

Always Looking for a Story



Photographer, D. Brent Miller

Writer and photographer D. Brent Miller is funny. Not funny-peculiar or funny “ha-ha.” He’s funny “a-ha.” He shoots the types of photos that you just get. Photos that make you want to know more about the story. Photos that pull you in and make you smile, and sometimes laugh. In meeting the photographer for the South Bend Silver Hawks – for the past four seasons – I expected to find a sports photographer. What I met was a storyteller, both with words and pictures.

Interested in photography since the age of 13, Miller chose it as a profession, making the full-time leap four years ago. But he wasn’t sitting idle during the time between his teen years and the present. Two master’s degrees, a career in teaching photography, photojournalism and documentary photography, and many projects focusing on rural issues – later, Miller and his wife, Lin, landed in Granger, where he now shows off his skills photographing minor league baseball.

His photos will be featured in an upcoming exhibit at Downtown South Bend Inc. “South Bend Silver Hawks: A Photographic Exhibition” takes a look at the heart of minor league baseball, from a photo of a young boy following literally in the footsteps of the professional player, to a fine art presentation of batting helmets – a photo taken quickly (Miller was on his way to the field for the National Anthem) on his first day as the Silver Hawks’ photographer. That particular photo exemplifies “the eye” that Miller brings to photography. His photograph of Silver Hawks player Mike Goss and Silver Hawks’ mascot, Swoop, meshes his quick eye with his sense of humor. There’s nothing like a grown man dancing with a big bird. A photo of the Eastern Division Celebration in the locker room makes you want to buy a season ticket; it captures the payoff of victory.

Miller, whose work can be seen on the team’s baseball cards, enjoys baseball – minor league in particular. “I love minor league. I’ve been to some Cub games and it gets kind of expensive going to the majors. But it’s a different dynamic at a minor league baseball game. It’s the atmosphere, the crowd, the approachability of the players ... it’s the closeness and the proximity, the intimacy of the players and the fans and the stadium itself,” commented Miller.

While the exhibit features digital images, Miller doesn’t limit himself to baseball or digital photography. Working in film, his black and white photo-

(continued ...)



graphs capture many rural and small town folks, objects and landscapes today as we might have remembered them yesterday. His documentary projects include "Fairs & Festivals," as well as "Last Days of the Oliver Chilled Plow Works." He also has a motorcycle travel piece recently published in "Road Runner" magazine.

Miller doesn't limit his sense of humor either. He has a photo of a civil war reenactment, complete with a battling soldier using a Chrysler as a rock for cover. Another photo shows a sign for "Bob's Lemonade" strategically, albeit not intentionally, placed over a row of port-o-potties. Now that's funny.

Whether he's photographing plows or fields or fairs or batting helmets, Miller is always looking for the story. He pauses to show me a photograph of a motioning umpire, a player sliding into a base and the player covering the base, explaining that: "Baseball is one thing. Yes, it's sports photography but I bring a different eye to it. I'm looking for an image that tells a story ...

"The umpire is calling him safe. It's not about Alberto Gonzalez going across the base or this guy missing the tag. It's [the] umpire calling him safe ... to me that tells a story."

South Bend Silver Hawks: A Photographic Exhibition

Where: Downtown South Bend Inc., 217 S. Michigan St., South Bend, at the Exhibition Space and in the Board Room Gallery Space

When: June 5th through August 31st

Opening Reception: June 14th • 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Cost: Free

Why you should go to the reception: It's a great chance to meet a professional who will take time to talk about all things camera.

What you'll see: 30+ photographs featuring the South Bend Silver Hawks



What you should look for:
Batting Helmets

Why: D. Brent Miller uses it as an example of picking a great shot: "You see it, you recognize it, you use your skill set to capture it the way you see it. And you know you've got something."

Look for this too: *Eastern Division Celebration - 2005*

Why:
Because you'll feel like a winner rooting for the Silver Hawks!

