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From The Assistant Editor....

by Meemaw

(Since I'm putting together this Special Edition, I should probably write something....)

Hello!

These Special Editions are something I don't do very often, and do when I have time. I have a wonderful family who include me in all their fun times, and even at my age, I still have a part-time job (besides the monthly issues of the magazine). Even as a Mature Linux User, I have a job as a secretary in an office not far from my home, and I don't think I'll retire yet.

I am happy to bring you this special edition of the graphics tutorials from the PCLinuxOS Magazine! This is a compilation of all the graphics articles from January, 2018 to December, 2020. It includes an article by our own Jimlw1, who showed us how to make a Christmas card in Inkscape and LibreOffice. This card is folded so you could enclose money in it as a gift, and in addition, it has a 14-month calendar for the recipient's use.

I have separated the GIMP and Inkscape articles into separate groups, but each group is in chronological order. Just as a reminder, this issue is ONLY available in pdf format, since all the articles can be accessed in html form on the magazine website, or found in the separate issues.

I really enjoy doing these articles, and as basic as they are, I hope you are learning something from them. At the very least, I have shown you some handy tools that you can use on your own creations. As I have said before, there are many others (some in our very own forum) who are infinitely more talented than I am, but at least I can show you a couple of things to help you better use these programs.

It seems I never tire of reading or watching tutorials about GIMP and Inkscape, and I'm happy to share many of them with you. I still think it's amazing how truly versatile both of these programs are, and what awesome things you can do with each. I have used both programs in my job and in some of the projects I have done for others - newsletters, flyers that advertise upcoming events, postcards, classroom worksheets and even placemats. Those of you that use these programs know that the possibilities are endless!

I hope you enjoy this third special edition. The fourth will cover 2021 through 2023, and may be released in late 2024.

I send you prayers for health, happiness and prosperity for all.
GIMP Tutorial: Create A Color Swirl

by Meemaw

I found a neat tutorial that only takes a few steps and makes a swirl pattern that could be used for a wallpaper or a fun background. I think it will be fun.

Create a new image. I made mine 640x480, but you can use any size. Choose Filter > Render > Clouds > Plasma. You can change the pattern by clicking on the New Seed button. When you get something you like, apply the filter. Your result should look similar to the image at center, top:

Now do Filters > Distorts > Whirl and Pinch, using the following settings:
Whirl angle: 130
Pinch amount: 1
Radius: 1
It should look like this now (right).

Create a new transparent layer.

Choose the Blend tool, using white as foreground color and black as background color and choosing the shape: Radial.

Click and hold the mouse button and move from the center of the image to one of the four corners. It should now look like this (top, right):

Duplicate the layer, naming the original one name “fade black”. For this layer, set the layer mode to Multiply. Rename the duplicate “light”.

Click the layer named light. Choosing Colors > Brightness & Contrast, change the values to -65 (brightness) and +45 (contrast). Now apply Filters > Distorts > Whirl and Pinch, using the following settings:
Whirl angle: 130
Pinch amount: 0.8
Radius: 1

Set the layer mode for this layer to Dodge. Duplicate the light layer to enhance the effect.
Color balance. Using Color Balance, you might try the following settings:
Shadows -30 / -30 / +30
Mids: -30 / +10 / 0
Highlights: 0 / 0 / 30

Now change to the background layer. Choose Filter > Blur > Selective Gaussian Blur with the following settings:
Radius: 50
Max. Delta: 70

You can export your project any time you are satisfied with it. I chose to save it with the black around the outside, but I also used Colors > Color to Alpha and remove the black, then put a white background behind it. I got this:

I actually liked it better before the blur, so I’m going to undo that and leave it without the blur.

You could make it a single color using Colors > Desaturate, then Colors > Colorize or Colors >

GIMP Tutorial: Create A Color Swirl

You can also leave out the black or white background and make it semi-transparent, then use it as an accent on something else, like a real quick letterhead:

You can even make a wallpaper. I like mine a bit darker, so I kept the black.

As always, you can get several effects, depending on your settings. Hope you had a bit of fun with this experiment!
GIMP Tutorial: Another Simple Animation

by Meemaw

This one is a very quick and easy method for making a specific animation. I know Valentine’s Day is long gone, but the day I did this one was just a few days before Valentine’s Day and I had just been playing with some graphics for it, so I used one for this tutorial. This graphic includes a heart design that the very talented ms_meme gave me a few years ago. I added my own text. When we are finished, our animation will be a globe shape, with our selected graphic mapped to the globe and spinning around. (Bear in mind, if you are reading this in the PDF, the globes won’t be spinning, but you can open the web-based html version and see the animations.)

Create the graphic you want to use for your globe. Be sure your image is complete before you do anything else to it, and save your work as a GIMP xcf file. Since the process stretches the image out over the surface of the globe, I made my graphic smaller with a bigger background, on a square canvas 800 x 800 px, as seen at center top.

When you have your starting graphic complete, go to Filter > Animation > Spinning Globe. A window will appear with some settings. I kept the defaults, except for the number of frames, which I changed from the default of 10 to my desired number of 15.

Click OK and your animation will be made. The more frames you want, the longer it will take as it makes one frame at a time. It will be a separate creation from your beginning graphic. Now you can go to Filter > Animation > Playback to view your animation in GIMP. Clicking on Play will show you what it looks like.

Close the playback window and click Export as... When you put in your filename and choose .gif as the extension, you will get an options window. Make sure you check the box in front of As animation. Click Export.
Now you have a spinning globe that only took a few minutes! I’m sure you can have fun with this.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Mr_CrankyZombie on December 31, 2021, running KDE.
GIMP Tutorial: Sphere Variations

by Meemaw

In the March issue, we created a spinning globe which had text or an image on it. This time we're going to use a different GIMP filter to create another globe, or sphere, with two different effects.

The first effect will be a "photo sphere." The first time I did this was with pictures of my grandchildren. This time I am using sections of my favorite wallpapers created by many of our PCLinuxOS family members. I edited sixteen images, all 450 x 450 px, set into an 1800 x 1800 px grid.

Create a new image, 1800 x 1800 px. Grab three guides from top and side and place them 450 px apart to make a grid. Copy and paste your images into your grid. It should look similar to the following;

Now, Click on Filters > Map > Map Object. The following window will appear. Choose Map to Sphere and check Transparent background, and Create new image (unless you want the sphere to appear over your grid).

Click on the Orientation tab and choose the following rotations:

You'll see different parts of the sphere if you change your rotation settings.

Our other variation is a spiral. Create a line of black stripes.
Select the black, then click Select > Grow and grow the selection by 15 px. Create a new layer and choose the Gradient tool, then fill the selection (in the new layer) with a brushed aluminum gradient. Then move it to the bottom and merge the layers. Click Colors > Color to Alpha and choose white. Choose a pattern to fill the black (I used a water pattern) and use Bucket fill.

Crop it down so you have stripes clear to the edge all around.

Save your work.

Now click on Filters > Map > Map Object, and choose the same settings as before.

With a bit of planning, you can make the stripe continuous. If you don’t rotate your stripes, it comes out nice anyway.

Let your mind wander. The possibilities are endless!
Long Awaited GIMP 2.10 Released

by Meemaw

GIMP 2.10.0 was released on April 27th and 2.10.2 was released on May 20th.

GIMP has always been wonderful, but in the 2.10 version, many things have been corrected and added. I'm sure this article will only scratch the surface, but I wanted to give you some highlights of the new version.

One of the newest things you'll see when you upgrade to GIMP 2.10 is that there are more themes and more icons. When you first open it after updating, GIMP will open with the Dark theme and Symbolic icons, which are now the default. No worries, you can open the Preferences and change the theme and the icons. The themes are Dark, Light, Grey and System. The icons are Legacy, Color, Symbolic and Symbolic-inverted. Symbolic and symbol-inverted are the same design, but Symbolic is grey (suitable for the dark theme) and symbol-inverted is dark grey (suitable for a lighter theme). Legacy icons are the traditional icons GIMP has had forever, so you can use them if you decide they are irreplaceable. I chose the light theme with the color icons. The added zing here is that you can choose what size your icons are. In the drop-down, choose “Guess icons size from the resolution”, “Use the icon size from the theme”, or “Custom size”. When you choose Custom size, the slider at the bottom will activate and you can choose Small, Medium, Large and Huge. If you need things a bit bigger, this is great. The icon set in the image below is the “Color” set.

GIMP’s big news is that GEGL is now being used throughout the program. I know it is an image processing library, but I really don’t understand it very well, so I’ll quote from the release notes:

Here is what it boils down to:
- You now have both linear and perceptual versions of most blending modes.
- There is now a linear version of the Color Invert command.
- You can freely switch between the two at any time via Image > Precision submenu.
- You can choose which mode is displayed in the Histogram docker.
- You can apply Levels and Curves filters in either perceptual or linear mode

- When higher than 8-bit per channel precision is used, all channels data is linear.
- You can choose whether the gradient tool should work in perceptual RGB, linear RGB, or CIE LAB color space

Color Management has been revamped. In previous versions, it was a plug-in, but now it’s a core feature. When you start a new project in GIMP, you’ll find that the Create New Image window has much more to select. Just click on Advanced Options.

Color space, Precision, Gamma and Color profile are new choices. Until I learn a bit more, I’m sticking with the defaults above (other than my choice of fill).

Layers and masks have many more choices to help enhance your creation. Clicking on the layers dock, you’ll see a “mode choice” button at the top with two choices, Default and Legacy. Default is the new
mode collection, and Legacy is the modes that were in GIMP 2.8. You can see there are more choices in Default.

Also, if you always want an alpha channel in your layers, you can enable automatic generation of the alpha channel in imported images upon opening them. See Edit > Preferences > Image Import & Export for ways to do this on Import.

The Transform menu has been extended and there are a few more tools:

Unified Transform

You can use this tool to stretch a photo any direction (rather than having to pull up different tools). As you can see, there are more handles and the photo is changed differently depending on which handle you grab (and which way you move it).

Warp Transform

This tool will stretch a chosen part of your image (not like the smudge tool). When I started, the egg yolk was a circle.
Handle Transform

This tool will stretch or rotate an image while the handle holds it in a specific spot. The circle in the upper left corner is the handle.

Blend tool becomes Gradient tool

GIMP has renamed the Blend tool to Gradient tool and changed its default shortcut to G. This is only the start of the change!

The new tool pretty much makes the old Gradient Editor dialog obsolete. Now you can edit the gradient right where you drew it, on your creation, adding and deleting stops and colors as you go. You can even start with a pre-made gradient, then develop it into a different one right there (center top).

Better selection tools

The Foreground Select tool is more selective now. Two new masking methods are now available for that.

The Select by Color and Fuzzy Select tools both have a Draw mask option to display future selection area with a magenta fill. The Fuzzy Select tool also got a Diagonal neighbors option to select diagonally neighboring pixels.

With the Free Select tool, closing the selection now doesn’t make the selection automatically. Instead, you still can tweak positions of nodes, then press Enter, or double-click inside the selection, or switch to another tool to confirm the selection.

The Intelligent Scissors tool now lets you remove the last added segment with Backspace key, and GIMP now checks, whether the first and the last segments are distinct before closing the curve.

Digital painting improvements

GIMP 2.10 has many improvements requested by digital painters. The one I noticed right away was the MyPaint Brush tool. It has a number of different brushes that GIMP didn’t have before, except in a GIMP fork called GIMP-Paint (right, top).

Many of the tools have additional choices. From the release notice:

The Smudge tool got updates specifically targeted in painting use case. The new No erase effect option prevents the tools from changing alpha of pixels. And the foreground color can now be blended into smudged pixels, controlled by a new Flow slider, where 0 means no blending.

All painting tools now have explicit Hardness and Force sliders except for the MyPaint Brush tool that only has the Hardness slider.

Most importantly, GIMP now supports canvas rotation and flipping to help illustrators checking proportions and perspective.
A new Brush lock to view option gives you a choice whether you want a brush locked to a certain zoom level and rotation angle of the canvas. The option is available for all painting tools that use a brush except for the MyPaint Brush tool.

New Symmetry Painting dockable dialog (click on Windows > Dockable Dialogs > Symmetry Painting), enabled on per-image basis, allows to use all painting tools with various symmetries (mirror, mandala, tiling...).

One of the things I found that is really great (at least for me) is the split view on the new filters. Activating split view (circled) allows you to see the difference between what you started with and what you are doing with the filter.

Don’t know which filters are the new and improved? Look for the icon in front of each filter. I think the big G means it’s a new &/or improved version, and the gear is the legacy filter, but I may be wrong.

Exposure, Shadows-Highlights, High-pass, Wavelet Decompose and Panorama Projection are new filters aimed at photographers. I intend to try each of them to see how awesome they are.

Many more changes are present. You’ll have to open GIMP and see what you can find. I haven’t even covered half of the improvements.

For further information, see the release notes: https://www.gimp.org/release-notes/gimp-2.10.html
GIMP Tutorial: Create A User Bar

by Meemaw

A lot of people have userbars in their signatures, and many of them are really wonderful! Ours are usually made by one of our wonderful artists and donated on the forum. However, they aren't too difficult, so let's make one.

You can use any dimensions, but let's use 300 pixels wide x 50 pixels high. It doesn't matter whether you start with foreground or background color, because we're going to change it. Select your gradient tool. Set your foreground and background color to something that you like. Set the gradient to "FG to BG". Click at one end of your bar and drag to the other end to make your gradient. I went kind of diagonally (top left to bottom right), but you can make your gradient however you want.

