In | the path of life,
DAD,
I'm glad you're along side me

Photo Collages

By now you know that layer masks are so easy to use that this chapter will be a breeze, but I thought I'd show you some other effects you can achieve with them. Collage art is a great way to blend a bunch of photos and memories into one layout, as well as tell a story with photos.
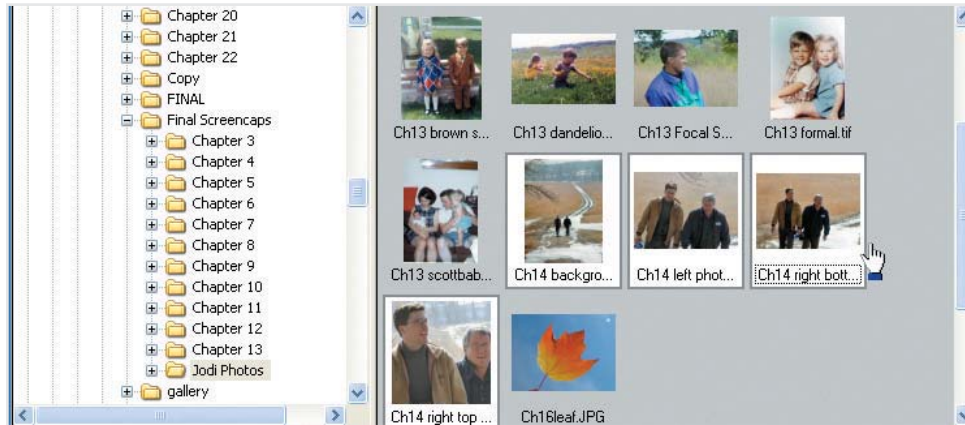
My example uses a series of photos I took in the early spring of my dad and brother on one of their usual walks exploring the land. I love the way the snow accented the worn path to the river, as well as how engrossed the two were in their chat that they didn't even notice me photographing them until the very end. This is a great way to capture relationships in action, as well as memories that speak volumes.

If you're skipping around in the book, you might want to check out Chapter 13 for a more in-depth overview of masks. If you have already been through that chapter, you're an expert so I'll dig right in to creating the collage.

# Select Photos

1. To begin, select a group of photos that you'd like to combine into one flowing layout. See if you can find some closely cropped, as well as one that is suitable as a background for the page. Distance shots with a majority of sky or snow work great.
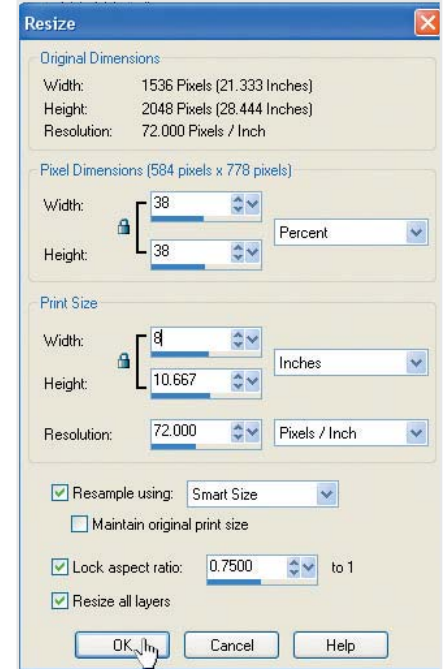


