

# FOCUS

Newsletter of the Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club  
Hosted by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Visit our website at [www.naturecameraclub.com](http://www.naturecameraclub.com) or email [d.hamernik@comcast.net](mailto:d.hamernik@comcast.net)

## SEPTEMBER

- Sept 7 No Meeting (Labor Day)  
Sept 21 Scott Meister - Nite Watch Bats

## OCTOBER

- Oct 5 Competition (Prints & Digital)  
Oct 19 Bill Helmuth - Serengeti National Park

### **President's Message**

Tom Richardson

Club members:

Please help with this photo request from Mayslake Peabody Estate. While it is not nature photography, it could be a good excuse to branch out to architectural and city and suburb landscape photography. Although I won't

be picking the photos, I would appreciate knowing if you submit photos for the Burnham exhibit. You would get credit for any photo used. Details are attached.

Dear All,

I know all of you are interested in nature photography, but I was wondering if there a few amongst you that are interested in some of the items/topics listed below and already have good photographs to submit or would love to go out and take some.

Mayslake Peabody Estate is working with the Landmark Conservancy and DePaul University Museum to put together an exhibit on the Burnham Plan and its influence on the development of the suburbs and its green space. The people who are putting together the exhibit boards are in need of some specific photos as listed below. I thought it would be great to have the club participate as another collaborator on this project if possible.

To make sure they have adequate time, they request that photos be sent electronically to Ann Schmid by email [annhschmid@gmail.com](mailto:annhschmid@gmail.com) by the end of September (earlier is of course no problem). High quality resolution is needed for importing into the display graphics.

Please let me know who might be interested in which #, so that we can anticipate which ones we need to cover in another fashion.

Thank you,

Janneke Fowers  
Heritage Interpreter ~ Mayslake Peabody Estate  
[jfowers@dupageforest.com](mailto:jfowers@dupageforest.com)  
(630) 206-9567

## Photos Needed

1. Chicago lakefront today
2. Tollway pictures - western suburbs
3. Railway pictures - boarding Metra trains, freight yards, Union Station, El line, subway, etc.
4. Morton Arboretum
5. Sheridan Road
6. Ravinia
7. Crystal Lake
8. Fox River visitors
9. Kankakee river boaters
10. Archer Avenue in Palos or similar tree canopy scenic drive
11. Lyric bldg.
12. Navy Pier
13. Symphony Center
14. Theaters
15. Photos of Chicago River today
16. Grant Park
17. Museum campus
18. Art Institute
19. Field Museum
20. Statues
21. Millennium
22. Harris Theatre
23. Chicago futuristic photos/graphics
24. Chicago Olympic logo, high speed rail photos

## **September Presentation**

Larry Buttimer

Scott Meister has been an Ecologist with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County for the past 7 years. In this capacity he participates in the restoration and management of our protected open space and conducts surveys and inventories of many wildlife species including bats. Scott also

serves an active role within the Chicago Wilderness Wildlife Task Force and the Illinois Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

Scott's presentation entitled "A Bit About Bats" will introduce us to the natural history of habits of bats with an emphasis on the bats that can be found in DuPage County, introduce us to how bat populations are monitored and discuss emerging disease concerns linked to bats.

## **THE NATIONAL PARKS**

America's Best Idea

Ray Kammer

Beginning Sunday September 27 at 8PM on PBS Channel 11, Ken Burns will take you on many trips, over 6 sessions, to your National Parks.

He will start off with the beginning of a park, the ideas and the people behind the movements to preserve and protect the nation's landscape gems. He will also cover the generous donations of land and money by well known people.

Ken Burns is the one who gave us that outstanding story of the Civil War. His cinematography was captivating. In fact Fred Drury taught us some of Ken's techniques in his Pro Show Gold classes.

Burns and his crew were so enamored with the parks after they started filming that they extended their field work another 2 years! I liked what I saw in the previews. Since many of us have photographed in some of the parks it will bring back good memories and introduce us to the ones we haven't prompting new photography trips. Be sure to tune in on this.

## **OUTINGS UPDATE**

Upcoming events

There **will not** be a scheduled outing for **SEPTEMBER**.

Outings will resume in **OCTOBER** with a fall color shot on either Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> or the 31<sup>st</sup>. Location to be announced later. If you have a favorite place you would like to go, let me know and I will arrange it.