If you want some sort of picture on it, add a transparent layer and put it there. I added our well-known PCLinuxOS Ring. Put whatever text you want on this layer as well. While you're at it, select the text and add a layer behind it. Choose Select > Grow and grow your text selection by 1 px, then fill it with a dark gray. This will highlight your white text. Before you de-select the gray, click on Filters > Light & Shadow and give it a 2 px drop shadow.

Now add another layer and click on the ellipse tool. Make an ellipse from one end to the other. Make it stretch just under half way down the userbar. Fill it with the color white.

Lower the opacity to around 50 to give the userbar a 3D effect.

If you desire, you can put a black border around the whole thing. The easiest way for me was to change the Image > Canvas Size by 2 px, centering the change, then adding one last layer on the bottom, filled with black.

Many of the people on the forum have made userbars, and many of them are just awesome! This one was simple, but with different effects (a striped background, for example) or fancier text, I'm sure yours can be just as wonderful.

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to: pclinuxos.mag@gmail.com

We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.
GIMP Tutorial: Editing Your Vacation Photos

by Meemaw

Everyone takes vacation photos, and I'm sure yours are wonderful. We've seen some really great photos in the forum as well, and I'm sure that yours are among some of the great ones. If you don't think they are, and you're wondering how to make improvements to some of them, I'm going to show you a few things you might do to make your photos "pop."

In the July, 2015 issue I did a short tutorial about editing photos. This one expands on that a bit and gives you more choices. In the earlier tutorial, I used a photo I took at Monument Valley in southeast Utah. I'm going to use a different one this time. This one was taken in Colorado from an ATV trail.

The first thing you can do is adjust the Levels. Click on Colors > Levels and you'll get the histogram showing the color graph (center, top).

As you can see there is a low spot on each end of the histogram. Start by moving the arrows underneath the histogram inwards towards the spot where the curve starts extending upwards. This helps to even out the light and dark areas of the picture. Then, move the center arrow left or right until you are satisfied with the result. This changes the midtones. If you will check “Split view” at lower right, you can see the changes in the left half of the picture with the photo’s original appearance on the right half.

That has brightened up the colors a bit.

The next thing we want to do is edit again using Colors > Curves. When the window opens, you will see the histogram again, but it doesn't look quite the same because you've already edited a bit. On top of the histogram is a straight line from bottom left to top right. You can use this line to fine tune the areas of your photo. Pulling down on this line will darken things and pushing up on it will lighten things. Depending on which end of the line you move and which way you move it, you can change the darkness and lightness more than you would if you quit at editing levels. Also, when you click on the line, it will create a node which will stay when you release it. Now you can click elsewhere and move your line again to edit other aspects of your photo. Lightening dark areas and darkening light areas may improve your photo greatly. (Check “Split view” to see what's happening.)

As you can see, my line ended up as an “S” shaped curve. My photo looks a bit better, too.
Saturation is the intensity of the color in your photo. If you click Colors > Saturation or Colors > Hue-Saturation, you can adjust the colors so they are more intense. If your photo is dull, this is one of the best ways to enhance it. Using Saturation is easier because there is only one slider, but to fine tune things, you could use Hue-Saturation as there are many different settings. If there is a certain color you want to emphasize, you can do it there.

The next thing you can do is adjust any color you think shouldn’t be there. This uses Colors > Color Balance.

In this one, you can edit three different ranges: Shadows, Midtones and Highlights. You might have to study your photo to see if your colors are the way you want them. This is especially helpful if you think your photo is too red or green (or if your photo is old and has turned that reddish brown that some of them turn). Again, click “Split view” to see what you are doing.

I wanted just a little more green in my photo, so I increased the green.

I used Hue-Saturation and set the saturation up to 30 (right, top).

One last thing you can do is use Sharpen or Unsharp Mask to sharpen your photo, being careful not to go too far, as your photo may end up with little white halos on the edges of things. This is Unsharp Mask that has been taken to excess:
In an article I read, it was summarized as follows:

- Adjust the dark/bright Input Levels sliders relative to the histogram edges to improve contrast. Adjust the mid-tones slider to settle on the overall brightness.
- Apply a subtle curve adjustment (Curves) to enhance any areas along the brightness scale we're still not happy with.
- If you think there's a nasty tinge to your image, balance it out using the Color Balance tool.
- Increase the master saturation and also adjust the Saturation for any other colors you want to emphasise further (or de-emphasise).
- Apply some Sharpening, being careful not to make edges look too 'spikey'.

My mountain photo looks better, in my opinion.

It might be too green for you, but as I remember the trip, everything was very green and lush.

Oh, my Monument Valley photo from the last article? I did it again and I think it looks even better. I'll show both so you can compare.

GIMP Tutorial: Editing Your Vacation Photos

While it hasn't happened to me, you could experience some slowdowns. Some of it also depends on your system capabilities (memory, CPU), the size of your photo (bigger takes longer and uses more resources), and what steps you are performing. If you are just cropping your photo or resizing it, you should be fine, but if you are using some heavier filters, it may take a while. Also, the status bar shows a completely different number than your image size: it shows the amount of system memory used by your image. I was working on an image that had a file size of 2MB, but the status bar showed 47MB! That's the memory my system is using while I edit the photo. I'm sure if the GIMP developers get complaints, they will address it quickly. I know there have already been a couple of posts on our forum. Hang in there, guys, I know they'll fix it.

Does your computer run slow?

Are you tired of all the "Blue Screens of Death" computer crashes?

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GIMP Tutorial: How To Add A Sepia Tone

by Meemaw

With photography what it is today, and photo manipulation programs being so easy to use, it is great to take a digital photo of something and then see how you can manipulate your photo for the best image possible.

Most of the time, the photo is awesome just the way it is, but sometimes, a black & white or sepia image really pops as well. Google defines sepia as a reddish-brown color associated particularly with monochrome photographs of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since we’ve explored image enhancing, changing a photo to sepia is just another enhancement.

In an earlier magazine article, Parmote discussed tutorials for Photoshop & GIMP, which got us discussing the tutorials, and which Photoshop tutorials could be used in GIMP. At one of the links he provided, I came across a Photoshop tutorial for changing a photograph to sepia. It was a very simple tutorial, and is shown below.

Here is a step-by-step for Photoshopping a photo to get a sepia tone.

1. Open the image in Photoshop.
2. If the image is color, go to Image > Adjustments > Desaturate and skip to step 4.
3. If the image is in grayscale go to Image > Mode > RGB Color.
4. Go to Image > Adjustments > Variations.
5. Move the Fine Coarse slider down one notch less than the middle.
6. Click on More Yellow once.
7. Click on More Red once.
8. Click OK.

While I’m sure this is very simple (I have never used Photoshop), this can be done in GIMP, and with fewer steps.

Open the photo in GIMP (of course). I’m using a cute animal photo I found.

Click on Colors > Desaturate > Sepia.

It should happen immediately.

Wow! That was fast! However, what if you don’t like the way it looks? Go click on Edit > Undo Sepia. Now, you can do it a bit differently to allow yourself to control the color. Go back to the Colors menu and choose Desaturate > Desaturate. You will get a photo in grayscale.

You can now go back to the Colors menu and choose Colorize, just a bit farther down in the main Colors menu. Don’t be shocked if your photo turns a
blue color, as that is just how the window comes up.
In the center of the Colorize window there is a color
button which should be the same color as your
photo is now. Click on that, and the Color window
will appear, and let you change the color to a sepia
(brownish) color. Feel free to play with the color in
the Color window before clicking OK.

Feel free to experiment all you want to get your
perfect color.

If it looks the way you think it should, you are free to
quit adjusting and export your photo. If you think it
could use a bit more red or yellow, you can also click
on Colors > Color Balance and experiment there.
To add more of the colors on the right, click the up
arrow on the right end of each scale. To add more of
the colors on the left, click the down arrow.
GIMP Tutorial: Helpful Tips You Might Already Know

by Meemaw

There is so much in GIMP, and we have such fun using it! When we first started, we learned a few tips to make our work easier. In my visits to the GIMP Learn Forum, I saw a thread called Absolute Beginners Tips and thought I would illustrate a few of the tips. You may know these already, but I hope you can learn something new. I have added the name of the person who posted it.

“When having many layers in your work and you need to see only a layer. You can close all of the eyes less the layer needed by pressing Shift and the layer eye at once. The same action to get to recover the whole open eyes.” (Issabella)

I have, at times, had so many layers in my creation that I lost track of the one layer I need to be working on, or see so much, I can’t concentrate on that one layer. Hold down the Shift key, and click on the eye on the left side of the layer you want to work on, and the rest of them will disappear. I clicked on the eye on the fifth layer down (while holding down the Shift key) and now that is the only layer that is visible.

“One that for me makes things a little easier is the small icon at the extreme top right of your work area,

when clicked the image is enlarged to fill the screen.” (Steve Reid)

I already knew this, but it bears repeating. It’s really easy to click on that corner icon and enlarge your image to the size of your work area.

“When you save an .xcf, all the layers and paths you have made are kept. This is good if you have done a project that you might use again. Also you can play with the layers and alter the images any way you wish.” (Pat625)

I have this .xcf file of some planets I did a few years ago. I have changed it a couple of times, redoing the planets when I wanted, but I have kept two of the planet layers and the starry background. If I were to merge those layers, I couldn’t edit the image nearly as much as I can if I keep the layers intact. I can always export any image I want to keep.

“One thing that you want to keep in mind is that if you merge a layer, and you close the work or Gimp, you won’t be able to get that layer back. I don’t know if I explained clearly, any layer you merge or any effect you put on a layer, you cannot roll it back when you close Gimp. Even if you save your work.” (Conbagui)

Put another way, anything you do in GIMP can be undone (even merging two layers), as long as GIMP
is open. When you close GIMP, your undo history is deleted and you can't go back to anything you did before you saved and closed GIMP.

"You can 'swap' layers between opened images without destroying or 'losing' layers. You may wish to practice this by creating two images open at the same time each with 2 colored layers and by holding down a left click of the mouse on any layer, drag it over the other image to activate it and release the mouse - now your first image still has 2 layers, your second has three." (RJKD)

I didn’t know you could do this! I can see where it would be helpful if you were working on something tricky, and opened two versions of the same file by saving it under a different filename, then opening the original again as well. To illustrate though, I have opened a photo of a local bike trail where I walk, and also an image of the PCLOS pinwheel.

Duplicating the layer on the pinwheel, I will grab one layer and transfer it over to the photo. Click on the layer image (in the layers dialog) and drag it over to the tab with the other image. The image in your workspace will change and the layer you are dragging will be there.

“Hold down the mouse scroll wheel and you can pan the canvas - by keeping it depressed and moving the mouse." (RJKD)

Well, now, I have learned something else as well!!! If you are zoomed into your image and want to move to another area, just press your scroll wheel down and hold it, then move your mouse. Your canvas will move and you can move anywhere on it you wish. Make sure it's your scroll wheel, because if you forget and try to do it with your mouse button, you'll just move a layer that you probably don't want to move.

It’s amazing how much you can learn on forums! I shouldn’t be surprised, judging by how much I have learned in our own forum! I hope you have learned something as well.
GIMP Tutorial: Easy Ball Bounce Animation

by Meemaw

As I’ve told everyone before, there are a couple of sites I go to which help me learn about GIMP. One of them is GIMP Chat and the other is GIMP Learn. A while ago, I happened upon a fun tutorial on GIMP Learn from one of the masters there, named animicule. I thought it might be fun to do this one. It is an animation of a bouncing ball, but only the ball moving (and bouncing) from left to right. There was no allowance for the ball’s change in shape when it hits the bottom, but I’m sure that is easy to do.

I started by creating a “ball” in GIMP, 100 x 100 px, with a transparent background.

We need a canvas for this ball to bounce on, so I created a new file, using an 800 x 600 px preset canvas, with a transparent background. I created a new transparent layer, then copied and pasted the ball onto it. While I could still move the ball, I moved it to the upper left side of the canvas, then anchored the ball to the layer.

You’re going to need copies of your ball layer, so choose it, and click on Duplicate layer as many times as you think you need. I made 20 copies, but you can make more or less. If you have too many, you can delete the ones you don’t use, and if you need more, you can always make them later.

OK, here is where we make things a bit easier. Instead of choosing each layer and moving it into place separately, let’s link them and move everything at once. In your layer dialog is a link function, shown by the chain between the eye (making your layer visible) and your layer name. You can click on each one separately, but if you hold down your Shift key and click on one, they will all be chosen.

In an animation, layers are played from the bottom layer to the top, so we’ll move them this way. In my file, the very bottom layer is blank (and can be deleted if desired), so I’m going to click on that link to undo it. Then grab your layers and move them where you want the first ball to be. I moved mine close to the top and a bit off the page so the ball looks like it’s coming from off to the left. You have moved your whole stack, so go to the bottom of your layers, and unlink the next to the bottom layer, then grab the stack and move them to where you want your next ball to be.

Continue to move and unlink until you have them all distributed.
When you think you have them arranged, you can choose Filters > Animation > Playback to see if it looks the way you want it to look. Be aware that when you play it back now, all your layers will show up, even if you don’t want them that way in the final product.

This is just to make sure each layer is positioned where you want it. If not, you can choose each individual layer and move it to your liking. Saving this as a GIMP file will preserve your layers in case you ever want to go back in and do anything. Now, export as .gif. One message you’ll get is this one:

This just means that since all of our layers were 800 x 600 px, and we’ve moved most of them, the layer boundaries have spilled off the right and bottom of the canvas. Since the ball was close to the top left corner, the rest of the layers are empty. We can safely crop them off, so click Crop.

The next window you get is the export as GIF window.

