

MC³ Newsletter

May 2019

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The May meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is **May 11, 2019 at Salvation Army Building 290 W. Crystal Lake Ave., in Crystal Lake, IL.**

NOTE: *Enter the building on the parking lot level under the awning.*

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions & Reports
- Q & A
- APCUG Video "Libre Office Word Processing"

Upcoming Demos - Subject to Change

October - Digital Photography Topix, Part 2

Please let a board member know if you have any ideas for upcoming demos.

Suggestions Requested

Suggestions are needed for the next special raffle and the annual raffle. Bring your suggestions to the meeting!

A Great Photoshop Alternative - Sheila Swaikowski, TPCUG-CT

Gimp is a great free image manipulation program much like Photoshop. Here is a YouTube link to a 13+ minute video of a basic beginners' guide that I found very helpful: Q8C0L-JPpr64.mp4. It is entitled 'How to Use Gimp (A Beginners Guide)' and produced by TechGumbo. According to the instructor, Gimp is one of the top five best free Photoshop alternatives and his favorite.

The video begins by showing where to go (gimp.org) to download Gimp and walks you through the whole download process. Then it goes over the layout you should see when you start Gimp: the primary window in the center, the toolbox on the left and the layers window on the right.

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Our membership is \$26.00 a year.

NOTE: This fee offsets the running of the club; membership benefits include help with computer problems. Please pay Lyle Giese, our treasurer, or the designated Board Member in his absence.

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The instructor starts a new project by creating a new image from the file tab at the top. He shows how to scale it down (resize it) and add a background color.

Gimp works with layers, which is a new concept for me. Changes are made on individual layers which become part of the whole exported image at the end. If a change has to be made, you can go back to that particular layer which has what you want to change. You create a new layer from the right layer window. The video shows how to create text in a new layer by going to the toolbox, selecting the text tool, then selecting a different text color and changing the text size. It shows how to use the move tool to move the text anywhere in that layer.

If you don't like what you produced, you can go back to a previous step or steps by going to the Edit tab at the top and choosing Undo Move Text Layer which will undo the last operation or using the shortcut, ctrl z, until you get back to the step you want.

The instructor creates an oval in a new, second layer, by selecting an ellipse tool from the tool box; other options are the rectangle tool or circle tool. He also shows how to use the blend tool in the background to show a color variance in the background.

In this video there are three levels: the background image, the layer with the text and the layer with the oval drawn on it.

When you are done, its time to export the created image by going to the File tab and clicking on Export As and exporting the image in the file type you want, png or jpg being the most popular. Even though you work with each level separately in Gimp, they become one image upon exporting.

If you choose the Save As option in the File tab and also save the image as an .xcf file type, you can retrieve and work on the image later and make changes in the different layers. It seems to me to be a good idea to also save an .xcf file.

So there you have it, a very good, basic beginners video introduction to Gimp. There are other You Tube videos you can find by searching for Gimp that will show you how to do specific things, such as rounding corners in a photo. If you've ever wanted to do photo editing, but hesitated because of the cost of Photoshop, this Gimp tutorial is just what you may need.

Personalize your Desktop – With Pictures and/or Slideshows

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, FL

All desktops are not created equal. Just look at the differences the next time you go to a class where you bring and use your own laptop. I bet none of those other desktops will look like your own desktop. Probably the biggest differences will be in the desktop background. These differences come about from the choices in the "Personalize window" in "Settings." You can get to the Personalize window by at least two ways. Personalize is a selection in Settings so just click on the Start button and then the Settings button (the gear like Icon). Or, you can get to the Personalize window by just right clicking an empty space on the desktop. Either way, you get to the Personalize window where you can set up things like the Background, the Lock screen, the Start screen, and the Taskbar.

The Background can be set to three different possibilities; a picture, a color, or a slideshow. The picture can be one of the pictures that you get to select by browsing your Pictures folder. When you find one you like, select it and it will become one of your selections and it will also become your background. (If you have multiple monitors, you can select Monitor 1 or 2 or both, by right clicking the picture and then left clicking your choice.) After you've chosen a picture you can determine how it will show on your monitor by making a selection in "Choose a fit." Pull down the down facing ar-

row at the right-hand end of the selection box and make your selection among the choices, Fill, Fit, Stretch, Tile, Center, or Span. Pictures from different sources will show up slightly differently depending on this choice. Once you've chosen a picture, you'll just have to experiment with the choices. Don't worry, you can't really break anything here.

The second background choice, "Solid color," is maybe a little less exciting. When you select Solid color, you get to choose from a palette of colors to be the background. Just click on the color you like in the "Choose your background color" grouping of colors. You can even add a custom color by just clicking on the "Custom color button" and then in the "Pick a background color" area, click the color you would like and then click "Done." If you don't quite like the new custom color, just re-do the selection process and the custom color will change to your new choice.

