Gimp Basics

To start go to www.gimp.org and download the program. At this time I believe the most recent version is 2.6, but download the most recent. Gimp is FREE. It is also cross platform so it works on Windows, Mac, or Linux. When you click the download link it should take you to Sourceforge.net.

Also download the Help manual. It is available online if you forget but it is much easier to have it on your computer so clicking help will bring it up rather than telling you that you need to go to the Internet to find it.

Now I know you all use Google and there are many great You Tubes out there but be sure the ones you are watching are for the right version. There were many changes between 2.4 and 2.6.

After you have installed, open Gimp. The first time you open it you will see three panels and the tip of the day. The tip may or may not be helpful. I have turned mine off at home.

The left panel it the Tools Panel and below it are the tools options. The options change as you change the tool. We are going to take some time today to learn to use some of the tools and to help you identify them. Once you are familiar with them you will find Gimp much faster to use.

The right panel is the layers panel. We will need that for scrapbooking but we will not be addressing that in this portion. However if you close the tool right side panels and need them back go to Windows> Recently Closed Docks and click on the one you need.

One of the changes in version 2.6 is that closing the tool box will close the main panel as well. However, sometimes you lose the toolbox under something else. You can go to Windows>Toolbox or Ctrl+ B and that will raise the toolbox.

Arrange your desktop so you are comfortable with the way it works for you. If it is more comfortable for the main window to be smaller or larger fix it. If you like the tools on the right and the layers palette on the left, change it.

On to the tools- what they are called and how to use themScaling adjusts the size of the photo area.

The tool looks like this... Notice that as you choose the tool the option below the toolbar change. To keep the aspect ratio the same grab a corner and drag to the size you wish or click the Keep aspect box.

Cropping

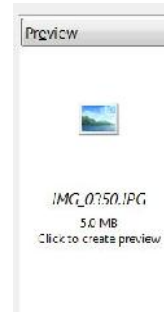Cutting with Transparency

Flipping

Rotating

Reducing

Saving

Before we play with anything go to File > open> navigate to the picture you want and click open. If the preview is not available there is an option in the preview panel that says click to create preview. . First I am just going to work on editing a photo so go to File> Open> locate the photo you want. If you do see
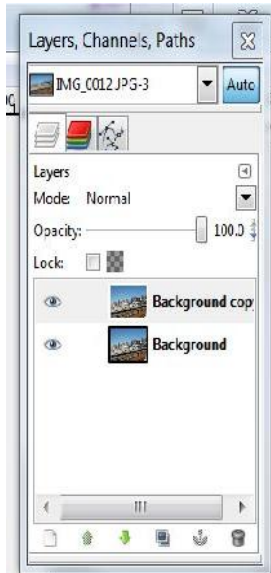
previews at this time Click where it says Click to create preview.

You can select all the photos in a folder (Ctrl+A) and then click create preview and it will create all of them at once...Much easier than doing it individually.

Now select the photo you want click Open.

Once you picture is open you will see it in the layers panel and it is labeled background. Right click on that layer and click Duplicate Layer. You now see 2 pictures. Background and Background copy.

 Rename background copy to whatever you like by double clicking on the name and typing what you want.

Next right click on the background layer and click Delete layer. This has only deleted the copy in that layer and you still have your original safely put away in case we mess up….Don't ask me how I know we will, but we will.

 One other change we will probably want to make is the number of undo layers we have. Go to Edit> Preferences > Environment and change to minimal number of undo levels to 20 or higher.

Now we are ready to learn the 7 basics.

Scaling - Obviously this photo is huge. Scaling is used when you want the entire photo but you want it
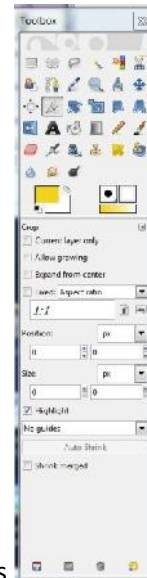

smaller. The tool looks like this [image]. It is also available in the Images tab. When I click the scale tool the pop up menu tells me it is over 24 x18 inches (I clicked the down arrow next to pixels and chose inches since I have no frame of reference for the number of pixels in my schema.)

Since the 2 links just to the right of the aspect numbers are linked the proportion will stay the same when I change either number. If you wanted to control that you can unlink them by clicking on the links.

After the Scaling runs, your smaller picture will appear on a checkerboard background. NOTE: The Checkerboard indicates a transparent area.

Alternatively, you can place the little cross hairs in one corner or on side and drag while holding down the left mouse button until it appears the size you want. Notice the Option menu has popped up again so you click Scale to accept.

Cropping is like the other programs you may have used. The tool looks like this Cropping differs from scaling in that cropping removes a portion of the photo. This can be very helpful if there is something the camera caught that you don't want in the picture…like someone's arm or you finger too near the lens.

Drag the cursor over the area you want to keep and click in that area to accept.

Cutting with Transparency Select the Path tool. Now click, move, and click ,move all around the area you want to cut out until you outline the entire thing and have a close area. Now click Shift+V . This gets tricky. If you want to cut out what is inside click delete now. If you want to keep what is inside the path such as someone's face but want to delete everything else (outside the path), after Ctrl+V, click Ctrl+I (invert) before Delete.

