# *'Frame' your pictures through the viewfinder*

photography
**Monte Nagler**

Everyone will agree that a properly selected and assembled frame will add tremendously to the overall presentation of a piece of artwork, including a photograph.

Did you know there's another kind of frame you can apply in your photography, one that can add a great deal of impact to your pictures?

I'm referring to "framing" in your viewfinder as you compose your shot. As a compositional technique, framing can turn an other wise plain scene into a beautiful, harmonious one and can add important impact to your protograph.

**FAMILIAR** techniques of framing include looking through, under, around and over a foreground object that totally or partially frames a more important object behind.

For example, hanging branches will make a sky more interesting and give emphasis to the landscape or seascape behind. An overhanging roof adds accent to a street scene.

An archway directs attention to the subject inside, and a looming rock formation will give foundation to an overall scene. Even a portrait can be made more striking when a window is used as an impromptu frame.

Often times, framing effects are so natural that a viewer of a photograph isn't aware of their presence in a picture. Yet if framing were absent from the composition, it would be missed and the picture would lose impact.

It is up to you, the photographer, to use framing when apropriate in a way that will complement your photograph.

**THE SHAPE** of your frame can be important.

Rectangular frames such as windows and doorways will visually reinforce the main scene.

Circular or curved frames are more dynamic and will draw more attention to themselves as they encompass the subject of the scene.

Foreground objects such as rocks will add substance and act as a base to your shot. Look for unusual frames, too, such as a car door, an outstretched arm or a fence. Keep in mind that frames which contrast with the area they surround, either in color or tonal values are most exciting.

**BECAUSE** many "frames" you'll use will be close to your camera position, you'll need to pay particular attention to depth-of-field.

Many times, a small aperture (f/16 or f/22) will be needed to maximize depth-of-field so that foreground objects will be sharp in the final picture. Be sure to use your camera's depth-of-field preview button and read the depth-of-field scale on your lens in order to get the zone of sharpness your picture requires.

Switching to a wide-angle lens will increase depth-of-field even further and will help you to get foreground objects in the scene.

There may be times, however, when you want intentionally to blur the foreground to obtain a misty, romantic effect. Just adjust the depth-of-field accordingly.

Experiment with different camera angles, too, and you'll be surprised with the many objects that are available to use as frames. Really look through the viewfinder and compose carefully, giving thought to your final image. Your pictures will get framed and you'll get the payoff.



The tree silhouette "frames" the boys on the hill and adds a mysterious element to this picture. Monte Nagler captured this scene in Troy before a commercial development levelled the area.