I use Photoshop (PS) and PS Elements, but lately my 'go-to' for minor photo editing has been Gimp.

While the Gimp interface is a bit different, for casual use it works well. Plus, as shareware, you can easily try it for free.
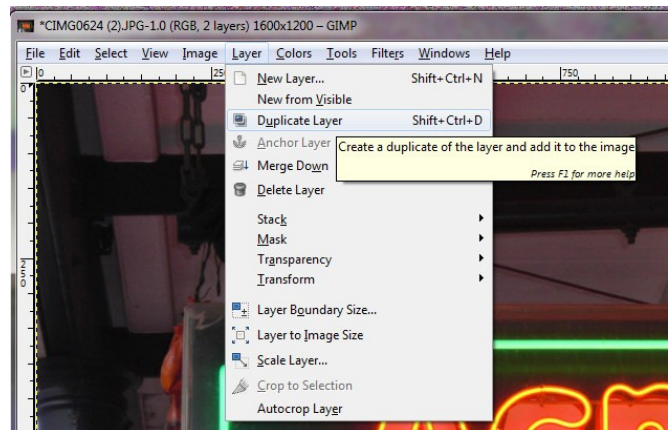
To give you a feel for the Gimp interface, I decided to write this short article to show how to create a color accented picture. The picture at the right was taken of my favorite oyster house in New Orleans. The background was a bit distracting and took away from the color in the neon sign which was the real 'pop' I was going for in this photo. So I decided to use Gimp to reduce the background to B&W.

I'm using Gimp version 2.6. If you have a different version the names and order of the menus might change a little, but the steps should be the same.
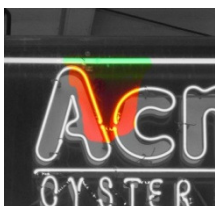
Step 1, Create two layers of the same image. Open the image, and then use Layer – Duplicate Layer menu. You should see 2 stacked layers like in the Gimp interface at the right. Note the (RGB, 2 layers) at the header.

Step 2, Colorify the top layer to B&W.
Use Colors – Colorify to bring up a Colorify dialog box. Then select the white box at the right below to make the top layer B&W. Note the B&W preview in the dialog box. When you close this dialog box with an OK, the top layer becomes a B&W image and the color image (not visible) is stacked below it.

Step 3, Erase the desired portion of the B&W Image. In this step you need to go to the toolbox and select the Eraser tool. I usually set the radius large and then go back with a smaller radius to work the details. Below left you can see how a portion of the top layer has been erased to a transparency so as to see the color.

Step 4, Merge layers and save. Use the <u>Layers – Merge Down</u> menu to create one layer from the two and then save in the desired format. I worked all of this in a JPEG format, but be careful as Gimp will, by default, want to save this in a xcf format, which is unique to Gimp. There are viewers available for xcf, but I usually work in JPEG. Here is the finished product.

This is a great way to create title pictures for a slide show to create a little extra pizzazz. The single color background doesn't have to be B&W as you can select other color shades, such as Sepia, from the custom color tab in the drop down <u>Colorify</u> menu.