

Fire Bowl adds torch light glow to gatherings

Don't have a fireplace to gather around this holiday season? You can still add the warm glow of faux flames to your celebrations, thanks to the Fire Bowl, an innovative new product from American DJ that simulates the effect of an ancient torch.

You won't be able to roast chestnuts on this open fire, because the flames aren't real. But the dancing reddish orange and blue flames look authentic.

Although they look like the

real thing, the Fire Bowl's flames are an illusion created by high-tech lamps. This lightweight and portable product doesn't even give off heat.

The fire-like effect of the Fire Bowl is created by Halo-gon lamps and a fan positioned inside the curved bowl base.

Suggested retail price is \$119.95. The Fire Bowl is available only at authorized American DJ dealers. For a dealer near you, call the company at (800) 322-6837 or visit www.americandj.com.

You'll be rewarded with holiday photos

I like to write annually on probably the best time of the year for recording treasured family memories with your camera: the holidays. So here goes with this year's advice and recommendations.

Holidays and children go hand in hand, so let's begin with them. Remember to move in close to fill the frame and get down on their level.

Concentrate on candid as the youngsters play with their new toys. Your photos will appear natural because in all the excitement the children won't even know you're there.

But don't forget other family members. For group shots, have everyone sit or stand around informally rather than stiffly posed. Even try some candid as you did with the children.

Try including yourself in the picture by using the self-timer and placing the camera on a tripod or steady base.

As always, check your backgrounds for unwanted or distracting objects. And watch out for undesirable reflections from windows, mirrors or picture glass that may ruin a treasured shot. Most often, a slight adjustment in camera angle eliminates this problem.

Keep alert for other subjects that will add variety and interest to your holiday pictures. A

FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY



MONTE NAGLER

beautifully wrapped present, or a sparkling tree ornament will all reward you with a fine shot.

Take advantage of today's fast films. Using 1000 or 1600 speed films, try lighting some scenes only with candlelight. Your dinner table or a family member lit only by candles will produce that unforgettable romantic shot. An exposure of f/2 at 1/30 second is all that's needed.

Need a holiday gift? How about one of the Fuji or Kodak disposable panorama cameras? They're inexpensive and produce surprisingly good results.

A supply of film, a new camera bag or a beautiful photo-filled 2002 calendar will please any photographer.

Here's another unusual gift idea. "Borrow" Dad's old home movies — you know, the ones col-



Freeze frame: The holidays offer the perfect time to head outdoors to capture dramatic winter scenes on film. This snow-covered scene with a holiday "flavor" was shot by Monte Nagler in Northern Michigan.

lecting dust on the top shelf — and have them video transferred. Imagine his and everyone's delight when you pop them into the VCR for a memorable holiday treat.

And at holiday time, we're usually ankle deep in nature's blanket of winter snow. So bundle up both yourself and your camera to capture some exciting

winter scenes on film.

Happy holidays to all my readers and friends.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. His fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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GARDENING CALENDAR

■ The Days of Giving are being hosted by Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro, between Goodies and Plymouth roads in Ann Arbor, beginning with a blood drive conducted by the American Red Cross

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 28. Call the Gardens at (734) 998-7061 to schedule an appointment. Successful donors, and those who try to donate, may enjoy a complimentary visit to the Conservatory. Continuing

with the giving theme, and on behalf of Food Gatherers of Washtenaw County, each visitor donating to a food drive will be offered free admission to the Conservatory. Food collection dates are Friday-Sunday, Dec. 28-30. Suggested acceptable and needed articles include commercially labeled and packaged canned food, dried goods, miscellaneous items and personal care items. Call (734) 998-7061 for information.

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