

## Using Pixelmator to create Custom Tab Bar Icons



Pixelmator is a great program. And inexpensive. After upgrading my Mac to 10.8.3 I couldn't stomach the thought of another expensive Photoshop license. So I decided to see if it could be done in Pixelmator ([www.pixelmator.com](http://www.pixelmator.com), \$15 in the app store unless you scored big on one of Nad's bundle broadcasts)

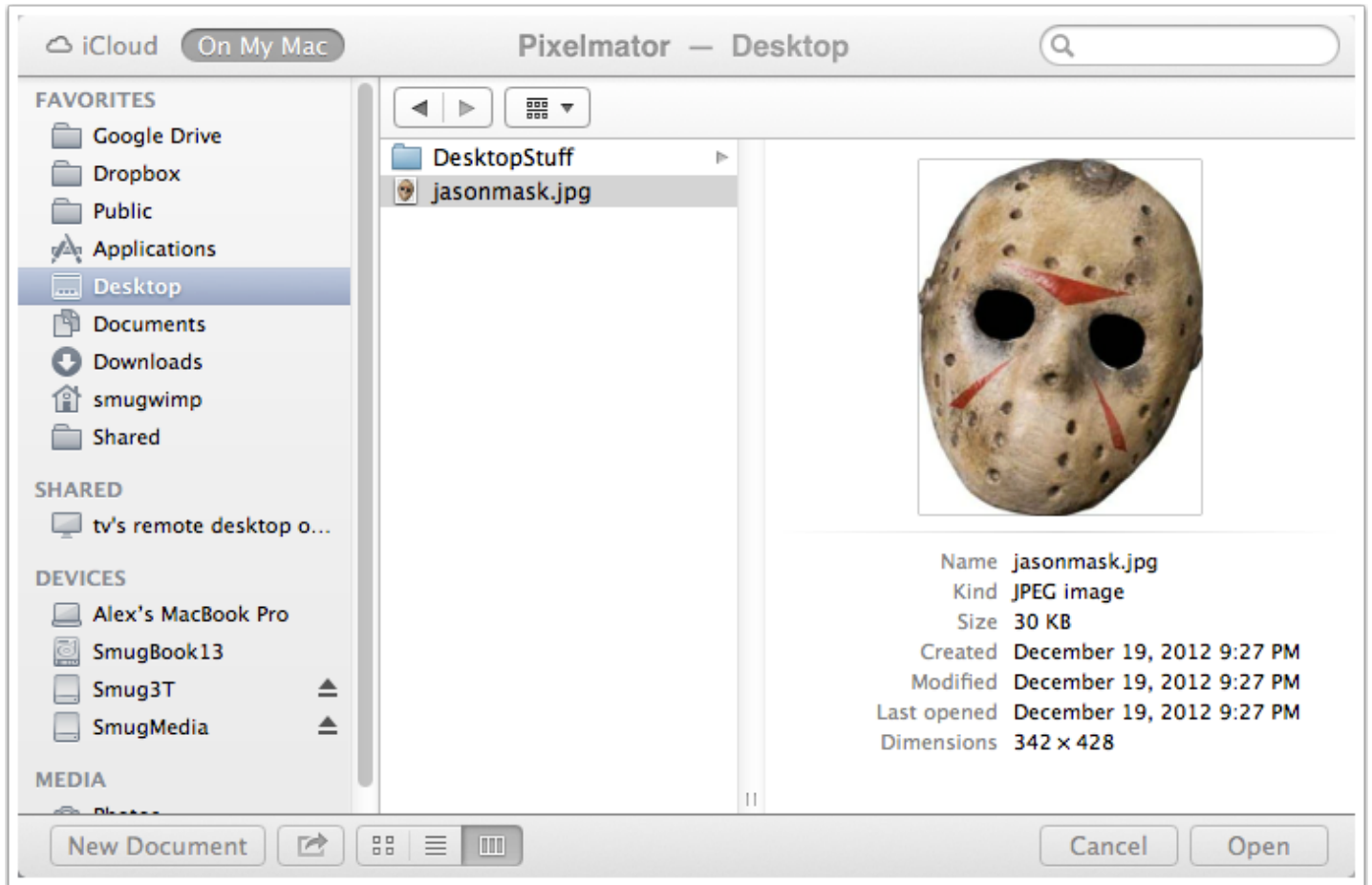
I'm happy to say it's not that hard.

If you want to follow 'exactly' like the demo, download my 'Jason' mask to use as a demo and follow along with me. Once you've done it once, you'll wonder why you never did it before! It's that simple!

Download the test image from here: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/115208762/jasonmask.jpg>

