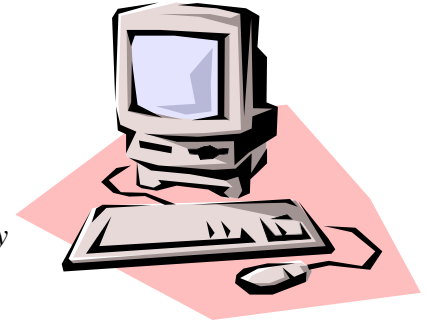# COMPUTER CORNER

"Our" New Scanner

Guest Column by Stu Murray

What's this, another photo/document scanner for the library? They aren't getting rid of the book scanner in the computer room are they? Why this one? Yes, the AGS Board bought a photo/document scanner for the Library. No, this scanner will not replace the book scanner in the computer room, if anything, it will complement it.

I researched the Brother photo/document scanner and a couple of others for the AGS board to consider purchasing. After careful debate, the AGS Board decided to purchase the Brother Photo/Scanner. I took my own advice and purchased the Brother ADS2800W photo/document scanner for my own use too. Why buy you might ask when there will be one at the main library? Recent events clearing out my mother-in-law's home made it clear to me, hauling eight or nine boxes of photos to the library might be impractical. The sheer volume of the pictures I found made copying them on my flatbed scanner impractical. I needed something faster, at least 600 dpi (dots per inch), which could perform double-sided scans and handle multiple pictures or documents. This article is not a recommendation to purchase, but rather my experience using it so if you go to the library, you will know what to expect.

ADS2800w Photo/Document Scanner

I evaluated three units, Epson, Fujitsu, and Brother. What I liked about the Brother was the additional software allowing me to save a picture or document to a variety of software formats. The Epson and Fujitsu photo/document scanners are just as capable. If you look at all three units, they are similar in size and specifications with minor differences in speed and other capabilities. All of them have three modes of operation. 1) Stand-alone using a USB memory stick to save your pictures, 2) Wireless so the scanner does not have to be in the same room as your computer but transmits your photos to your computer over your wireless network, and 3) a USB cable that connects directly from the photo scanner to your computer USB port. I have used both #1 and #2 and I can say they both work flawlessly. Remember though, the wireless connection is not as fast as directly saving your photos to a USB memory stick or having a direct cable connection.

I will focus on the stand-alone operation. This is how it will be used at the Main Library Genealogy Center. Walking up to the scanner, the USB port is located on the right side as you face it. Simply insert your USB memory stick into the USB port, and the red lighted X will

briefly turn on as the scanner is connecting to your memory stick. When it is finished, the white power button will light up and the red light will go out. You are ready to scan your photos or documents.

On the front panel is a small touch screen with the main menu. Notice there are two small arrows on the left and right side of the screen and three dots at the bottom indicating which screen you are on. Date and time are also displayed at the bottom of the screen along with a "shortcuts" menu option that will be discussed later. If you touch the left side arrow, you should see another menu screen like the one in the next image. Touch the icon that says "to USB." This will save your pictures to your memory stick and your pictures will be saved in a folder marked "Brother." Selecting "to USB" will show another screen with the current settings for the scanner. The upper left corner will display "to USB" and a current list shown along the left side of the screen. You can change any of the settings by touching the Options button on the lower left. This brings up a list of options for you to select, e.g., two-sided Scan, Scan Type, Resolution, and File Type.

Creating shortcuts for those pictures or documents you are scanning saves time and a lot of custom selections. Once I have a particular setup created for a set of pictures (like 600 dpi, double-sided, no picture if blank, etc.) I can simply select from the shortcuts menu and I am set to scan my pictures or documents. This saves a lot of effort. If you are at the library, I would look at the shortcuts to see what is on the list and see if it meets your needs. Also, you can select a shortcut and modify it before scanning to fit your style. What is really appealing about the scanner is a single pass creating two separate images (front and back) of a picture.

Once you have your menu selection chosen, take a look at the top tray. It has icons showing you the proper direction of how to load your document or pictures. There are icons there that indicate no paper clips, no staples. The top tray has an adjustable set of slides to help guide your document or pictures into the feed tray. They also indicate the size of your document or picture. According to the specifications, the smallest picture it can scan is 2x2 inches. The automatic document feeder can handle up to 50 pages at a time.

