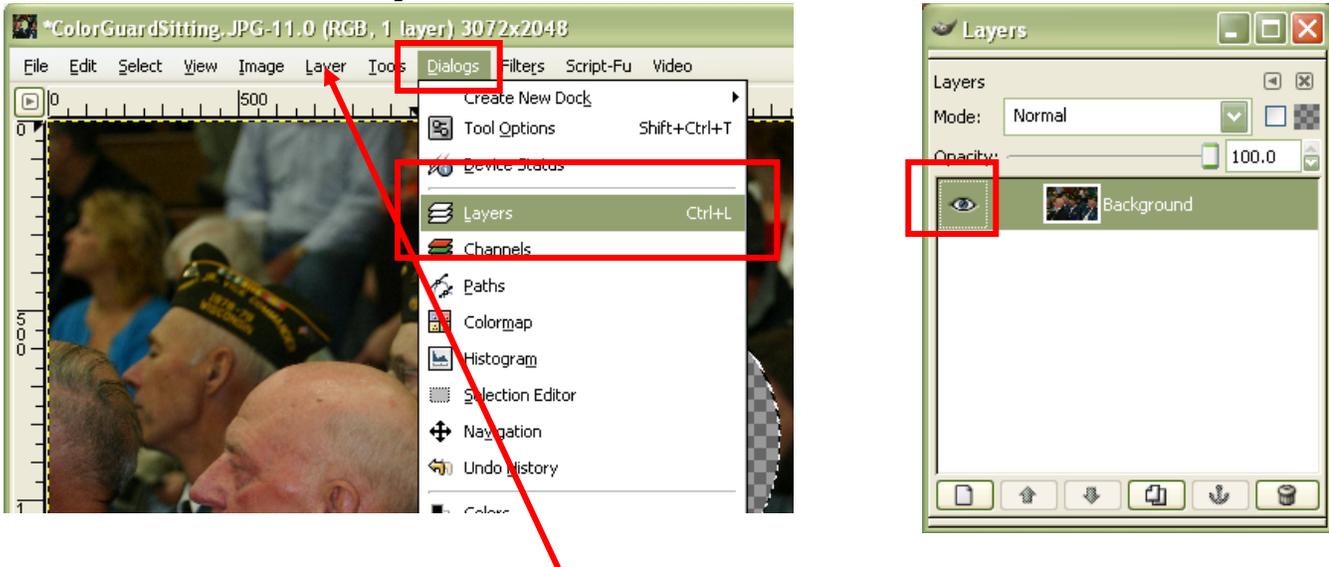# GIMP: Working With Layers
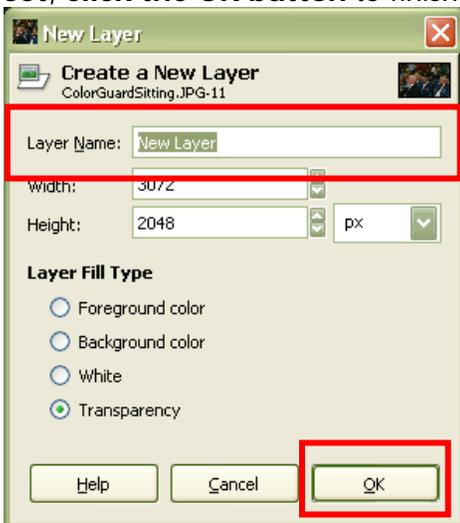
Layers are wonderful tools, especially to create collages or to delete various portions of an image.