# Sketch Design

2. Quickly sketch out an idea on paper of how you'd like the photos to be arranged, as well as a possible title/journaling. Staggering the photos, as well as varying the size works well with this type of layout.
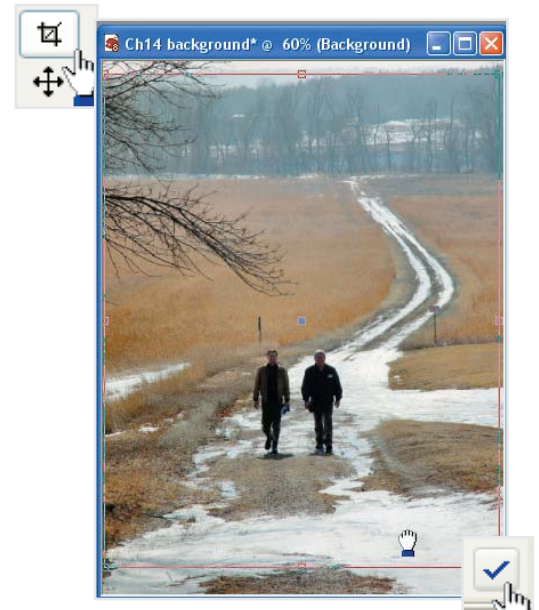
# Create a Photo Background

3. Now, open the photo you'd like for the background and size it to your preference. I planned on matting and framing this for my dad and brother, so I chose an 8" x 10" (20 x 25.4 cm) format.

4. Choose **Image > Resize** and enter the width you'd like, and the height will adjust proportionately. Decide on a resolution that takes into consideration printing, as well as the capabilities of your computer. 180-200 ppi (70-80 pixels/cm) is a good range for printing on home inkjet printers. Click **OK** and the image will be resized. In my example, the photo resized to 8" x 10.667" (20 x 27 cm), so I have some cropping yet to do.
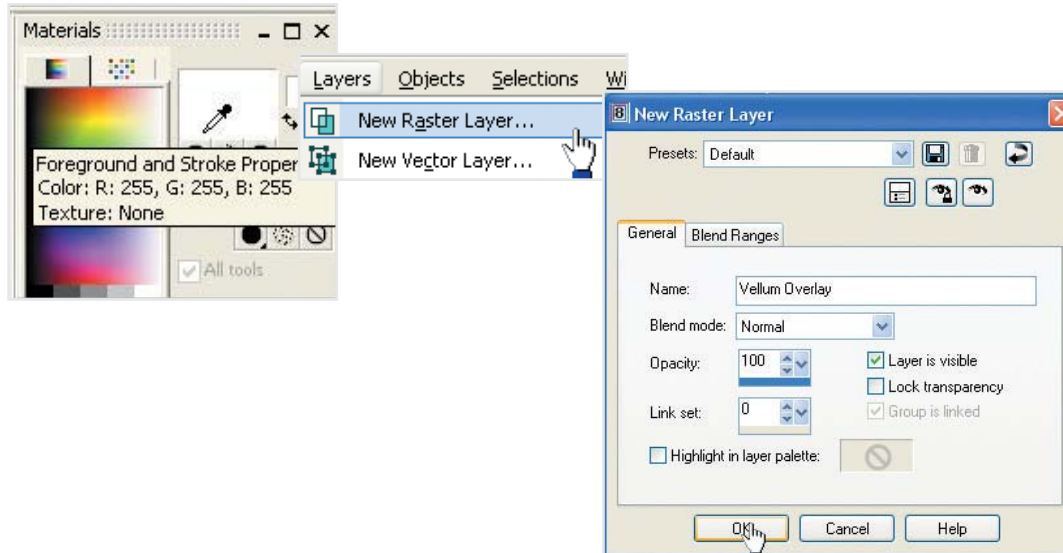