Of course, the first thing you choose is “As animation”. Then put in the delay between frames (100 ms is the default, and I have changed it to 200 ms here, which will make it slower). I also chose “Loop forever” so it will play over and over until you close it. To make sure your animation looks like one ball bouncing, choose “One frame per layer (replace)” in the Frame disposal line.

Have fun! The animation won’t show in the pdf, but you can see it in here.
GIMP Tutorial: More About Masks

by Meemaw

I was talking to some of the guys in PCLOS-Talk the other day, and they were talking about GIMP, and how they were wanting to understand masks. They wanted to learn more about how they worked, and told me that one of my future tutorials needed to cover that.

In my research, I discovered that I had already done a tutorial about masks in the August, 2013 issue, but that’s been a while, so I will revisit the subject here.

As I said in the first article, a mask is a layer you can add to your project to affect certain parts of it. However, instead of being another layer, the mask is attached to a layer and affects the pixels on that layer. It’s used to block or show the pixels on the layer it is part of, so your project is changed in some way.

According to the online book, Grokking the GIMP, layer masks are special layers that are only 8 bits deep and that represent the alpha channel of an image layer. Now I’m not quite sure I understand it when stated that way, but it is a special layer that can be manipulated to change the image.

To add a layer mask, open the image you want to use. In the layers dialog, right click on the layer where you want the mask. A menu will open, and click on Apply Layer Mask. You’ll get the window shown at center top:

In my first article, I reviewed a couple of methods of using the layer mask to affect a photo. The first was a black layer mask, which made the layer invisible, showing the desaturated layer below. Then we painted with white to show specific areas of color in the same layer as the mask. In one of the projects, I changed the mask itself to a gradient (grey to black, so the top left of the photo was partially colored and the bottom right was black & white like the desaturated copy below), then painted the flower with white to highlight it. Here is another example of the first kind, using the tulips in my yard.

In each instance I used a black layer mask and painted it with white, essentially covering up the layer then exposing selected areas of it.

A white mask does the opposite: it makes the layer visible. Painting it with black hides that part of the layer, revealing the layer below. On the following photo, I put the desaturated layer on top and used a white mask, painting it with black to expose the color photo below.

The dramatic effect above can be done with either a black or white layer mask. You just have to place the desaturated layer in a different spot.

I can also use this tool to quickly erase the background from a photo that has just the picture I want to use elsewhere. We went to an auto auction a few years ago (just to look at the vehicles) and I snapped this picture:
If I want to use only this truck in another project, I will want to get rid of the background. Open it in GIMP, and apply a white layer mask to this layer. Notice in the image below that I have also selected it with the Lasso tool. Go to Select > Invert to change the selection to the background. The white blob in the top left corner is what happens when I start painting with the eraser, but if I use the paintbrush with black, the background disappears (top right corner). When it is exported, only the truck shows. An extra added attraction is that if your hand slips and you run over the truck, it doesn’t get erased, because it isn’t in the selection.

You could also use another tip: if your object can be outlined relatively easily with one of the selection tools, you can then bucket fill your selection with black instead of painting it in with the brush. I use the Lasso or Intelligent Scissors most, but you can also use the Paths tool. It is much faster and more accurate than painting! I used that on the butterfly photo, but the truck and the flower photos would be a bit more difficult (because there are more detailed edges). As you can see above, I didn’t outline the truck very well. If I was going to use that in another project I would have to be much more careful. However, when I get the truck outlined correctly, I can invert the selection, then bucket fill with black. If you press Delete, the background will disappear, but replaced with a white background (I started with a jpg file, which doesn’t use transparency). Then you could export it as a png.

When the online book was written there were only 3 choices in the Layer Mask window. Now there are 7, and I’m still learning. The book says that the layer mask will only work if the photo has an alpha channel, and there is a choice to add one if needed. We'll revisit this again, but I need to learn more first.
GIMP Tutorial: Pressed Text

by Meemaw

I saw this tutorial several months ago and thought it was neat. It makes a text that looks sort of like it was stamped into the background. I used the same pattern as the original, so I'm going to also try it with a different pattern to see how it changes.

So, let's go through it. I made my drawing 800 x 600 and my text Verdana Bold Italic, size 120 px. I used the name of everyone's favorite distro, but use whatever text you want.

When you get your text written, change to the move tool and move it to the center of your canvas, then right-click the text layer and choose Layer to image size.

Now, choose only your text by right-clicking the text layer and choosing Alpha to selection. Now your letters are outlined. The next step is to fill the letters with a pattern. Choose Bucket fill and change to pattern fill. Choose the pattern named “Pine?”, and fill the letters. Now, add a drop shadow using Filters > Light and Shadow > Drop Shadow. (I used the legacy drop shadow tool.) Make your drop shadow offset 4 px.

The next step is to fill our letters again. However, we want to leave that wood grain as a border, so go to Select > Shrink and shrink it 3 px. Now, choose your Bucket fill again, but change back to FG fill and use a gray color. Your letters should now be gray with a wood grain border.

We're going to add another drop shadow, but it will affect the gray parts of the letters. Choose Select > Invert so everything else is chosen, then choose Filters > Re-Show Drop Shadow. Change the offset back to 8 px and click OK. This puts the shadow on the inside of the border.

Now, start in the center of your canvas and draw your mouse pointer to the bottom right corner (next page, top left).

Now we can merge all our layers by clicking Image > Flatten image.

We'll put the first of two gradients in now. Change to the Gradients tool, and choose a radial gradient, FG to transparent. Reverse the gradient as well, so the transparency is on the “left”.

The next step is to do a bump map on this creation. Click on Filters > Light and Shadow > Lighting Effects. Click on the Bump Map tab and click the box that says Enable Bump Map. If our project had
multiple layers, we would be able to choose which layer we wanted to use, but we only have one layer, so just click OK.

Let's add another gradient. If you click on your gradient tool again, your settings should still be there. Start in the center again and drag past the corner.

If you've noticed, the drop shadow tool has left some extra at the sides of the project. At this point you can crop out whatever you don't want. I chose to crop a lot of my drawing, leaving just the text. Since it is your project, you can choose how much or little to crop.

Neat effect, isn't it? I tried it again, using “Pastel stuff” for the letters and “Rain” for the background. It looks totally different. It may not appeal to everyone, but this is just another example of what can be done.
GIMP Tutorial: Joined Photos

by Meemaw

I saw this tutorial on YouTube and it looked really fun, so I’m going to share it. This is similar to the “Out Of Frame Effect” tutorial I shared in the November, 2014 issue. This one will make an image look like it is spread across two photographs.

I am again using an image from a parade that my town has every year.

After loading your image into GIMP, right click on the layer that shows the image (in the Layers toolbox) and choose Add Alpha Channel. (We’ll have to explore Alpha Channels soon.)

To start working on the photo frames, add a new, transparent layer. In the Layers toolbox, make sure that your transparent layer is selected, then choose the Rectangle Select tool and draw a square.

Using the Bucket Fill tool, fill your square with white. Now, with the square selected, go to Filters > Light & Shadow > Drop Shadow and add a drop shadow to the white square. I had to use the Drop Shadow (legacy) to see it, but you may not have any problem.

With the drop shadow complete, you may see that it and your white square are in two different layers. If they are, right-click the drop shadow layer and choose Merge Down.

Now we’re going to create the border of our photo. Go to Select > Shrink, and make it 25 pixels. Now the smaller square is selected, so press the Delete key to delete the white.

It’s starting to look like a photo. With that layer still chosen, go to Select > None to de-select everything. Now choose the Rotate tool, and click on your photo frame. When the rotate window comes up, press the mouse key in the angle setting
until your frame is rotated the way you want, then click on Rotate.

Now, choose the Move tool, to move this frame to a different position. Drag it to wherever you want it, but still overlapping the first frame. You also need to decide which of your “photos” will be on top, and make sure that layer is above the other. When I got mine moved, I wanted the left frame on top, so I raised that layer above the other with the arrow buttons in the Layers toolbox.

Selecting your “frame” layers one at a time, choose your Eraser tool, and carefully erase those parts of the frames that are over the object you have in your photos. You also want to erase that part of the bottom frame that should be under the top photo.

Let’s really make them look like two photos on the table. With your Eraser tool still active, choose the layer that the photo is in, and erase the part of the photo around the frames. There is a trick to erasing that you might use: click the mouse at one corner of a frame, but don’t hold it down. Go to the next corner, hold down the Shift key, and click your mouse there. You should see a straight line erased between the places where you clicked your mouse. I was able to do all the boundaries of the frames very quickly using this method. After that, I made my eraser tool much bigger, and was able to erase the rest of the picture quickly and easily. I’ve used this trick many times since I learned it! Remember though, it works that way only for straight lines.

If you haven’t saved your file, you should save it now.

We want two photos, so duplicate the frame layer (it should still be selected, so all you should have to do is click on the Duplicate Layer button). You’ll see another layer in the layers list but not another frame in your picture yet. Change to the new layer, and choose the Rotate tool again. We don’t usually set every photo down in exactly the same position, so rotate this one a bit differently than the first - maybe even in the other direction - then click on Rotate.

At this point we want to add another transparent layer (for a tabletop). Move it to the bottom, and Bucket Fill it with the color of your choice (I’m partial to blue). You can also crop it down to a nice size (next page).
Save and export your image, and you’re finished!

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Microsoft Windows has encountered an unrecoverable error. Please reboot and install PCLinuxOS.

Posted by Snubbi on January 1, 2022, running e25.
GIMP Tutorial: Reflective Water Effect

by Meemaw

This is a tutorial for adding a water effect to a photo. I saw two of them on YouTube - there are actually many GIMP tutorials on YouTube, if you just search for GIMP.

I grabbed a photo of the Grand Teton mountain range from WikiMedia Commons. Most of these are free-to-use images - however, you should check on each photo to see if you need to credit the photographer/artist. This one was taken by Michael Gåbler.

I also found a photo of some water we'll use. There is a little bit of water in the photo, but I want to make more.

The first thing you want to do is duplicate your layer (because we'll need two). Then, you want to add an alpha channel to your top layer by right-clicking the layer and choosing "Add alpha channel". An alpha channel adds transparency to the layer, so if you delete part of that layer, as we're about to do, the layer underneath shows through. If there was no alpha channel, and you deleted part of that layer, you would see whatever background color you have at that moment (mine would have been white).

For now, turn off the visibility of your bottom layer. Then, with your top layer selected, choose your Lasso Tool and outline the area in your top layer photo that you want to change to water. I made mine just the slightest bit wavy at the top, since lake shores don't usually run in a straight line.

I want to make a small border between the fill and the photo, so go to Select > Shrink, and shrink your selection about 7 pixels (although you can use whatever looks good to you.)

Now, press the delete key. You'll see everything within the selection is gone and that part of your photo is transparent.

The next thing you want to do is use your Bucket Fill tool and fill this area with a grey. If it only fills a few little bits of the selection, go to your tool settings and choose "Fill whole selection".

Now my aim in leaving the small grey border was to have a slight change between the vegetation and the water, so the only border I need is the top one
right next to the plants. Choose Select > None to
deselect the area, then use your Eraser Tool to
erase the sides and bottom lines. can also check Split View, which shows a before
and after view of your screen, so you can compare.

When you see a reflection in the water, it is nearly
always wavy, except for those times that the water is
absolutely still, and then your reflection may still be
distorted. In the filter, Ripple, I used the following
settings: Amplitude - 6, Period - 240, and left
everything else at default. However, you can
experiment to see what you think looks best.

Before you finish, you may want to crop your project
(I see some transparency at the bottom of mine). Also, our grey line is still in the middle of the picture.
We want to smudge that just a bit to just make a
slight shadow between the scenery and the
reflection. You might have to zoom in to do that.
Every time I'm zoomed in, working on something, I
want to look past the edge of my project, and
sometimes GIMP won't let me. However, see that
plus sign in the bottom right corner of your canvas?
Grab and hold that and move your mouse. GIMP will
move your photo however far you want to move it,
giving you a view of the edge (and past it) that you
want.

Now we're going to start the reflection. Turn on the
visibility of your bottom layer, choose it, and select
Layer > Transform > Flip Vertically. Choosing the
Move Tool, move your layer up until the reflected
part at the bottom matches up pretty well. You can
see the border between them at the grey line.

Now that we have our reflection looking more
natural, we'll add some actual water to the picture. I
saved a picture of water from another photo and will
use that.

Add a new white layer between the two layers you
have, and open the water picture. Copy and paste it
onto the new layer. You may also have to scale it to
make sure it will fill the area you have over the
reflected layer before anchoring it as well. Right now
it will completely cover the reflection you just worked
on. With that layer still chosen, go to the layer
attributes at the top of the layer list and set the
opacity down to about 20, but you may want to
experiment there as well. Now you can see the
reflection through the water.

When you finish your image, and are satisfied with it,
save and export it. I did two… one with the border
between the picture and reflection, and one without
(next page). Do yours whichever way you like best.
Gattinoni: Reflective Water Effect

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Posted by Ramchu on January 11, 2022, running KDE.
GIMP Tutorial: Photo Filmstrip

by Meemaw

Last month, we saw a Repo Review of the program PhotoFilmStrip, which allows you to create a slideshow from your chosen photos. However, if you want a single image that includes several photos, you can create something like the following in GIMP. I’ve seen this done by others but we’ve never covered it in these tutorials, so I thought I’d do one. In this tutorial, we can make a filmstrip out of several photos we load, and use the Curve Bend filter to make it something other than a straight rectangular strip.

I used 5 photos from a recent trip to the mountains. You could use less or more, I’m sure. When you have your photos selected, open GIMP and choose File > Open As Layers. Your photos will open in one GIMP project, and you’ll be able to see them in the layers window (center, top).