In **NOVEMBER** we will once again journey to Jasper Pulaski Wildlife Preserve in Indiana to celebrate the fall migration of the Sandhill Cranes. This will be a very early am event and is tentatively scheduled for Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Remember, if anyone has a suggestion of a location you would like to see as a future club outing, please let me know and I will do my best to arrange it.

Have a wonderful summer, Jon Snyder.....

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Gary Saunders**

Membership dues (\$2,175) and DuPage County Forest Preserve photo class revenue (\$1,658) are the Club's sources of cash. The report is attached to this email for review.

The most significant expenditures during the year were:

- Fees to outside program speakers (\$400)
- Photo class expenses (\$476)
- Purchases of equipment for meetings, programs and competitions (\$1,701)
- Annual dinner expenses, including the outside speaker, net of payments from attending members (\$456)
- Filing fee to obtain IRS ruling re the Club's not-for-profit status (\$300)

## **Bob's Blog List**

This month I would like to share with you blogs and web sites of well known outdoor and nature photographer. Most have a button to take you to their blog. To view the work of others gives us enjoyment and ideas.

Art Wolfe	<a href="http://www.artwolfe.com/">http://www.artwolfe.com/</a>
Glen Randall	<a href="http://www.glennrandall.com/">http://www.glennrandall.com/</a>
Guy Tal	<a href="http://www.guytal.com/">http://www.guytal.com/</a>
Lewis Kemper	<a href="https://www.lewiskemper.com/">https://www.lewiskemper.com/</a>
Tom Till	<a href="http://www.tomtill.com/">http://www.tomtill.com/</a>
Michael Clark	<a href="http://www.michaelclarkphoto.com/">http://www.michaelclarkphoto.com/</a>
Rob Sheppard	<a href="http://www.robsheppardphoto.com/">http://www.robsheppardphoto.com/</a>
Jay Goodrich	<a href="http://www.jaygoodrich.com/">http://www.jaygoodrich.com/</a>

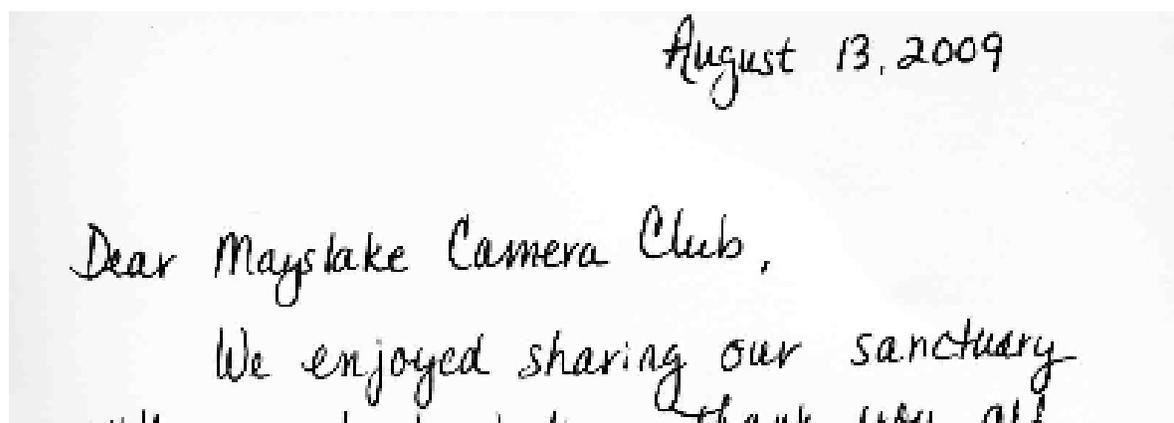
And don't forget our Mayslake web site.

<http://www.naturecameraclub.org/Mayslake/Welcome.html>

You may reach me for suggestions, comments and questions at bobd@oakton.edu.

## Message from Daybreak Sanctuary

Following is a note that was sent to Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club from the Daybreak Sanctuary. Several members made the trip south this past August.



August 13, 2009

Dear Mayslake Camera Club,

We enjoyed sharing our sanctuary  
with you all



Since the beginning of this column, all of our work has been done in the RGB Color Space. There was a brief excursion into CMYK, the printer's color space, a couple of columns back, but apart from selecting channels from CMYK to use for masks, there has been no color correction work done other than in RGB. That's about to change. And the reason for the change is that sometimes another color space can do the job better and faster. We start this month with an introduction to the LAB Color Space.

