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James was hired for his ability to quickly learn and adapt, and he put those skills into how to digitize the photographs. He started with using a video camera, held above the photograph, taking images of individual portions of the picture and putting them together in the system.

"It took time and didn't look very good," James said.

From there he moved to digital cameras, and finally onto big scanners. He is also the archivist of the group.

"We get a lot of calls from magazines or researchers, asking if we have 'this person from this year,'" Shawn, The Archives office manager, said. "He's who you go to. He knows the collection. His eyes have seen every single picture Milton took."

Throw out a name and James will be able to pinpoint if the photograph exists. Are there any photographs of 1950's film noir star Alan Ladd?

"No," James said. "But Cheryl Ladd has some pictures. They're in a group of other celebrities, not by herself."

It should be noted that James hasn't even seen most of the films these actors are in. He knows the names, but many times not the context. This helps distance himself from the "wow" factor that many other archivists could get caught up in. They're simply photos that need to be printed well.

"I watched Cannonball Run and came to learn there's famous people in that movie," he said.

Welles laughed at that, saying, "There's even famous people in Cannonball Run 2."

Welles has family roots in Florence, when his parents moved to



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES' MILTON H. GREENE COLLECTION

It takes a whole team at The Archives to restore Milton H. Greene's Marilyn Monroe photos to their former glory.

the area in 1986. He had been the tech support manager for Kinko's for a number of years.

"I'm much more of a computer geek than a photographer, although I've always enjoyed photography," he said.

That enjoyment of photography is what led him to meet Greene.

"I first came to him as a client for a huge panorama of Old Town which I had taken 13 years ago," Welles said. "That's actually nine different images that were manually put together in Photoshop. The camera didn't have a panorama button as it does now."

The photograph is displayed at the Siuslaw Public Library now. The work impressed Greene.

"I swept him up as fast as I could get him," he said.

Welles' primary job was to build the complex databases that would house all the images James entered into the system. All told,

there are 400,000 pictures uploaded into the system.

"It tracks all of our products," Greene said. "All our prints. Everything. You can track the image and all the information related to the image. He custom designed all the fields for us to capture that information."

Welles also designed websites for The Archives, but these days he's cleaning up the pictures themselves through Photoshop.

He does this by creating hundreds of "masks" on the photograph. A mask is akin to a jigsaw puzzle piece. The piece may have a picture of an eyelash. Another piece would be an eyebrow. Interlock 100 other pieces, and you have the face of Marilyn Monroe.

Welles breaks the Monroe picture into masks so he can manipulate each piece without changing the whole puzzle.

"So, you can change the image of the iris without changing the white of the eye," he said. "A lot of this is really tedious. I mean, there's tiny bits of dust. You look at something at literally a pixel level. And going through each pixel takes a lot of concentration and focus. It can be very tiring to do. It has to be done with exacting detail. It's a great intellectual challenge."

Welles isn't the only restoration technician at The Archives. Since last year, Stephen Jones has been restoring images as well.

"My wife and I had a documentary photography business for many years," he said as to how he came to Florence. "We

decided we were going to sell everything we owned and move to Ecuador. So we literally sold everything down to the floorboard. We had everything down to four backpacks. We decided to come to Florence before we made the break. And then my wife bought a house. I've been here ever since."

Having worked with image restoration for a number of years, Jones has an intimate knowledge of how time can ravage a photograph.

"Over the years, pictures get mildew spots or grains of hair or dust that actually get embedded in the emulsion of the film, or on the surface. And no matter how clean the scan can be, there's always going to be some elements that need to be cleaned up. White dots, we need to make them black. They'll be a beautiful color image, but there'll be a hairline through it. We have to repair that and make it seamless."

When he started restoring pictures years ago, he would do it manually, retouching them with a brush and "wearing big funky glasses."

One of the most interesting things he saw was how the techniques for retouching had changed over the years, and how he could see that progression in the photographs.

"Every time I work on an image, I find evidence of someone who has actually gone in and attempted the dot method," Jones said. "You're looking at the history of retouching it while you're using these modern techniques."

Jones has since ditched the big glasses and gone digital, an evolution in technique that some have criticized, particularly when it comes to celebrity photography. A famous Rolling Stone picture of singer Katy Perry had her skin smoothed over, her thighs thinned, her hand modified and several moles removed. "Photoshopping" someone is a derogatory term.

