Five cool things I'll bet you didn't know about Lightroom

1. Displaying Keyboard Shortcuts.
   Like most programs Lightroom is chock full of keyboard shortcuts. There's a shortcut key or keys for everything from importing your images to setting flags or ratings to exporting images and several in between. Problem is, with so many, it's hard to remember them all. You could have a printed list but it would be at least a couple of pages long and it would always be there cluttering up your workspace. Why not make Lightroom display the shortcuts for you? There's a shortcut for that. Hold the CTRL or CMND key and type **/ (CTRL+/ or CMND+/)** and Lightroom will display a list of the shortcuts for you. Even better Lightroom shows a list of the shortcuts specific to the module you're working in.

2. Cropping Overlay.
   You have probably had occasion to use the Crop Overlay tool in the Develop Module. If you have you're no doubt familiar with the default grid that's set up for the Rule of Thirds to help you with your composition. Did you know that there are actually several different configurations for this grid? With the Crop overlay turned on the "**O**" key will cycle through several iterations of the grid. There's the Rule of Thirds grid, the "Golden Ratio" (the golden mean), Diagonals, Triangles (also set up for the Golden Mean) The Golden Spiral (aka the Fibonacci Spiral) and a tight Grid. New for LR5 is a display of Aspect Ratios which will show how an image would look, or what might get cut off, if an image were cropped to that Aspect Ratio. Also, for the triangles and the Golden Spiral, typing the **Shift+O** keys will change their orientation. There are two different orientations for the Triangles and eight for the Golden Spiral, four each for horizontal and vertical images. If you would rather pick the overlays from a list it's under View›Crop Guide Overlay (LR2) or Tools›Crop Guide Overlay (LR3-5). If there are crop overlays that you don't use then you can remove them from the cycle. Under the Crop Guide Overlay menu is an option for "Choose Overlays to cycle" that lets you choose from a list only the overlays you wish to see when using the "**O**" key. It may also be of some benefit to know that you can turn the grid off entirely or to only have it show when you are actually in the act of cropping an image. Go to View›Tool Overlay (LR2) or Tools›Tool Overlay (LR3-5). The default setting is Always On but it can be set to Never Show or Auto Show (comes on when the cropping "handles" are clicked.) LR3-5 also allows you to select the overlay on or off on the toolbar under the image anytime the crop tool is turned on.

3. Nesting Keywords.
   If you shoot even fairly regularly then your Lightroom catalog is growing rapidly. If you keyword those images even moderately then you've probably noticed your keyword list is getting pretty long. I keyword pretty heavily, in fact I think the ability to keyword is one of Lightroom's best features. As you can imagine my keyword list is as long as your arm. Did you know there is a way to make that list shorter? Keywords can be nested within

other keywords. As an example let's say you have an image of a Great Egret. You might keyword that image Animal, Bird, Great Egret. The keyword Great Egret can be nested within Bird and Bird can be nested within Animal. How? If these words already exist in your Keyword List (Right Panel in Library Module) you can click and drag any keyword to nest it within another. Click on Great Egret and drag it to, and drop it on, Bird. When you have all of your bird species nested under Bird then drag and drop it on Animal. If you are creating a new keyword you can nest it right away. Let's say I add a Black Skimmer to my catalog. Before I add that keyword to the image I can Right-Click Bird and select "Create Keyword Tag Inside Bird." Enter the new keyword in the textbox. If all of your Black Skimmers are selected in the Grid View be sure to check the box that says Add to Selected Photos and Lightroom will add that nested keyword to all those images. If you want to look at the nested keywords simply click on the gray arrow immediately to the left of the keyword in the Keyword List Pane and it will expand to show all of the keywords nested beneath it. If the gray arrow is invisible there are no nested keywords there.

4. Metadata Searches.

Adobe promotes Lightroom as a "powerful, searchable database" and you probably already know that Lightroom can search for your images by keywords. Did you also know that Lightroom can search and filter your images by virtually any metadata imbedded into your images? This can be camera generated exif data or metadata you applied to an image with Lightroom or other editing program. To search by metadata you must first turn the Library Filter Bar on. If you don't see it just above the grid or loupe view type the backslash key (backslash \ is just under the Backspace key). Click on the Metadata tab and the filter bar will expand to reveal four columns. Most folks will get to this point and believe that it's as far as they can go however, all four columns can be reconfigured to display almost any information you desire. If you hover your mouse over the column title you'll see arrows indicating that it's a drop down menu. Click the title and the drop down appears. There are at least 23 different options that you can set the column too. Click the option you want and the column reconfigures to display that information. Each successive column to the right has information based on the column to its immediate left. This really opens things up for some pretty interesting image filtering. Let's say you started shooting with a Rebel and now shoot with a 7D. With one of the columns set to Camera you can now filter your catalog to display images shot with one camera or the other. If you have one or more of the same camera Lightroom can display images shot with either camera by serial number. Set the column to Lens and you can display the images shot with each of your lenses. You don't necessarily have to click on the lens type to filter the display, the number of images shot with each lens is displayed right there next to the lens name. This is a great tool to go through your catalog and clean up any errors you may have made along the way. For instance by searching for copyright status I found a significant number of images that I had not applied a copyright to which I was able to fix rather quickly.

5. Zooming while using the Spot Removal Tool.

Here's one little trick that, until I learned it, used to cause me a great amount of frustration. We get into the habit of clicking anywhere in an image to zoom in on that portion of the image that it's a hard habit to let go of. On a number of occasions, when using the spot removal tool, I have clicked in an image with the intent of zooming in on that area and instead caused the spot removal action to take place. You can click on the smaller thumbnail image in the navigator window and zoom there but I find it distracting to hop back and forth between images. There is an easier way. With the cursor hovering over your image, hold the spacebar down and you'll notice the spot removal cursor become a magnifying glass. Now click on the area of the image you wish to zoom in on and let the spacebar go. The cursor will revert back to the spot removal tool and you can continue to work. You may notice that, as long as the image is zoomed in, the space bar will cause the cursor to turn into the hand tool and you can click and drag to move around within the image. Incidentally this little trick works with the Red Eye Removal tool, the Graduated filter tool the Radial Filter tool, and the Adjustment Brush tool also.

6. * Bonus* Match Total Exposure

For anyone who shoots in Manual mode I'm sure you've run into a situation where you see a great subject and want to grab it before it moves so you quickly bring the camera to your eye and shoot. Turns out the camera is still set for the previous exposure and that first shot is under or over exposed. Of course you quickly come to your senses and adjust the exposure for the second shot but, as luck would have it, the pose in the first image is better. You can manipulate the tone sliders in Lightroom and likely come pretty close to matching the look of the good image but there is an easier way. Lightroom offers a "Match Total Exposure" tool. In the Develop Module click the "good" exposure then **CTRL/CMND** click the "bad" exposure (the exposure you wish to match to must be selected first). In the Settings Menu click on "Match Total Exposure." The "bad" exposure will be altered to match the "good" exposure.