5. Select the **Crop** Tool and on the Tool Options palette set the width and height to your desired size. This will ensure your crop is exact. Move the crop box around your image until you like what you see, then click **Accept**.
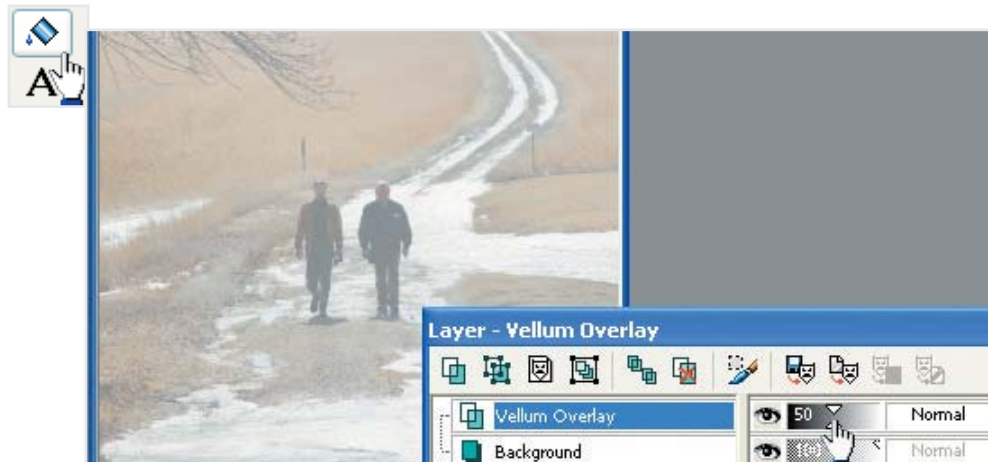
# Add a Vellum Overlay

6. On the Materials palette set the foreground color to white (HTML color: **#FFFFFF**).

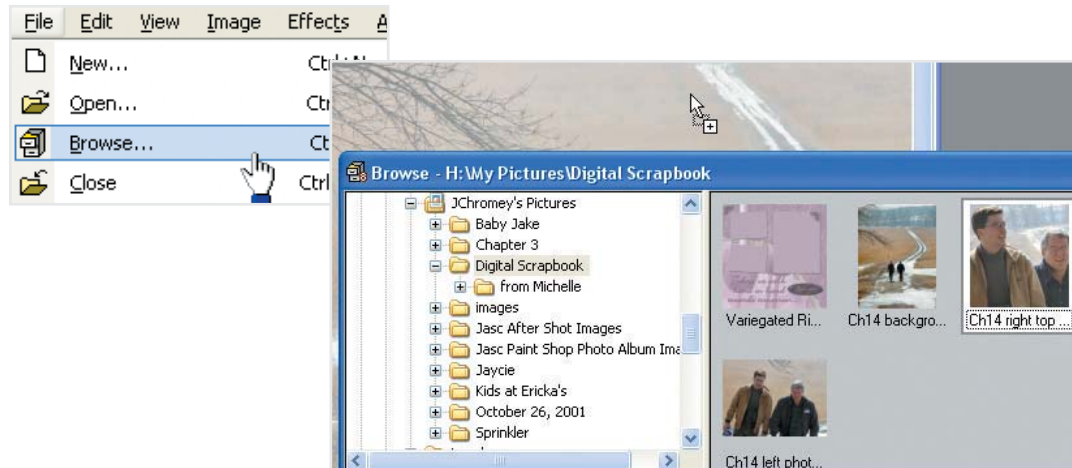   Choose **Layers > New Raster Layer** and name it **Vellum Overlay**.



7. Select the **Flood Fill** Tool and click anywhere in the image. A solid white layer will be added on top of the photo. On the Layer palette, reduce the opacity to around **50%**.