LAB is an unusual color space. RGB is a color space that's based on the way our eyes see. It's also the color space of most of the photographic tools we use including digital sensors, film, and scanners. The CMYK color space is fundamental to printers and printing. LAB is an entirely different animal. It was constructed by scientists who wanted a color space in which 'color' could be defined independent of the device producing it. Nevertheless, Photoshop is built to use LAB, very much in the same ways it uses RGB or CMYK. In other words, images can be converted from RGB to LAB (and the reverse). Layers, adjustment layers, masks, sharpening, darkening edges, etc. can all be used in LAB just as in RGB. However, the way things work is often different.

**Figures 1 & Figure 2** are the Curves dialog one sees when one applies a Curve to the RGB and LAB Color spaces respectively. About the only similarity between the two is that each is made up of three channels. Following are a list of some of the more important differences:

1. In RGB, each channel carries its own luminosity and color. In LAB the 'L' channel carries all of the luminosity while the 'a' and 'b' channels carry all of the color. The 'a' channel is the magenta-green channel, while the 'b' channel is the yellow-blue channel.
2. In RGB the scales on all the channels are the same, ranging from 0 (black) to 255 (white). In LAB the 'L' channel has a different scale than the two color channels, the 'a' and the 'b'. The 'L' channel ranges from 0 (black) to 100 (white). The color channels both range from +127 to 0 and then to -128.

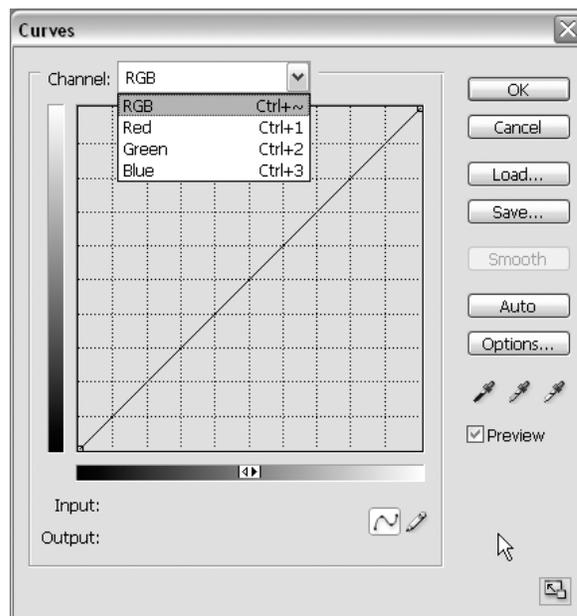


Figure 1: Curves dialog in RGB color space.

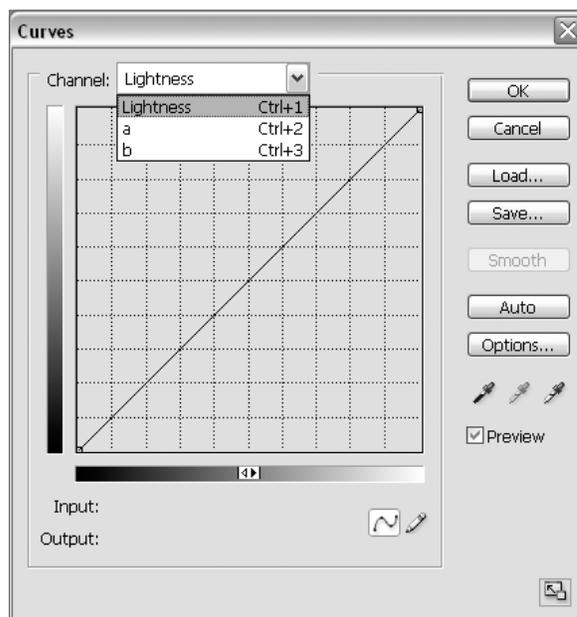
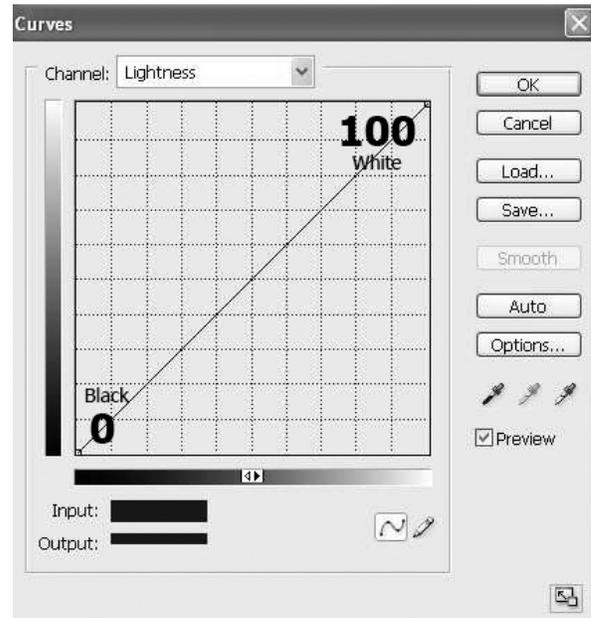


Figure 2: Curves dialog in LAB color space.