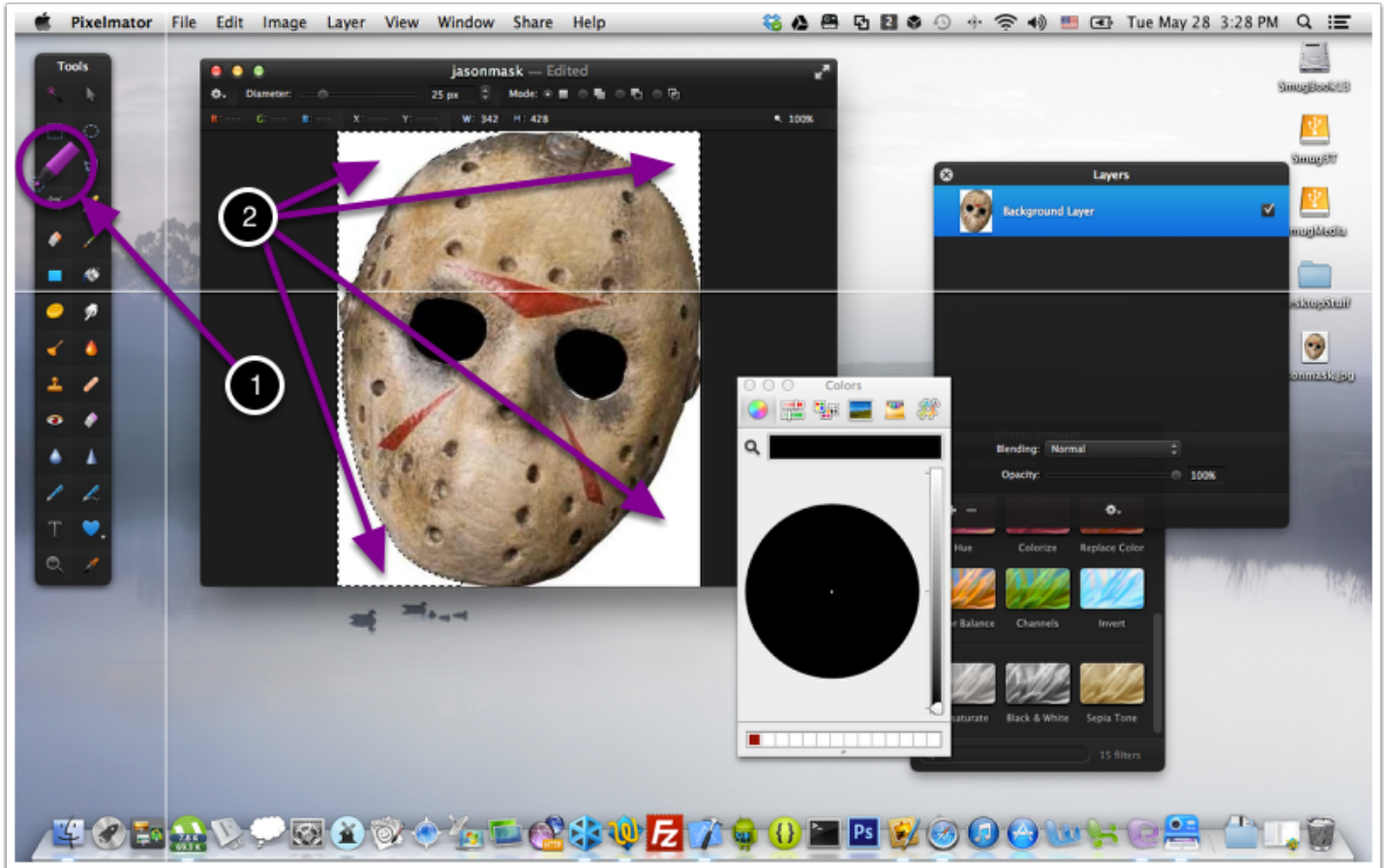
## Open a copy of your image

Launch Pixelmator. When the open dialog appears, select a copy of the image that you wish to create an icon of.



## Get rid of any background colors...

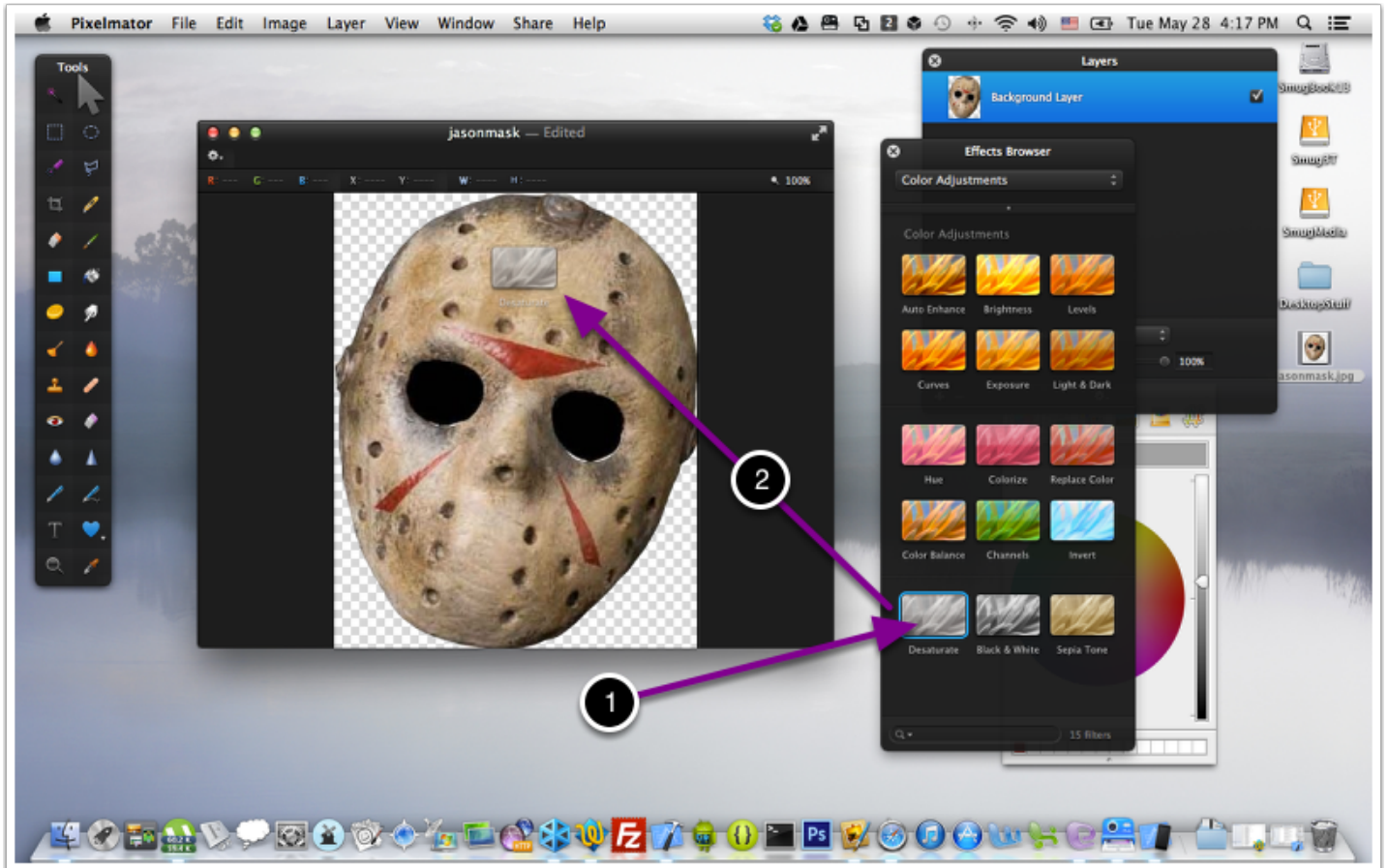
- 1) Select the 'Paint Selection Tool' from the tool palette
- 2) Select the areas that you do not want/need, and delete them



## Convert the image to grayscale

Convert the image to grayscale. This is done by

- 1) opening your effects browser, navigate to 'color' and find 'desaturate'.
- 2) CLICK AND DRAG the desaturate 'tool' on top of the image. Drop it on the image.

