

## The Thin Black Line ...

### Preliminaries

It is important to know the following before you start thinking about adding the thin black line around the outside of your photos.

#1 How large will your final image be? You may be aiming to produce an image that is a certain number of pixels wide and high (like we do for the CCC contests), or you may be wanting to print an image to a certain size (I still think about this in inches instead of centimetres).

#2 If you are wanting to print an image to a certain size, you should decide how many dots (or pixels) you want per inch to produce your print. This is called the printing resolution. Almost everyone uses a number between 150 and 360. Canon printers traditionally use 150 or 300 dots per inch to produce their best work, while Epson and HP usually use 180, 240, 300 or 360. The final size of the print also should effect your decision, because the larger the print, the greater distance it is viewed from, and therefore the resolution can be lower. Using too high a resolution just makes your files unnecessarily large; too low a resolution makes your prints look "newspapery".

#3 The resolution required for an image to look good on a computer screen or projector is very low, somewhere between 72 and 110 dots per inch. Higher resolutions just make the image file larger and slower to load and transfer.

### Adding the Thin Black Line

Adding a thin black line around your prints sets off the image, provides a sharp border for high key images and contrasts well with the white paper we use to print. A line of between two and five pixels is the correct size, in my opinion, as I wish the line to be a boundary rather than a frame.

As a rule, I use a maximum of 5 pixels for the largest images I print (11" x 16" or 10" x 17" on 13" x 19" paper), and I reduce the thickness of the line as the size of the image decreases. For a submission to the CCC or CAPA, I use two pixels for the line width.

## Case #1: CCC or CAPA Submission

Prepare your submission for the contest, including all editing, etc. Do not do your final sharpening however, as this should be done after the image is resized to the required dimensions.

Resample the image to dimensions required, but reduce the size by 4 pixels  
For example for a landscape orientation, use 1020 pixels as the required dimension;  
for a portrait orientation use 764 pixels as the dimension.

Use your preferred method to sharpen the image. This will be your final sharpening.



Load *CCC\_CAPA\_Example\_A.jpg*. The original image was 1856 x 2700 pixels at 300 dots per inch. I resampled it to 525 x 764 pixels at 200 dots per inch.