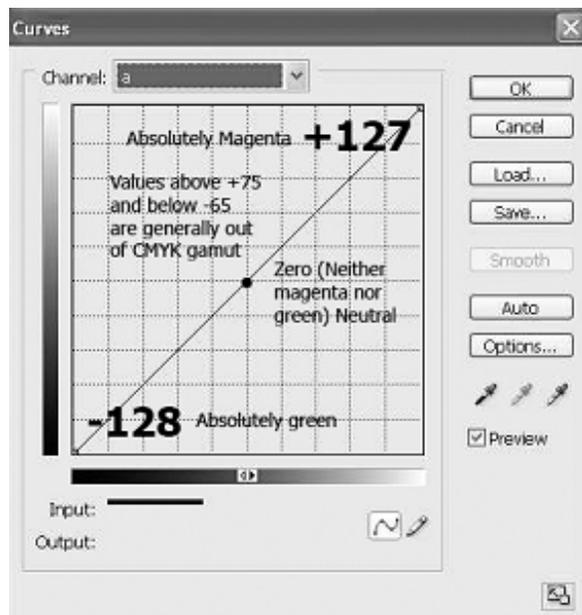
- In RGB, neutrality (the absence of any color cast) is evidenced by equal R, G, & B values (e.g. 128,128,128). In LAB, neutrality is evidenced by the 'a' and 'b' values both being '0', no matter what the 'L' value. This greatly simplifies the elimination of color casts.

In LAB the 'L' or Luminosity channel carries all of the tonal information, and none of the color information. This channel (**Figure 3**) looks very much like a grayscale version of the image. An important benefit to the absence of color information in the 'L' channel is that no matter how aggressively one sharpens it, the sharpening cannot possibly create any color artifacts! Typical shadow and highlight values for the 'L' channel are 10 and 95 respectively.



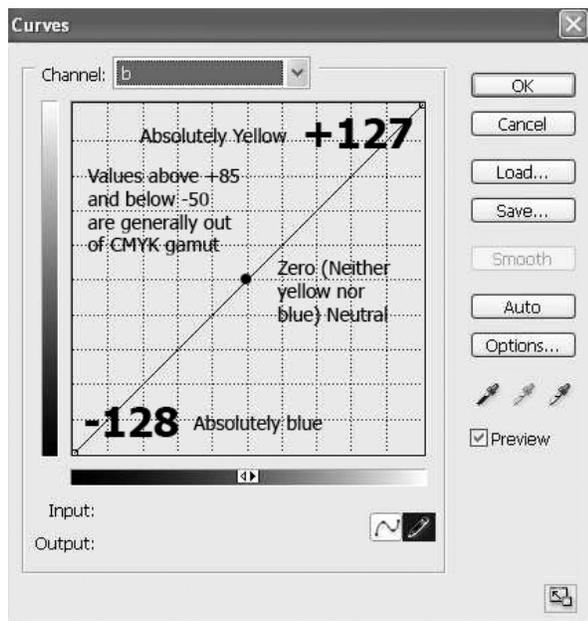
**Figure 3:** The 'L' channel is tonal values only. This channel is where one enhances the contrast of the primary subject of the image.

LAB is an especially effective color space for handling images of substantially monochromatic subjects such as canyons (red-brown), rain forests (yellow-green), and snow & ice (white to gray). This is because LAB allows us to do what the human vision system does when confronted by a vista of similar colors. Probably because of our hunter-gatherer ancestry, when confronted by similar colors, our eyes break the colors apart and impart additional 'color contrast' to the otherwise monochromatic scene, and thus allowing us to successfully stalk the wily saber tooth tiger the family wants for dinner. The camera is not as well equipped as the human vision system and leaves this additional 'color contrast' on the forest floor, producing a unsatisfactory version of the scene as we best recall it. In LAB it's a simple matter to add back the missing color contrast by simply steepening the 'a' and 'b' curves.