If you do not see the layers area, go to the **dialogs menu and select layers.** A new **window of layers will appear.** Every new canvas starts with one main layer. **To turn a layer off,** so that it is still present but hidden from view, **click the eye icon**.
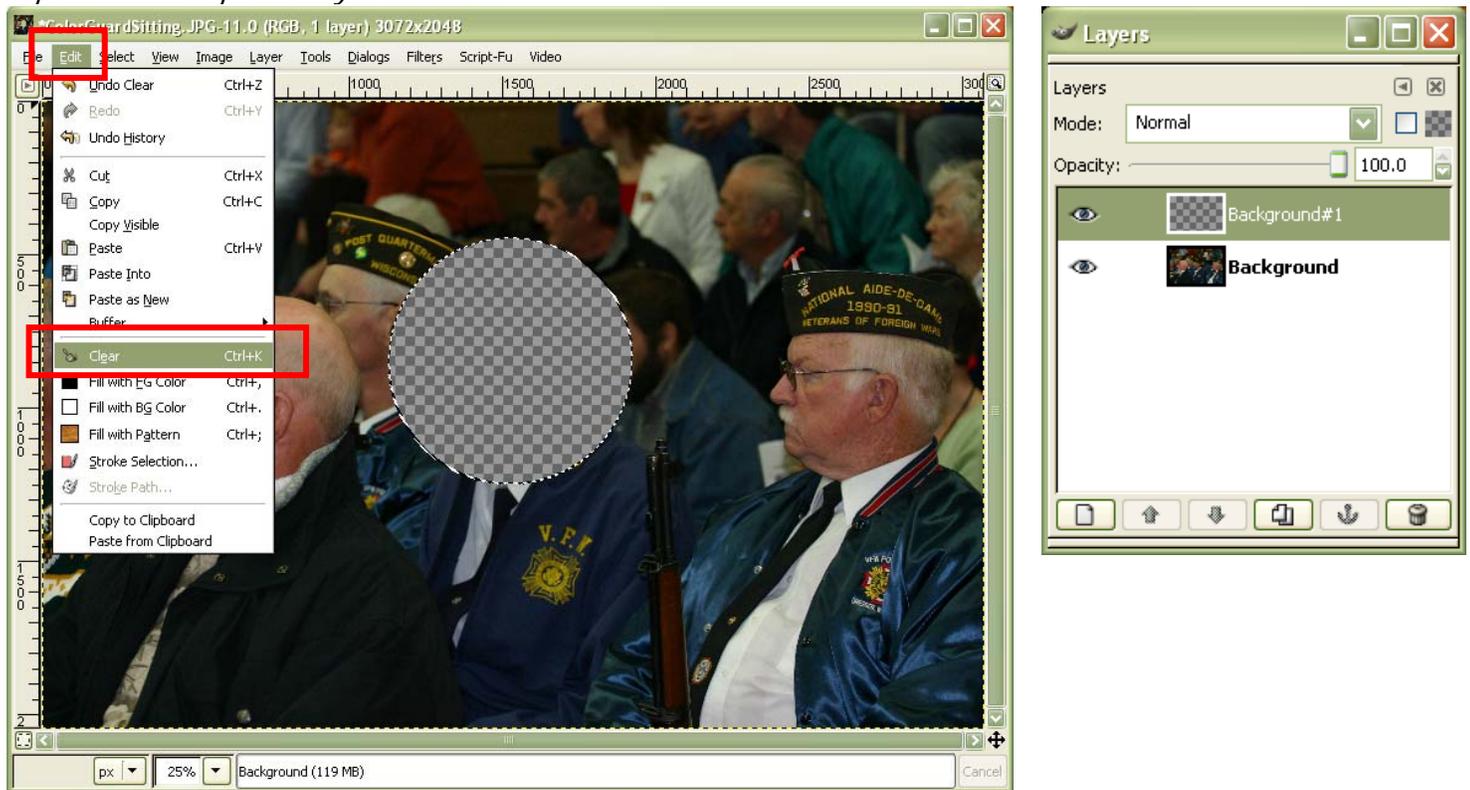
Creating New Layers and Renaming Layers:

To create a new layer, go to the **layer menu** and **select new layer**. **Enter the information** for a new layer; **transparency is great for overlapping layers** or **necessary for deleting portions** of an image. **Give the layer a name** that will help you identify it later, such as background. **After all the information is set**, **click the OK button** to finish creating the new layer.