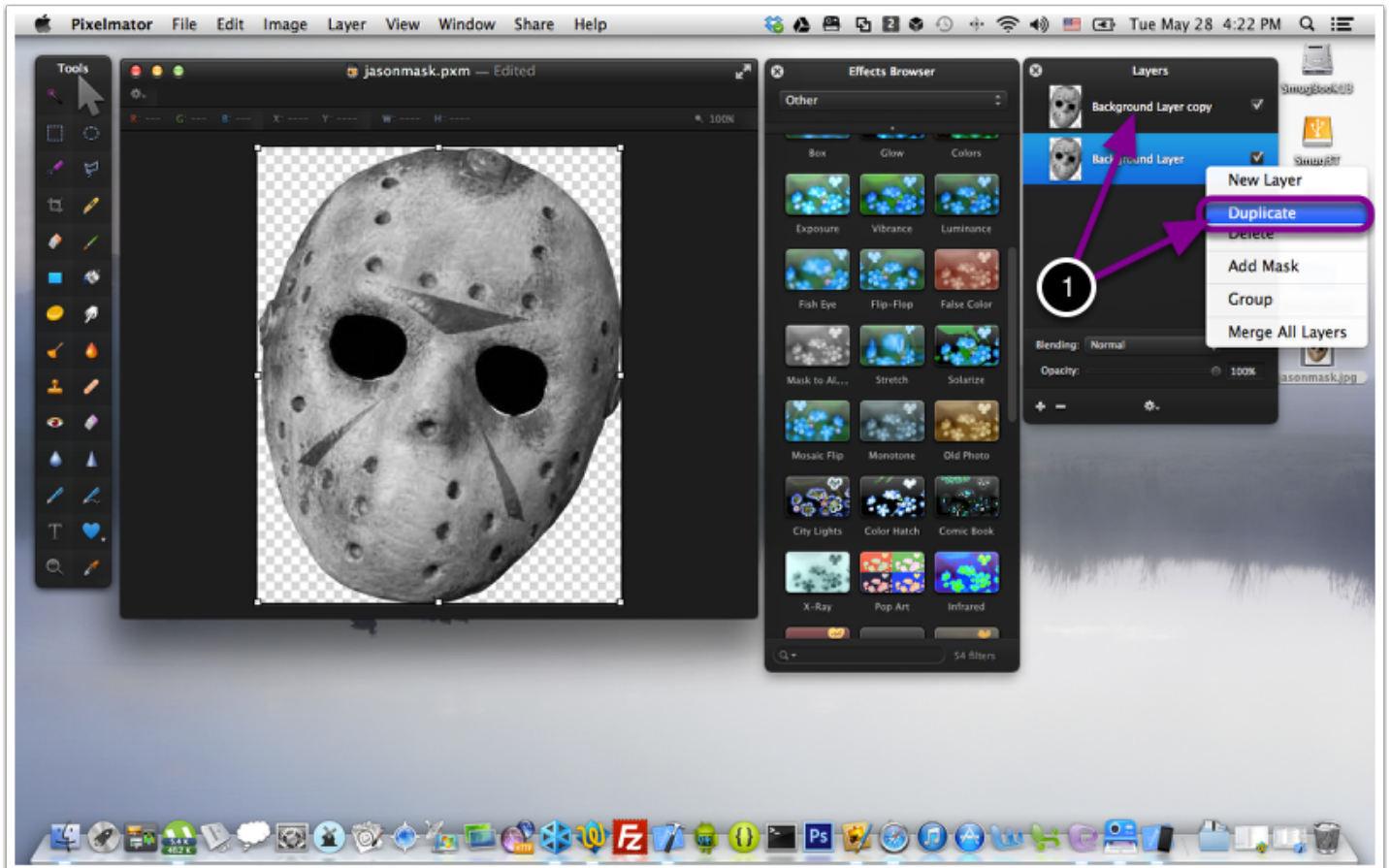


## Duplicate the prepared layer

Duplicate your layer in one of two ways:

- 1) Right Click on the layer, and choose 'duplicate'
- 1a) Under the 'layer' menu, choose 'duplicate'.

