

Chinese people loved his camera

Because of commitments to government officials and trip sponsors, I stuck close to the large cities during my recent trip to China.

And what better subject to photograph in the cities than the people. Never on any of my previous trips have I seen such an abundance of interesting people (1.1 billion in all of China) and never before have I seen people with such character in their faces.

The Chinese were very friendly and, in most cases, very willing to pose for me. However, their curiosity over my cameras sometimes prevented me from getting my shot. The Fujifilm 6-by-17 panoramic camera drew so much instant attention on the streets that within seconds after removing it from my camera bag crowds of onlookers blocked any chance of a shot. Even the simple

task of changing film drew crowds of curious people.

INITIALLY, WHEN my Chinese subjects held out their hands after being photographed, I thought they wanted to be paid. As I reached into my pocket for some yuan (Chinese currency), they shook their heads. They didn't want money — they wanted the photograph.

Many Chinese think that all cameras are the Polaroid variety. Well, through sign language, body gestures, and drawing of pictures, I let it be known I wasn't shooting instant film while promising to send a photograph to those who gave me an address.

At all times, I felt perfectly safe and comfortable walking the streets of China in search of photographic material. And at times I had the lux-



photography
Monte Nagler

ury of a taxi driver who could be hired for an all-day photo excursion for just a few dollars.

Here are some tips that worked well in China:

- When photographing people to show character, use a telephoto lens to get in close. A large aperture will blur out a distracting background and allow for a faster shutter speed.
- Sneak some candid shots, but if your subject knows you're there, ask permission to take a photograph.

Even with a language barrier, more often than not you'll get the okay to take the shot.

- Learn to change film quickly in a bus or on a busy street. After all, the next shot may be just around the corner.

- Get off the tourist path. Go to the out-of-the-way places, explore, be adventurous. Always be on the lookout for photographic opportunities.

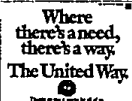
© 1990, Monte Nagler



Monte Nagler used a telephoto lens to move in close for impact. The use of a large aperture blurred an unwanted background.

Short shots

Monte Nagler's exhibit, "The Face of China: The People and The Land," will be at Somerset Mall of Troy May 10-20. There will be an opening reception with the photographer 7-9 p.m. Thursday, May 10 and 7-9 p.m. Friday, May 11.



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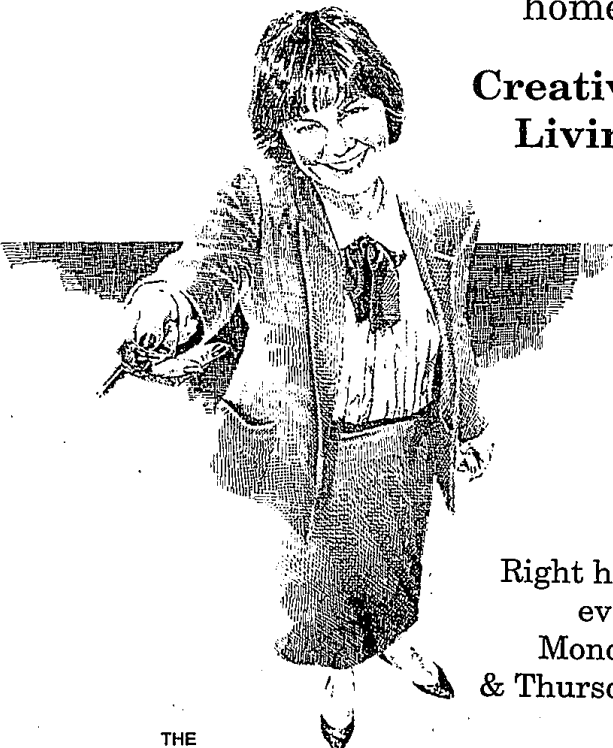
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