

Zoo from page E1

do," said Jackson. "Some people think reptiles don't have skeletons."

Walkin' through a Winter Wonderland

Back on the trail after a brief warm-up, the Adams were delighted by the 70 animals and tree trunks dressed to look like giant coral. Like Katie, Ron Kagan's fascinated by the animated scenes, especially the leaping frog and reindeer. Zoo director Kagan thinks that seeing thousands of lights shaped into animals is a great way to celebrate the holidays.

"Wild Lights" rejoices over the abundance of moose, monkeys, rhinoceros and even frogs but also offers "so much to do you'll go wild" at the fifth annual walk.

Seven flamingoes, a moose and jumping fish, are just a few of the animal sculptures on the 45-minute walk. Should you get cold there's hot cocoa in the warming tent and a zootique of mugs, t-shirts, stuffed animals, ornaments and toys offering hundreds of gift giving ideas for a friend or even yourself.

More than 70,000 visitors walked through the half mile light extravaganza in 1997. This year attendance is expected to

top that especially since Elmo is making a guest appearance on Saturday, Dec. 18. According to Kagan, the warmer weather and interest already has sent numbers soaring toward the 100,000 mark.

"Wild Lights is celebrating; it gives people the opportunity to celebrate with their family and friends," said Kagan. "This year, it's bigger and better. We've changed the choreography a little bit, changed the placement and sequence. We have more special activities: ice carving, storytelling and choirs. And we've opened the river otter and reptile buildings so people can see the otters swimming and the amphibians up close."

There's plenty now at the zoo besides the activities that go along with the lights. Unfortunately, visitors will have to come back during the day to see all of the baby animals born this spring, summer and fall. It's well worth the trip because the zoo is less crowded in the winter months and there's plenty of action from roaming polar bears to inquisitive red panda bears hanging around in trees.

"The zoo is at its best when its cold and snowy," said Kagan. "We're interested in continuing

the message about how intriguing the zoo is in the winter time. Different animals are more active. There are snow monkeys playing in the hot tub. Siberian tigers love to play in the snow. The polar bears and walrus are become animated in the winter time."

That was evident by the way Snowflake and her twins were walking around their rockcave. The three polar bears, mom and 22-year old daughters Nikki and Sissy, were reunited in November after being separated for years. They're still getting reacquainted with one another and haven't been introduced to Vilma and Icoo, the resident polar bears, yet.

"We've reunited them," said Kagan. "One of the daughters was adopted out long ago."

Panda exhibit

A red panda bear exhibit opened in mid December with two new faces. Officially an endangered species, the red panda bears with black legs, a white cat-like face and red raccoon tail were wandering around their old exhibit last week before moving into a new space similar to their native habitat in the Himalayan mountains.

"It's the first time we've ever had a red panda born at the zoo," said Kagan. "The new exhibit is 20 times larger with a lot of trees and tufted deer. It's a multi-species extravaganza."

Just one of a number of births this year, the panda join two Grey's zebras, also an endangered species, and a new kangaroo born in December. Native to the grasslands of Kenya and Tanzania, the zebras number only about 5,000 in the wild due to extensive hunting for their hides.

The Grey's gave birth on two different weekends in front of hundreds of visitors," said Kagan. "Whenever you visit the zoo, that's one of the unexpected events. You never know what will happen."

If you haven't met Hamma yet, stop by to say hi to the rescued black bear. According to Kagan, he's a likable bear especially for someone who's had a pitch fork stuck in his face. At the request of the California-based animal protection organization In Defense of Animals, the Detroit Zoo gave Hamma a home in late July after the bear spent most of his 20 years living in an Iowa backyard. The 600-pound bear, who appeared in two Hamms

beer commercials, was brutalized by intruders, once with a baseball bat and with the pitch fork that left facial injuries. The Detroit Zoo has rescued 30 bears, lions and monkeys over the past two years and is the only zoo in the country recognized by the Association of Sanctuaries as an approved rescue facility.