Either way, you want a copy of your image in a different layer



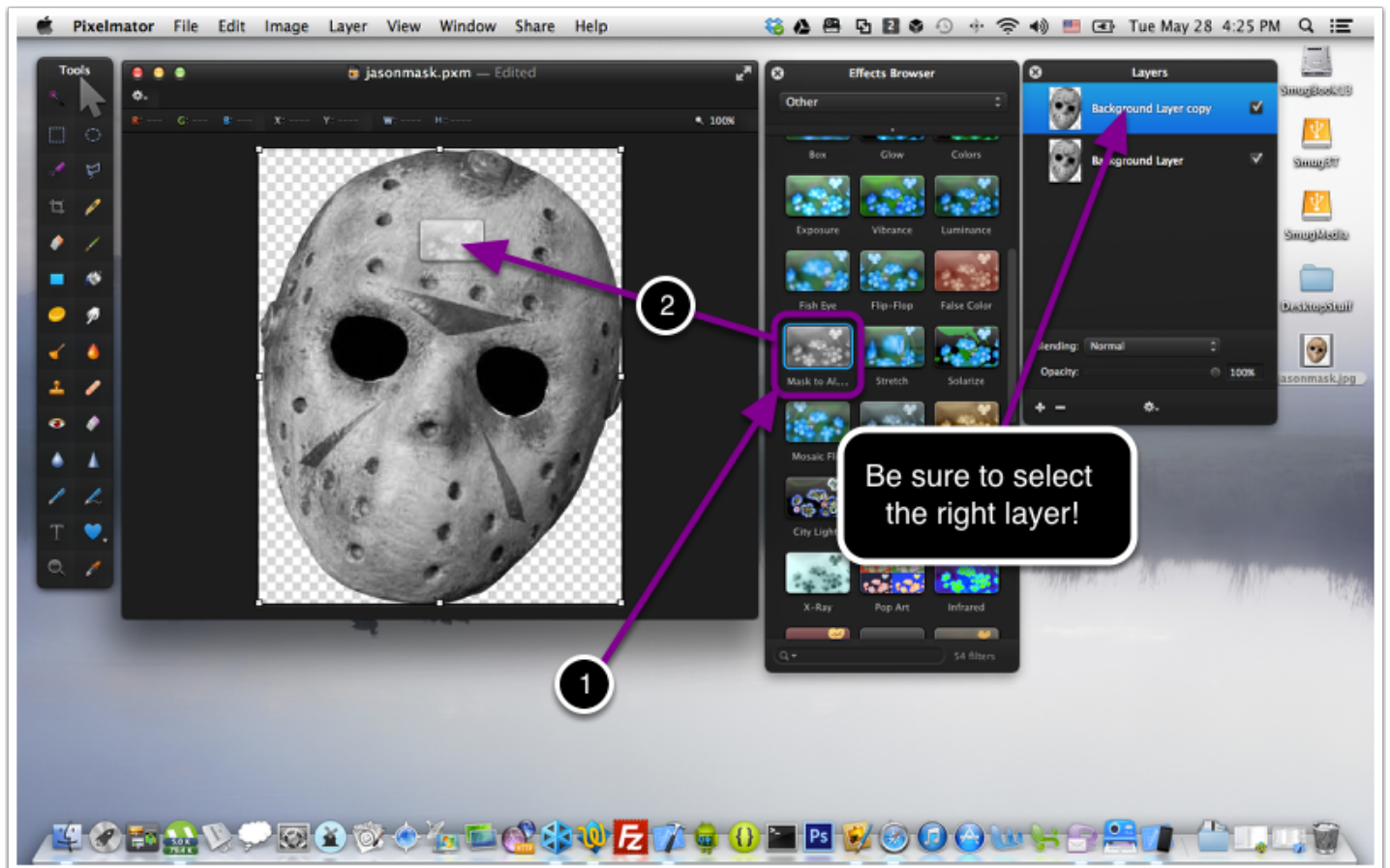


## Create an Alpha Mask from your layer copy

Create an Alpha Mask from your layer copy by

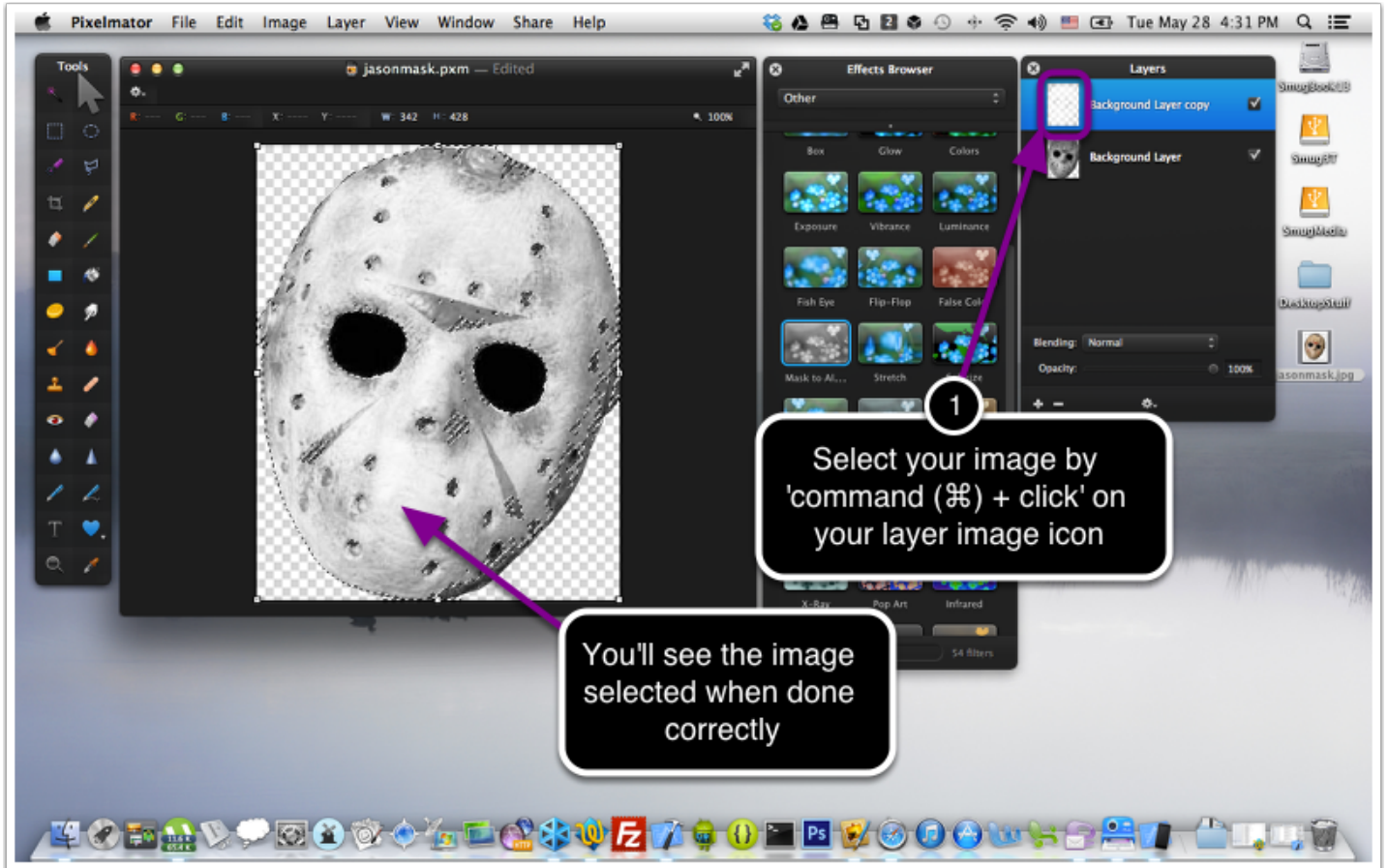
(with your layer copy selected!)

- 1) selecting the 'Mask to Alpha' tool (in Effects Browser, 'other')
- 2) CLICK and DRAG the Mask to Alpha Tool to your image. Drop it there.