While you are here, you can reorder your photos into the order you want them by moving the layers. When you are satisfied, choose Filters > Combine > Filmstrip. In the window, you can keep the defaults and click OK. I unchecked the boxes dealing with showing the numbers on the filmstrip.

Choosing the layer with the photos, and using the Move tool, move the filmstrip to just above and to the right of the center of the canvas.

The openings in the filmstrip are still white and we want them transparent like the background. First, right click on the layer and choose Add Alpha Channel. Click on the Select by Color tool and then click on one of the white rectangles to select the color white. Now, choose the eraser tool. We’re going to start our eraser on one end of the filmstrip and use that tip we learned a few issues ago. Click on the end rectangle, then holding down the Shift key, click on the rectangle at the other end to erase them all. Merge your layers.

You’ll get a new project with the filmstrip. If you want to, you can delete the first project with the photos opened as layers (right, top).

To give yourself room to work, add a transparent layer 2000px by 2000px. Then click Image > Fit Canvas To Layers (right).
We need to stretch out the first photo so it will look right when we bend our filmstrip. With the Rectangle Select tool, select the first photo, then choose the Scale tool, and move the border of your selection to the left so it's just over twice the length that it was, and click Scale.

Make a copy of the filmstrip by clicking <CTRL> + C, then <CTRL> + V. The copy is over the original, of course, but in a floating layer. Flip the copy vertically, then move it beneath the original, and then set the opacity to about 40%.

The copy is now on a floating layer, so you should anchor it.

Using the rectangle select again, select both filmstrips, then click Filters > Distorts > Curve Bend. You'll get the first window below. In the center you'll see the setting “Curve for Border”. Click on Upper first, and drag the left end of the line from center to the shape you see in the second window below. Then choose Lower, and drag the center line to the lower shape (center).

Right click the floating layer and choose “To new layer”. You can now delete the layer with the straight filmstrip.

Let's give this a background. Create a new transparent layer and move it underneath your filmstrip. Choose the Gradient tool, FG to BG, and make your foreground black and your background white. Start at the top of the top strip and drag to the top of the bottom strip.

The copy is now on a floating layer, so you should anchor it.

Click on OK. This filter takes a few seconds to work depending on your system. Notice that this is also put on a floating layer, and you can see the original strip below the curved strip.

Let's also make the reflection fade out a bit like it should. Choose the filmstrip layer, right click it and click Add Layer Mask. In the Add Layer Mask window, make sure White is chosen. In the Layers toolbox, click on the layer mask next to the filmstrip.

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and using your gradient again, click from the bottom of the window a little diagonally and up into the strip a bit so the mask fades out the bottom part of the strip. How far you go is up to you.

Now you can merge your layers, and crop your creation, and you’re finished!
GIMP Tutorial: Photo Editing Revisited

by Meemaw

I recently found another tutorial about photo editing which has some tips we know, plus some we don’t, so I thought I’d share it.

We always want the photos we take to look their best, so here are more tips.

Straighten the Horizon

Sometimes we shoot a photo “askew” for artistic reasons, but most of the time we need it to be level. Unless you have the uncanny ability to shoot everything level automatically, it’s going to be off. Luckily, it’s easy to fix. I actually did another tip for this in an earlier article, but this method works better. This barn photo was taken on one of my trips to Colorado, USA. The horizon isn’t off much, but it will look better when it’s straightened.

You will see the photo turn so the horizon is straight, plus crop a bit of the outside to compensate for the rotation.

If it looks better to you, finish the job going to Image > Crop to Content to remove any blank areas around the corners of the canvas. If not, click Edit > Undo and try again.

Cropping Photos in GIMP

We’ve done cropping before, but some of the tool options should probably be explored.

Select the Crop tool (Shift + C). Now click and drag inside the image to draw the outline of your new crop. You can hold the Shift key to maintain the photo’s original aspect ratio, but if the tool is set to retain the aspect ratio, you’re good.

Just like the Rectangle Select tool, you can hold your mouse in the corners or edges of the frame and then drag in or out to correct. You can also click in the middle of the frame and drag to reposition the cropped area. Hit Enter to apply.

You should also experiment with the composition guides in the Tool options. This enables you to overlay several grids (including the rule of thirds grid) to aid with your crop.

Improve Exposure

If your photo is too light or dark, or contains highlights where the brightest parts of the frame are rendered as pure white with no detail, you need to fix the exposure. I have a photo that’s too dark.

Select the Measure Tool from the Toolbox. Click on a point on the horizon in your image, drag your mouse along the horizon line, then release the mouse button. Now, under Tool Options, set Clipping to Crop to result, then click Straighten.
Go to Colors > Exposure. In the dialog box that opens, drag the Black level slider to the right to darken the blacks in your image. Drag the Exposure slider right to brighten the image, and left to darken it.

Make sure Preview is checked to show the real-time effect of your changes, and select Split view to see the before and after effects in the same image. When you’re satisfied, click OK to apply the change. The black level slider gave me a result I didn’t like, so I moved it back to zero. However, the exposure slider, moved right, made a change I thought was good. The right side is the original, and the left side is the changed photo.

Image Size enter a new width for your image, in pixels. Interpolation is usually set to Cubic (I think it’s the default), which is the slowest but also the best quality.

Ideally, you should only ever make your images smaller. If you do need to make any of them bigger, you should do it in increments of 10 percent, and inspect the result carefully before doing another 10 percent.

If you want to resize your photos to print them, you can use Image > Print Size instead. This window will let you set the size you plan to print your photo.

If you’re working with JPEG files, you should be careful with the exposure tweaks, because you can risk introducing noise or otherwise degrading the image.

Resizing Images

The last job in editing your photos is to resize them correctly. If you know how big you want to make your photo, click on Image > Scale Image, then under

Image Size enter a new width for your image, in pixels. Interpolation is usually set to Cubic (I think it’s the default), which is the slowest but also the best quality.

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GIMP Tutorial: Photo Editing, Part 3

by Meemaw

In an ongoing effort to provide you with several ways to tweak your photos, I have found a few more tips that you can use in GIMP.

Correcting White Balance

Sometimes your camera will react strangely to the light conditions in the scene you want to photograph, and the photo may have a blue (or strange) hue to it, when the colors are obviously supposed to be different. In the photo below, the blue sky almost takes over the whole photo.

Choose Colors > Auto > White Balance, and it should be instantly corrected (center, top).

While it looks to me to be closer to the scene I remembered when I took the photo, I’ll have to do some more later. Similarly, you may not like the results you get.

If you aren’t happy with the automatic results, there’s always another way to do things in GIMP. Choose Colors > Levels, and toward the bottom of the window that opens, click on the middle eyedropper icon. This will let you set a gray point in your image, an area of neutral color off which all the other colors will be based.

With the eyedropper selected, find an area of gray in the photo and click on it. The color of the whole photo will update. The good thing about this is that you can keep clicking different grays in different parts of the picture until you find one that you’re happy with.

Tweaking Photo Colors in GIMP

Tweaking the colors of your photos can make dramatic effects. Depending on what you do with your photos, you might want vivid colors or subdued colors.

Click on Colors > Hue-Saturation. The Saturation slider will boost your colors. Be careful because it’s very easy to oversaturate your images. A good rule is to set the saturation to a level that looks okay, then just drop it back a little. Here, I set the saturation up.

You can adjust the red, magenta, blue, cyan, green, and yellow parts of your image separately by choosing the color and using the Lightness slider.

You can make a sky look bolder and bluer by focusing on the blue and cyan colors, and set the Lightness slider to a darker level. To make grass and foliage look greener and more vivid, increase the Lightness level for green. Here, I’ve set the lightness for green up a bit. It just increased the green in the foreground (next page, top left).
If you’re left with harsh edges around the areas of color that you’ve adjusted, drag the **Overlap** slider to the right to help blend them better.

After editing a bit more, I came up with this result.

**Removing the Background**

Sometimes, you shoot what you think is a perfect shot, but the sky is one big blob of grey-blue. Let’s remove the sky and replace it with something better. Fortunately, you can remove the background in GIMP, which enables you to replace the sky with something a lot more interesting. In the photo below, the sky is almost white with no color at all. I want to replace it with something more colorful (center, top).

As you can see, the sky has almost no color at all, even after I used some of the above tweaks on it. We’ll use one method of editing now. First, choose **Layer > Transparency > Add Alpha Channel**. Now, choose the **Fuzzy Select** tool, and click on the sky. You may have to play with the threshold setting to get only the sky, but you can click, then adjust and click again. My threshold was 35, and I got the following:

See the little dots across the tops of the trees? Those dots and the dotted lines over the top are moving, which means that’s your selection. Now click on **Delete**. The sky will disappear (right, top).

Now the only thing left is to add a transparent layer and paste a different sky into it. Open your sky and resize it to the width of your photo. Copy and paste it on a newly created transparent layer, then move that layer to the bottom of the layers. Export it to a new file.

Several other ways exist to remove a background from a photo. We’ll soon explore others in upcoming articles.
GIMP Tutorial: Pattern Filters For Different Effects

by Meemaw

I was in GIMP the other day and got into the Render filter. One of the subcategories is Pattern, and I hadn't explored much of that before. It turns out that there are several items that could be useful.

Filters > Render > Pattern > Checkerboard makes a checkerboard pattern that can also be edited for size and color. In this version of GIMP, there are two menu entries for checkerboard, the new one and the "Legacy" one. The new one is a straight checkerboard, but the legacy entry has a checkbox called "Psychobilly", which gives a different effect.

Filters > Render > Pattern > Grid makes a grid pattern, like graph paper.

Filters > Render > Pattern > Linear Sinusoid makes a sort of checkerboard pattern but more abstract. Loads of settings will let you twist it to your liking.

Filters > Render > Pattern > Maze makes a maze. You can make the size bigger or smaller. Clicking on "New Seed" changes the maze. I'm not sure if each maze is actually "solvable", but the design looks neat anyway.
Filters > Render > Pattern > Spiral makes two different types - Linear and Logarithmic. You can check “On-canvas controls” and you’ll get the handles shown. On the linear, it’s just to control the size of the stroke, but there are two on the logarithmic, one for the stroke and one for how tight you want the spiral. Be careful how far you move your mouse! Your stroke could disappear!

Filters > Render > Pattern > Jigsaw makes a jigsaw puzzle with any picture you want. In version 2.10.18, Jigsaw is a legacy filter. In fact, there is a new and a legacy filter for Checkerboard, Grid, Maze and Sinus. The new version of these filters have more settings for more variety. The new versions have a “G” icon next to them, while the legacy versions have a gear icon.

Sinus is another abstract. You’ll see a new version and a legacy version.

Filters > Render > Pattern > Qbist is a sort of abstract pattern generator. You get a grid where you can choose something that you like. Every time you click on one, the grid changes to another collection close to the one you clicked. When you find one you want, click on it and choose OK (right, top).
Bayer Matrix is kind of like a checkerboard, except that all the squares are different shades of gray, which you can lighten, darken, resize and rotate.

Looks like we’ll be experimenting for a while!
GIMP Tutorial: Blending Multiple Images

by Meemaw

I saw this the other day, and had thought about combining some photos. I have grandchildren and it seems like a neat way to show them at different ages. However, I’m going to practice with other photos. This is a pretty quick process.

To blend multiple images together, you will need to erase the background of one of the top layers in order to reveal what’s underneath. You can do this very quickly using Masks.

Open your two images on separate layers in the same file. What I did was to open my main image in one layer, then created a white layer in the same drawing. I then copied and pasted my other photos to the bottom layer layer.

Select the top layer and click the Masks button at the bottom of the Layers dock. When the window comes up, leave the default - White (Full Opacity), then click Add.

Select the Brush tool and set the color to black.

Now start painting onto the top layer. Where you paint black, the top layer will be erased and the bottom layer will become visible.

If you make a mistake, change the brush color to white. Now paint over the black areas of the mask and that will make the top layer visible once again. If it’s a stroke you just made, you can always undo it using <CTRL> + Z.

Hint: If you want your background color different, you can always change that layer’s color by using Bucket Fill before you open the photo for that layer. In the photo above, I made my bottom layer blue so it would show through around the photo. Remember also, you can make a straight line with your brush by holding down Shift and clicking each end of where you want your line. GIMP will draw a straight line between those two points.

I also did a sort of collage of some of our ATV riding photos from last summer (top, right).

The hardest thing is remembering where your photos are to uncover them! Have fun!
GIMP Tutorial: Create A Mandala Using Your Name

by Meemaw

I haven't been to some of my favorite sites for a while, having other events that were keeping me busy - you know, Life. However, I happened to go to one of my favorite GIMP sites the other day - GIMP Learn. I know I can always find something new to learn, and that day was no exception. One of the most talented people on the site, a lady named Pat625, had posted a fine tutorial a while back, and I was just now able to go through it. The actual tutorial is here, and it is wonderful, so I thought I'd share it with you.

Create a new file, 1,000 px X 1,000 px, with a white background. Using the guides you can pull from the left-side and top rulers, place them at 500 px. If you will check the bar at the bottom of your window, you will see “Add Guide” and it will show you when your guide is at 500 px. Your canvas will look like this:

When you get it on the canvas, center it in the background, and move it so the top of the text is just touching the horizontal guide.

Create a text box and put your name in it using a fancy font. Pat625’s suggestion was Rothenburg Decorative or Strassburg Fraktur, and included them in her tutorial package. I used Rothenburg (it has more swirls), but you could use any font you’d like. The swirly ones make great mandalas! Depending on how long your name is, your font size should probably be between 100 and 150. Mine was 150 but could have been a bit more.

