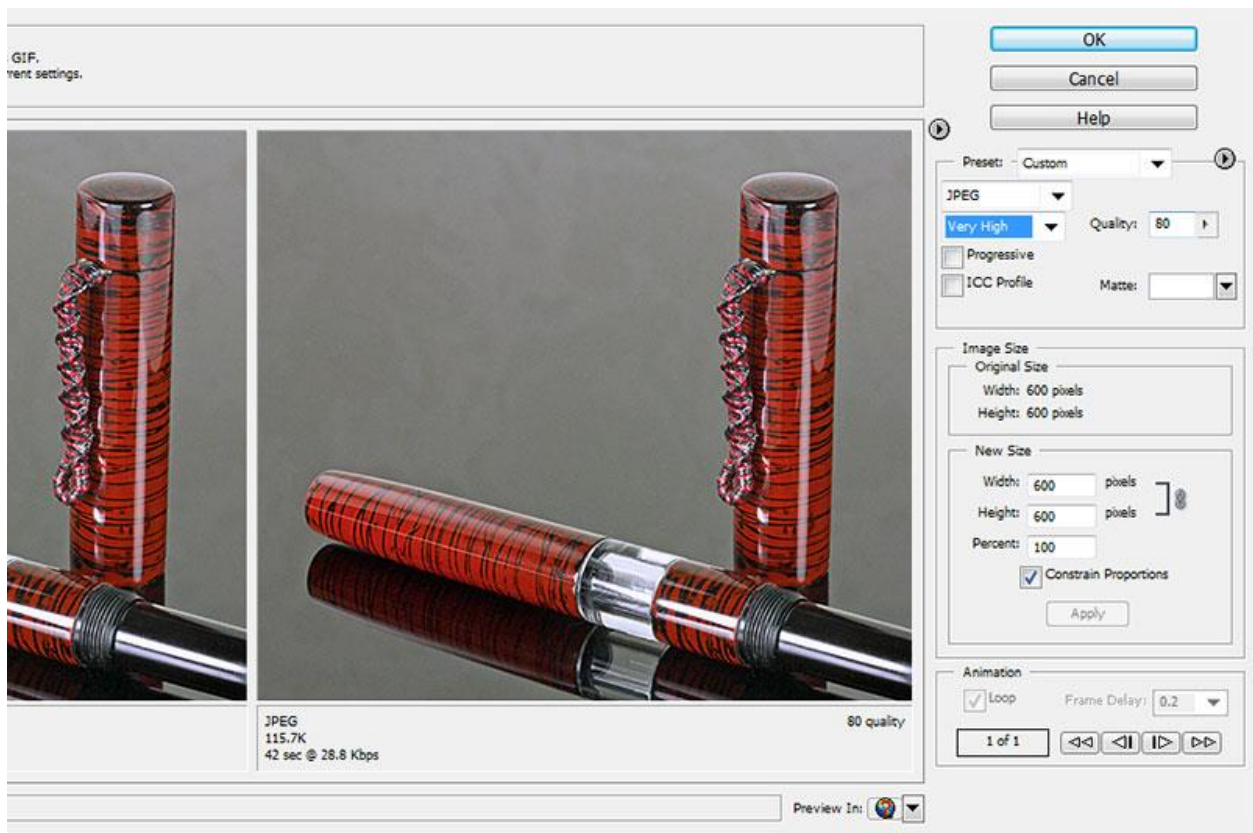
Step 8 – Save for Web

All that's left is to save the image which I do as in "*Photoshop Tip #1: Saving Images for the Web*".

Click "*File -> Save for Web*".



In the dialog, I chose "JPEG" format, "Very High" quality, which yields a file about 116kb, which is well within the IAP size limit.



The Final Result

Here is the finished image, ready to post on "Show-Off Your Pens".



Credits

This pen was crafted for the first IAP "Creative Collaboration Contest" by Team Hydra. Photograph by Eric Rasmussen (a.k.a. Sylvanite).