## Select your Mask Image from the layer copy

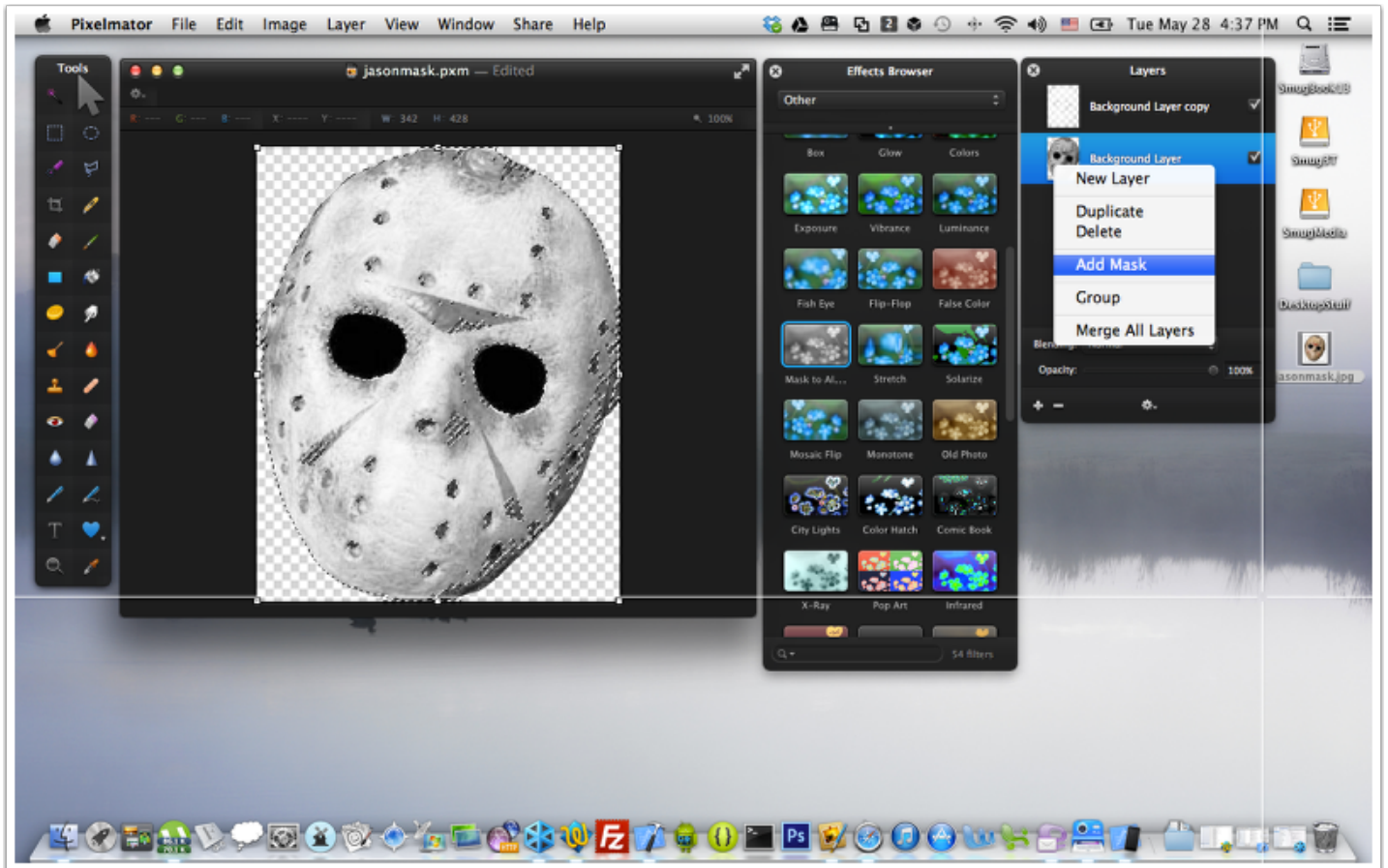
Select your mask image from the layer copy by selecting the layer, and then 'Command' (⌘) + clicking the icon of the layer



## Create a new Mask of your image from your 'Alpha Mask' layer...

First select your target layer (your original layer)

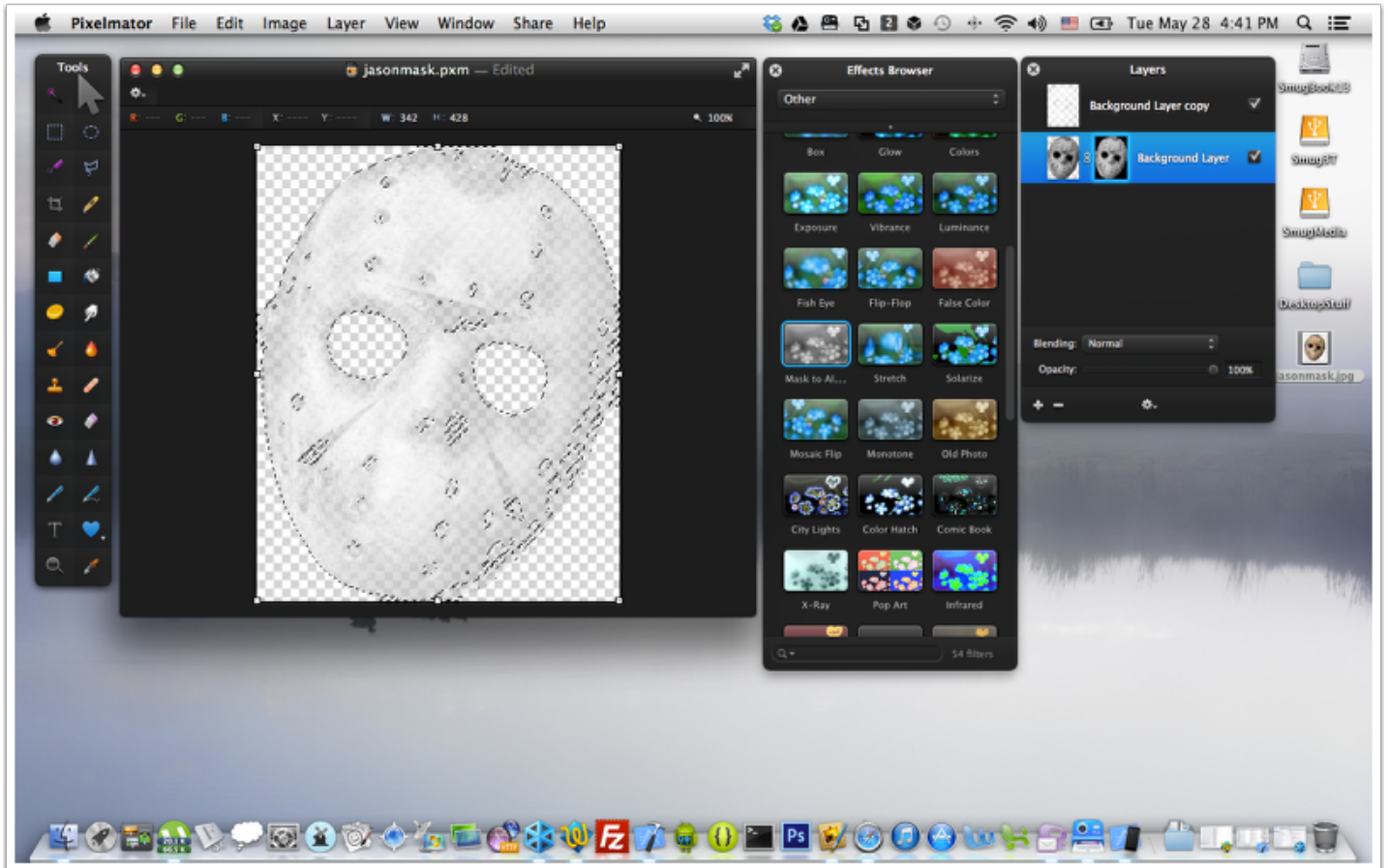
Then 'control' click on it, to bring up the menu. Choose 'Add Mask' from the menu