When you get it where it needs to be, right click the text layer in the layer dialog and choose “Discard Text Information” since we now need this to just be a layer. Right click again and choose “Layer to Image Size”.

Now we'll use this layer to make our mandala. Choosing the text layer, duplicate it by clicking on Duplicate Layer in the Layers dialog. With the duplicate chosen, click on the rotate tool (GIMP 2.10.22 groups the tools, so it may be in the transform group depending on your version.) Put your cursor in the middle of your layer and rotate it 180°. It will look like this now (next page, top left):

Now, right click the top layer and choose “Merge Down”. NOTE - Keep the text layers separate from the background (don’t merge all the way down.) Duplicate the text layer, then rotate the duplicate 90° (next page, center, left).

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Now we can give it a little flair. In Pat625’s tutorial, she had drawn two circles around her mandala. It looks really neat, so let’s do it. Choose your ellipse tool and in the toolbox, tick the boxes for “Expand from center” and “Fixed aspect ratio” so we can make the circle perfectly round. Starting in the center, make the circle large enough for the text to be just inside. We want an actual circle there, so before you do anything else, choose Edit > Stroke Selection. Make sure your foreground color is black, then make your stroke 12 px.

Before you do anything else, click Select > None. That will deselect the ellipse you just used. Repeat your circle again, using the ellipse tool, making this one inside the first. When you do Edit > Stroke Selection this time, make it 4 or 5 px. Merge down until you have the drawing on the top layer, and the background on the bottom layer. Remember to save your work.

It already looks pretty neat! You can stop now, export it in the format of your choice, and let a child or grandchild color it if you wish. However, we can also add some color to it before we’re finished.

Right click on the top layer and choose Alpha To Selection. You will see the “walking ants” everywhere you have any black. Make the black layer invisible so you can see the result (next page, top left).

Add a new layer on top of the other two. Now, click on the Gradients tool, choose Radial gradient, and whichever gradient you want. Starting from the center, click and drag your mouse towards the
GIMP Tutorial: Create A Mandala Using Your Name

Again, you can stop here and export, but I'll show you a couple more things you can do. One thing you can do is to emphasize the colors of your mandala. If your selection is still active (we did Alpha to Selection earlier), create a new layer under the top layer. Choose Edit > Stroke Selection again. Use around 5 px for your stroke, and make it black. If you want more black, make it 6 or 7 px.

The first time I did this tutorial, the result was the first image below. The second image below (next page, top left) is the second try.

Another thing you can do, if you don't want to fill the background with color, is to add shadows instead. Choose your mandala layer (the color layer) and go to Filters > Light & Shadow > Drop Shadow. Change your shadow, blur radius and opacity to whatever looks good to you.

outside. Remember, any time you don't like the result, you can always press CTRL + Z to undo it and try again. I chose the Caribbean Blues gradient, and I think I had to reverse it. In the mandala at the first of the article, I used the Sunrise gradient.

Another one is to bucket fill the background layer with color. That's easy. Just choose the background layer, choose the bucket fill tool and a color you want, and click.
I hope you enjoyed this one. I thought it was fun! Depending on the colors and extra effects, they all look a bit different.
**Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Rose**

by Meemaw

This tutorial is really fun, and you end up with a pretty clipart rose.

Draw a simple circle for the top of the flower.

To add character to our rose, let's use tapered lines. The first step is to draw a flat ellipse somewhere on your page, then copy it to your clipboard.

Open the Path > Path Effect Editor. Select the spiral, add a Pattern Along Path effect, and then click Paste path (the clipboard) for the pattern source. Since the ellipse was copied to the clipboard, its shape will now be stretched along the spiral.

Next, click on the Nodes tool and move the sides so they are rounded.

Adjusting the stroke width to 6 will result in this (top, right):

Now let's do the rest of the flower. Using the Pencil tool, with the shape changed to Triangle Out, draw a triangle shape (right).
We want a red rose, don’t we? However, you’ll notice that you can’t fill this shape since it isn’t closed. So, duplicate the tapered line, click on Path > Remove Path Effect, and then change the color of your new section to red.

Move the colored section behind the tapered line, and change the fill on the top circle to red as well.

Before I finish with the flower itself, I want to add some detail. With the swirl in the center ending at the bottom right side of the top, that’s naturally where the petal edge should be, so I will use the pencil tool again to add a line on top of the flower that imitates the edge of the petal (center, top). To easily move the flower, select all and group the parts.

To finish the flower, we need to draw the stem and some leaves. Using the Pen tool with a Triangle In shape, draw a very slightly curved line.

The leaves are pretty easy. Use the Pencil tool with a Triangle In shape and draw a couple of freehand lines. Increase the Smoothing until you get the result you want. Mine was 50. Draw another line down the middle for detail.

To color the leaf, do the same thing as you did with the flower - create a copy and click on Path > Remove Path Effect and change the fill to green. Place the green section under the outline section. You can make as many leaves as you want by grouping the original (if you haven’t already), duplicating it, flipping it horizontally and placing the copies on the stem. You can also change the size or rotate them to get the effect you want (top, right).

We’re finished! That was fun!

If you want to change the background that’s up to you. Save and export your rose in whatever image format you want. I made several for a Valentine’s Day bouquet.
by Meemaw

The other day I was reading the on forum and came across phornerker’s excellent post about redesigning his website. When I clicked on the link to go to his homepage, I thought his title text was very cool. This tutorial is to make something similar to his.

This is a quick tutorial, easy to do but very striking. You can make this any size or font you want, but it’s easier to reduce the size than it would be to increase it (depending on the file format you are using). If you use it on something big, like a wallpaper, you’ll want it big.

Open Inkscape and choose your canvas. I usually start with one the size of a piece of US Letter-sized paper (1056 x 816 px), but I know folks who start with a minimum of 1600 x 1200 px.

Start with a rectangle filled with black. It doesn’t have to cover the whole page unless you want it to. Set it to the side, and change to the text tool. Decide on your desired text and enter it in the font of your choice. I used a font called A&S Speedway.

Duplicate your text and make the duplicate white. Put it behind the original, or put your original off to the side, and bring back your black rectangle.

Go to Filters > Blurs > Blur. When the window comes up change the blur radius on each to 3. Click Apply. Then close the window.

Now move your black text back, and make sure it’s on top. Choosing the black text and the blurred text, use the Align and Distribute tool to center them both ways.

You’re finished! You can group it all and export it.
This makes a wonderful image, and you can change it up by changing the font or the colors. Phomeker’s had a smaller blur radius, so you could use 2 instead of 3, and it would be fine. This is a font called Patriot using blur radius 3, a red background and blue text.

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Special Editions!

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by Meemaw

I saw this one a while back and it looked really fun! We'll be making a bunch of grass that looks realistic. To do this we'll have to start with a single blade of grass.

Using the Pen tool, enable the Triangle out setting and draw a straight line. Change to the Nodes tool and widen the bottom of your line just a bit, then curve the line a little (since grass is never absolutely straight).

Before we go any farther, use the Gradient tool to make a light green to dark green linear gradient.

OK, now it's important that we change the rotation location on our line. Generally when you double-click an object, there's a small plus sign in the center of it. For this project, we need to drag that plus sign to the bottom of our line.

Since we want a whole bunch of grass, we're going to use an easy way to get it. Before we learned so much about Inkscape, our first thought would be to use $<$CTRL$>$ + D and duplicate the heck out of that single line. However, making them all look different would be loads of work. So instead of that, we will use Tiled Clones again.

Select your single blade of grass and go to Edit > Clones > Create Tiled Clones. The first thing you should do is click on Reset at the bottom of the window to make sure that no previous settings are still there. Then, we want the following settings:

- **Shift** - X - Per column - -85% (This is Minus 85)
- **Scale** - Y - Randomize - 10%,
- **Rotation Angle** - Randomize 10%
- **Rows** - 1, **Columns** - 475.

Now click Create.

After all that I moved them to the bottom of my page. Put a blurry green rectangle behind your grass to make it look like it is really thick.

This can be exported by itself. All you have to do is select your grass, and choose Export Selection. You should probably export it as a .png to preserve the transparency. Now, if you are making a scene that requires grass, you have it covered. Easy, huh?
Inkscape Tutorial: Drawing A Tree

by Meemaw

I found this tutorial in the same place as the grass tutorial we did a couple of months ago. This is to make a tree easily, rather than trying to draw one by hand.

Open Inkscape and click on Extensions > Render > Random Tree. You'll see a dialog box like the one below.

There are only two settings: Initial size and Minimum size. Set those to 100 and 4 respectively. Check the Live preview box and look at what you get. You can try again by unchecking the Live preview box and rechecking it (bottom, left).

I decided on this one:

Open up the Fill & Stroke dialog and change the Stroke to a color green with a width of about 40px. Set the Join to Miter so it's still jagged, like trees are.

Select your tree and click on Path > Stroke to Path. This will convert your tree into a much more simple shape, because we're going to change it.

We're going to deal with the leaves and the trunk separately so, using the Pen tool, draw a shape around the trunk.

Select both the tree and the shape you just drew and use Path > Division. You should get something that looks like the tree below. Change the trunk to a brown color of your choice.
Now, with the cut we just made, our leaves look way too straight on the bottom. To fix this, copy and paste the leaf bunch and then flip it vertically.

Now place the two leaf sections together, one on top of the other. You can then group them, or you can select both leaf objects and do a **Path > Union** to merge them. I also lengthened the trunk as well. It's your creation, so it's up to you.

Now, to make it more realistic, copy the entire tree top and flip it horizontally and give it a slightly darker green color. You can also rotate it and/or change the size. Send it to the bottom of your drawing to give it some depth.

Now we also want to add a shadow to the tree trunk. Copy the tree top and tree trunk. Give the tree top copy a black fill with a 50% opacity. Leave the tree trunk in position as we’ll be clipping it for a proper shadow.

Move the tree trunk on top of the shadow, select them both, and click on **Object > Clip > Set**. What you will end with is a shadow of the tree top on the trunk (right, top).

Click on your tree top and bring it back to the front. I also moved the trunk down just a little, and shortened up the tree top so the shadow is visible (right).

To add some finishing touches, I grouped all the tree pieces, duplicated the tree, changed the size of the duplicate and flipped it horizontally. Then I moved it elsewhere on the page. In addition, I put in some sky and some of the grass we made a couple of months ago (next page, top left).
The last step is to export the drawing in the format of your choice.

I’m sure your creation is wonderful! I hope you had fun with this!
Inkscape Tutorial: How To Vectorize A Bitmap

by Meemaw

OK, say I'm creating a magazine cover and I just HAVE to use a certain piece of clipart. The problem is, when I enlarge it to the size it needs to be, it gets all fuzzy. For example, maybe I'm doing something for New Year's, and want to use this noise maker clipart:

However, for what I'm doing, it needs to be bigger:

Well, look at it now, kinda grainy and the edges aren't as smooth as the smaller image... is there anything we can do about that? We could vectorize it.

Vectorizing it means that we will convert it from a bitmap to a scalable vector image, which can be resized without losing any quality. Scalable Vector Graphics are defined in a text file rather than with pixels, like many other graphics formats. When you enlarge a pixel graphic (the image above is a png), the pixels enlarge, which allows the image to lose quality and get grainy. An svg, on the other hand, is described using an xml text file. The text will be exactly the same no matter how big you enlarge the image, so it definitely has advantages.

So, can we convert this grainy thing to an svg? Yes! Let's do it!

Open your image in Inkscape. Select your image, and click Path > Trace Bitmap. You'll see a window like this:

The first time will be a single scan, which will give us a black & white image (just for illustration). Make sure Brightness Cutoff is chosen (and check Live Preview if you want). You might have to play with the settings, but the default is pretty good, or you could go up to 0.500. Click OK. The svg will appear over the original, but I moved it to the right.

The black and white image can be saved as an svg.

(Rats! I wanted a color image!) OK, let's do it again, and do multiple scans. In your Trace Bitmap window, choose Colors down under Multiple scans. Also, at the bottom, uncheck Smooth, as it seems to improve the quality. The selected image on the right is the trace. This can now be saved as an svg.
Look at the difference when I enlarge them both. The png is on the left. You can see how the png is fuzzy, but the svg isn't.

While the colors aren't exact (probably the person running the program rather than the program itself), they are very close, and the drawing edges are much smoother when the image is enlarged.

While this particular image was fairly easy, I have found a few that are much harder. I think it's a matter of finding the right settings for the image you are using. If your image has a highlight on it, things are a bit harder. I did this globe as well. As you can see, the highlighted area looks choppy now, even with the number of layers increased to 30. I'll have to experiment with the settings more, but it seemed to smooth out when I increased the layers.

I hope this will prove useful to you. I thought it was fun besides. Your newly made svg's can be made as big as you need for your artwork.
Inkscape Tutorial: Snowflakes And Christmas Trees

by Meemaw

I found a tutorial the other day that I thought was really fun! When we are finished, we will have a pile of snowflakes plus a decorated tree. We'll do the snowflakes first.

Using the Pen tool, draw a vertical line. Make the Stroke 8 or 10 with a Square cap.

Draw a V shape similar to what is below. Make sure you center it on the first line, then group the two shapes using Object > Group or the Group button on the toolbar.

We're going to duplicate this object several times to make our snowflake. Remember, the rotate tool is shown when you click on an object a second time. Make sure you move your center of rotation to the bottom before you start.

With the object selected, choose Control+D to duplicate it, then grab a rotation handle, and hold Control as you rotate to snap the angle (center, top).

You can simply change these to white (or really light blue) and duplicate your snowflakes to make a background. You can add a blue rectangle to the background as well.