The last background choice is "Slideshow," which is probably the most fun. When you choose slideshow, you get to choose the source of your slideshow pictures. Maybe you have a folder of grandchildren, or a folder of puppies or kittens, or a folder of your family vacations. Whatever you like can be the source of your slideshow pictures. Just click the Browse button, under "DesktopBackground," and you'll get a navigation window to use to find the folder that contains the pictures you would like to use as a slideshow. If you don't have a folder with all the pictures you want to use in your slideshow, now is the time to create it. Just make a new folder, using File Explorer, and put it in an easy place to find, like under the Pictures folder, under "This PC." After you've created this folder and maybe named it "SlideshowPictures," put all the pictures that you want to be in the slideshow into it, and then go back to Settings-Personalize-Background, browse for your new folder, and make it the source of your slideshow. Next decide how often you want the pictures to change; choices go from 1 minute to one day. The pictures will show in the sequence that they are in the folder. (Remember, files in a folder will be in alpha-numeric order, numbers first, then letters.) If you don't want this sequence and would rather have them shown in random order, just slide the "Shuffle" slide switch to "On." Again, you can make a "Choose a fit" choice just as before in the "Picture" background choice.

The Lock screen is the next item that can be "personalized" in the Personalize window. (The Lock screen is displayed when the computer is locked. You can lock the computer by using the keyboard combination of the "Windows Key" and the L key. Or you can lock the computer by pressing the Control-Alternate-Delete key combination and then choosing "Lock".) The choices for the Lock screen are similar to Background, but slightly different. The choices are "Windows Spotlight," "Picture," and "Slideshow." Windows Spotlight is a feature of Windows 10 that downloads pictures from "Bing" and displays them when the lock screen is being shown. So it's like a picture option, only Bing is choosing the picture. The "Picture" choice seems to work just like the Picture choice in Background. You could even choose the same picture for Background and Lock screen, but it would probably be more useful if a different picture were chosen for Background and Lock screen. (The picture you see would be a hint as to what was on the display.) And "Slideshow" seems to work just about the same here in Lock screen as it does in Background, though there are some "Advanced slideshow settings" that can further determine how Slideshow works on the Lock screen.

The "Start screen" can be personalized by selecting "Start screen" and then setting the slide switches to "on" or "off" based on your need for the specific feature. You can even choose which "well known" folders appear on the Start screen by selecting "Choose which folders appear on start" and then switching that particular folder on or off. The Start screen is the pop-up window displayed when you click the start button (down on the screen, at the lower left end of the Taskbar). On this screen you'll find an alphabetical list of all the software (or Apps) on this computer and any App that has been "pinned" to the Start screen. Items on the Start screen can be moved around the Start screen by dragging and dropping them to other locations. Left-clicking an item on the Start screen will start that App. Right-clicking an item will provide the ability to "unpin" the item from the Start screen.

The Taskbar is the last item on the Personalize screen and is the bar at the bottom of the Windows display. It shows Apps that have been pinned to the Taskbar along with notification from Windows, Apps, or certain hardware such as the network you are connected to (and the amount of charge in your battery, if you are on a Laptop). The Taskbar can be personalized by selecting “Taskbar” and then setting the slide switches to on or off, based on your need for that specific feature. You can even move the Taskbar to the top or a side by selecting “Taskbar location on screen” and then choosing the desired location. “How do I customize Taskbars?” gives a good amount of helpful information for customizing the taskbar. The Notification area (at the right-hand end of the taskbar) can also be personalized by selecting “Select which Notification Icons appear on the taskbar.” This will provide a screen of Apps, the Icons of which could appear on the Taskbar. Each one can be turned on or off, depending on your need for this notification. You can also “Turn system Icons On or Off.” This selection will provide a list of system Icons along with on/off slide switches. The Clock, Volume, Network, Location, and Action center are system notification you might want to turn on, if they are not on already.

Personalization provides the ability to customize the way some very basic screens look and operate. The choices you make will make your computer look a little different from other computers and give it your particular customized look.

[Interesting Internet Finds - Steve Costello, sefcug.com](#)

How Do I Know When to Repair or Replace My Computer?

<https://www.askdavetaylor.com/know-when-repair-or-replace-computer/>

This is a common question regardless the operating system. Dave provides some basic answers depending upon the reason.

Why Use A VPN At Home On Your Windows PC

<https://reviews.thewindowsclub.com/why-use-vpn-windows>

Do you use a VPN on your Windows PC at home? I do. If you don't, check out this post for reasons you should too.

I Cut Google Out Of My Life. It Screwed Up Everything

<https://gizmodo.com/i-cut-google-out-of-my-life-it-screwed-up-everything-1830565500>

This post emphasizes how dependent we are on Google in our internet life. This post is included just because I found it very interesting. Note: I regularly use Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Photos, the Chrome browser, and many other Google items, so this is not because this is a Google bashing thing.

