

# Take home winning summer vacation shots

## FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY



MONTE NAGLER

Warm weather is here. Summer is just around the corner. Now is the time most of us begin planning our vacation. Those plans should include some consideration of your photography needs.

Here are some tips that will help you bring home winning shots.

■ Make sure you're thoroughly familiar with all the features and controls on your camera. Reread the instructional manual. Practice with a roll of film before you leave and become an expert at changing lenses and film quickly.

■ And speaking about film, take enough to get you through the trip, usually a roll per day. Decide in advance if you want slide or print film and select a medium speed that will enable you to cope with a variety of lighting situations. But also take along a few rolls of fast film for those low light shots you're bound to encounter. Important: If traveling by air, either request a visual inspection of your film at security stations or use a lead-lined film pouch.

■ Travel light, but don't leave an important piece of equipment at home. In addition to your camera and normal lens, a wide angle and moderate telephoto will cover most picture taking situations. You'll find zoom lenses very useful on a trip, too. A small flash unit and collapsible

tripod will come in handy and a polarizer filter will add important impact to your scenic shots.

■ Do some planning before you leave. If going abroad, study the people, locales and customs. If staying in the USA, read up on the national parks or other points of interest you'll be visiting to get some photographic ideas.

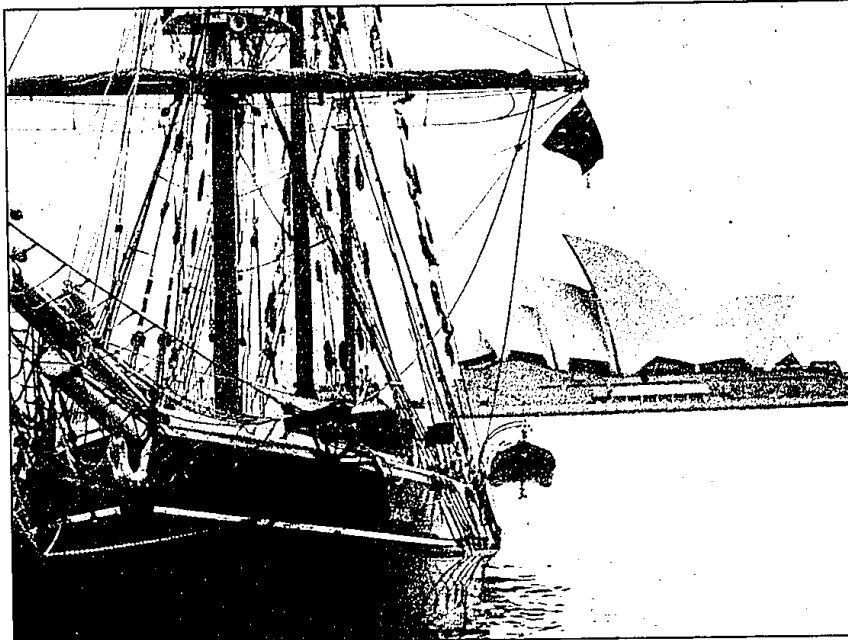
■ Include people in some of your shots. People at work or play are an integral part of any environment especially when engaged in traditional crafts and events.

■ Go beyond staged events. Real people and real places are far better subjects than staged events for the tourist's benefit.

■ Don't pass up pictures on the way. Many good photographic opportunities are missed by ignoring interesting things en route because it's felt better pictures are waiting at the final destination. Taking pictures along the way also helps to make your trip coverage complete.

Most importantly, become involved in your travel photography. Immerse yourself in the places you visit. Try to bring home the essence of your vacation by getting off the "tourist path" and always keeping your traveler's vision in high gear.

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.



Vacation snapshot: No trip to Australia would be complete without a picture of the Sydney Opera House. By placing the old ship in the foreground, an unusual photograph was obtained.

## Leithauser's 'A Few Corrections' has staying power

**A Few Corrections**, by Brad Leithauser (Vintage Contemporaries - published by Vintage Contemporaries, \$13).



VICTORIA DIAZ

thought and brings it to skillful fruition.

The story's principal narrator, Luke Planter, has recently quit his job with a New York investment firm because he finds him-

self driven to find out "the truth" about his recently deceased father, Wesley Sultan, a man he hardly knew during his lifetime. Perhaps he will write a book about this in the end. Perhaps not. All he knows is that he has to dig.

"Our story begins on April Fools' Day," Luke tells us at the beginning of his quest. "This would be a balmy spring morning in 1952, the robins and blue jays racketing in those... wine-glass-shaped elms that reigned back then over the streets of Stags Harbor, Michigan...."

In order to "find" his father, the 38-year-old Luke decides first to talk with those who were closest to Wes during his lifetime. This would include Luke's mother, Sally, who married the handsome but philandering Wes when she was only 19. It would

also include Wes' brother and lifelong competitor, Conrad (once as "beautiful" as Wes, but now appallingly altered by age and disease), and Wes' flirtatious and pretty last wife, Tiffany.

Through his dialogue with these characters, and through his second-hand knowledge of others in Wes' life, Luke will gradually discover how little his father's obituary really reveals about the man - and also how misleading it is in regard to his father's true character.

But, in uncovering the layers of Wes Sultan's life, Luke comes to know much more about his mother, his uncle, and others in his father's life. And, ultimately, he comes to discover essential parts of himself -

including one greatly significant surprise.

### Strong qualities

*A Few Corrections* has so much going for it that it's rather difficult to pin down its strongest qualities.

Leithauser (a critically-lauded poet before he was a novelist) possesses a way with words which definitely renders this work of fiction more engaging than it might be otherwise.

Through the power of his prose, he can, in relatively few words, not only paint a scene, but establish mood and suggest theme as well ("a silver aircraft, traveling south, trails a silken line. It's but one strand of a projected web - a strand destined to dissolve, probably, before being linked to

another.")

In addition, the inhabitants of this drama - even the minor players - are so carefully and uniquely rendered that they are difficult to get away from, even after the story has ended. This haunting quality

applies just as well to Wes' forebears as it does to his living survivors.

Leithauser's highly varied backdrops are nearly as arresting and engaging as his characters. We can practically feel the light and air around the Burgundian hillsides here, shiver at the sleety Grosse Pointe street scene, smell the musty Cistercian monastery, hear the youngsters playing in the American

backyard, taste the beer inside the rundown Miami bar.

Perhaps it is the author's insights and perceptions about life itself that ultimately make *A Few Corrections* the really worthwhile read that it is, though - that really lend this book its truly remarkable "staying power." If you've not read Leithauser's work before, allow me to make a suggestion. Start here.

And now.

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia resident and writes about books, movies, and travel for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.



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