This curved the paths and will allow you to adjust them to look more like a tree. You want to pull the bottom down and the sides out a bit (top left, next page).

When you finish that, select all of them and move them aside. This is also a good time to save your work, if you haven't done so already. We'll make the tree now.

Select the Polygon tool and choose the Star shape. Now, change your settings to the following: Corners - 3, Spoke Ratio - .380. Hold the Control key down while you drag to create this triangle shape. Fill it with a green color.

With the triangle still selected, click on Path > Object to Path to create some nodes. Choose the Nodes tool and select the middle nodes on all sides, then click Make nodes symmetric.
Inkscape Tutorial: Snowflakes And Christmas Trees

We're going to create a shadow. First, duplicate (Control+D) the triangle shape. Then, using the Pen tool, draw a simple curved line over this new triangle. Select both the triangle and the line, then choose Path > Division to make the cut.

Position the shadow shape over the original triangle (using Object > Align and Distribute to align the right sides will make this much easier). It will be easier to work with if you group these two pieces together.

You should end up with two shapes – grab the shadow shape on the right and delete the rest. Change the color to a darker green to make it look like a shadow. We've created our tree part, so now we can duplicate it at least twice, resize, and position the three or four pieces for our tree. As you go down, make each piece larger (since trees are smaller at the top) and put the lower ones behind the upper ones. Now, use Align & Distribute to center all the tree parts, then group them.

Now, select the Rectangle tool and draw a small, brown, rectangle for the tree trunk. Click on Path > Object to Path to adjust this rectangle so it looks more like a tree trunk.

We will need to create a shadow for the tree trunk, just like we did on the tree. Draw your line over the duplicated tree trunk, click Path > Division, and change the color of the one piece. Position it under the tree, so it looks like it should.
Inkscape Tutorial: Snowflakes And Christmas Trees

This is optional, but I'm going to draw a pot to put the tree in. Draw a couple of ovals over each other with the **Ellipse tool**. Click **Object to Path** on both of these.

To make the pot shape, select the **Nodes tool**, select the side and bottom nodes on the bottom ellipse, and then click **Add nodes**. You will get another node in between each of the ones you selected.

Select the three bottom nodes, click on the center one, and drag them down to create the pot (center, top).

Just like we did on the tree and trunk, duplicate the pot and create the shadow (center).

This tree needs some ornaments. Click on the **Polygon tool** again and change your settings to a 5 pointed star with a spoke ratio of .550 and .140 rounded, filled with yellow.

Now for some round ornaments. Create a red circle and a white oval for a reflection.

Again, we will put a shadow on the ornament. Do it the same way as above.
To be a little more realistic, we’ll need a shadow behind the ornament on the tree, using the same shadow color as we used on the tree. In this case, it’s just as easy to draw a circle the same color as the tree shadow, duplicate and place behind the ornaments that need shadows.

All that’s left to do is add your snowflake background to finish the scene. I also added a drop shadow to the tree. I think it looks great! It was fun as well!

When you are finished with the tree and ornaments you can always group the whole bunch.

You can get a lot more creative with the snowflakes, but I’ll let you play with that yourself.

Have a Merry Christmas, or whatever holiday you celebrate this time of year.

InkScape Tutorial: Snowflakes And Christmas Trees

Users Don't

Text
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Web Surf
Facebook
Tweet
Instagram
Video
Take Pictures
Email
Chat

While Driving.

Put Down Your Phone & Arrive Alive.
Inkscape Tutorial: Some Useful And Fun Extensions

by Meemaw

I saw a neat tutorial the other day that outlined several useful extensions in Inkscape. Khadis did a calendar article in January 2015 and another article in February of 2016 describing a few of them, but I thought I would review a few more. In creating your masterpiece, you never know what will be useful in making your work more efficient.

Restack

Suppose you have worked really hard arranging some objects, and suddenly decide they would look better if they were reversed? Restack can help. Select your objects and click Extensions > Arrange > Restack. In the following image, I stacked the top row left to right (left-most is on the bottom), and then I selected them all and duplicated them. I then moved the duplicates below the originals and did the restack on them. Notice that they are stacked from right to left (right-most is now on the bottom).

In the presets, there is a setting called Radial Outward, so I thought I’d try that with some Valentine’s hearts that were on the cover of our February, 2018 issue. You see that radial outward places the center object on the bottom, and stacks both ways from there (center, top).

Barcodes

Khadis’s article showed how to create a QR code. In Extensions > Render > Barcode, you are able to generate two other types, Classic and Data Matrix, shown here. The Classic barcodes have several kinds, depending on how much and what kind of information you need it for (written at the bottom of the barcode). The Data Matrix looks a bit like a QR Code, and is for the text Inkscape.

Grids

In this extension, you can generate different types of grids using Extensions > Render > Grids. Cartesian, Isometric and Polar grids (top, center and bottom at right) can be generated as well as the standard grid that looks like graph paper.
Interpolate

While I can’t think of very many uses for this extension, it is kinda fun! I’m sure someone more talented than I can create a wonderful wallpaper with it. If you have two paths, click on Extensions > Generate from Path > Interpolate. If your objects are different, the extension seems to form a path of one object changing to the other.

Remember, you have to have two items, and you have to make them paths using Path > Object to path. Make sure they are both chosen, then choose Interpolate using the menu directions above. You’ll get the following window.

Interpolation steps lets you choose how many intermediate objects you have, and Interpolation method causes the program to shape the intermediate objects differently. Use 1 or 2, whichever looks best to you. Live preview lets you see what the result is before you apply (when you’re satisfied, remember to click Apply so your interpolation will stay after you close the window).

Fractalize

Another fun extension is found at Extensions > Modify Path > Fractalize. It kinda destroys the edges and shape of a smooth object, as shown here. I used the stacked circles, duplicated and then fractalized them.

The lower your Smoothness number is, the rougher your creation. The number for the fractal below was 0.1.

There are many more extensions in Inkscape! We’ll probably see more in the future.
Inkscape Tutorial: Stylized Text

by Meemaw

I came across this tutorial a few weeks ago. This is another method for decorative text, and pretty fun. I also chose it because it includes keyboard shortcuts for customizing your text. In some instances, rotating and moving individual letters will give your text a different look that works better for your project than straight text would.

Open a new page, then choose your font and do your typing. Fat or heavy text will work better for this - I used a font called Flubber.

Rotation can be performed on each letter individually. Alt-[ and Alt-] can be used for counter and clockwise rotation around the lower left character anchor point.

Adjusting baselines will move the lines of text closer together. Alt-Up and Alt-Down are the keyboard shortcuts. Note that your anchor will be the first character in the text to the right of the cursor, so adjusting the first character will shift the entire line up or down accordingly.

I chose to space the letters out just a bit, rotate a few of the letters, and adjust the baseline on most of them. Playing with my text produced this:

Grab the handle and pull it out, making the text look heavier. Change the colors on the two different text items, so you can see what you’re doing. As you can see below, the white text is the original, and the blue is the offset text.

Select the original text object and give it a stroke of another color that works with your palette. It’s your project, so pick the colors you like, and colors that complement each other. Do the same with the outset text.

Choose the outset object and use Filters > Shadows and Glows > Drop Shadow to add your drop shadow. Choose your original text and do the same. You can see two samples below.

Now we need to move &/or rotate the individual characters. You can easily use the keyboard shortcuts as described below. Note that your cursor will have to be placed to the left of whichever letter you want to change, and if there are more letters in that line, your change may affect them all.

Manual tracking is the distance between each letter. Using Alt-Right or Alt-Left, you can apply a shift of one unit left and right. Shift-Alt-Left and Shift-Alt-Right will apply a shift of ten units each direction.

Next, select your text, then use the Linked Offset tool from the Path menu. This will create the single node handle to drag outward. Do not change your original text to a path.
Inkscape Tutorial: Create An Avatar

by Meemaw

An avatar is the graphical representation of someone, often used in social networks, forums, games etc. Usually, a 2D-avatar is a square image which has a small size (100x100px, 64x64px). I'm going to create an avatar for myself, and you can do the same. We'll start with simple objects like circles, ellipses, rectangles and squares.

Create a circle using the circle tool. Convert the circle to path using Path > Object to Path. Edit the path by the nodes to make it look like a human head.

Create an ellipse and edit its nodes, so that looks like an ear. Duplicate it (Ctrl+D) and flip it horizontally. Place both ears in the middle of the head.

To create the neck, draw a rectangle, convert it to a path and place two lower nodes closer to each other. An easy way is to select them and press Ctrl+< repeatedy.

Create shoulders with the rectangle tool and make the top nodes smoother. Make the shoulders narrower than normal to focus the viewer's attention on the head.

In our shape collection above, we see that one is darker than the rest... that is a duplicate I made of the neck. Using that duplicate along with the original, you can create a "separation" between the head and neck in the form of a shadow.

There are a couple of useful features in Inkscape that can help you create avatar easily:

View > Icon Preview will let you preview the page or selected objects as an icon in different resolutions (16x16px/24x24px/32x32px/48x48px and 128x128px). Here's what I get:

It shows the icons for several sizes on the right, and will show on the left what you get if you try to make your icon any bigger. It will show you how your creation looks in icon size, to help you determine how you want to proceed, as far as detail and how much to include. For example, you could zoom in and concentrate on the face and omit the shoulders.

View > Duplicate Window will open a new window with the same document in which you are working. Editing the original document will duplicate the changes in the second one. However, you can make
changes in both windows. This feature can be useful when working in Inkscape as a whole, not just for this project.

Next, work on the facial features...

Usually eyes have an almond shape and are at the same level with the top edges of the ears. Create an ellipse and edit the nodes to get it the shape you want. Create two circles for iris and pupil.

Draw an eyebrow with Bezier curve in “Triangle in” shape mode. Convert the object to path and smooth needed nodes.

Draw a lash line with Bezier curve in “Ellipse” shape mode. Separate lashes can be easily done with Bezier curve in “Triangle in” shape mode. You can arrange them the way you want and then group them.

Add details to the ears by using Bezier curve in “Ellipse” shape mode. Convert both objects to path and give them the desired shape, then group them. If there are a large number of unnecessary nodes, go to Path > Simplify or just press Ctrl+L after selecting the path.

Also, many head elements are symmetrical and we can make things much easier. Simply create only one eye, duplicate it (Ctrl+D) and flip horizontally.

You can also use your Bezier tool to shape some hair for yourself, and edit the nodes to shape it the way you want. I made a couple of shapes in blending colors, because the light gives everyone’s hair different highlights (and I also have a big gray streak in the front). Stack them however they look correct. This will also give depth & some shading to your avatar.

Now apply them to your avatar in the places desired. Mine is pretty simplistic, but it might be close to what I look like. Note: I’m terrible with facial features! However, just because I made my avatar similar to myself doesn’t mean you have to. You can make yours look like anything or anyone … it’s your creation!

Inkscape Tutorial: Create An Avatar

In the tutorial I read, the next step was to add color, but I’ve been coloring everything as I went along. The next step here is to add some extra detail, like highlights where needed, and even jewelry if you want it. I added some eye shadow (I wear a kind of golden beige, so it really doesn’t show all that much), highlights in my eyes and on my lips and hair, and edited the neckline of my shirt to add a necklace. It’s easy! We’ve used this extension before. Create one bead with the Ellipse tool, then draw a necklace path with the Bezier tool. Use the Pattern along Path extension by clicking Extensions > Generate from Path > Pattern along Path. Make sure that you place the bead on top, otherwise the extension won’t work correctly. To see the result before you apply, make sure you click Live Preview. You can make the highlights the same way. (Make earrings to match!)

You should get one object consisting of many beads along the path.

All that’s left is some fine tuning, like shadows on the face. Add more details to the hair — most of this can be done with lines using the Bezier tool. After that, add shadows under the eyes, a seam/opening on the shirt and pink highlights on the lips if you haven’t already done it. How involved you want to get is entirely up to you. Now export your avatar! You can export an icon sized avatar as well. This one is 128 x 128.
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Posted by parnote on April 1, 2022, running Xfce.
Inkscape Tutorial: Rubber Stamp

by Meemaw

I saw this the other day! It’s a quick and easy way to create text that looks like it was made with a rubber stamp.

Create your page, then draw a circle (remember, to keep your circle perfectly round, you should press the <Ctrl> key while you draw). Duplicate the circle and make the duplicate a bit smaller. Also, make the Stroke size a bit bigger for the inner circle.

Make sure all items are paths (for text, choose Path > Object to Path and for circles choose Path > Stroke to Path). Select all, then choose Path > Union.

With the Calligraphic tool, draw randomly over the figure, covering nearly all of it. Select all and choose Path > Intersection. As you can see, the part covered with the Calligraphic tool is the part that’s visible afterwards.

Change the color to whatever you want, then apply a slight Gradient to it. For a more natural look, you can add a bit of Gaussian Blur.

Now create your text using the Text tool. Format it however you want, then place it in the center of the circles. You can use Align and Distribute to center everything.
Inkscape Tutorial: Five Inkscape Essentials

by Meemaw

I found this tutorial while I was looking for some technical information about Inkscape, and I thought maybe there were more than just me who didn't know some of these methods. As I've said before, I don't know everything about Inkscape, so I'm constantly searching for articles or tutorials to expand my knowledge (I believe I actually only know enough to be dangerous!

Erasing in Inkscape

Every time I chose the eraser tool in Inkscape, I was disappointed because it didn't work like I thought it should. Just goes to show what I just said about not knowing everything. Technically, you can't "erase" with vector design. Everything is based on points and lines, so you'll actually have to add/change the points in order to give the illusion of erasing. Let's see how we do this using a circle:

Choose the Eraser tool, change the mode to Cut out from objects, and set the brush Width: 25. Erase across your circle.

