

Make holiday photos come alive



Indoors and out, there are many photo opportunities at holiday time. Shown here is Monte Nagler's photo taken after a fresh snowfall.

Of all the times in the year to photograph family and friends, there's none better than the coming holidays. So try your hand at capturing the peace, joy, and good feelings of this season in your photographs.

Kids are such an important part of the holidays so let's begin with them. One important rule to remember is to move in close and get down on their level. Another is to frame (a telephone may work best). This adds impact to your shot and getting low makes the kids appear more natural.

Don't forget candid, too. In all the excitement of unwrapping their presents, the children won't even know you're there and you'll be able to capture those spontaneous expres-



photography
Monte Nagler

sions of joy and glee.

Try to avoid the stiff, posed look in group shots of the other family members. Rather than have everyone stand in a straight line, use the arm of a chair, the edge of a table or even the floor as informal places for your subjects.

Of course, don't forget to include yourself in some of the photos. A tri-

pod or even a tabletop will steady your camera and the self-timer will give you plenty of time to run around and position yourself in the picture.

Be sure to check your backgrounds for distracting objects and watch out for reflections from windows, mirrors and glass in pictures on the wall. Remember, backgrounds can make or break a photograph. Often, a slight shift in camera angle is all it takes to eliminate this problem.

Add variety and interest to your holiday pictures by photographing ornaments on the tree or details of an unusually wrapped gift. A star filter will make indoor and outdoor

Christmas lights appear exciting and dramatic.

What's new in photographic equipment you may want to give to that special person or hint to receive for yourself? Scott Riggs of Dunn's Camera at Twelve Oaks Mall of Northville says all-weather and underwater cameras are hot this year. Minolta's Weathermatic Dual 35 will give you rewarding pictures up to 15 feet underwater. Riggs praises Olympus's Infinity for its ability to perform worry-free near water, dust, and sand and Kodak's Explorer for its all-weather durability. He recommends Nikon's new Teletouch for its unique system that eliminates "red-eye" when using flash.

Surrounded by the holiday feeling

As I have mentioned before, my wife calls me a living contradiction: I own a store, but never shop. I write a column and only read occasionally. So for me to go out Christmas shopping is, at best, an experience and at worst, a traumatic event.

Oh, the places I've been and the things I've seen and the times I've been and seen them. I have never fought in a war, but I've battled for a parking spot at Meljers at 1:30 a.m. I have only once shot a gun, but next Christmas I'm mounding a gun turret to the top of my minivan just to clear a lane into Twelve Oaks parking lot. I've never traveled far but I've journeyed to Southland for some little toy that is "awesome" in my son's eyes.

Finally I have never been honored as a hero, but at 2:15 a.m. last Christmas Eve Sandy and I realized we had spent four batteries for one of Adam's toys. I, the green beret of after-hours shoppers, stood in line at Perry's drugs at 3 a.m. Yes, even at 3 a.m. there was a line of about 15 other heroes, most of whom were also buying batteries.

OF COURSE, this year has already offered me some wonderful moments. Sandy, my wife, loves to decorate. So for the holidays every



artifacts
David Messing

nook and cranny turns into a perfect place for another little Christmas "something or other." Then there is the 153rd viewing of animated Christmas specials that we all enjoy watching. We all sit and vocally or sub-vocally quote most of the lines from memory, but it's part of Christmas.

I love clocks that tick real loud. Sandy and I just bought a new clock for the family room. I hung it, wound it up, advanced the hands so we could all hear the neat chime, then everyone said "neat, wow, yah, good night Dad." It was one of those rare moments in a family of five... the TV was off. Everyone went to bed and I was about to make my rounds turning off Christmas lights and blowing out Christmas candles.

In the silence I could hear the woodstove sucking air, fueling its 600 degree fire. The heat causes the pine cones on the Christmas tree to pop. So laced in with the silence

were the sounds of the cold wind outside, the "too hot" fire inside, the pine cones popping and the new sound; the tick, tick... of our new clock. (Our Christmas present to each other).

Then there's the sights of Christmas and Oh! The smells of Christ-

mas. Sandy is just now making fudge in the kitchen and there is an army of little cookie Santas and snowmen, waiting for tollhouse eyes. Cookie trees and wreaths waiting for little red cinnamon to be pushed into their thick green icing. How could it get any better. I am blessed!

briefly speaking

- people dancing**
People Dancing will present a rich palette of new and repertory works at the Performance Network, 408 W. Washington, Ann Arbor, on Friday-Sunday, Jan. 12-14. Performances will take place at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sunday. To reserve tickets, call 663-0681 noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.
- matthaei tour**
Docents at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor, will offer tours of the conservatory to the public. Reservations are recommended although interested participants may sign up on the day of the tour. For reservations, call 998-7061. Admission is \$1.
Preceding that, however, will be a Sunday Trail Walk at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7. Participants are advised to dress for the weather, including warm boots.
- photographic exhibit**
Madonna College will present a creative photography exhibit in the gallery of the library wing Jan. 8-30, courtesy of Bruce Harkness. There is no admission charge. Madonna is located at 1-96 and Levan Road, Livonia.

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