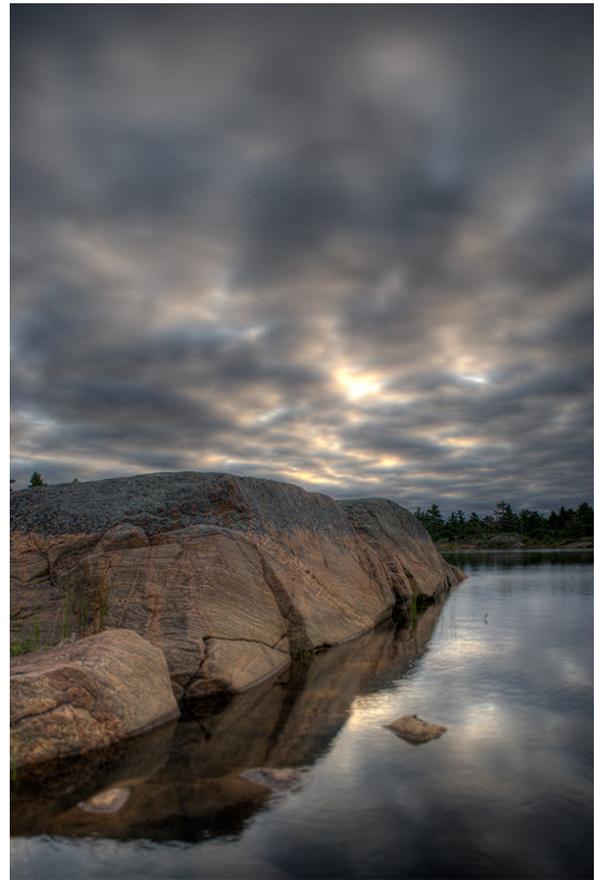
**Figure 4:** The 'a' channel carries the magenta-green color information.

Channels in LAB take on a quite different appearance than they do in RGB. In each of the R, G, & B channels, increased the amount of the respective primary color lightens the appearance of the channel. Thus a red ball is light in the red channel as is green grass. In the 'L' channel of LAB, color matters not at all, so the red ball and green grass may be the same shade of gray if their tonal values are equal, or they may be very different. The 'a' and 'b' channels (**Figure 4** & **Figure 5**) where all the color information is carried are unique. Neutral colors are middle gray; warmer colors are lighter-than-middle-gray, while cooler colors are darker-than-middle-gray. Thus in the 'a' channel, magentas are lighter and greens are



*Figure 5: The 'b' channel carries the yellow-blue color information.*

darker. And in the 'b' channel, yellows are lighter and blues are darker. All of this means it's pretty easy to pick out the 'a' and 'b' channels. And as we're going to see, this structure creates a number of interesting color correcting and image optimization opportunities.



*Figure 6: The image as the camera saw it.*

Here's a simple example of the utility and speed of LAB. **Figure 6** is an early morning image from Georgian Bay's eastern coast, a region of Precambrian granite, cold lakes and mixed forests. This image is a good example of what happens when a camera sees something monochromatic; it does nothing! Our eyes, on the other hand, break apart the colors in the rock and the sky and effectively 'see' a greater variety of colors than the camera. Working in LAB makes the process of 'correcting' this image a simple 30 second exercise.

The following is the recipe used. Try it out on one of your monochromatic images that failed to deliver the color your eyes saw.

1. If the image is not already in LAB, use the command 'Image: Mode> LAB Color' to get it there.
2. Add a Curves Adjustment Layer.
3. If necessary, <Alt> click in the grid to select the 10-segment grid. Also click the black/white arrows along the bottom of the grid so shadow is on the left, highlights on the right.
4. Select the 'a' channel (dropdown box at top of dialog), move the upper end of the curve (top, right) 2 squares to the left. Next, move the lower end of the curve (bottom, left) an equal amount to the right, i.e. make sure the center of the curve does not change location.
5. Without clicking OK, switch to the 'b' channel and make identical moves as in the previous step ... be sure to move the curves in the same amount.