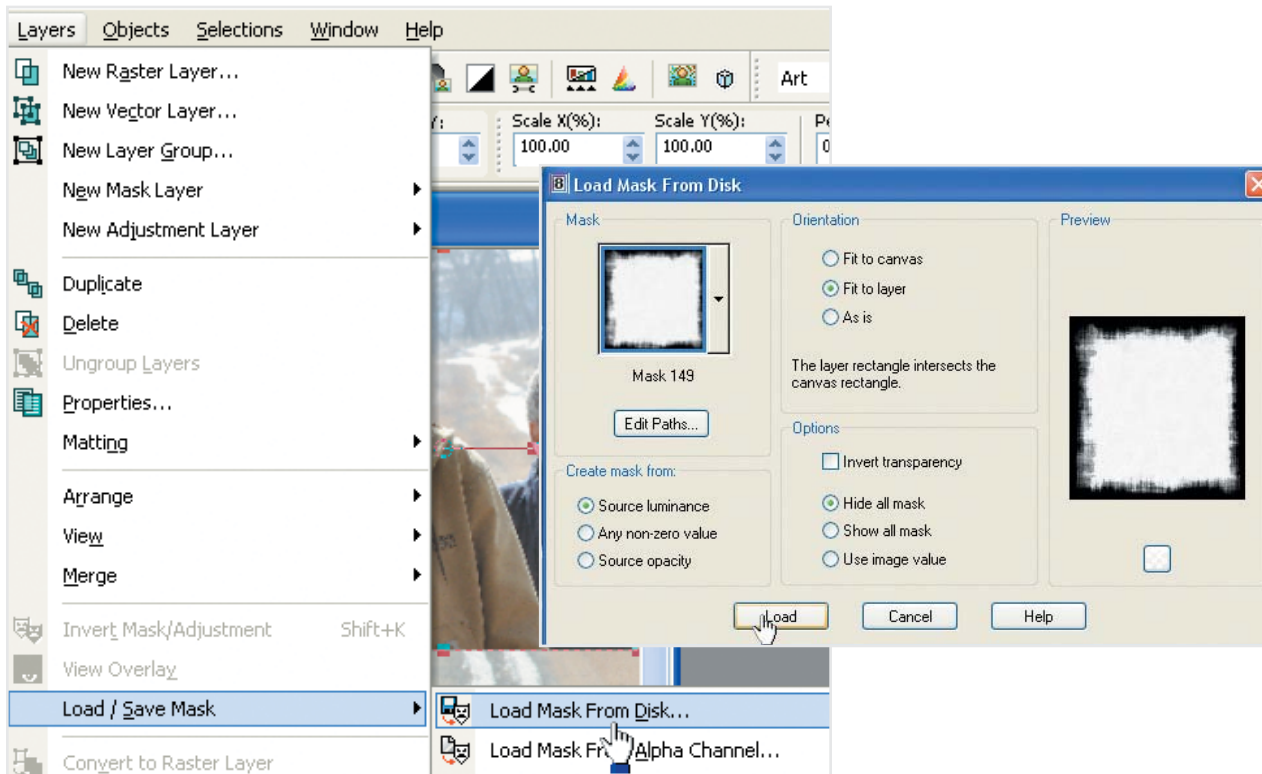8. Save the file as .pspimage to retain the layers.

## Add Photos

9. Choose **File > Browse** and drag the remaining photos onto the layout and arrange them in a pleasing manner. Adjust the size using the Deform Tool, if necessary (remember right-click one of the corner boxes while resizing to keep proportional).

# Add Layer Masks

**10.** Select one of the photos on the Layer palette and then choose **Layers > Load/Save Mask > Load Mask from Disk** and select a mask that fits your tastes with the **Fit to layer** option marked. Play around with different masks until you get the effect you're looking for. This layout uses **Mask 149**. When you find the mask you like, click **Load**.
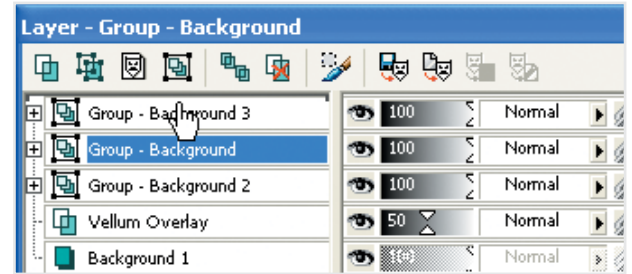


