



The Backgrounder

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Summer Issue 2005

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Never Outdated

It doesn't matter how trends change, your Virtual Background system can keep you current simply by changing to new background slides. Whatever is popular with your customers, your Virtual Background system can create it for you...colors, indoor and outdoor scenes, computer graphics, abstracts, classical and contemporary art, and so much more. A Virtual Background system is truly a universal tool!

New Book, *Background Power!* Gets Rave Reviews

Although it has only been out for a few months, *Background Power!* is already getting rave reviews from those who have received a copy.

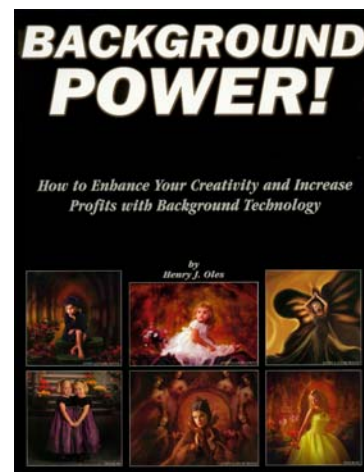
Ed Stroup of Diamond Portraits in Cincinnati reports, "It's the best book I have ever read and it really hits home. I sat down and read it cover to cover all at once."

Background Power! was written by Dr. Henry Oles, the foremost authority on Virtual Backgrounds. However, the book is about much more than just backgrounds. It contains a huge amount of information about innovative marketing and operating a successful profitable studio in today's

environment. If you are in portrait photography, working out of your home or running a chain of studios, this book is for you!

Background Power! is sold with a very unusual guarantee of satisfaction. If any reader does not feel it was worth the price of \$39.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling, they can call and get an immediate refund. So far, no one has asked for it yet!

Background Power! is available directly from Virtual Backgrounds and will soon be available from other sources as well.



It's Like Steroids for Your Studio

Many portrait studios today are finding it increasingly difficult to grow, let alone turn a good profit. Many photographers blame their problems on the economy. In reality, the problem is not the economy. The real problem is that today's customer wants far more than what the typical photographer offers. They want more variety. They want different "looks." They want portraits that they cannot do themselves with their new 6.3 mega pixel digital camera.

So...what is a photographer to do? Many photographers offer photojour-

nalistic type images that are shot on location, but many customers respond by doing their own candid images. Professional portrait photographers must offer something that their customers can't do on their own. The answer is in introducing infinite background variety which also means more variety in posing and lighting, without having to leave the studio. Photographers who really get into using a Virtual Background system report that it indeed is like a steroid...it enhances and builds the business.

Unfortunately, many photographers just haven't appreciated the power of the background and background variety to enhance business. Many photographers still think that the more simple the background, the better. This is the primary reason for publishing *The Backgrounder* electronic newsletter—to provide a continuing flow of ideas to professional photographers about how they can grow their business through background variety....ideas that they won't find in magazines or at platform presentations.

Where in the world is San Marcos, Texas?

San Marcos, home of Virtual Backgrounds, is a relatively small university town (Texas State) with a population of 45,000. It is centrally located along Interstate 35 just 30 miles south of Austin and 50 miles north of San Antonio. Both cities have major airports and are popular tourist destinations.

Located on the edge of the beautiful Texas Hill Country, San Marcos is also a popular tourist site drawing in hundreds of thousands of tourists

each year to float the natural spring fed 100% artesian river or shop in two of the world's largest outlet malls. Many workshop attendees come early or stay late to take in the sites.

If you are ever in our area, give us a call and stop in for a visit, even if only for a short time. For more information on San Marcos, our Texas Natural and other surrounding attractions, simply click on a corresponding logo! Come by for a visit, bring

your camera, and test drive our Virtual Backgrounds systems. You'll be glad that you did!



Virtual Backgrounds Sponsors Speakers World Wide

If you are involved in selecting program talent for your association, keep in mind that Virtual Backgrounds sponsors a number of speakers who are well known for their use of the Virtual Backgrounds process. These include Joseph and Louise Simone, Trevon Baker, Rick Harding, Rick Avalos, Shirley Robinson, Dean McDonald, and others. For further information, [contact](#) one of our friendly consultants.

Virtual Backgrounds Programs

If you are looking for an exciting and informative program for your professional organization, consider a program on Virtual Backgrounds. It will be new and different and filled with a multitude of ideas. [Contact](#) one of our consultants at Virtual Backgrounds for more information.

