Creating Backgrounds
Dennis Holden

Dennis Holden presented "Creating Backgrounds" using gradient, hue, saturation, distortion, Gaussian blur, twirl, impressionist brush, etc. The principle is to create a duplicate of your image and place it over top the original and change the duplicate using whatever you choose to cover up the background which may be too busy or non complimentary.   Then erase the subject on the duplicate so the original of the subject shows through. Flatten the duplicate layer onto the original layer and you have your new image. Dennis presented a short slideshow on what the changes would accomplish and then proceeded to demonstrate how to do the changes step by step using Photo Shop Elements:

1. File > select 'open'

2. Layer > select 'duplicate layer'

3. Enhance > choose a filter or other tool (if using Elements/ in Photoshop use Image - then 'adjustments') Note: When using a tool or brush, both 'Sunta and Dennis recommended that we should work with small short strokes as if you make a mistake and go to Edit > 'undo' only the last movement will be undone instead of a mass of work.

4. Eraser > choose size and then erase area of subject (or use 'layer mask' in Photoshop)

5. Layer > select 'flatten' [it is here you decide whether to make the new image a .psd (Photoshop document) or a jpeg. The latter is chosen if you are finished. The former is if you have not completed what you set out to do and wish to return to it at a later date.]

6. Save as > give your new image a new name to differentiate it from the original and then 'save'. The new image will be saved as a jpeg in your collection.

The different filters and tools there are to choose from are:

Enhance > Adjust color > Hue and saturation

Filter > Filter gallery:
- Artistic > colored pencil
- Brush stroke > crosshatch
- Sketch > bas relief
- Texture > texturizer
plus many more

Filter > Gaussian blur
      > Distort > twirl
      > Render > clouds or fibers

Gradient Tool > colors from color picker

Impressionist Brush > (Art History in Photoshop) More options, many!

Layer Style > image effects, many
            > Photographic effects, many