**11.** Repeat the mask loading process for each photo you added to your layout.

## Rearrange Stacking Order

12. If a photo is hidden beneath another, adjust its stacking order on the Layer palette by clicking and dragging the layer up or down.
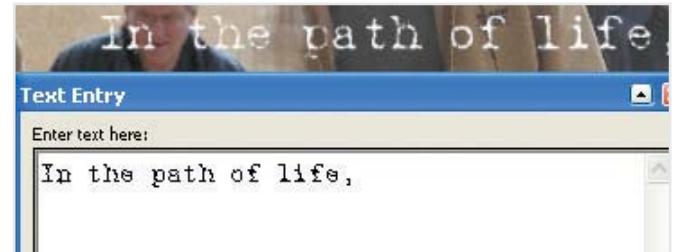


## Reduce Opacity

13. You may want to reduce the opacity of some of the photos, if you'd like more focus on a specific one. In this layout all the layers were left at 100%, but try out this effect and see how you like the results.
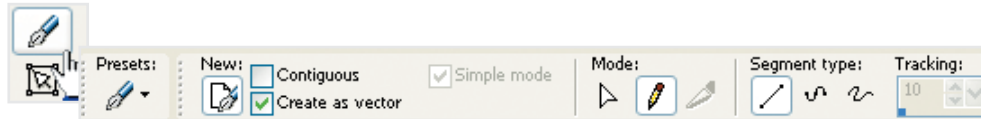
## Add Titles

14. I used the font, Typewriter. You may need to create each line as a separate vector layer, so you have more control over their positioning.  This is where you can really get creative by adding different fonts, sizes, colors, etc. for your title.
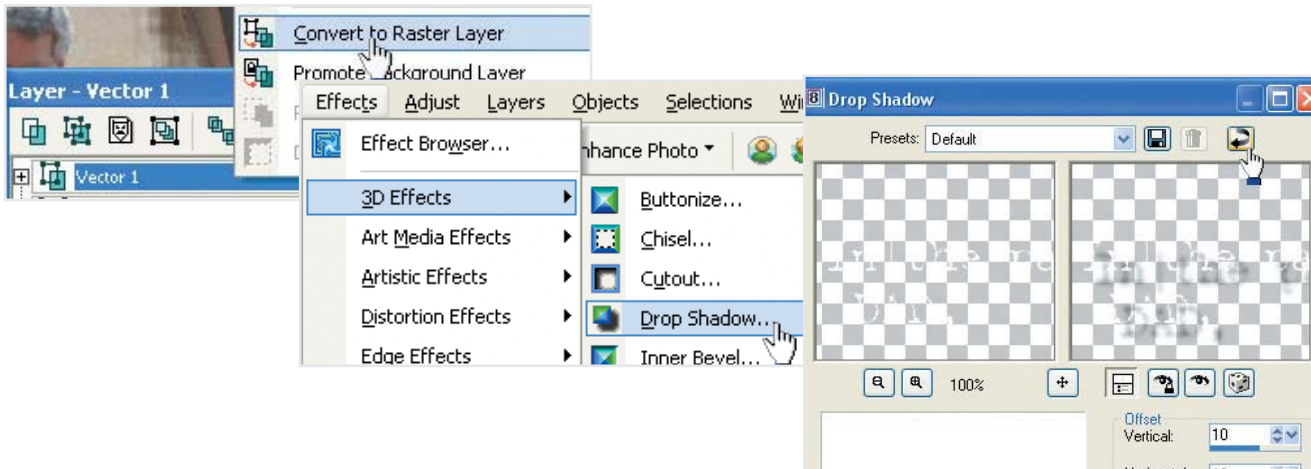
# Add White Accent Lines to Title