VB Website Available in English, Spanish and German

Did you know that when you navigate to the Virtual Backgrounds web site, you can click on a preferred language? At this time, the site is available in English, Spanish and German. Nearly all of the web site has been translated into these three languages.

Our implementation of multiple languages is a direct reflection of the world wide interest in Virtual Backgrounds among photographers! Customers everywhere are looking for more variety in their photography and photographers are responding with offering Virtual Backgrounds.

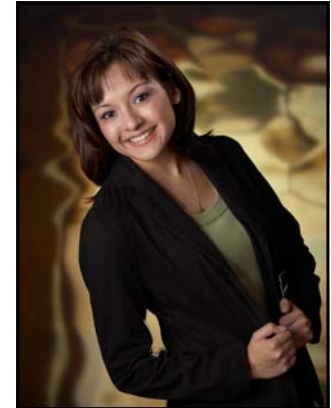
If you haven't already done so, check out our website at www.virtualbackgrounds.net.

Using Backgrounds to Sell Foregrounds



eye going straight to the subject's face and no where else, the eye goes to the subject's face and then scans the overall image and the brain comes up with a perceptual summation of *all that is viewed*. As a result, a less than perfect subject in an attractive environment and pose with good lighting and expression can look much more attractive in their setting because the brain's perceptual process adds up all the components of the image.

Your subjects want to look good. If your methods can make that happen, they will praise your work and buy your results...and send their friends to you as well. It is very possible that subjects will come to you because of your backgrounds...because you are



different from the "run of the mill" photographer. They will also come to you if you offer desirable portraits that they cannot do themselves with their super duper 6.3 mega pixel amateur digital camera.

It is even possible to have subjects come to you solely because of specific backgrounds you have available. In the book, *Background Power!*, it is discussed how one can use service club backgrounds like the symbol for the Rotary Club, as a background. Using the club symbol will help you get the opportunity to photograph the group. With Virtual Backgrounds, you can quickly change to other backgrounds and that is where your sales really happen!

Although some photographers feel that the less the viewer sees a background in a portrait, the better, in reality, the background can be a very complementary dimension in a portrait. We call it the fourth dimension of photography with the other three dimensions being lighting, posing and expression. It is the fourth dimension that enables the photographer to do so much more with the other three dimensions and can help set the statement for the overall portrait.

This does NOT mean that a background should detract from a subject. The subject is still the key element, but the subject can be enhanced if he or she is coupled with a complementary background. Instead of the



Background Library Highlight: Summer Greens 1 & 2

Summer is here and many of your clients are requesting summer portraits. Seniors want their portraits to look natural. Families want something they can hang over their fireplace mantle reflecting the current time of the year. But it's hot outside and going on location can sometimes be a discouraging and a not-so-cost-effective way to conduct your business. The solution: Bring your clients into your studio but place them outdoors in their portraits! With libraries such as Summer Greens, your clients can be photographed comfortably in your air conditioned studio, yet have the look and feel of great outdoor portraiture! [Click here](#) to see other background libraries offered by Virtual Backgrounds!



Virtual Backgrounds for Video Production

In the next issue of *The Backgrounder*, we will have a feature article on using the Virtual Background process for video production. Most people think that video work automatically calls for green screen. Not so! There are many applications for using projected Virtual Backgrounds for video backgrounds. In addition, a Virtual Background system can be used to project green or blue light to create a perfect Chromakey background. A projected Chromakey background eliminates some of the key problems that are associated with Chromakey. Projected backgrounds for video is sure to cause a stir in the video world.

Frequently Asked Questions

Got questions about Virtual Backgrounds? We have the answers! Visit our Virtual Backgrounds web site, go to [FAQ](#) and read "Your Questions Answered." We've taken just about every question that has ever been asked about the Virtual Background process and provided clear written answers. If you have still more questions, simply call or email Virtual Backgrounds for a personal consultation.

New Props are Being Designed Exclusively for VB

Props are an important element for most work created with Virtual Backgrounds. Until now, Virtual Backgrounds photographers had to choose from available props that were not fundamentally designed for maximum flexibility with Virtual Backgrounds. We are currently in the process of designing props specifically designed. Further detailed information will be available in the Fall 2005 issue of *The Backgrounder*.

Virtual Backgrounds' Annual Print Competition

Virtual Backgrounds is holding its annual "Best Of" print competition. This competition is open to any professional photographer who uses a Virtual Backgrounds system. The only criteria is (of course) that images submitted must have been created using a Virtual Backgrounds system. It is an Open Category only.