Coincidentally, the polar bear is one of the animals up for adoption at the zoo as part of the Detroit Zoological Society's "Wildlife Preserves" program. For \$30 (until Jan. 1), you'll receive a plush polar bear, arctic fox or Siberian tiger, an adoption certificate, color photo, fact sheet, and biannual newsletter with information about the zoo. Proceeds go towards the care of the animals, to renovate or build new exhibits, and provide ongoing education for zoo staff. Last year, nearly 1,700 people adopted animals.

In the works

Two big exhibits set to open over the next two years are the polar bears' Arctic Ring of Life and the National Amphibian Conservation Center. The Arctic Ring features an underground tunnel where bears will swim around visitors but the zoo can't

do it without the help of generous individuals and corporations. Instead of giving the same old tie or slippers this holiday season why not present your favorite someone with a Detroit Zoological Society membership (\$40, \$55 for a family of four). It allows families or individuals to enjoy the zoo all year long.

Or how about a paving stone to remember family occasions or a treasured friend? The zoo has created a special walkway of memories etched in brick pavers. Located near the Rackham Fountain, the pavers are available through Jan. 1 for \$95. Proceeds go to an endowment fund that will ensure the future of the zoo. For more information about adoption, membership or paving stones, call (248) 641-5717.

"There are a lot of people who grew up here and have incredible memories," said Kagan. "This is a permanent way to record them and it goes toward the endowment. We started the endowment a couple of years ago and we're trying to build on it. Having the endowment is going to help us long term."

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traditional holiday songs for their release. Most of the tunes were ones that the duo had played over the years.

"These were kind of the ones that went down the easiest. I wanted to include Christmas Brown's 'Merry Christmas Baby' because it was a different animal on Christmas; a bluesy Christmas," Landis explained.

"We tried to go really, really traditional with the 'Greensleeves,' which has been recorded by everybody and his brother and grandmother."

Not all the tracks for "Winter Wonderland" were recorded during the summer. "My Favorite Things" was laid to tape with violinist Evan Price at the Coffee Beanery in Rochester.

"It added a nice touch to have the violin. It's not a Christmas song but there's so many images that are Christmas, like stroul and doberle."

"Winter Wonderland," was released Nov. 20, is available at Borders Books and Music in Rochester Hills and Farmington

'We tried to go really, really traditional with the 'Greensleeves,' which has been recorded by everybody and his brother and grandmother.'

Sheila Landis
'Winter Wonderland'

Hills. Landis and Mattie will perform live from 6-8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, at the Coffee Beanery, 152 N. Woodward Ave., Birmingham. Call (248) 646-6022 for more information.

Holiday cheer

Holiday albums are music to record companies' ears. Sales of new holiday CDs from Babyface, "Christmas with Babyface," Celine Dion, "These Are Special Times," and Trans-Siberian Orchestra, "The Christmas Attie" are expected to be hot sellers. The Lovemongers, Ann and Nancy Wilson of Heart, "Here is Christmas," Etta James, "12 Songs of Christmas," Squirrel Nut Zippers, "Holidays

with the Squirrel Nut Zippers," Shawn Colvin, "Holiday Songs and Lullabies," and even Donny Osmond, "Christmas At Home," and Cyndi Lauper, "Merry Christmas ... Nice Life," have also gotten into the mix.

Teddy Pondergus has released his first Christmas album, "This Christmas (I'd Rather Have Love)" (Wind-Up Entertainment). What makes that special is "Happy Kwanzaa," a song which celebrates the African-American holiday just after Christmas.

Getting into the swing of things is John Joneith, who is offering "The Ultimate Lounge Christmas" (Essential).

A sleighful of compilation CDs are also available. "Natty and Nice: A Reggae Christmas" (Rhino Records) features a collection of reggae and ska music for the holidays.

Jermaine Dupri called in some of R&B's top performers

like K-Ci and JoJo of Jodeci, Chaka Khan, Voices of Soul and Brian McKnight for the "12 Soulful Nights of Christmas" (So So Def/Columbia). McKnight also has his own Christmas offering, "Bethlehem" (Motown).