15. Add some pizzazz by drawing a few accent lines using the **Pen** Tool. On the Tool Options palette, mark **Create as vecto**r, and then click **Drawing Mode** and **Line Segment**.
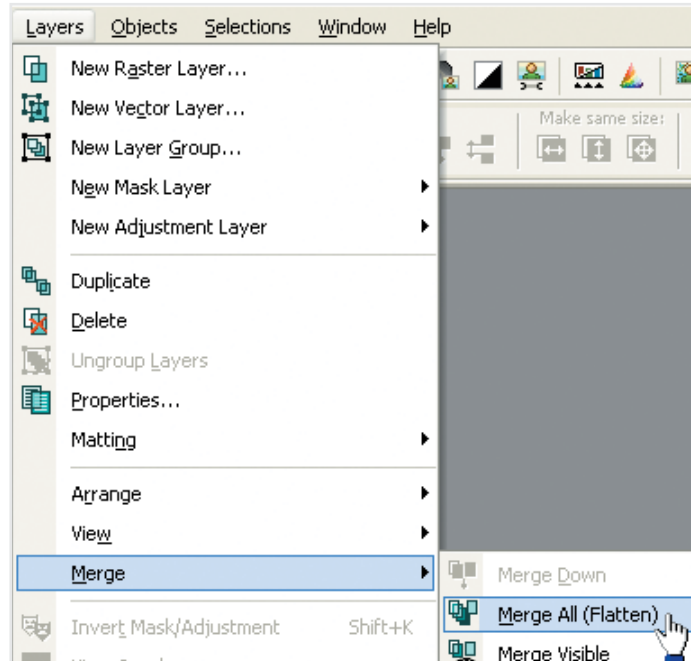
# Add Drop Shadows

16. The titles could really use some zing, so let's add a final touch with drop shadows set at the system default. Choose **Effects > 3D Effects > Drop Shadows** and click the **Reset to Default** button. Apply this to each text layer (you'll need to change each to a raster layer first, and the system will prompt you) and each accent line layer. Save as a .pspimage to retain all the layers.
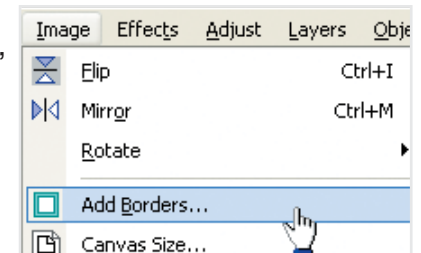
## Add a Border

17. Choose **Layers > Merge > Merge All (Flatten)** to create one layer, this allows you to add a border around the image.
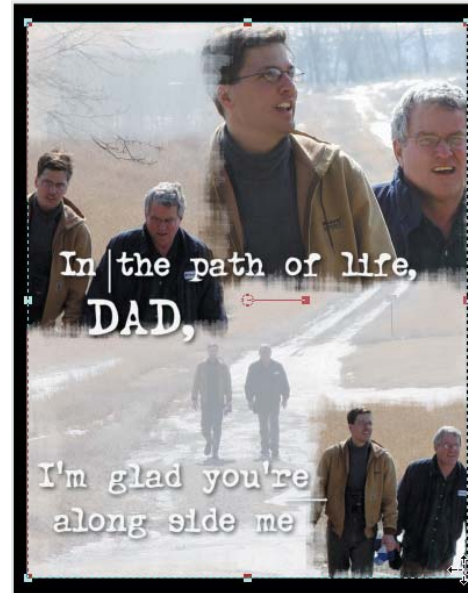


18. There are a few ways to add a border. You can use the border feature or flatten the layout, decrease its size, and add a fill layer beneath it in any color you choose.

- The easiest is to use Paint Shop Pro's border feature, however, if you need your finished layout to be 8" x 10" (20 x 25.4 cm), this option won't work. If you are fine with increasing the size of your finished layout, choose **Image > Add Borders** and then add a border of any color to the perimeter of your image. You can make it symmetric or not.

- The option I chose to use takes a few more steps, but it's still a piece of cake. Add a new raster layer and position it below the background layer (first promote the background layer to a raster layer by right-clicking it and choosing **Promote Background Layer**). Using the Flood Fill Tool and a Black foreground color on the Materials palette, fill the new layer with black by clicking anywhere on the layout.

- Activate the layout layer on the Layer palette. Using the Deform Tool, decrease the size of the layout proportionately (hold down the right mouse button) until the border is to the size you want. Center this top layer over the black layer.

19. Print at high print quality on high grade photo paper. You can also mat, frame, and wrap this layout up for a great gift.