The owner of the winning print will receive a \$300 gift certificate to Virtual Backgrounds and will be a **Featured Photographer** in the Fall 2005 edition of *The Backgrounder*. Second Place will receive a \$200 gift certificate and third place will receive a \$100 gift certificate.

Submit 8x10 prints to

Virtual Backgrounds
c/o Jen LaGrange
101 Uhland Road, Suite 106
San Marcos, TX 78666

Maximum entries: 5 / studio

Deadline for entry:
September 1, 2005

Winners will be announced in the Fall 2005 edition of *The Backgrounder*!



2004 Winning Print
Carrell Grigsby Photography
Austin, Texas

VB People Spotlight: Patrick Riley & Terry Deglau



Patrick Riley (pictured above) of Ottawa, Canada has been designated as the Canadian Representative for Virtual Backgrounds. Pat has a great deal of experience in the actual use of Virtual Backgrounds. For 15 years, he was the manager and then the owner of Portraits Now, based in Ottawa.

Portraits Now was the world's first retail mall location studio offering one hour service on proofs and one hour service on finished prints, back in the days when everything was non-digital. Every portrait taken in Portraits Now was done with an early version of the Scene Machine.

Quoting Pat, "I wouldn't know how to operate a portrait studio without

a Scene Machine...nor would I want to. The Virtual Background system just gives me so much versatility that isn't possible in a standard studio with regular backgrounds."

In Pat's role as a Virtual Backgrounds Canadian representative, he will be talking with professional photographers about his experiences with Virtual Backgrounds. He will also be attending trade shows in Canada. Pat can be reached at 613-321-8773 or priley@virtualbackgrounds.ca.

Terry Deglau (pictured right), one of the best known photographers in the country, has also joined Virtual Backgrounds as a consultant. Terry's history in photography goes way back to his Grandfather Elmer who started a studio in Latrobe, Pennsylvania in 1920. His dad, Henry Deglau began working in the studio in 1930. After graduating from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in Photographic Science, Terry officially joined the studio in 1964.

In 1985, Terry was invited to join Kodak in the position of an Instructor in the Marketing Education Section and later became Marketing Manager of Professional Photographers for the United States. He remained with Kodak until 2001 when he became an independent



industry consultant. Terry also continues with his speaking and teaching on a variety of photographic topics including the use of Virtual Backgrounds. He currently serves as one of a very select group of only ten photographers in the country as a Kodak Mentor.

Terry has long recognized the value of using backgrounds to enhance professional portraiture. He was instrumental in introducing Joseph and Louise Simone to the Virtual Backgrounds concept and he also worked closely with Don Blair as he developed his approach to using Virtual Backgrounds.

We welcome both Patrick Riley and Terry Deglau to the Virtual Backgrounds family.

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Rick Avalos Scores Big with His New Scene Machine



Only four months after receiving his first Virtual Background system, Rick Avalos hit it big with his new Scene Machine! After a little bit of practice, Rick started to achieve what he felt was award level work so he submitted an image to the Professional Photographers of America for national judging. Not only was the print accepted for merit, it was also accepted for the PPA traveling Loan Collection which means Rick's print will be shown in exhibits around the country. It will also appear in a book published each year by Marathon Press.

In order to become part of the PPA traveling Loan Collection, a merit winning print has to be considered so superior that it can be used as an example for other photographers as well as for the general public to view. Only a small percentage of the many thousands of prints submitted to PPA

for judging each year are selected for the Loan Collection.

Rick comes from a family of photographers. His father, Jack Avalos, started the Pueblo, Colorado studio in 1947. Rick joined the studio when he was very young. The studio had always been very traditional when it came to studio backgrounds, using only traditional canvas and muslin. They did not even have any polystyrene sets. But Rick clearly noticed the difference in the customers the studio served, especially the younger ones. They were looking for something different...something that reflected their style and personality. To accomplish this "new look" for Avalos portraits, Rick turned to adding background variety to his portraiture and chose to work with the Scene Machine Digital from Virtual Backgrounds.

