BASIC IMAGE EDITING
By Lesly Klippel, 4/15

1. **Acquire** or **Import** an image into your image editing software either by scanning a photograph or by taking a picture of it with a digital camera. Usually 150 dpi is adequate for a scan unless the picture is small and you want to enlarge it. More than 300 dpi will create a very large file that may be difficult for your system to handle. Slides need to be scanned at 2400 dpi making very large files.

2. Immediately save the un-retouched image as a TIFF or PNG file to be your **archive master**. They can be read by both PCs and Macs. The Windows XP Media programs require a BMP.

3. If the color or tonal balance is off, first try the **automatic adjustment**. It may be called Auto Levels or Auto Enhance or something else with the word "Auto" in it. If you don't like what it does to the photo, choose Undo and start enhancing the photo manually.

4. Learn what tools you have on the **toolbar** by cruising over the icons slowly with your mouse arrow. As the arrow pauses on a tool, a pop-up box will tell you what the tool is. You can look up that tool on the Help menu to learn how to use it. Some important tools to learn how to use are: zoom in and out (a magnifying glass on the toolbar); clone, crop, blur or smudge and eraser.

5. Most pictures can use a little **cropping** to focus in on the people. Try various cuts and use the Undo if you don't like the new look. Do crop off the picture borders from snapshots.

6. If you have a **red-eye** removal tool, use it to remove the red dots from eyes in color photos. If you don't have one, you can remove the red-eye by using the clone tool described in 10 below.

7. Use the **Adjust Brightness and Contrast** to lighten or darken the photo and to give a little more contrast if needed.

8. If needed, adjust the **Color Balance**. This is important for color photos from the 40s and 50s that are fading and turning yellowish. You can bring them back to life with careful editing.

9. If you have a **Sharpen** function, it might help certain kinds of blurry pictures. Use sparingly since it can really make a photo look weird.

10. To fix up **scratches, blotches and other damaged areas**, use the **zoom** to magnify the damaged area, use the **clone tool** to pick up the pixels next to the blotches and paste on the blotches to remove them. Work slowly and carefully, picking up from the area close to the blotch to keep the color accurate. If you make a mistake, use the Undo to remove it. Some programs have an automatic scratch repair tool.

11. It's also a good idea to save **interim versions** of the photo to go back to if you get too far out of line in your corrections. You can add numbers or letters to designate the versions.

12. When you are happy with the enhanced picture, **save it with another, but related name** so that you will know it is the improved version. You can call it enhanced or clean or edited or whatever. Just be consistent.

13. Save the image also in **JPEG format** so it is ready to send by e-mail or upload to the Web if desired.