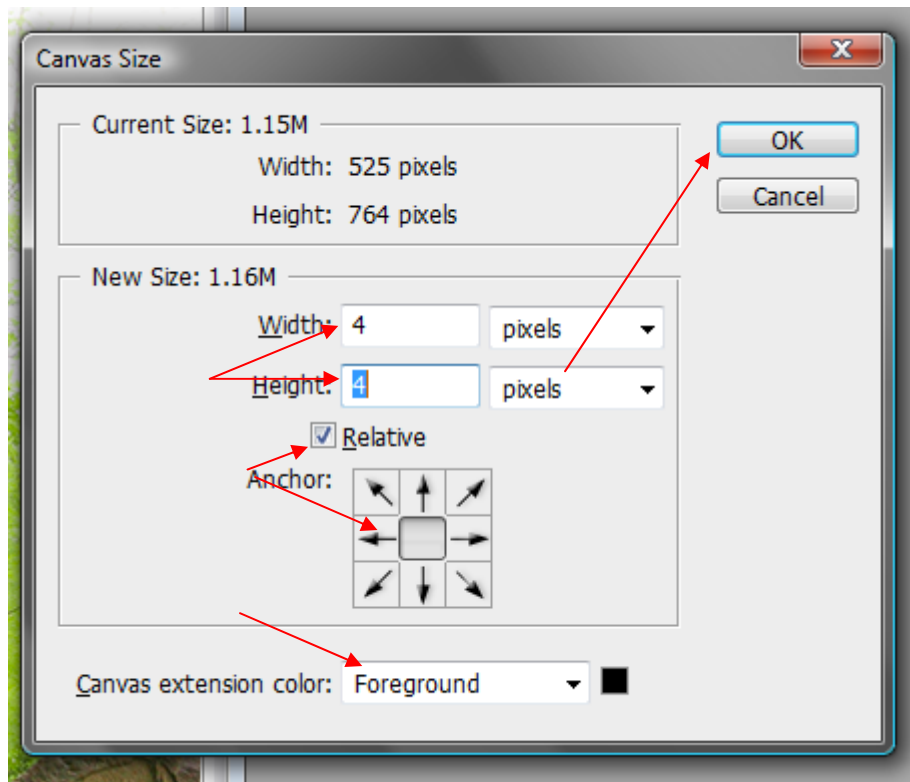


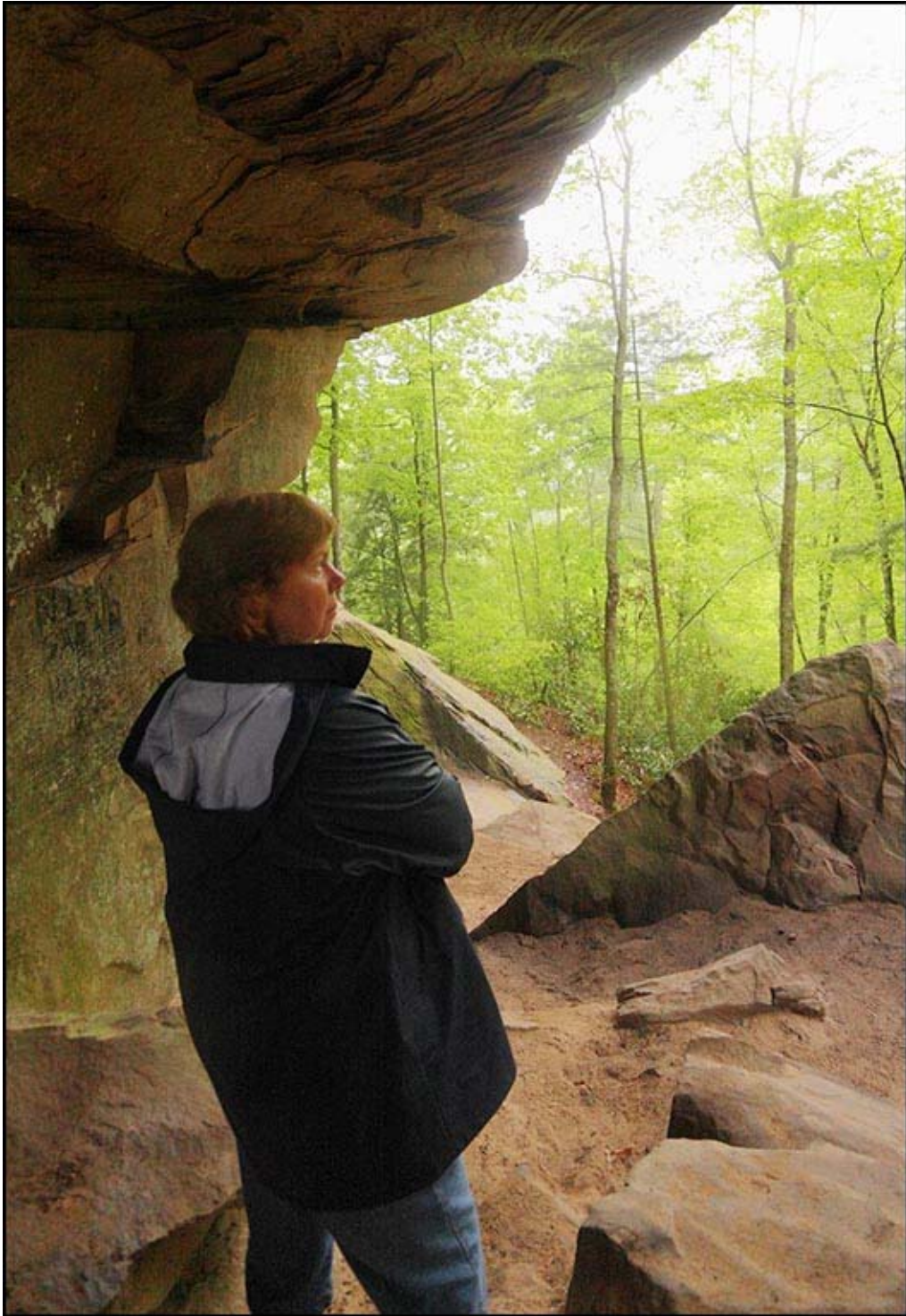
Make sure the foreground and background colours are set for black and white ... click the small overlapping squares to change them to this setting.