Quoting Rick, "I was really surprised to find how easy it was to work with the Virtual Background system. I had some experience with a background system years ago, but now,

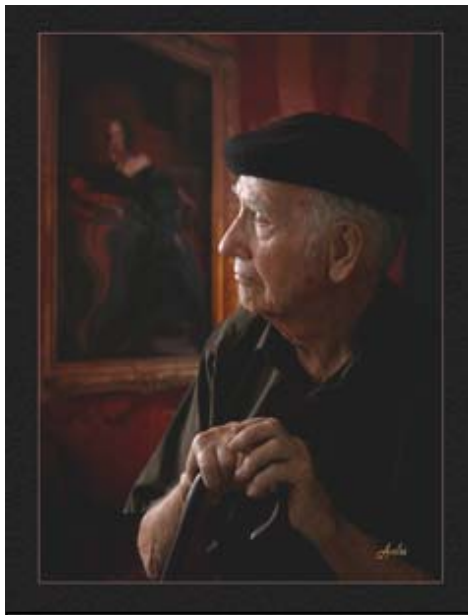
it is so simple to use."

Continuing, Rick said, "What really excites me is that I haven't had to change my lighting strategy even though I am using a Starfish which didn't used to work with Virtual Backgrounds. They tell me the secret is in the new screen technology."

Rick initially was concerned that his subjects might be uncomfortable with sitting in front of a black screen and not

knowing what the background was going to be, but he simply turns this around to being a positive. He talks with his clients about the new technology and the exciting things he is putting behind them. When they see their results, it is all OOOHHHs and AAHHHs. Sales are great!

Always a believer in providing his clients with more variety and more creativity, Rick is now able to inject more creativity into his sittings than ever before. While he still reports that he personally likes classical type backgrounds, he admits that kids



The above print is in the 2005 Professional Photographers of America Traveling Loan Collection. This is the highest award given to a photographic print by the PPA.

today want a jazzier look. Many of them actually reject the old classical look. Now he is able to give them both...the more classical look to suit the parents and the jazzier look to satisfy the subject.

Rick is anxious to share his new tools with other photographers. He is also eager to do more programs in which he will present his work with Virtual Backgrounds. His programs are based on Tom Peter's three elements for success which include quality, service and innovation. Rick believes that we have to show the public something innovative and creative...something new every year



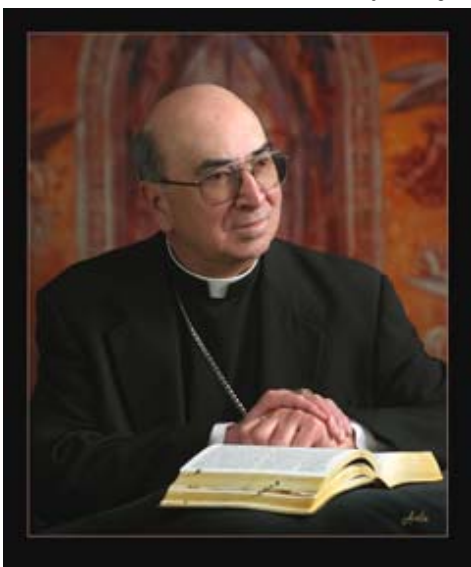
that they can't get right next door or with their own cameras.

Rick has already done a couple of proms with Virtual Backgrounds. He finds it much easier to bring a Virtual Background system than it is to lug around an entire set. And, the kids love having custom backgrounds for their event. A recent event had a wild west theme and the kids wanted a desert scene with cactus. Rick found it easy to create the scene from a slide and then added a few props.

"Virtual Backgrounds came at a good time for us...we needed it...and we had time to learn to use it."

Rick's first presentation of Virtual Backgrounds to other professionals came recently in Phoenix. He had a system set up and operating with the images he captured being transferred immediately to a viewing screen.

We at Virtual Backgrounds are thrilled to have Rick using our equipment, winning awards, and talking about it to other photographers. Keep up the great work, Rick!



VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS' 1ST ANNUAL GIANT WAREHOUSE *CLEARANCE SALE*

**SAVE BIG DOLLARS ON MANY ITEMS INCLUDING SCENE MACHINES,
BACKGROUND SCREENS, BACKGROUND SLIDES, STUDIO FLASH
UNITS, CAMERA STANDS AND MORE!**

Virtual Backgrounds is having our first ever warehouse sale. This is your chance to get Virtual Backgrounds products at big savings of up to 50% and more. We are selling off our trade show demonstration systems, classroom equipment, brand new projection screens that aren't quite perfect and used systems.

