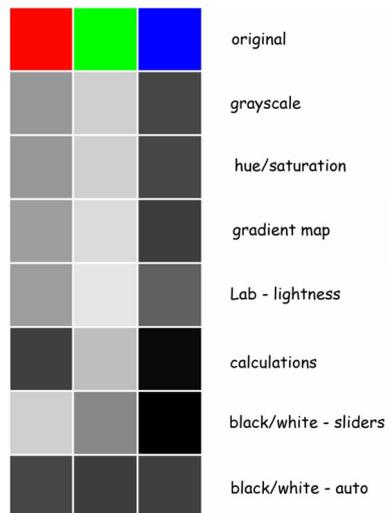


“Bits & Pieces” by Lindsay Gibbs

Black and White Conversion

There are many ways of converting a colour image to black and white each of which produce different results as shown in each of the rows in figure 1.



Be aware that some methods produce unexpected results.

For instance the red, green, and blue squares in figure 1 will each look the same (bottom row fig 1) if you click “Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black & White” in Photoshop and then choose the “Auto” convert option. The reason for this is that each of the three squares have the same luminosity value ... in this case, to distinguish between these three colours, you need to choose one of the other methods.

An example

Images often look better in black and white. Figure 2, supplied by Mike Moran (Hutt Camera Club) is an example. What makes this image is the expression on the boys face.



Unfortunately the boy is central plus there are several distractions such as the telephone pole, the fence, the car, and the car tail-light.



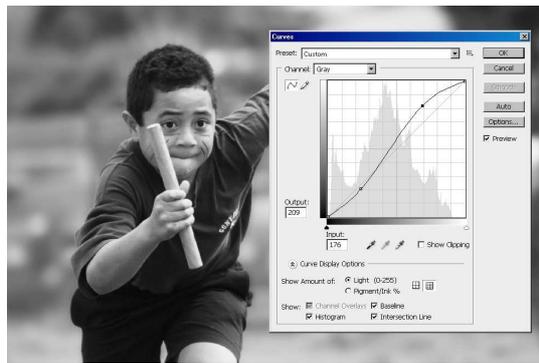
The first thing to do is to crop the image as shown in figure 3. The boy now falls on the rule-of-third lines plus we no longer have the telephone pole. This still leaves the fence, car, and tail-lights.



Converting the image to “black and white” as shown in figure 4 gets rid of the tail-light but still leaves the car and fence. Before we deal with these let’s enhance the boy. Use the “lasso” selection tool to select the boy as shown in figure 5.



Then improve the contrast using curves as shown in figure 6.



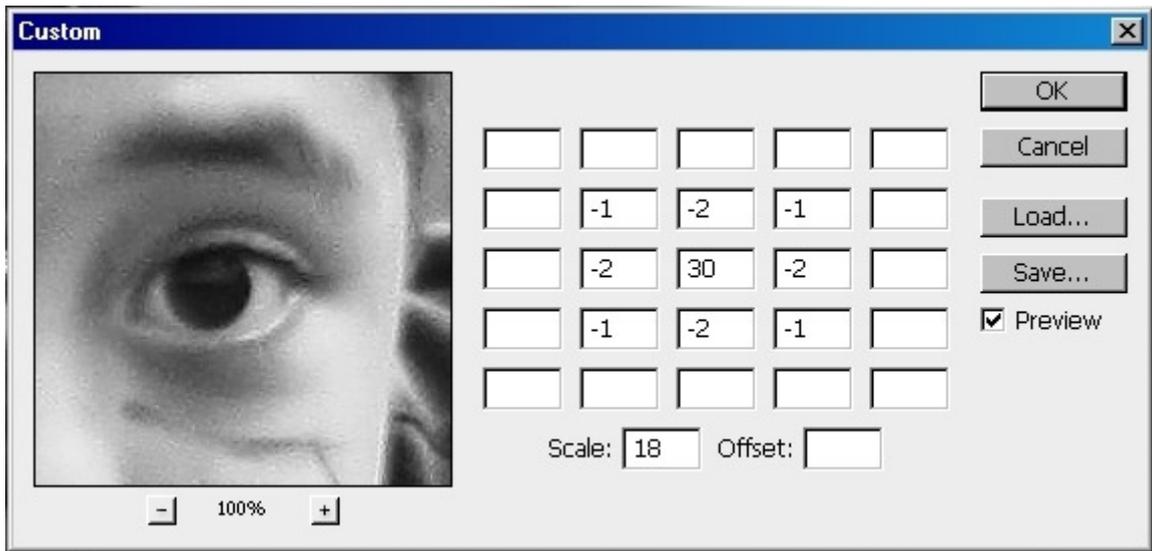
Let's now fix the fence. With the boy still selected, press the Ctrl and I keys simultaneously. The selected area is now the Inverse of the original selection and contains the fence and car (figure 7).



Now right-click and select a "feather radius" of 50 pixels. From the drop-down tool bar select the "Gaussian Blur" tool and apply a 20 pixel blur. The fence will disappear as shown in figure 8.



The image is now ready for sharpening for print. Any of the sharpen tools will do. In this example I have used the "Custom" tool with the settings shown in figure 9.



The finished image is shown in figure 10. The boy really stands out now that the background has been blurred.