To rename a layer after it is created, **highlight the layer**, **right click** it and **select edit layer attributes**, then **type in a new name**.
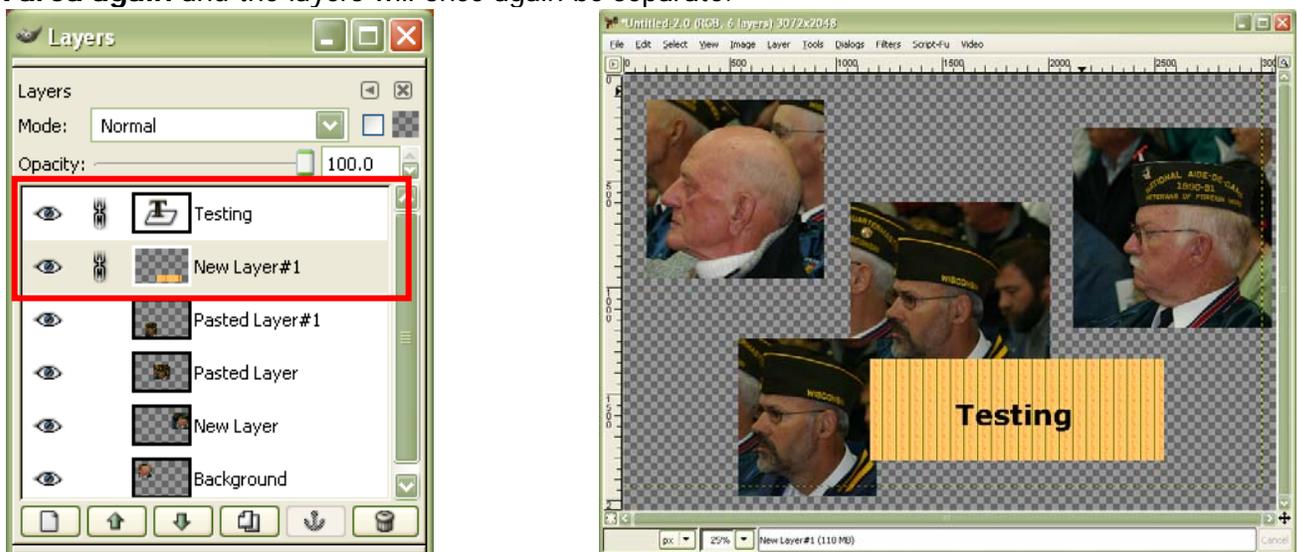
Deleting Portions of an Image With Transparency:

If you desire to **delete a portion of a photo and have the deleted portion be transparent**, **add a new transparent layer**, **right click the layer and then select merge down**. This merges the two layers into one layer with a transparent background. Then, using a selection tool, **select the area that is desired to be deleted**, then go to the **edit menu and select clear**. *This command will clear the area of the first layer and expose the transparent layer behind it.*
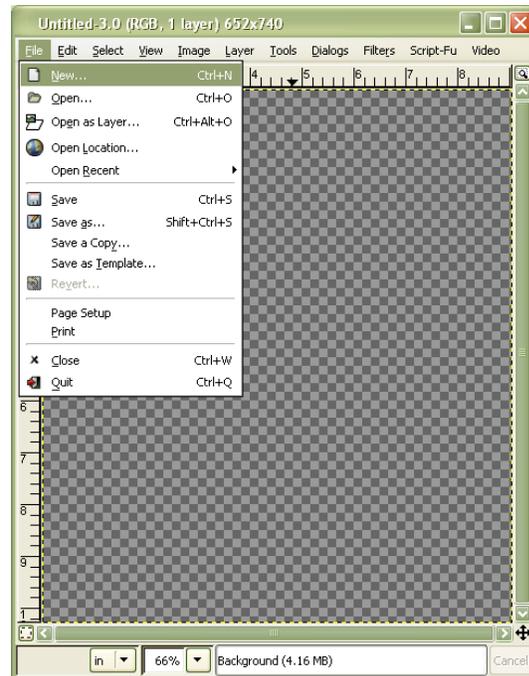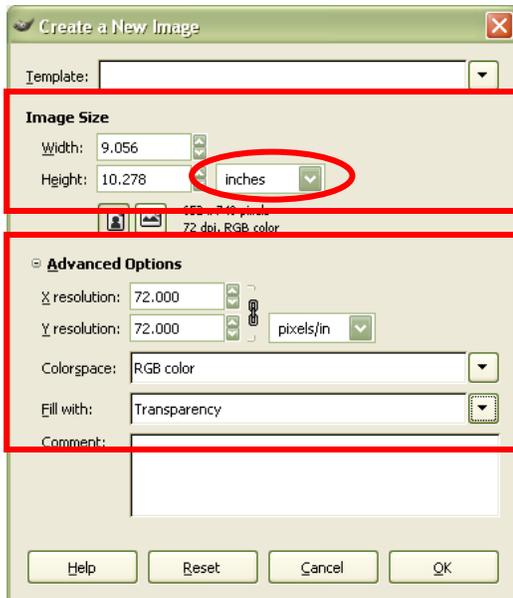

Linking Layers:

Although you might want to **maintain separate layers** for later use individually, you might find that there are a **few layers you want to move together**. *For example text written on a shape would be two separate layers*. If you **desired to move the text and the shape** with it, each layer would move separately. To get layers to move together, **click the blank box of each layer** you desire to be linked together. **A chain link will appear** to indicate the layers are linked. If you want to **unlink the layers** at a later date, **click the chain link area again** and the layers will once again be separate.