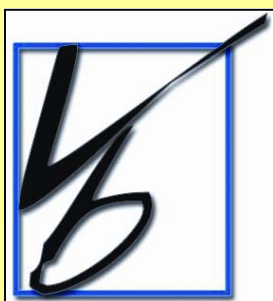
If you are looking for a spare system, a screen for location work such as proms or sports events or just want to get started using Virtual Backgrounds at a big savings, this is your opportunity to save!

Simply call a Virtual Backgrounds Sales Consultant and tell us what you are interested in. We will check the inventory and tell you what's available. Everything is sold on a first come first served basis. Layaway is possible.

**Don't Wait! Contact us today at
info@virtualbackgrounds.net or 1-800-831-0474!**

Scene Machine 2100s
Scene Machine Universals
Scene Machine Digitals
Spectravue 300s
Spectravue 200s
Projection Screens

Heavy Duty Monostands
Studio Light Stands
Slide Storage Cabinets
Studio Flash Units
Softboxes
Posing Tables
Custom Camera Supports
Background Library Slides



Virtual Backgrounds

101 Uhlund Road, Suite 106 / San Marcos, Texas 78666

Phone: 1-800-831-0474 / 512-805-4844

Email: info@virtualbackgrounds.net

Website: www.virtualbackgrounds.net

INTRODUCING

WEB PHOTO SUPPLY

A Division of Virtual Backgrounds



WEB PHOTO SUPPLY is a new source of specialized photographic equipment that advertises and sells primarily through the internet. You won't see Web Photo Supply running many big expensive print ads. Instead, Web Photo Supply depends primarily on its ever-changing web pages. The savings are passed on to you in lower prices. Every working photographer is constantly looking for unique and useful products that can be purchased at bargain prices. This is exactly why Web Photo Supply was created....to find products that are especially valuable to professional photographers. Some of these products may not be available from anywhere else. Other products are simply much better values than what has been available so far.

What can you find at WEB Photo Supply? Many different products that are often not found anywhere else and are listed at great prices. WEB Photo Supply is managed by Christian Feigl. You can reach him at (800) 831-0474 and at www.webphotosupply.com.



"TOUCH OF WARMTH" REFLECTORS – A special reflector created by Don Blair and Terry Deglau that adds just the right amount of warmth to your indoor and outdoor portraits. The Touch of Warmth Reflector is available in three sizes (32" round, 42" round, and 42"x72"). This special reflector is a patch work of silver and magenta reflective panels creating a special reflection to "warm up" reflected fill light.

DIGITAL IMAGING BOXES – How often have you had a small shiny object to photograph only to be frustrated with lighting problems? You can't beat the results you can get with a WEB Photo Supply "Digital Imaging Light Box." Each box lights small products with wrap around lighting producing exceptional results in seconds.



STUDIO STROBES – There's no need to pay high prices for electronic flash for studio photography. WEB Photo Supply has a variety of quality high energy flash units and soft boxes.



AC / DC ELECTRONIC FLASHES – Every photographer should own one or more of these new lights. They work great on AC in the studio, but when you go on location, simply switch them over to long-life rechargeable battery operation. Best of all, the batteries are cheap to replace. Other companies charge you hundreds of dollars for a new battery. With the WEB Photo Supply unit, on really big jobs, you can pre-charge several batteries and change them out in seconds. This same battery pack will power many different flash units. For example, if you already own a Quantum Turbo flash power supply, you know that when the battery wears out and cannot be recharged, it can cost several hundred dollars for an entire new pack. It is not possible to change out the battery. So, WEB Photo Supply has found a compatible flash power supply which will power most flash units. Here is the great news: a complete new power supply with battery is available for only \$139.95 including the battery (regular price \$259.95). And here is even better news: the battery is replaceable in just a minute or two and a replacement battery is only \$29.95. The new battery pack works with Web Photo Supply's AC/DC flash head which can be used in the studio on AC power and then plugged into the battery pack for operation on location. It's a perfect tool for the wedding photographer or location photographer.



CALIBRATION UMBRELLAS - This unique product created by Terry Deglau and John Shirilla is a simple, convenient and very effective way to color balance your digital camera. Like a regular umbrella, it quickly collapses into something that easily stores in your camera bag.

COOL LIGHTS: A hot new product for portrait photographers today is the cool light. Cool lights are fluorescent light banks specially color corrected for daylight quality lighting. With cool lights, the photographer gets exactly the effect he sees. There is no guesswork as there is with strobe lighting where the modeling lamp does not match the flash in terms of lighting characteristics. A variety of cool lights are available at Web Photo Supply.