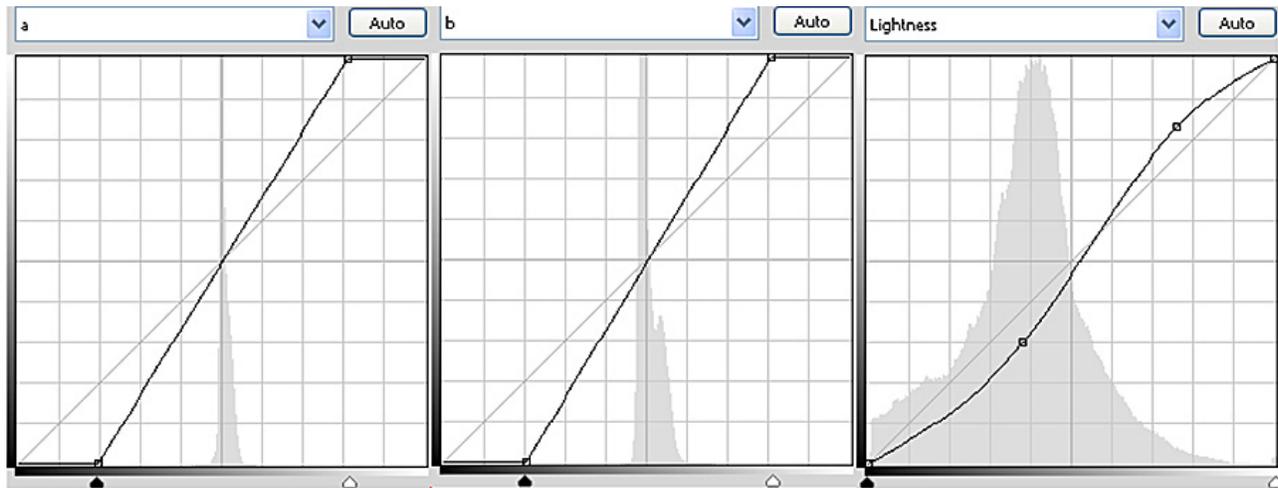


Figure 7 shows the LAB curves used: 'a' channel on left, 'b' channel in center and 'L' channel on right.

- Again without clicking OK, go to the 'Lightness' channel. Use the standard technique to increase the contrast of the primary subject of the image. (Move the cursor over what you think is the subject of the image while holding the left mouse button down. As you move the cursor over the image notice that a small circle is moving back and forth along the line in the curves dialog. This circle is showing you the relative lightness of each spot the cursor passes over. If you <Ctrl><click> a location on the image, a point is placed at the corresponding location on the curve. Place points on the curve just below the darkest and just above lightest extremes of the primary subject. Now make the curve steeper in this range, by moving the higher point upwards, and the lower point downwards, and then click OK.)

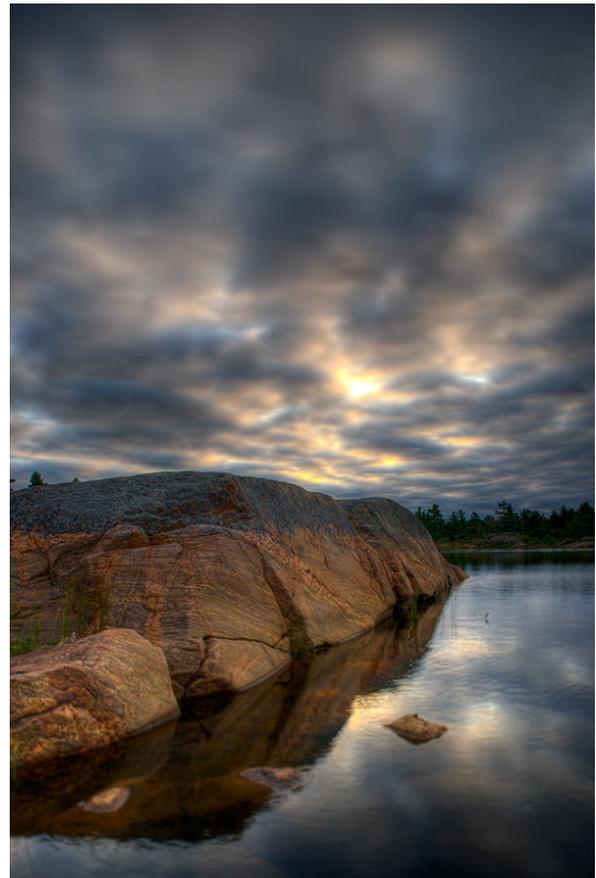


Figure 8: The image after the LAB Curves; much closer to what the photographer saw.

**Next month I'll explain more about how LAB works and show you some additional examples of where it can be both faster and more effective than working in RGB. In the meanwhile take a few minutes to experiment with LAB using the recipe included in this column.**