Yikes! That's not what I wanted at all! Using the eraser added about 100 nodes to our simple circle. It also looks really rough.

We wanted a larger area erased, so we'll adjust the stroke width. While you have the line chosen, click on Path > Stroke to Path. Then, go to your Properties window and adjust the stroke size to however wide you want. I made mine 12 but you can make it any size.

With both the circle and the line selected, go to Path > Difference complete your erasing. This looks much smoother than the first try.

The best way to erase in Inkscape is to use boolean path operations. Instead of the eraser, we'll be using the Pen tool to draw a line similar to the previous eraser scrub. The good thing about this is that you can adjust your nodes before you erase.

On the next page you can see the difference in the two methods. The one on the left was done with the eraser tool and the one on the right was done with the pen tool and Path > Difference.
Inkscape Tutorial: Five Inkscape Essentials

Curving Text

Sometimes in your graphics creation, you want something that's not just straight text, but you want it to have some shape to it. You can draw a line to illustrate the curve you want your text to have, but what to do next? Fortunately, I found out, this is fairly easy in Inkscape.

Create your text, configuring it however you want, then draw a line with the bezier tool, and edit the line so it has the curve you need.

Select the text and the curve, then click on Text > Put on Path.

You can change the color of your line (or make it transparent) so it's not visible in your project. To move your text easily to where you want it, you should group the text and line as well.

Cropping an object

Sometimes you want to use a certain object but it needs to be cropped. In other programs, you just draw the rectangle and choose “Crop”, but Inkscape doesn't work that way, so we'll have to do it differently.

Import the object you want to use, and size it down to the size you want. I have an image of a penguin I want to use for a Christmas project, but I only want the head, so I will import the image, then draw a rectangle (or even a circle) over the area I want to use. I made the rectangle a little transparent so I could see what I was cropping.

Select the image and the rectangle (making sure the rectangle is on top) and click on Object > Clip > Set. Everything within the rectangle will be visible, and everything else will be invisible. What makes this nice is that you don't have to stop, open another program, and crop your image there - you can stay in Inkscape.

Merging Layers

The first thing you need to know is that merging layers in Inkscape doesn't work like it does anywhere else - so let's look.

I have drawn some rectangles and circles in two layers. The rectangles are in layer 1 and the circles are in layer 2, above layer 1. Open the Layers toolbox to get started.

Make sure both of the layers you want to merge are unlocked. Select them all and use <CTRL>+X to cut them (next page, top right).
Now we have a couple of choices: we can paste <CTRL>+V our objects to an existing layer, or create a new one. I chose to paste them all on layer 1. I will then delete layer 2 since it has nothing on it.

**Tracing A Photo**

This one might not be used so much, but it looked fun, so I left it in the list. We’ll use Trace Bitmap to trace a photo.

Import your photo and make sure it’s selected. I used a photo of our favorite editor and his lovely wife.

Now, choose Path > Trace Bitmap and you’ll get a menu. **Brightness cutoff 0.450** is default, so I left it there, then clicked OK. You might play with the settings if it’s too dark or too light. I’m sure that it depends on the photo.

The generated vector drawing will be lying on top of the original photo, but you can grab it and move it. Here, I have moved it to the right of the original photo.

Of course, now that it’s a vector drawing, you can do all sorts of different things to it if you wish, even changing the color.

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**Open Source Initiative**

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**A magazine just isn’t a magazine without articles to fill the pages.**

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to: pclinuxos.mag@gmail.com

We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.
Inkscape Tutorial: Fun With The Bezier Tool

by Meemaw

One of the tools we use a lot is the Bezier tool. It draws lines, of course (that's how I make the word find answer sheet), but depending on the settings, it does tons more. This time we will just play with this tool a bit to see what it can do.

When you choose the Bezier tool , a settings bar appears at the top (just like with many of the other tools). From left to right, you have five Mode buttons (Regular Path, Spiro Path, BSpline, Series of straight lines and Paraxial lines) and the dropdown has your shape choices, from None to Last applied.

The **regular** path does just what it says it does: draws paths - straight lines. The difference is what shape you choose. In the image below, from top to bottom, the lines are drawn from left to right, and shapes are None, Triangle in, Triangle out and Ellipse. These are just lines drawn with one starting point and one ending point (center, top).

Notice that the top one is the same width throughout (Shape - None). The next one is wider at the left side than at the right (Triangle in), and the third is wider at the right end (Triangle out). Finally, the last is wider in the center (Ellipse). After you draw these, you can go to the **Path Editing tool** and edit these paths, even widening the triangle end. Notice the handle on the corner of the end. When you hover over it, it will turn red. Grab it and pull perpendicular to the line and it will widen.

If you click - drag - click - drag, you will get curves.

Remember, any curve you draw can be edited with the path editing tool. If you don't like the curve you drew, **before you end it**, you can backspace and delete one node at a time until you get back to where you want. If you start a line by mistake while you're trying to do something else, you can do the same thing. Also if you finish a line before you want to, you can click on the end and continue, or even click and draw another line that connects to the end of the one that wasn't finished.

If you are trying this stuff, you should now have several lines. Let's move on...

Instead of using the regular path mode, choose the **Spiro** tool.

Click - move mouse - click - move mouse... your line should curve by itself, and depending on the shape, be wider somewhere. Below you can see None, Triangle in, Triangle out and Ellipse. With a little practice, you can make a very nice swirl (next page, top left).
Inkscape Tutorial: Fun With The Bezier Tool

These lines can be used for all sorts of things, but I’m going to start a kind of flourish that could be used to decorate other artwork.

I’m also going to describe a few more things that can be done with this tool.

**BSpline** mode will do a different kind of curve. All you have to do is draw an angle with a couple of lines... click - move mouse - click - move mouse - click. The red path here is the path I drew, and the blue curve is what was made by the BSpline.

You’ve probably noticed that I haven’t said anything about the next two shapes. They use objects that you create and copy to the clipboard. I made a kind of fork, with the fill purple and the stroke black. Then I copied it to the clipboard. Choosing many of the modes, and choosing **From clipboard** as the shape, I am able to make designs using the “fork” shape I copied. Below, from top to bottom, are Paraxial, Spiro, two regular lines, and BSpline, plus the original “fork”.

Amazingly enough, this mode can do something else as well. If you hold down the <CTRL> key and click ... click .. click ... you will end up with a series of dots (one for each click).

The last mode, called **Paraxial** lines, draws perpendicular lines no matter where your mouse goes:

In a different example, **Bend from clipboard** uses the “fork” and actually makes it follow the curve I drew using Spiro.

Playing with all these tools and then editing and stacking the curves, I came up with the flourish above, and made another later. They are both on the next page.
I'm sure your holiday decorations will be even fancier now!

Posted by Meemaw on April 28, 2022, running Xfce.
Inkscape Tutorial: Triangle Campfire

by Meemaw

I saw this tutorial a few days ago and it looked fun. Using triangles and the Tiled Clones tool, we’re going to create a campfire.

First, choose your Bezier tool and draw a tiny triangle. Make it about 30px by 20px.

Now set the Fill to Unset, and remove the stroke as well.

With your tiny triangle selected, click on Edit > Clone > Create Tiled Clones. If you’ve used the Create Tiled Clones window, you should probably click the Reset button at the bottom before you start, because Inkscape saves your last settings.

The following settings should give us a nice flame effect:

Shift
Shift X: Per Column: -50%, Randomize: 50%
Shift Y: Per Row: -150%, Randomize: 50%

Rotation
Angle: Randomize: 100%

Blur & Opacity
Opacity: Per Row: 1%

Color
Initial Color: (Click on the color swatch at the top, choose RGB at the top, and put in these settings: R 255, G 228, B 0) then close the color window.
Then in the main settings for that section: H: Per Row: -0.5%

Finally, change rows and columns to width and height: 200px wide and 300px tall, and click Create.

You should have ended up with something like this.

It’s still a bit square, so let’s remove some of the clones. Using your Eraser tool, set to Delete objects, just drag your cursor around to delete some of those triangles at the top. I also deleted a few at the bottom to round it off. It should look more like a fire when you’re finished.

Now it looks a bit more like a fire, but it needs some wood.
Using the **Rectangle** tool and the **Bezier** tool, I drew some pieces of wood and placed the fire on them. To finish, I added a shadow under the campfire.

The Tiled CLones tool is kinda touchy at times, so make sure you've reset your settings before you begin. It's pretty fun! We'll have to explore this tool more.

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**Screenshot Showcase**

*Posted by brisvegas on May 31, 2022, running Mate.*
Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Website Background

by Meemaw

I saw this the other day. This tutorial uses Inkscape to create a simple website background using repeating stripes.

We're going to make it 200px by 200px. In Document Properties, on the Page tab, choose the custom size and enter 200px in height and width.

Select the Grids tabs and create a grid with the following settings (center, top). If you haven't done this before, you select Rectangular grid (it's the default) and click New. These settings must be default, because I didn't have to change anything.

We also need to activate the Snapping toolbar (View > Show/Hide > Snap Controls Bar) and enable snapping, snap nodes/handles, and snap to grids as shown at right.

Now we'll use the Pen tool to draw some boxes (bottom, center). The snapping should make this much easier.

Continue the boxes as shown at top right. These have to be exact for the pattern to match up.
Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Website Background

When you finish drawing all of your sections, select them all and remove the Stroke, but add a black fill with 6.0 Opacity.

That's it! You are finished, but for adding the color you want to use for your webpage background.

To see how it looked, I went to my seldom-used blog and chose the blue one as a new background. While it doesn't exactly match another item, I can see that the pattern is good and matches up wonderfully (center, top).

Hope this helps you design an awesome website!

Screenshot Showcase

6:21:15 P.M.
Fri, May 27, 2022
17°

Posted by sam2fish on May 27, 2022, running Xfce.
**Inkscape Tutorial: Draw A Rope**

by Meemaw

I saw this tutorial recently, and thought of an advertisement that I had done for my job. It was an ad for a rodeo book, so I wanted it to have a western theme, including a rope. The art department at the main office did it for me, but with this tutorial, I might be able to do it myself next time using the Pattern Along Path effect. Let’s get started.

Using the pen tool in Inkscape, draw a shape that will make up the part of our rope that will be repeated.

Next, create the shape that you want to apply to your rope. This can be any shape. In this example, I just used a simple curve.

Now, select your shape, and copy it to the clipboard with **Edit > Copy** or **Control+C**. Once copied to the clipboard, select your path again, and in the Path Effects dialog, press the **Link To Path on Clipboard** button (it’s the last button in the Pattern Source section, with the tiny lock on it).

After doing this, your path should look different — the shape will be stretched out over the length of the path (right, top).

Well, that doesn’t look like a rope! Let’s change some settings. With the path still selected, change the **Pattern Copies** dropdown to **Repeated**, and mark the **Pattern is vertical** checkbox.

I have changed the Spacing value because the shapes weren’t touching each other. The number is going to be a negative number, but will vary widely depending on the size of your image. If a setting of -1 doesn’t change your path much, try a much larger number. My setting turned out to be -10. Change your value until the rope edges line up fairly cleanly.

The spacing is pretty close, but when you zoom in on the shapes, they may not fit perfectly. Using the original shape, adjust the nodes until you can see that the shapes fit together better.
The key here is that the outside edges line up neatly. Don't worry too much about the inside edges. The result should look something like this:

My finished rope looks like this:

Depending on what shape you use, you can make all sorts of shapes with your length of rope!

You can also select your path and tweak the shape of it if you want. Once you are happy with the shape, convert it to a path with Path > Object to Path. **NOTE:** Once you do this, you can't change the shapes anymore.

You can also break your path into individual shapes with Path > Break Apart, and set the fill colour and stroke to what you want. Once you set the fill colour, the inside overlaps will be covered up. You can also experiment with moving around different sections of your rope. Here, I took out a couple of shapes and rotated the middle section.
Introducing Inkscape 1.0

by The Inkscape Team

Smother performance, HiDPI support, new & improved Live Path Effects & native macOS app

After a little over three years in development, the team is excited to launch the long awaited Inkscape 1.0 into the world.

Built with the power of a team of volunteers, this open source vector editor represents the work of many hearts and hands from around the world, ensuring that Inkscape remains free for everyone to download and enjoy.

In fact, translations for over 20 languages were updated for version 1.0, making the software more accessible to people from all over the world.

A major milestone was achieved in enabling Inkscape to use a more recent version of the software used to build the editor's user interface (namely GTK+3). Users with HiDPI (high resolution) screens can thank teamwork that took place during the 2018 Boston Hackfest for setting the updated-GTK wheels in motion.

Smother performance & first native macOS application

This latest version is available for Linux, Windows and macOS. All macOS users will notice that this latest version is labelled as 'preview', which means that additional improvements are scheduled for the next versions. Overall, 1.0 delivers a smoother, higher performance experience on Linux and Windows, and a better system integration (no more XQuartz!) on macOS.

So many new bells and whistles

One of the first things users will notice is a reorganized tool box, with a more logical order. There are many new and improved Live Path Effect (LPE) features. The new searchable LPE selection dialog now features a very polished interface, descriptions and even the possibility of marking favorite LPEs. Performance improvements are most noticeable when editing node-heavy objects, using the Objects dialog, and when grouping/ungrouping.

Canvas flexibility & more for freestyle drawing

Freestyle drawing users can now mirror and rotate the canvas, and test out Xray and Split-view modes. The new PowerPencil mode of the Pencil tool provides pressure-dependent width and it is finally possible to create closed paths. Inkscape now allows you to vectorize line drawings, too, in the new unified Trace Bitmap dialog. New path effects that will appeal to the artistic user include Offset, PowerClip and PowerMask LPEs.

