

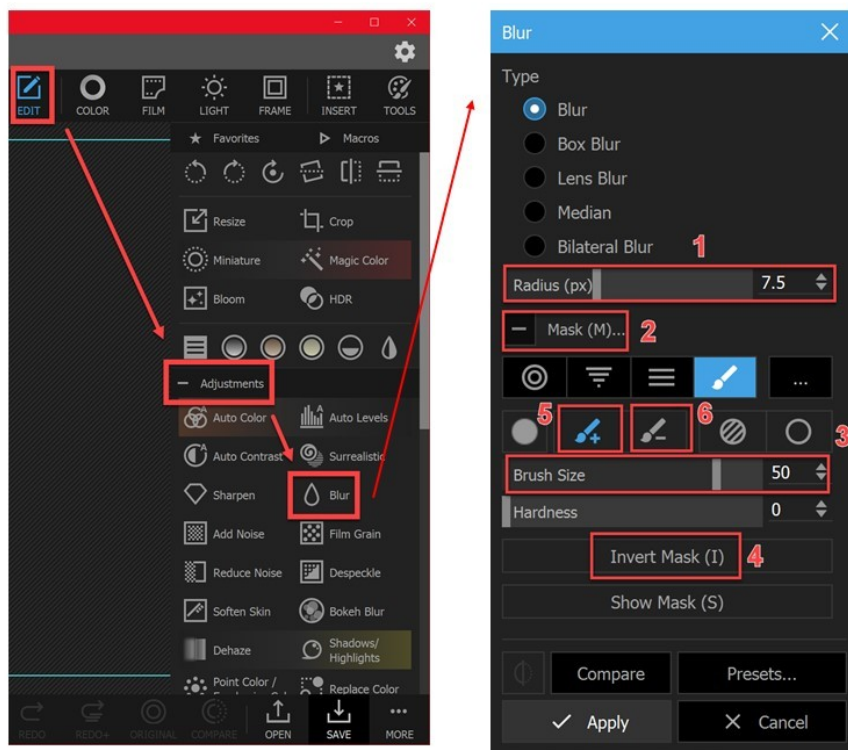
Through the Lens: A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts.
After the click of your camera, you're only half done!

Creating short depth of field with your computer

By Lynda Buske

A lens set to a wide aperture (low f-stop number) creates a shorter depth of field than when the lens is set to a narrow aperture (high f-stop number). A short depth of field softens or blurs objects nearer and further than objects at the point of sharp focus. If, for whatever reason, you don't get the effect you want while shooting (e.g., small sensor size, or forgot to set aperture), you can achieve it in post processing using photo editing software for your PC.

In the case of Photoscape X (free software I demoed at the April 2019 OCPUG meeting), make sure you are on the *Editor* tab. On the toolbar, click *Edit*. In the *Adjustments* section choose *Blur*. It will automatically blur your photo to a certain extent but you can increase or decrease this effect by changing the value for *Radius* (see 1). Click on *Mask* (see 2), choose a brush size using the slider bar (see 3) and paint (left click and drag) the area of your photo you wish to blur. Alternatively, you can paint the area you wish to keep in sharp focus and then click on *Invert mask* (see 4). If you make a booble while painting to an edge, you can change the brush from plus (see 5) to minus (see 6) and redraw your edge. Just remember to click back to the plus brush to continue your masking. Final step is to hit *Apply* and then *Save* or *Save As*.



Editor tab: *Edit* > *Adjustments* > *Blur*

Blur controls: *Radius*(1), *Mask*(2),
Slider bar(3), *Invert Mask*(4),
Brush: plus(5) or *minus*(6)

Keep in mind that you are adding a single degree of blur. When a short depth of field is created in-camera, objects close to the point of focus will be sharper than objects further from the point of focus. Blurring in photo editing looks more realistic when the objects being blurred are at a similar distance from the in-focus object, such as in the example shown.

In addition to the blur, it is sometime nice to add a black vignette to draw the eye towards the subject. You can find this under Edit/Adjustments/Vignette. You can adjust the size and intensity of the vignette.

