

by Jack and Sue Drafahl

We're still amazed at the degree to which digital cameras, editing software and inkjet output have taken the photo world by storm. Walking down the congested aisles at a recent convention, we came upon a booth that looked like a set out of a Clive Cussler novel. It was fully equipped with an antique car and old-

fashioned scuba gear as props, and a photo studio with a digital camera. Visitors were invited to enter the scene to have a digital picture taken. The resulting image was a realistic-looking magazine cover complete with logo and a picture of the model as this month's star.

The people running the booth were creating dozens of covers with a digital camera, computer, inkjet printer, and a special type of software. Best of all, we found that the software is available to anyone who can take a picture and operate a computer. PhotoSuite II from MGI Software Corporation combines the features of a standard photo editing program with a graphics arts interface.

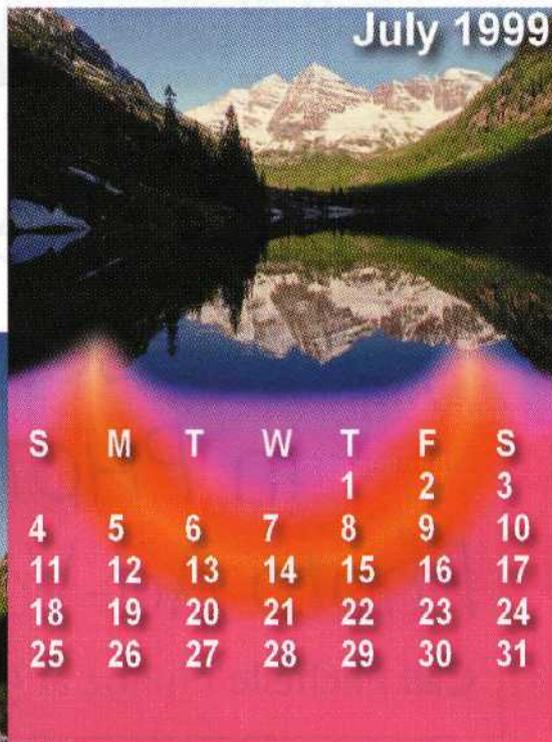
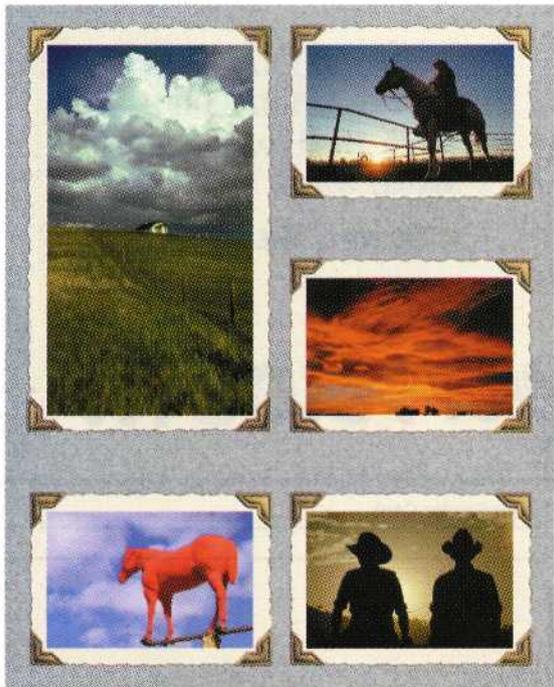
MGI understands that the average

photographer may not have the time or the graphic arts skills to put together a complex project. With PhotoSuite II, the process is automated so that all you have to do is come up with the images and the software does the rest.

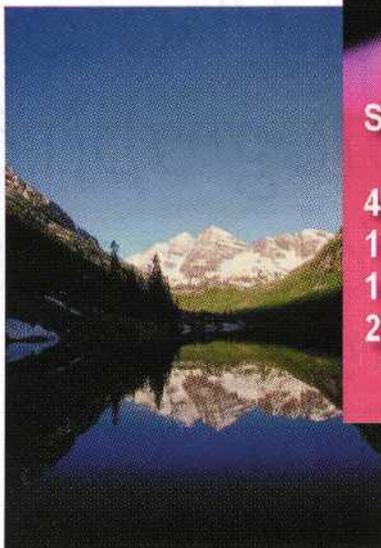
This innovative software allows you to design some pretty dazzling projects. You can create calendars, postcards, photo albums, greeting cards, wedding announcements, business brochures, and a dozen other applications. The projects use a variety of templates utilizing built-in automatic paste, blend, and masking functions. You can easily add text and drop shadows, as well as size, rotate and edit the photos. The entire process for creating these projects is very well organized and albums keep all the images at your fingertips.

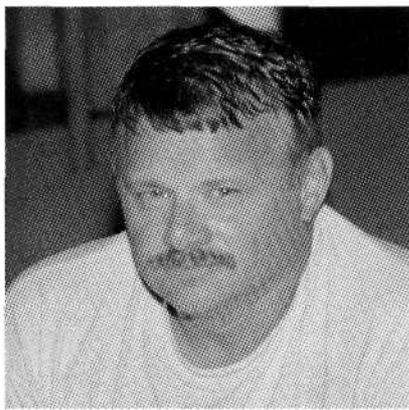
Upon opening the program, you are given six choices: Photos, Projects, Albums, Slide Shows, Internet, and Guides. Selecting the "Photos" button provides several sub-menus for bringing photos into your computer. The options are Computer Disk, Digital Camera, Photo Album, Scanner, and Internet. Once the picture is loaded into your computer, you can use the Edit function to fine-tune exposure, adjust color hue, sharpen, and remove red eye and other blemishes from the image.

