

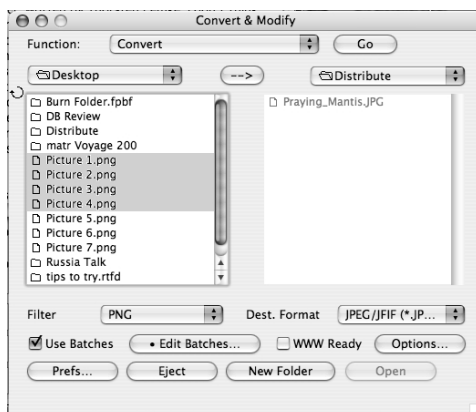
by George Dorner

## Don't Overlook This Swiss Army Knife - Made in Germany

There are very few Mac programs for which I can cite the programmer. An exception is Graphic Converter, written by Thorsten Lemke. I don't think it's the lilt of Thorsten's name, rather the number of times I have used this very useful utility for converting one graphic file to another. Whenever I have an image file created on a PC and mangled through the internet, or want to reduce an enormous TIFF file to a teeny JPEG which will be accepted by that list I subscribe to with the 100k limit, or want to crop an annoying background to a family photo, or optimize a bunch of pics for use on the web I reach for Graphic Converter, and I have done so since its first shareware version. It's now in Version 5.9.3. Or, was. Let me check. (Moments later...) Yup, It has been updated to 5.9.4 with 8 new and 12 updated features and a bunch of bug fixes. By the time you read this it may be 5.9.5.

The newly redesigned web page for Lemkesoft.com claims 1.5 million users worldwide, and there is no way of knowing how many folks have not yet ponied up for the freely distributed and shared copy.

Of course, the program does what its name says: converts files. In this mode, the user is presented with two windows. One



selects a file or a folder in the left window and selects a location in the right window. GC will identify the format of the file(s)

selected from almost 200 types and there is a filter to assure that you get only what you want in the left window. Then, having chosen the format to to which you want the file converted from a list of 80 output options, the push of a button does the desired task, leaving the file where you wanted it. That's what you expect from this program as countless Mac users have done. There's more, with a number of conversion options which go far beyond changing just the file format. I have felt that these conversion abilities have been worth the \$30 shareware fee, and I have paid the fee more than once in respect to the program and the job the author does in upgrading it.

But Graphic Converter is much more than that. If you have discounted this program as a graphic utility of limited interest, take another look. The program now has many additional functions, and the level of customization and option selection possible would take weeks to master.

I do quite a bit of hobby digital camera work, including a weekly club newsletter with two or three pics. GC is now used here just about as often as PhotoShop Elements (a full Photoshop is in the house, but I rarely use it). The photo browser, the slide show, the acquisition function for scanner or camera download are all comparable or superior to similar functions offered by iPhoto or by the software that accompanied my cameras. And, if I need to systematically change the names or formats of a big folder of photo files, the batch features are much more flexible than other programs.

The browser is comparable to that in the Adobe Bridge, with many options to view thumbnails or full size photos or movies, to list the metadata embedded with the photos, rename files, or just to search around your hard drive for misplaced pictures. It's also useful to make a catalog of what's there.

The slide show is blessed with options I haven't seen in other such programs such as iPhoto. One which is very useful when sorting a large number of photos is the ability to move a picture seen in a slide show to any one of ten previously defined folders by

pressing a key during the slideshow. This makes it a snap to sort a hundred or two photos into different folders without loading them into iPhoto. And it's easy to send a slide show off to become a movie. Those who do lots of slide shows would do well to investigate GC for that purpose.