"People make those comments about Photoshopping and image too much," Jones said. "What people don't realize is that every photographer who knows anything has spent time in the darkroom. I spend hours getting the picture with the lighting the way I want it, then I get into the darkroom and say, 'Yuck. That's flat, that's not at all what I saw.' And then I'll put a filter or dodge and burn some areas. We're not doing anything that photographers haven't done for a hundred years. It's just the tools we have to deal with are different."

But that kind of artistic manipulation is not what The Archive's is doing. Welles believes that it's absolutely true that people use digital imaging too much, as in the case of Katy Perry.

"But in this case, because the photo is so deteriorated so much, you can no longer see the original film," he said. "Because of Photoshop, we're able to recreate something into what it once was, instead of creating it into something we think it should be. Which is a big difference from how people are critical of Photoshop, which is your changing something you shot into something that's not

there. But in our case, we're actually going back and restoring what was once there."

After Welles and Jones finish their initial "rough draft" of the restoration, they bring it to Greene, who reviews the coloring and quality, then gives it back to the two to change. A back and forth commences until the photograph is pitch perfect.

It's then sent to James for printing.

"He has a more critical eye to see how those results are translated," Greene said. "How my color and my layers of color work. Or how my edges are working and what the grain looks like. Do I need to go back and do different diffusion? Whatever I'm doing, he's double-checking all of us."

Once it's set, the print is sent out. That's where Shawn comes in. He takes care of the literary and general business of The Archive.

"I started with Josh in 2000," Shawn said. "Actually, this is my second stint with him. My first stint here, I started off doing restoration and printing. Just whatever Joshua needed. But mostly Photoshop and printing."

But his real love was writing. At one time, he reported on sports and features for the Siuslaw News, before he became the assistant to the City Manager.

"I was getting burned out on government work," Shawn said. "Josh needed some organizational help here, and asked me to come over and manage the business side. I make sure bills are being paid and prints are going out."

Shawn does get to stretch his creative skills along the way — he wrote the text in "The Essential Marilyn."

But it's the business side of things traversed by Shawn that takes an entirely different creative skill.

The skill is dealing with the myriad of changes the industry is going through. Internet piracy, international export issues and the 2008 financial crash are just some of the bureaucratic issues Shawn faces.

And then there's the more philosophical questions. What is the audience for high-end prints in the age of social media? How will people view them? Will the world of prints become obsolete?

In next week's issue of the Siuslaw News, The Archives crew delves into these questions.

City of Florence continues business-centered website

Located on the Oregon coast, Florence is a modern and forward-looking city whose people know a thriving business economy is at the heart of making a great living community. The website florencebusiness.org is here to help people start, locate or grow their businesses in "Oregon's Premier Coastal City."

These are some of Florence's features:

- \$2 million in new urban development
- 4G cellular network
- Fiber high-speed internet
- Energy Costs
 - Commercial electricity rates are 28 percent less than the national average
 - Residential electricity rates are 34 percent less than the national average
 - Industrial electricity rates are 39 percent less than the national average
- Low property taxes
- 5-minute average commute
- 1 hour drive from Eugene
- 600 businesses and counting.

More than 8,000 people make Florence and the surrounding areas their home, as it is a great place to live year-round, with plenty of activities, a well-rated high school and a branch of Lane Community College.

Florence is "A City in Motion," with economic development as a key component of the city's workplan.

An active and engaged city council, capable and well-trained staff, willing local and regional partners and a community eager to support its businesses are all part of the recipe of creating an ideal climate to locate, grow or start a business.

In addition, the State of Oregon, Lane County and Florence offer key incentives for businesses interested in opening or relocating. Businesses will find that Oregon has designed its tax codes to attract and retain companies. As a result, Oregon state tax structures rank in the top cohort of the nation for business-friendly tax structure.

The Florence Enterprise Zone provides two to three years of tax exemption on site and building improvements for manufacturing and production businesses that increase employment and compensate new hires at a higher than average wage. This exemption is also extended to lodging, unlike many other Enterprise Zones in Oregon.

Visit florencebusiness.org for all your business needs, or visit ci.florence.or.us.

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