## Confirm your Alpha Mask was created correctly on the desired layer

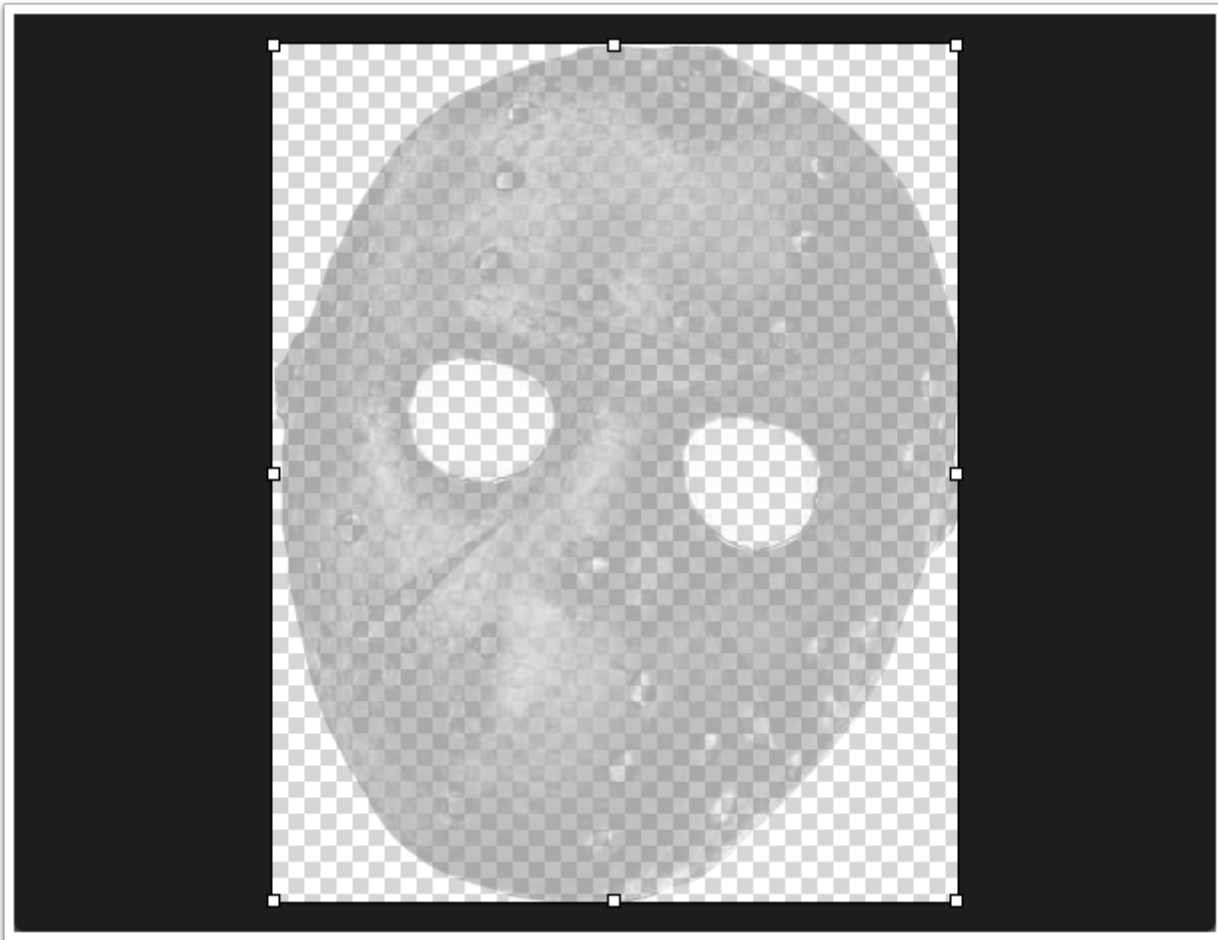
Now that we have a copy of your alpha mask on the desired layer, we can delete the 'layer copy' and leave only the original layer for our art.



## Your image should look similar to this...

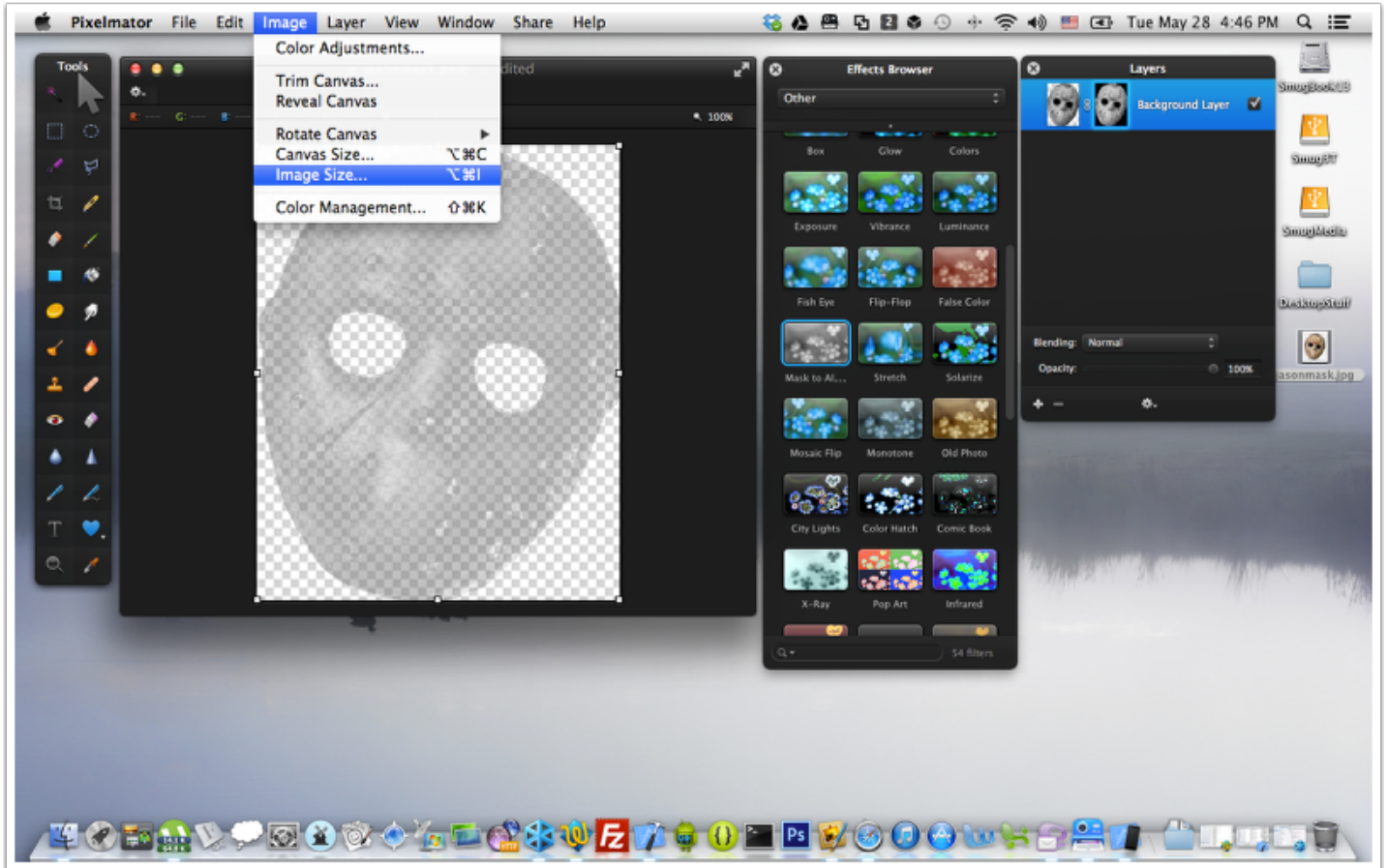
After you've deleted your layer copy, you should only have your original layer remaining, with Alpha mask intact. If so, your image should appear similar to the one below (provided you're doing this tutorial with the same image).