"Ultimate Christmas" (Arista), from those who brought us the gem "Ultimate Dance Party," offers a selection of new and traditional holiday songs. Boyz II Men takes on "Silent Night," Luciano Pavarotti does "Cantique De Noel (Oh Holy Night)," and Judy Garland handles "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Customers at Street Corner Music at 13 Mile and Southfield roads in Beverly Hills seem to prefer the standards as well as older holiday releases.

"Both the Temptations albums - 'Give Love at Christmas' and 'Christmas Card' - those two are our strongest sellers. The New Hope for the Holidays is really a good one too," said Lynn Koretz, co-owner of Street Corner Music.

"The Kenny G. album is still a very popular one, so is the Luther Vandross album."

'N the spirit

What's popular among screaming prepubescent girls -

and even some women and boys is 'N Sync's "Home for the Holidays" (RCA). 'N Sync has toured non-stop since the release of its self-titled debut. So fitting in time to record a Christmas album was tough, according to 'N Sync's Lance Bass.

"We had a month to do it, in between all the promotional touring and all this. We kind of hang it out, two songs a day."

Bass explained that it was easy to pick the first song for "Home for the Holidays," but after that it was a challenge.

"The first song that we chose was 'Oh Holy Night.' We knew two years ago that if we ever did a Christmas album we were going to do 'Oh Holy Night.' Tons of people found out we were doing a Christmas album and they started writing songs for us."

'N Sync - which also includes Justin Timberlake, JC Chasez, Joey Fatone and Chris Kirkpatrick - narrowed it to 14 songs.

"We just listened through all the tapes and chose every one we wanted on the album. I like this album because most of it is original material. It's nice to hear new Christmas songs." Apparently 'N Sync's fans felt

the same. The group is one of the few acts who have had two albums in Billboard's Top Ten charts at once. "Home for Christmas," along with Dion, James Brown's "A Funky Christmas" and Newman, is among the top-sellers at Borders Books and Music in Birmingham.

To promote the record, 'N Sync has been doing a television blitz. It appeared on "Kathie Lee Christmas Everyday," "Regis and Kathie Lee Show," and "CBS This Morning," and is scheduled for ABC's "Walt Disney World's Very Merry Christmas" on Dec. 25. The first week of December, the video for "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays" debuted on MTV.

"It's very funny. Gary Coleman is an elf. You see him at the very beginning," explained Bass, who will return to The Palace of Auburn Hills on Thursday, March 25, with the rest of 'N Sync.

Recording a Christmas album is a dream come true for 'N Sync, who return to the studio in February to record its follow-up. The album is due out in late summer, early fall.

"We've always wanted to do a Christmas album since the day we formed the group. I never imagined it would be this early."

Songs

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Hugh Martin

8. "Silver Bells" by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans

9. "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne

10. "Little Drummer Boy" by Katherine K. Davis, Henry V. Onorati and Harry Simeone

11. "Jingle Bell Rock" by Joseph Carleton Beal and James Ross Boethie

12. "I'll Be Home for Christmas" by Walter Kent, Kim Cannon and Buck Ram

13. "Frosty the Snow Man" by Steve Nelson and Walter E. Rollins

14. "Blue Christmas" by Billy Hayes and Jay W. Johnson

15. "Carol of the Bells" by Peter J. Wilhousky and M. Leontovich

16. "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" by Meredith Willson

17. "Here Comes Santa Claus (Right Down Santa Claus Lane)" by Gene Autry and Oakley Haldeman

18. "(There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays" by Bob Allen and Al Stillman

19. "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" by Johnny Marks

20. "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" by Tommie Connor

21. "We Need a Little Christmas" by Jerry Herman

22. "The Christmas Waltz" by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne

23. "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)" by Ross Bagdasarian (David Seville)

24. "Feliz Navidad" by Jose Feliciano

25. "A Holly Jolly Christmas" by Johnny Marks

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