The downside of double-sided picture copying is one image may be upside down, either the image or the text on the back of the image. However, there is a workaround I found on my
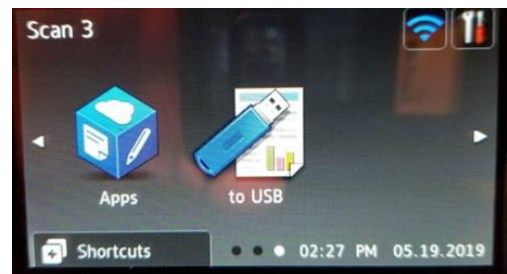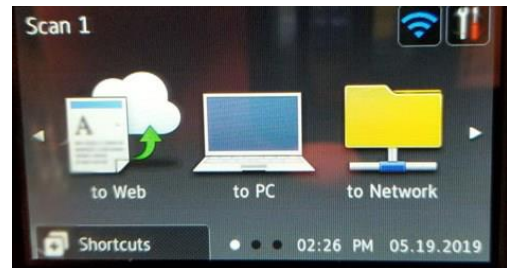
Windows PC. Apple computers may have something similar. I transferred my images from the memory stick to a temporary folder on my computer's hard disk. I selected multiple images by holding down the keyboard's Control Key and clicking the left mouse button. Once I selected the images I wanted to rotate, I put my mouse pointer over any image that was highlighted and right clicked the mouse button to bring up a menu. I found "Rotate Right" or "Rotate Left" and selected the rotation I wanted. After I selected the rotation, all pictures selected rotated 90 degrees in the direction selected. Right-click a selected image again and repeat the process, all pictures selected will rotate another 90 degrees. I found this is a quick trick to rotate those pictures that may be upside down. You may have to play around with this process, but once you are comfortable, it will become second nature to you and save a lot of time.

Another trick along those lines is naming a picture. The Brother will automatically name those pictures or documents based on the menu item selected. But you can name the pictures manually too. If you scan 20 or 30 pictures in a group, each picture's count is incremented automatically as it is scanned. Once you move the pictures over to your computer, using the same method described above, chose "Rename" from the menu, type the name you want and the picture will automatically save the text and create a count for that group of pictures. Example: two pictures I selected front and back I wanted to name "My Family.jpg," and Windows automatically named them "My Family (1).jpg" and "My Family (2).jpg."

Once you have the pictures the way you want them, you can save them to the location where you will keep them and you can delete the pictures from your USB drive if you desire. The scanner also comes with software that may not be available to you at the library. That is not a problem; you probably have applications that allow you to modify your newly scanned pictures. The "ABBYY PDF Transformer" application that comes with the scanner is nice because it can take your PDF files and make them searchable. It has a built-in Optical Character Recognition (OCR) conversion routine. It also integrated the ABBYY PDF application into my Microsoft Word 2010 software package. Inside Word, I can create a PDF, create an Email PDF or add a file. Word already has such an option to create a PDF file as one of its "Save As" options, but still a nice touch to add it to the menu bar at the top of the Word editor.

The ABBYY application also has the ability to convert the scanned PDF into a Word, Excel, PowerPoint, HTML or ePub document. Other file options are text file (*.txt), rich text file (*.rtf), comma separated document (*.csv), or Open Office (*.odt). So there are plenty of file conversion options. The ABBYY application has much of the same functionality you might find in the Adobe Acrobat application. You can convert, save, edit, add text boxes, add comments and redaction, digital signature and password security. The one failing of ABBYY that I found is that it does not realign the document to make it vertical like my older Adobe Acrobat Pro does so well when converting a document by OCR. What do I mean by that? If the scanner does not scan your document straight up and down, the page may be tilted slightly to the left or right. Adobe will alter and set your document so it is aligned correctly to the paper. ABBYY will not. A minor but desirable feature I like about my Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Text is slightly tilted to the right.
ABBYY will NOT correct the tilt.

Text has been realigned by Adobe Acrobat
Pro as part of its OCR conversion.

The Brother scanner also comes with a set of utilities to help you manage your scanner. They come with brief descriptions of each tool as you bring your mouse over the icon. It also has help and support tools embedded into the utilities. I may use them later, but for now, I am satisfied using the memory stick to scan my documents and pictures.

Purchasing this scanner has already saved me a lot of time and effort with our family pictures and documents. I already scanned over 200 pictures mostly 4x6 and 3x5 images and I haven't even gotten to the nine boxes with the photo albums. What this scanner won't do is slides or negatives. That's another device I have purchased that will help me with the hundreds of slides I have recently found about the family. That is for another, future article. For now, try out and enjoy this new scanner feature in our Main Library Genealogy Center. It will make scanning your family photos fun and efficient!