Now it's time to resize and export!



## Change the image size to suit the Tab Bar icon requirements

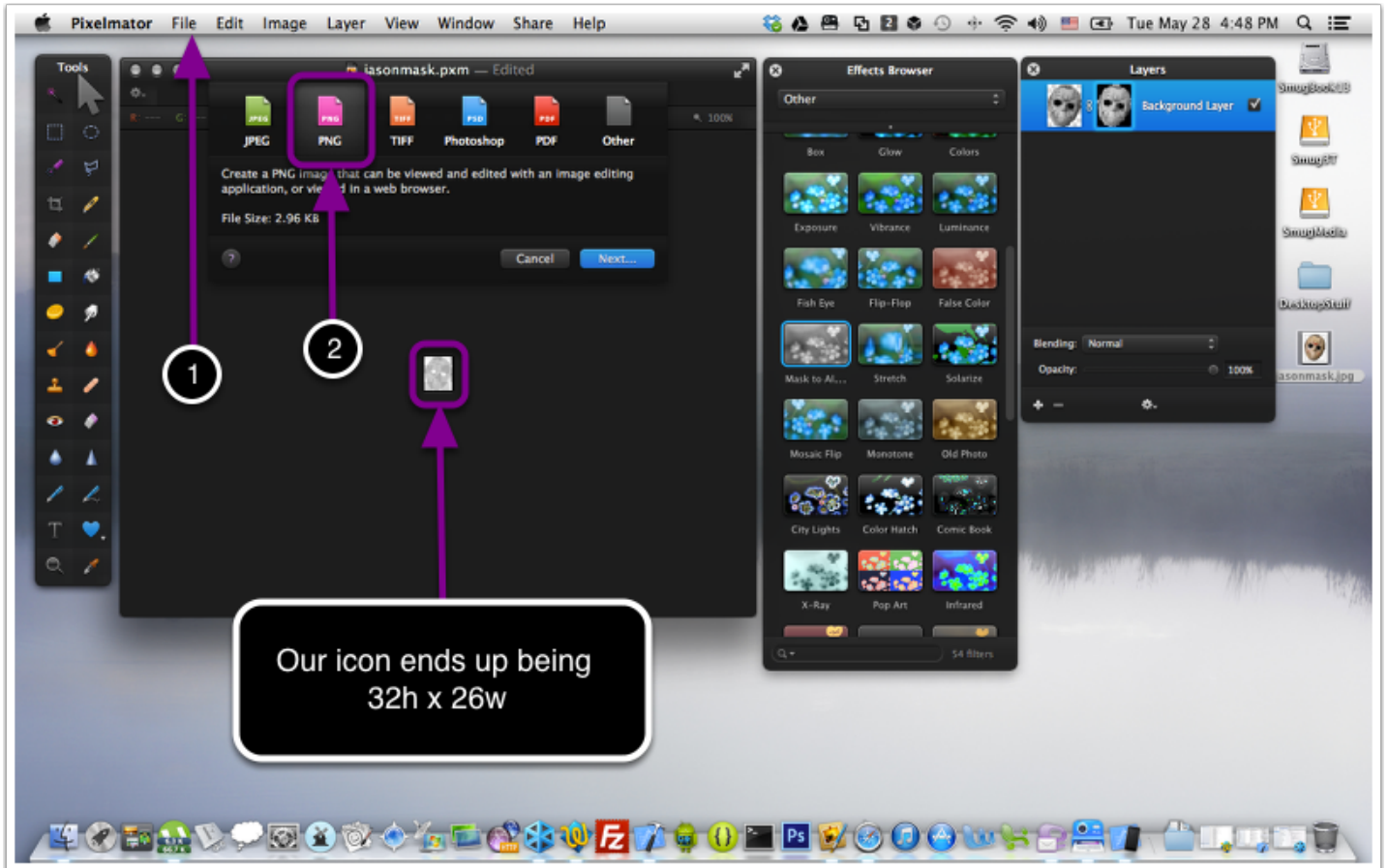
Tab Bar icons are only about 32 x 32 for normal, and 64 x 64 for retina images. For this demonstration, we're only going to do 32, but it's easy enough to create whatever sizes you need.



## Save your new image

Select 'File' and Export your image as PNG.