Creating a Collage:

Layers are very useful for creating collages. **Open a blank canvas document** that will become your collage, by going to the **file menu and selecting new**. **Change the image size selection to inches** to see what size the canvas will be; **type in the desired size for the collage. Click advanced options to expand** the area and **set the image resolution**. If the collage **will be printed, set the resolution for x and y at 150 pixels per inch at the very least**. The last step is to **set the fill to transparenc**y by clicking the dropdown arrow.
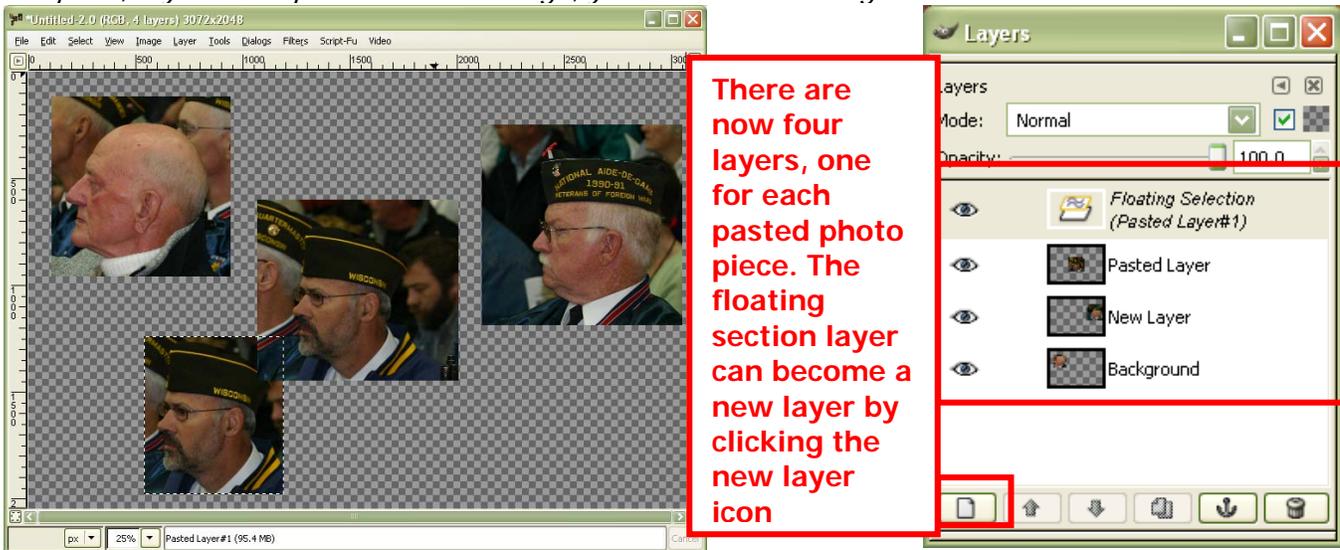
Open an image that you want to use in your collage. Then **use the selection tools to highlight an area of interest**, go to the **edit menu and select copy**. Go to the **blank canvas**, navigate to the **edit menu and select paste**. The selected portion of the original photo will appear on the blank canvas.

Selection tools

Select and paste various portions of photos onto different transparent layers and move them *(for assistance finding the move tool please refer to the GIMP main toolbar handout)* to create an artistic photo collection. **Be very careful not to paste photo pieces onto the same layer or you will lose the ability to move the photo pieces individually.** A quick and easy way to **make the pasted photo piece into a new separate layer** (rather than following the steps to create a new layer) is to **paste the image on the canvas**, **highlight the floating section layer**, which is the pasted photo, and **click the new layer icon**. Then **move the individual images around** by **clicking the layer with the photo** *(this is where naming the layers appropriately helps)* you desire to move and then **moving the corresponding photo around the empty canvas**. To **move a different photo**, **click on the corresponding layer** and **then move the image**. *Once you have your collage completed, you can merge all the layers down to create one solid image.* To **merge all the layers at once**, **right click a layer** and **select merge visible layers**. *Once this step is complete, if you attempt to move the image, you will move all images at once.*

There are now four layers, one for each pasted photo piece. The floating section layer can become a new layer by clicking the new layer icon

Arranging Layers:

To **change the order of the layers**, for example to drop one layer beneath another as seen below with the orange colored shape, **highlight a layer you desire to move**, then **use the up and down icons** to control the arrangement of the layers.