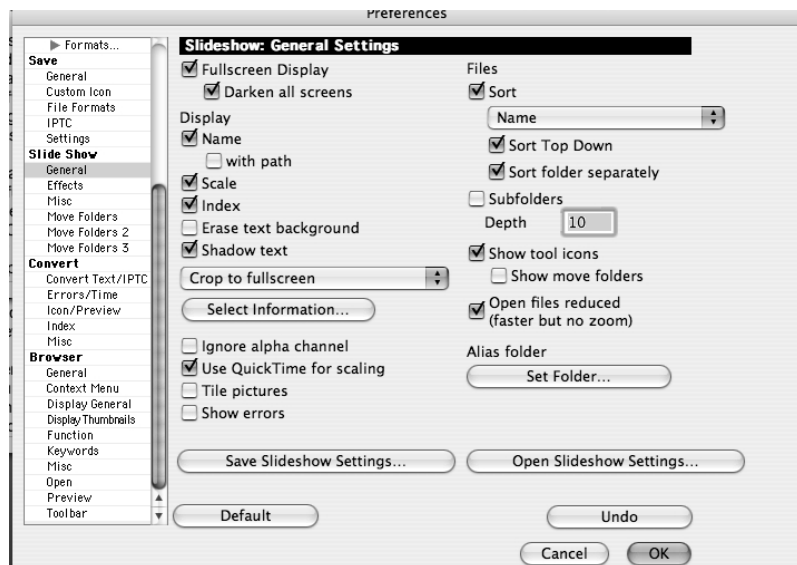
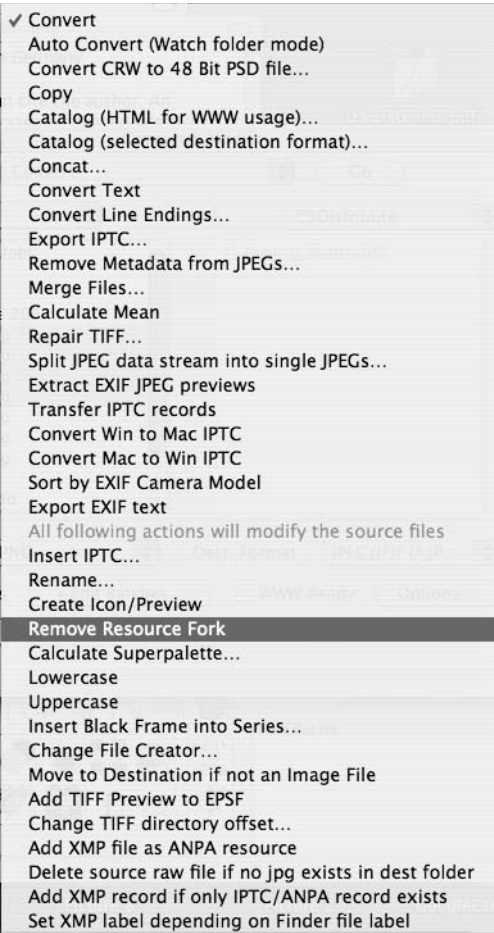
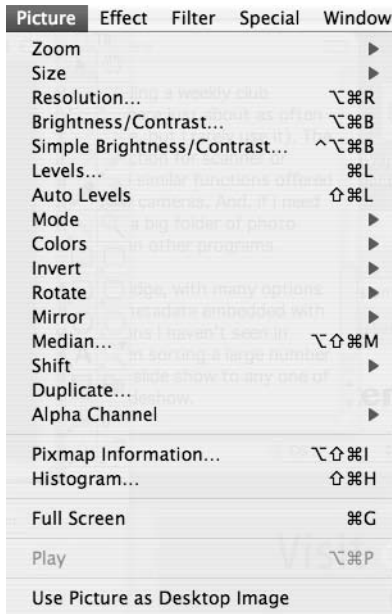
If you want to tweak a picture and need more control than iPhoto provides, GC will probably fill the bill. I use it to adjust levels or brightness routinely since I download from my cameras using the program. (I use the option of selective downloads and then route the pics off to different folders as described for the slide show.) The tool palette for this program looks much like that in Photoshop and most of the options are there. Some terminology, keyboard shortcuts, and pulldown options are different and a few are not as convenient. Third party filters for Photoshop are supported. There is enough raw format support to tweak them a little and get them into another format, too. There are Applescript hooks and it is easy to set up Automator files if the actions you want to batch are not there already.

There is a large PDF manual included, but there are so many features and details to control that it is rather terse. A nice tutorial book, written by Thorsten's wife, Hagen, and a set of practice lessons are available at very small cost. These are a pretty good intro for someone who hasn't done any photo processing on the computer yet.

I can't say enough about this program. I think everyone who does any image file manipulation needs it, and its modest price can forestall putting out more bucks for big name programs which don't do a lot more.

See next page for more screen shots

# Graphic Converter continued Review



*Graphic Calculator \$30 (Universal, optimized for G4 & G5, but usable on OS 8 and 9); Tutorial is \$10 and Workshops are \$6.  
Thorsten Lemke  
<http://www.lemkesoft.com/>*