Click on *Image*, and then click on *Canvas Size*.

Type a 4 in the *Width* and in the *Height* boxes.

Make certain the *Relative* check box is selected, the *Anchor* square is centred, and the *Canvas Extension Colour* is set for Foreground. Click *OK*.





The image now has dimensions of 529 x 768 pixels at 200 dots per inch. The black edge line is 2 pixels thick on all sides.

## Case #2: Large Paper Print (on 13" x 19" paper)

Prepare your image for printing, including all editing, etc. Do not do your final sharpening however, as this should be done after the image is resized to the required dimensions.

Resample the image to dimensions required, but reduce the size by 10 pixels. For example for a landscape orientation, use 3390 pixels (17" wide by 200 dots per inch minus 10 pixels) as the longer dimension. Use your preferred method to sharpen the image. This will be your final sharpening.

Load *Large\_Print\_Example\_B.jpg*. The original image was 3939 x 2626 pixels at 300 dots per inch. I resampled it to 3960 x 2640 pixels at 240 dots per inch.

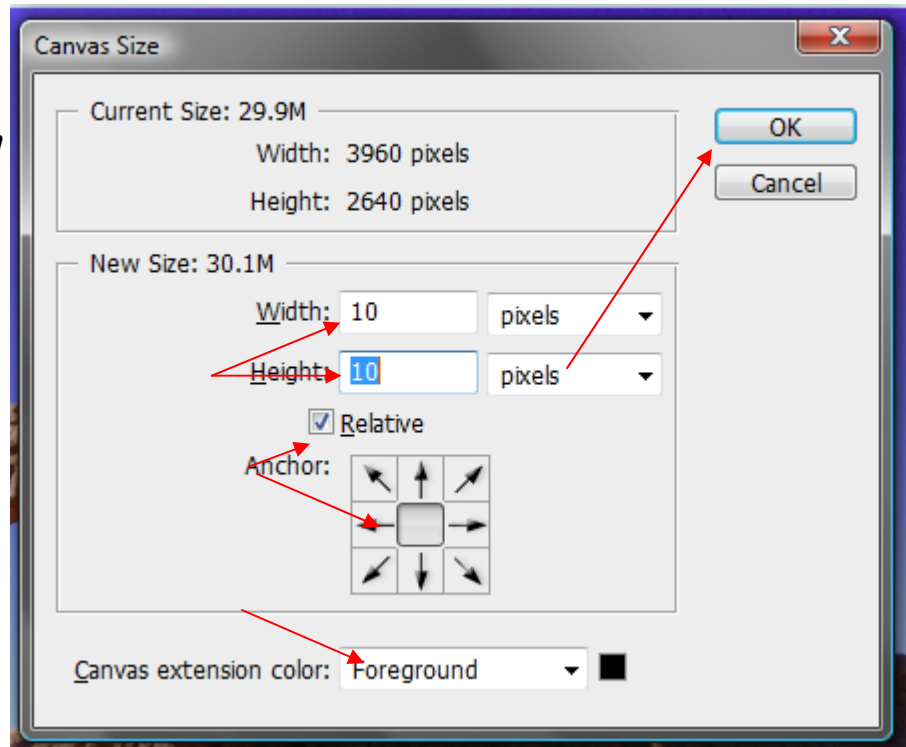


Make sure the foreground and background colours are set for black and white ... click the small overlapping squares to change them to this setting.

Click on *Image*, and then click on *Canvas Size*.

Type a 10 in the *Width* and in the *Height* boxes.

Make certain the *Relative* check box is selected, the *Anchor* square is centred, and the *Canvas Extension Colour* is set for Foreground. Click *OK*.



The image now has dimensions of 3970 x 2650 pixels at 240 dots per inch. The black edge line is 5 pixels thick on all sides (I can only show one corner!)