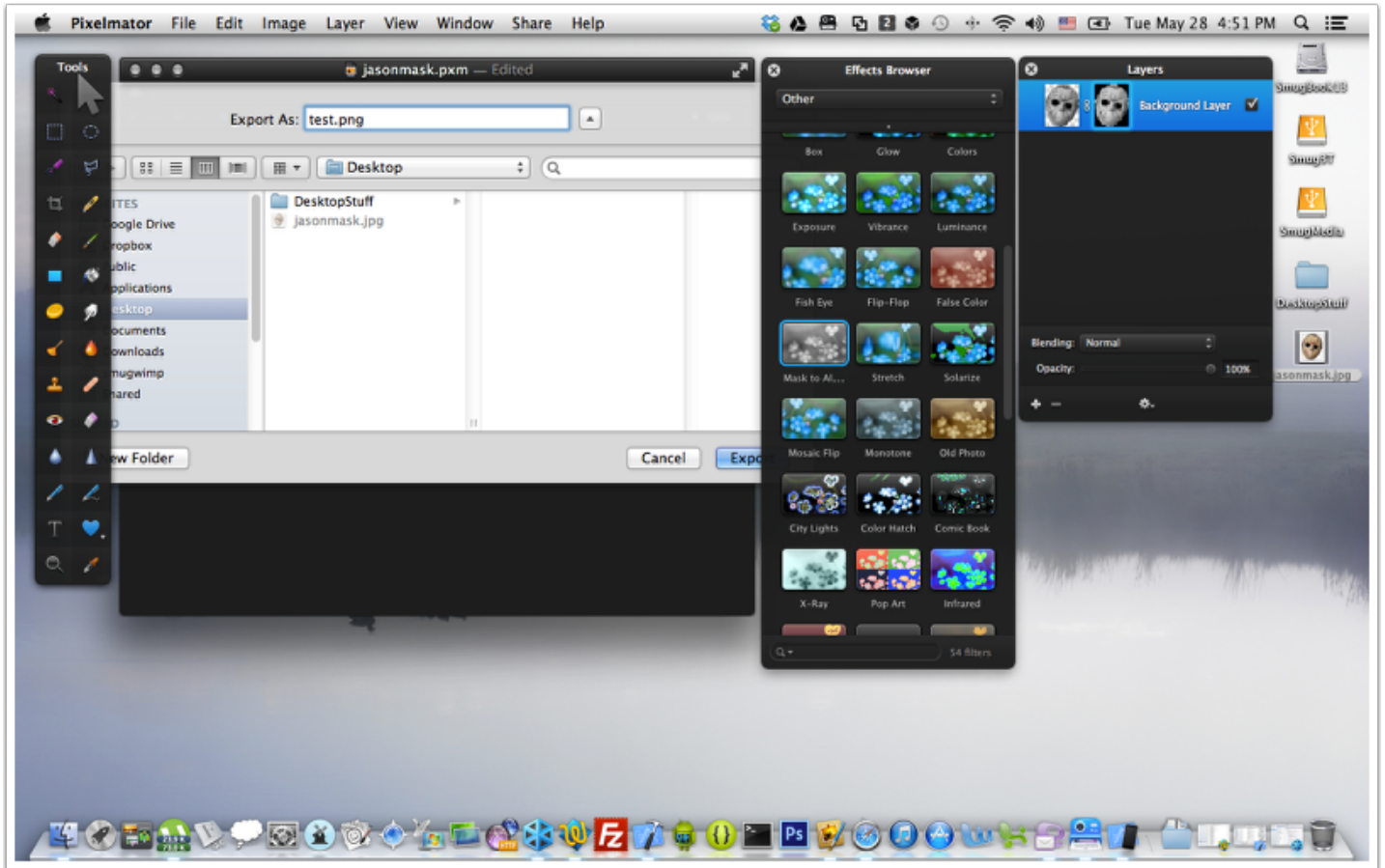
- 1) Choose 'File' and 'Export'
- 2) Select 'PNG'



## Name the file, and save it locally

Choose an appropriate name for your file, and save it to a location you're aware of.

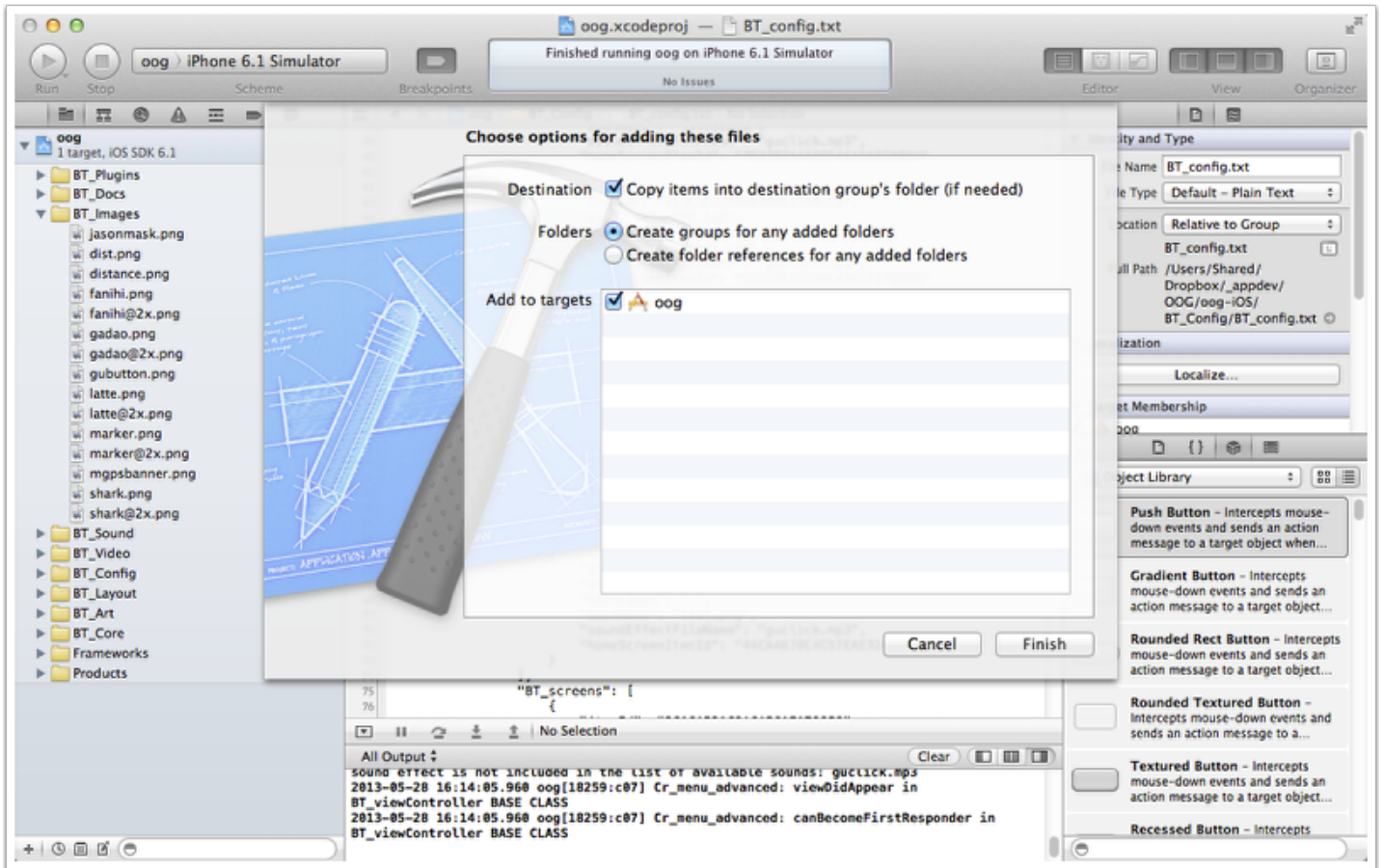
At this point, you can either exit Pixelmator, or minimize it; we won't need it anymore for this tutorial...





## Add the file into your BT\_Images directory

Remember to 'Add' the file, not copy the file. Let Xcode do the work for you!



## Assign your image. Launch your app. Voila!

After adding your image, assign it to your tab bar via the BT Control panel. You can verify this by looking at your BT\_Config.txt file

Remember Apple has guidelines on appearance and function of icons as well as other things. An icon should describe it's function.