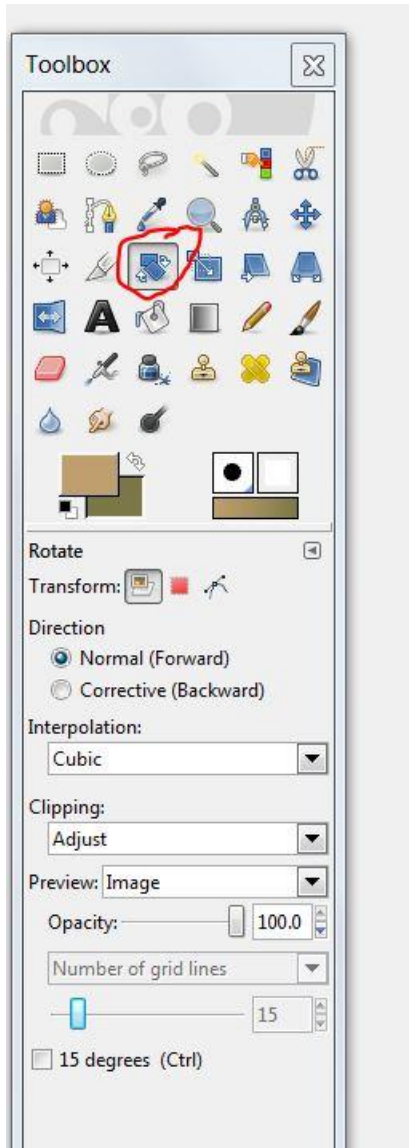All of this is on the Select menu if you need to find it.

The Move tool moves the objects or layers where you want them. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the object where you want to place it.

Keyboard shortcuts are very helpful and are worth learning they are listed on the right side of drop down menus. This is consistent in all programs I have come across. Also Ctrl+Z = Undo and Ctrl+Y = Redo. Boy do I use those a lot.

Flip is super easy. Just go to the flip tool and click on your photo. Clicking again will flip it back. It is also possible to flip vertically by going to Image > Transform >Flip vertically. Images > Transform is also where you will find the standard rotations, which is what we want to do next. There is a caveat regarding flipping a photo. Be sure there is no text in the picture. Otherwise the text will appear backwards.
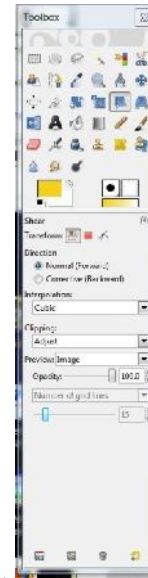
Rotate is used in scrapbooking when the frame or window is skewed at an angle. Here is the tool

. When you select the tool and click on the photo the pop up menu appears again. The easiest way to adjust the angle of your photo is to use the slide bar until it is in the position you want. Then click the photo to accept.

Alternatively you can type in the exact degree of rotation and click rotate.

Before I go to the last 2 of the 7 essential skills I want to mention a couple of other tools you might want in your photo editing arsenal.

Shear is used to straighten a photo without leaving you with transparent areas. In Corel and I believe Photo Shop Elements it is called Straighten and works by placing one end of a line on a place in the photo and the other end at the other point you want adjusted and clicking. In Gimp you must play with the numbers or the slider unless I am missing something.
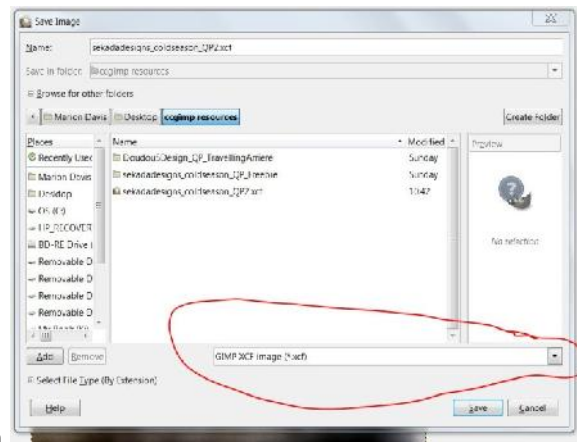

The **Perspective** tool is used to tip things that look tipped because of the natural effect of looking at long distances such as tall building. Click on the tool and then drag on the photo to get the correction.

Most importantly, I recommend you use the rotate, shear and perspective tools before you crop or resize so that you can get rid of any transparent area that might be visible.

When you save as a jpeg   you lose information and will not be able to edit this corrected version. Therefore I save first in xcf and then in jpeg. We are going to save before we reduce. You will see why in a moment. Go to File> Save As> Got to Select File type and select the xcf file extension. This is Gimps

own file type and will save all the information about the image so you can go back and reedit. The only

thing is doesn't save is the undo and redo information.

Reducing the file size

Start as we did above…File> Save As> Select JPEG . You will get a popup that warns that you are about to lose transparency information when you save in jpeg. Just click export and you get another pop up. Click the preview box and adjust the slide or the compression number. I was taught to use 20 as a compression number but I have used smaller ones successfully. The cool thing is that the program estimates the size of your compressed photo so if you want to send this or several photos through your mail program and there is a limitation on the size you can be sure they will get through.

That is the basics. Now that you know the tools and you have edited the photos you want to use we are ready to scrapbook.