The new Live Path Effects Selection dialog

Duplicate guides, Corners & Hairlines for technical drawing

Users who work on technical drawings will appreciate being able to create a duplicate guide, aligning grids to the page, the Measure tool's path length indicator and the inverted Y-axis, which...
makes coordinates match between the SVG code and the Inkscape user interface. Potential favorite new LPEs might be Corners (Fillet/Chamfer) for even rounding / cutting of path corners, Ellipse from Points for construction of circles and ellipses and Measure Segments for architectural plans and other real-world object measuring. A new functionality with the Circle Tool means it can create closed arcs (fillets) with the click of a button. When it comes to SVG and CSS, Inkscape 1.0 can make use of SVG2 vector hatches, and can render and export hairlines.

PDF export, text & document fixes for designing

Designers will appreciate being able to export PDFs with clickable links and metadata. They can enjoy new palettes and mesh gradients that work in the web browser, as well as the handy on-canvas alignment for objects. When it comes to wrangling text in Inkscape, variable font support, browser-compatible flowed text, simplified, yet powerful line-height settings will make that a joy. New templates for different screen sizes, margin guides and a colorful checkerboard background are now available. Inkscape 1.0 even features an extension for creating interactive mockups to simulate user interaction with an app in the web browser for presentations to clients and usability testing.

Alignment of objects on canvass with a new set of alignment handles

Customizable themes, icons, fonts & UI

For users interested in customizing their user interface, Inkscape 1.0 allows for plenty of tinkering. From menus and toolbars to page sizes and custom font directories, there is lots to discover. Choose from your installed themes to give Inkscape a dark or bright interface, and select one of the available icon sets, which include customizable single-color icons and the newly-designed multicolored icon set. The new dialog for saving the current file as a template, with keywords and title, allows you to always have the template you need available.

Some fundamental changes

The extensions system has undergone some fundamental changes in version 1.0. Over the years, Inkscape users have become used to working with third-party extensions, such as various ones used for laser cutting and exporting to file formats which are not a native part of Inkscape. While outreach to extension developers was undertaken as Inkscape migrates towards Python 3 and a more logical and fully tested extensions API (now hosted in a separate repository), not all third-party extensions have been brought forward to be compatible yet. This will mean that 1.0 may not allow some users to continue with their normal extensions workflow.

For more details on specific updates in Inkscape 1.0, check out the Release Notes.

Download Inkscape 1.0 now! Or, wait until the package reaches the PCLinuxOS repository, and install it via Synaptic.
Inkscape Tutorial: Inkscape 1.0 New Features

by Meemaw

May 4, 2020

“After a little over three years in development, the team is excited to launch the long awaited Inkscape 1.0 into the world.

Built with the power of a team of volunteers, this free and open source vector editor represents the work of many hearts and hands from around the world, ensuring that Inkscape remains available free for everyone to download and enjoy.”

Finally! Inkscape 1.0 is out!

Reading the release notes, we can see that there are several new features. I’m going to review just a few.

Rotate the Entire Canvas

Nice! A cool feature I never knew I wanted. While pressing <SHIFT> + <CTRL>, scroll with your mouse to rotate the canvas to your desired angle. The bottom right corner of your window now has a box labeled “R” that shows your angle of rotation (center, top).

On-Canvas Alignment

On-canvas alignment allows you to use many alignment options on the fly, rather than opening another window with Align & Distribute. To enable this, open Object > Align and Distribute and toggle the on-canvas button, located just under the word Align in the tool window. After that, the window won’t need to be opened.

Clicking the selection 3 times shows the handles (click 1 is select/resize, click 2 is rotate, and click 3 is align)

You’ll notice the handles are different now. The ones in the corners align the objects to that corner. The ones on the sides, top and bottom are to align left and right, top and bottom. The square in the center is the align center. Clicking the square aligns horizontally to center. If you hold down the Shift key, it aligns to center vertically.

Custom Inkscape Themes

Earlier, there were only one or two ways to personalize certain things on your Inkscape interface, without actually hazarding a trip to root and file alteration. Now you can just go to Edit > Preferences, select the Interface drop down, and select Theme. Here you can change the entire way Inkscape looks and adjust icon themes and sizes separately.

Live Path Effects Makeover!

The live path effects tool has been changed considerably.

If you want to tinker around with these, select Path > Path Effects to bring up the menu. Then just select any path and hit the “+” icon to Add Path Effect, which brings up this window shown below.
In previous versions, the window only had a list of the live paths you could choose. Now they are in a different window that shows a sample of the effect, so you know you are getting the right one. In the box above, you can see three different ways to display the effects (top center of window). You can choose icons, smaller icons or a list (which has icons on the left end of the description).

**More Compact Tool Controls Bar**

Some control buttons that have been mutually exclusive (e.g. right-aligned, left-aligned, justified) have been combined into drop-down lists, so they now take up less space.

**Context menu**

The menu that appears after a right-click on the canvas has been extended at the bottom with the following items, which makes locking/unlocking and hiding/unhiding individual objects much easier:
- Hide selected objects
- Unhide objects below (the mouse cursor)
- Lock selected objects
- Unlock objects below (the mouse cursor)

**Pinch-to-zoom**

On supported hardware (trackpad, touchpad, multi-touch screen), the canvas can be zoomed with the two-finger pinch gesture. My laptop touchpad doesn't work, but you should try yours. My daughter has an older Wacom Bamboo (CTH-661) and the pinch-to-zoom works when it's connected to my husband's laptop running PCLinuxOS Xfce.

**Split View and X-ray Modes**

Both of these tools make it easier to see what you have in your drawing, especially if you have several things stacked. With the Split View and the X-ray, you can see them and it will be easier to grab the one you want and edit it, without having to use trial and error to grab what you want or unlayer objects to find the correct one. Split view divides your page in half and shows one side as it is, and the other side with just the frames of your objects without the colors. The line can be moved left & right or up & down using your mouse. X-ray view puts a resizable transparent circle on the drawing that lets you look past all the color and only at the frames of each object.

X-ray view is found in the View menu or can be activated by pressing <Alt> + 6. The circle that you use can be made larger or smaller by pressing **Edit > Preferences > Rendering > Rendering XRay radius**.

**Snapping**

In **Edit > Preferences > Behavior > Snapping**, a new option was added to **disable** snapping in new documents or files that are opened with Inkscape for the first time. It's a checkbox saying **Enable snapping in new documents**.

**Center Page in Window**

You might have noticed a new tool up in the toolbar with the Zoom buttons (Zoom to fit selection in window, Zoom to fit drawing in window, and Zoom to fit page in window). Now there is also a tool that allows you to center your zoomed object in the window.

If you have zoomed in on an object, you can center that in your window without altering the zoom you have.

It looks like we're all going to be doing some experimentation. This isn't the limit of the new features!
Inkscape Tutorial: Inkscape 1.0 New Features, Part 2

by Meemaw

Inkscape 1.0 came out a bit ago, and I thought I’d show you a few more of the new features.

Y-Axis Inversion

In this version of Inkscape, the zero measurements on the canvas are now in the UPPER left hand corner of the window, rather than the lower left as it has always been. This makes it more compatible with other programs that use the svg file format. You can change it back in Settings.

Canvas Mirroring

The canvas can now be flipped horizontally or vertically, to make sure that your drawing is absolutely straight, and looks good either way. You can access it from View > Canvas orientation > Flip horizontally / Flip vertically as shown below. I didn’t do anything very fancy but you can see it can be flipped easily. If you had done a very involved project but wanted to flip to see if it looked good, it would be easier to flip the whole canvas than to try to select everything and flip it.

Calligraphy Tool

A new option to add dots has been added to the tool. Click in place without moving the mouse to create a dot, and use Shift + Click to create a larger dot.

Measurement Tool

Hovering over a path with the tool now displays the length, height, width, and position of the path. If you hover over a group, it will show the width, height, and position of the group. Holding Shift switches to showing info about the parts of the group (top, right).

New Live Path Effects

The new window lists the Live Path Effects (LPE) in alphabetical order, so if you don’t see some of these, scroll down.
Inkscape Tutorial: Inkscape 1.0 New Features, Part 2

Dashed Stroke LPE

This new LPE creates uniformly dashed paths, optionally by subdividing the path’s segments, or including dashes that are symmetrically wrapped around corners.

Measure Segments LPE

This new path effect adds DIN and custom style measuring lines to "straight" segments in a path (center).

Offset

Use this to add an offset to your paths, shapes and groups (right). Compared with the ‘Dynamic Offset’ available from the menu, this allows you to:

- define the offset distance numerically and to choose the unit, for example, to offset an object by 3 mm.
- keep sharp corners sharp (or to make them round, or beveled, if you want to), by using different methods for calculating the corners (right, center).
- same on-canvas control handle for changing the offset when using the node tool.
Inkscape 1.0 New Features: Part 3

by Meemaw

I had just a few more features I wanted to cover, from Inkscape 1.0. The release notes are here.

Trace Bitmap

A new dialog for vectorizing images is now available from Path > Trace Bitmap. It has the previously separate Trace pixelart and also a tab for centerline tracing.

Saving the current file as a template

A new entry for saving the current file as a template has been added to the File menu. You need to specify a name for it, and optionally, you can add the template's author, a description and some keywords. A checkbox allows you to set the new template as the default template.

Fonts

Load additional fonts

Inkscape can now load fonts that are not installed on the system. Inkscape has always loaded additional fonts from its own share folder (in PCLinuxOS it's user/share/inkscape/fonts) and the user's configuration folder (~/.config/inkscape/fonts). Now you can set other folders in Preferences (see Tools > Text > Additional font directories). This is good if you don’t want to install every single font to your system. You can just put them in another folder (~/Fonts or something similar) and add that folder in your Inkscape preferences (center, top).

At center bottom I saved the settings I always change to in Inkscape when I'm working on a cover. I also checked the box to make it the default template so it opens when I create a new document. If you have designed a postcard and the basic settings for all your postcards are the same, you could save it as a postcard template.

Eraser

I don’t have a drawing tablet, but I know that many do, so I thought I’d include this.

- Added option to control eraser width with a pressure sensitive input device.
- Added thinning, caps, and tremor options (as used for calligraphy tool).
- New option to erase as clip, which allows the User to non-destructively erase parts of various types of elements, including raster images and clones.

Also, from the Release Notes-

“Custom Icon Sets

Icon sets no longer consist of a single file containing all icons. Instead each icon is allocated its own file. The directory structure must follow the standard structure for Gnome icons.

If you would like to create or convert your own icon set to the new format, please compare the ‘hicolor’ and ‘Tango’ icon theme folders, in your Inkscape installation’s ‘share’ directory for suitable examples and check out our guide to making a new multicolor icon theme.

As a side effect of a bug fix to the icon preview
dialog, custom UI icon SVG files need to be updated to have their background color alpha channel set to 0 so that they display correctly (see Issue #1661989 (ip))."

Inkscape just gets better and better!
Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Custom Calendar

by Jimlw1 (with a tiny bit of help from Meemaw)

In this forum post, Jimlw1 wrote:

I don't have an article, but I have designed a Money Holder in LibreOffice Draw [may be of interest to Meemaw] that my wife and I use every Christmas for gift money to family members. It also has a tiny calendar that I make [needs to be copied and rotated to make a full page of next year's Calendar for cardstock printout]. The calendar for printout is made in Inkscape.

While reviewing his artwork, I remembered that Khadis described how to make a calendar in the January, 2015 issue. However, Jim's is a bit different. With Khadis's summary of the extension Calendar (found in Extensions > Render > Calendar), I found that the calendar could only be made for one year. In Jim's project, he makes a calendar for 14 months, including December of this year plus January of 2022, so as to overlap calendars (in case you don't get a new calendar right away for 2022). That also allows him to make a 4 x 4 grid and add some graphics. It also allows him more flexibility in his design. Let's mess with it a bit.

In Jim's calendar project, he has text boxes with the dates already laid out (at the sides), one for each starting day. Using these, he creates a month at a time, putting in the day and month names as well as the year. In order, he creates the frame for the month, adds the text box for the month and year, then one for the weekdays, and then adds the correct date box he created for that month (editing out the dates he doesn’t need, like the 31st in a month with only 30 days). Then, he groups those together to make one month.

Note that each finished month is 2.5 x 2.0 inches (6.35 x 5.08 cm). I'm sure it was an arbitrary choice to make sure they were all uniform. Since he's going to put this on a tri-fold sheet of cover stock to make a money gift card, he needs to make it small. We know it will end up smaller, but we also know by now that graphics look better when they are sized down rather than up. You could probably make them any size that is easy for you, as long as they are ALL the same size.

At this point it might be good to use Align and Distribute to make sure they are all lined up the way you want them. Jim had 16 rectangles (including a couple of holiday images), all the same size, and wanted them all touching, in a 4 x 4 grid. After getting it just the way he wanted it, he exported the calendar page as an image (next page, top left).
His document has items added which can be changed for your card.

Here is mine:

That looks awesome! If you just wanted the calendar, you’re finished. However, Jim still wanted the tri-fold money card, so his next step was to open a document in LibreOffice Draw.

Now, Jim used Landscape orientation to make his card, but I changed mine to portrait. Since it’s your project, you can do it any way that makes sense to you. Insert any text or images to dress up your card. Here is Jim’s:

I rotated the text and images so that, when it’s folded, the text and the calendar are all the same orientation.

We’re finished! This is a project that you can customize for yourself. If you want to use our documents, they can be accessed here.