You can also apply a variety of digital filters to make creative image variations. Some of the popular filters include

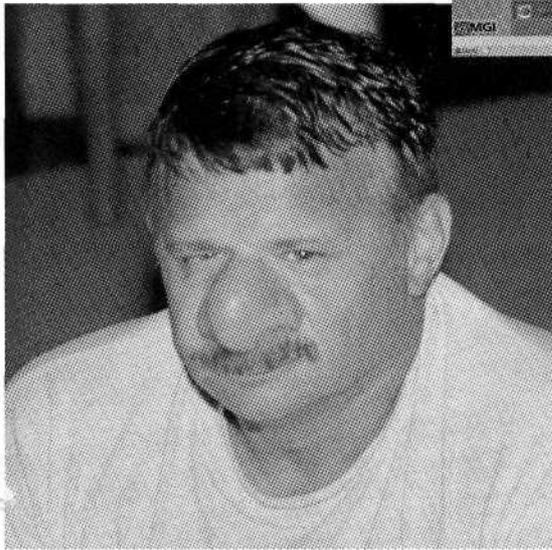
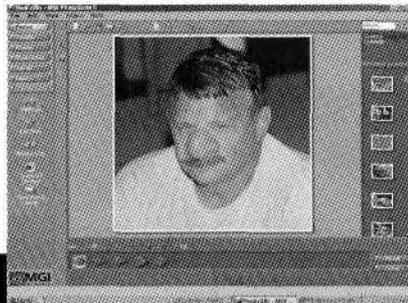


PhotoSuite II helps you create photo calendars, picture albums, greeting cards and a variety of other projects. There are also templates for business applications.





The program includes a variety of digital effects filters, including a "warp" filter that was applied to the author's nose.



emboss, posterization, cartoonize and spherize; and each variation can be saved in a dozen different file formats.

When you have input several images, edited them, and made creative variations, you are ready to use the "Albums" button. When you open this part of the program you name the album and tell it to collect images from the directory where you saved your images. Once the images are collected, you can select each image from the thumbnail version, add additional information about the photo and then re-save it.

Pushing the "Projects" button is where the fun begins. You can then select from four special sub-menus: Photo Layouts, Cards and Calendars, Fun and Business.

With the photo layouts you can create collages, group photos, comic book pages, photo albums, posters, edge effects and photo packages. The Photo Package function allows

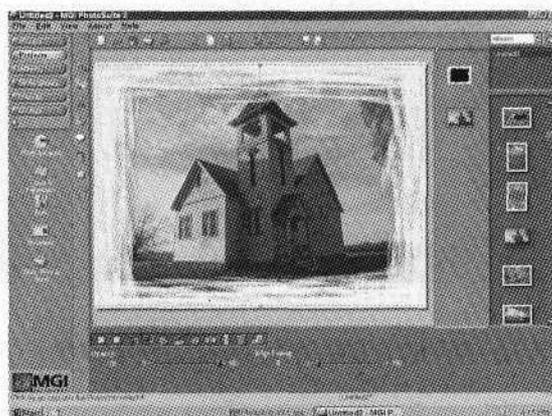
you to pick a multiple-print format and add different photos to the page.

The second function allows you to create bookmarks, calendars in all shapes and sizes, greeting cards, postcards and wedding collections. In each case, you

select a template and then add a photo from the photo album on the right. After refining your work with the template edit function, you quickly have a final masterpiece. With the "Fun" function, you can create sports cards, magazine covers, creative ID tags and photos with jazzy backgrounds. With Backgrounds you load in a surrealistic background, and then paste in a masked foreground image. Sports Cards allows you to combine pictures of you and your friends into several dozen types of sport cards. Magazines has a variety of realistic mastheads, bar codes, text, and special boxes. Just drop in your photo and a photo mask combines the image. Fun IDs is a collection of basic ID tag templates to which you can add photos and text.

The final section under projects is used for business applications. Here you can combine your photos with business cards, create stick-on labels, letterheads, brochures, name tags, and certificates. Several templates are displayed in each group; simply drop in your photo and PhotoSuite II does the rest.

Digital slide shows can be created by using the "Slide Show" button. You simply insert images from the album on the right to



The Photo Layouts menu offers a choice of edge effects for enhancing your photographs. This image is one of a number of stock photos included on the PhotoSuite II CD.

the film strip at the bottom of the screen. A transition menu lets you add a variety of special effects. When you have added all the images and effects, you can play back the show using the slide show controls at the bottom of the screen. The slide show can be played full screen and can be looped to play repeatedly.

The "Internet" button connects PhotoSuite II to the Web where you can update your program, download new templates, access online photo services, and receive tips on how to use the various functions.

The button called "Guides" is a help menu that answers your questions by sending you directly to the specific part of the program that will help solve your problem. There is also a complete help menu that can be accessed with the "F1" key.

PhotoSuite II is very easy to use. The automated paste and masking functions made simple work of what it takes hours to accomplish in the darkroom. The program's ability to bring in images from a variety of sources eliminates the need for other programs usually required to work with digital images. For more information contact MGI Software Corp., 50 W. Pierce St., Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada L4B 1E3; 905/764-7000. On the Internet at www.mgisoft.com ■

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