

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS SIG ~ March 8, 2006

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In this project we will use:

- Crop using a size ratio
- Layers, moving & labeling
- Enlarging the canvas
- Anchoring an image
- Painting a Selection
- An Elemask
- Feathering
- Adding Text

We've demonstrated using an Elemask to replace a background or create a vignette. This time our Elemask will become a picture mat, and we'll let a portion of the subject 'stick out' over the edge of the mat to give a '3D' effect to the subject. (*Janee has a tutorial on her website she calls "Break Out of that Frame!" You should check out her description and methods also at www.myjanee.com.) The process is the same, but her end result is slightly different.*

This is actually a project that I demonstrated several years ago when we were all using Microsoft Picture It. Here we get the same result, but that method was much more cumbersome and this one is much more fun.



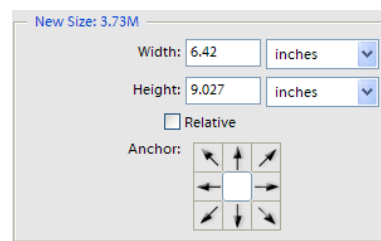
Select a picture that would be enhanced by a unique frame or mat. I'm going to use a photo I took at my nephew's wedding on the beach in Jamaica. My kids call these two, "Ken and Barbie".

For this project, I'm going to use a *copy* of my original rather than storing the copy as the background in the same file. So I've saved the original as Wedding-original.tif. Now I am going to save the file as "Wedding.psd" and use that copy.

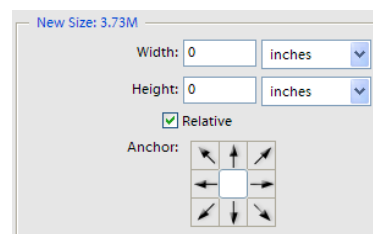
To achieve the desired effect in the finished project, I want the subject a bit more to the left and I want to insure that when I print it, I will have an 8 x 10 photo. To accomplish that, I will set the aspect ratio in the toolbar before cropping. I'd like to have just a bit more canvas on the right also, so first I will resize the canvas, then I will crop the image.

(1) To add just a bit of canvas to the right edge of the picture, I click Image, Resize, Canvas Size...

(2) Note that the center of the dialog box deals with the New Size. With Relative UNchecked you see actual picture size.



By checking the Relative box, you see zeros in the sizing boxes and you can increase the canvas by adding inches. I'm going to use



the 'Relative' choice, because I don't want to deal with the picture size. It's going to change in a minute anyway when I crop it.

(3) To specify where I want the picture on the newly sized canvas I must Anchor it. First I click on the left arrow to hold the picture on the left side of the canvas, then add .5 inches to the width box. In this dialog box I can also tell the canvas extension what color to be. But because I'm going to add a mat, the color for the newly added canvas area doesn't matter.

(4) I will select the Crop Tool, to crop the image, but before cropping, I will set the Aspect Ratio to 8x10. Then I will drag a frame till I've included the desired subjects. I can reposition the selection box before I crop, then I right click on the image and select Crop.

(5) Now I select the Marquee Elliptical Tool. When I frame out my subjects, I would like the edge of the frame to appear soft. I don't want a harsh line, so on the toolbar, I will set the Feather to 10 px. then drag an oval frame around the subjects. I will get the size and shape I want for the oval, and again, I can just drag it to position it correctly over the image. If I don't like my selection, I can Ctrl+Z and do it again. In this case, I want to nearly center the subjects in the oval.

(6) Then I inverse the selection. This means I defined the oval, but what I really want to work with right now is everything BUT the oval. In other words, the Mat (*Select > Inverse*).

(7) I'll make a new layer by clicking the 'Create a New Layer' icon at the top of the Layers palette. Label this layer, "Matting".

(8) I'll choose the Matting color in the Color-Picker. (*I want to make sure my choice appears as the background color in the color-picker*).

(9) I'll press Alt+Backspace to fill, then Ctrl+D to deselect.

(10) Now I'll drag the Matting layer beneath the Photo layer. (*At this point we won't see the matting*).

(11) Now to reselect the Matting area, I'll Ctrl-Click the matting thumbnail in the layers palette. Then Select, Inverse so only the image is selected.

(12) Now I have to click the Photo layer in the layers palette to make it active.

(13) I'll choose the Selection Brush from the Toolbox and choose Selection Mode in the toolbar at the top.

(14) Now I'm going to paint the additional area I want to include in the picture (*in this case, the train of the dress*.) Note: I'm going to stay inside the margin of the train at the upper edge. This is to insure that none of the dark grassy area is selected, but I am going right to the edge on the bottom border of the train. You'll see why in a moment.

(15) With the area selected, I'll change the Mode to Mask (*in the toolbar*).

(16) Now to create the Elemask I'll click the Create an Adjustment Layer icon, choose Levels, OK. And label the layer, "Elemask".

(17) Drag the Elemask layer to beneath the Photo layer and above the Matting layer, then Alt+Click between the Photo layer and the Elemask layer.

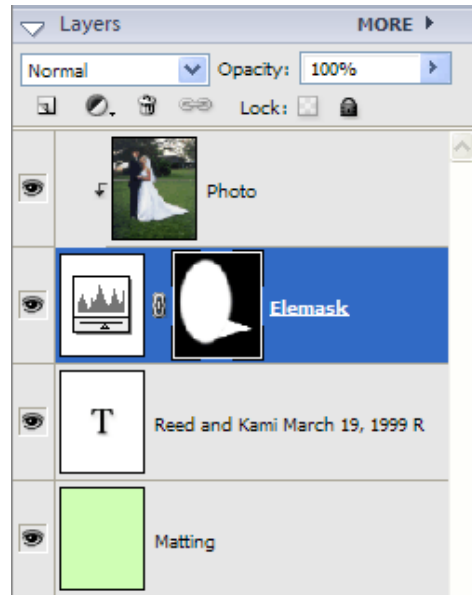
(18) Almost... Click the Matting layer in the layers palette, click the Fill tool (*bucket*), then click in the middle of the oval. OK, the picture is back, but because of the feathering I did, I must also click on the little oval frame that is still visible. Now, notice the bottom of the dress? Can you see the slight shadow that was formed because I went all the way to the edge of the dress when making the selection? Now the train doesn't look like it's just sticking out in space.

(19) The finishing touch will be the Text label for the picture. Choose the Text tool from the toolbox.



Check the toolbar at the top to make sure the selected color is different from the background where you intend to place the text, or you will be typing and seeing nothing. (I can use the Eyedropper Tool to select a color from the picture.)

(20) Now I'll type the label for the picture. Once it is typed, and before clicking to place the text on the page, with the text highlighted, I can change the font, the font size, the alignment the positioning and the color of the text. I can still make changes after placing the text, but I have to make sure I have the text layer as the active layer. Note on a text layer, the layer name is the text you have typed. You can change that, but often there's no need to do that.



I could enhance this further by adding a subtle texture to the mat, but this time we'll keep it simple.

