

Sharing the Moment with Photojournalist Wayne F. Miller

By Laurie Snyder

Many photographers, even amateurs, freeze important moments in time – family birthdays, fun with friends. The incomparable few – like Matthew Brady or Dorothea Lange – enable viewers to truly appreciate time, place, and culture.

Wayne F. Miller is one of those. Following his time as a photographer with the U.S. Navy, he turned his attention to the children of Orinda. Miller

and his wife, Joan, arrived here in 1949. "It was a growing community which had its roots still in the existing culture," Miller reflected recently in a conversation at his Orinda home. Writing about the unincorporated community in his 1958 book, *The World Is Young*, he said: "It is a new community without tradition, grandmothers, and until this year, enough children to make up a senior class in high school."

Published when Miller was

40, the book chronicles the lives of the Millers and their children and the youngsters of Glorietta Elementary School from 1955 to 1958.

"A perceptive man once said that 'to look at the world through the eyes of another would be true knowledge.' This is what I have attempted here. For three years, I have tried to look with children rather than at them, and to see through their eyes," he wrote. "Perhaps it shows that others

often think and feel as we do, that the need to love and be loved is in everyone, that each of us would rather succeed than fail, would rather know than not know."

Preschoolers yearn to join in as elder siblings head to school, moms and little ones struggle with their goodbyes, and friends are made – and lost. Children giggle and laugh with heads back at the Orinda Theatre, growing girls sleep over, boys huddle,

tweens dance – in what Miller calls "sharing the moment."

"Before my eyes were fabrics being woven and courses charted that would be with these children to their dying day," he wrote. "Failure, frustration, and defeat, success, pleasure, and triumph were being carved into their natures."

Miller, in describing his book's viewpoint, wrote that "all pictures were taken from the subject's eye level, so that the people and the things around them would be seen in a proper context. There were few 'little' children in the book. They are all full size, life size, their size. The best proof I had that this was the right approach came on the playground one day during a May-pole program. I was on one knee making photographs when a preschooler came over, threw his arms about me and kissed my cheek. Being on the same level, I decided, creates understanding."

Many of Miller's photographs are available through the U.S. National Archives; others may be enjoyed through his publications available at the Orinda Historical Society and the Orinda Library. His photos may also be purchased through Magnum Photos, the gallery which represents him: www.magnumphotos.com.



"Stiffer homework, more demanding classroom work, maturing bodies, and new boy-girl awareness," wrote Miller. "The sixth grade children I photographed were considered an exceptional group. They worked well together." Copyright, Wayne F. Miller, 1958. Used with permission.



(Photo above) Preschooler, Peter Miller (Wayne and Joan Miller's youngest child), longs to join his siblings at school. (Photo on right) Peter, the kindergartner, radiates joy the next year as he gets his wish.

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DEAR JAVIER,

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Questions with home care?

Advice for elderly on managing medications safely...

Ask Vanessa

DEAR VANESSA,

I have recently fallen into poorer health than I am used to and have been prescribed many different medications by my doctor. What are some tips for proper ways to safely manage my medications at home? I am still very capable to do this myself and was hoping to get advice to make sure I am organized and safe in doing so. Thank you for any help or advice you can offer. JAVIER

Managing medications is about safety. When you take a lot of different medications, errors can easily happen; this can range from missing a dose to overdosing. To reduce or avoid potentially fatal errors, you need to get organized and make sure your medical team and pharmacist know about all of the prescription drugs you're taking. Be sure to include over-the-counter medicines, supplements and herbal preparations, too. Become your own self-advocate for care, and know what questions to ask your pharmacist and physicians about your medications. Don't be afraid to ask any questions. Dr. James Wooten, a proponent of patient education, said, "Asking questions is one of the most important ways to manage treatment. Information is power and you're more likely to use something correctly if you know why you're using it."

Know the risks (side effects and unexpected interactions) and learn how to prevent or lessen them. To help prevent drug dependence, ask your health care provider if any of your medications are habit-forming and ask how much of each medication you can take without becoming addicted. If possible, always use the same pharmacy. With a complete record of all your prescriptions on hand, the pharmacist can catch dangerous drug interactions. Call your health care provider immediately if you experience any unpleasant reactions to a medication.

Here are a few reminder techniques: use a daily pill box; create a dosing schedule chart; and use a pill reminder gadget. By packing a day or a week's worth of medication you will know if you took your medication or not. You may want to have someone double-check your pill box to make sure it is packed correctly. For people who rely on calendars to keep their schedule or who respond well to visual cues, incorporating prescription medication times into a chart or calendar can serve as a reminder. There are several electronic pill reminders on the market of varying prices. You can input the name of the medication, how often you need to take it, and if you need to take it with food. An alarm will sound, much like an alarm clock or cell phone ringer, alerting you to what medication needs to be taken and how much.

When instructions say "take with water", drink 8 oz. of water--not just enough to get the medication down. Always use a standard measuring spoon to be sure you're getting the exact amount. If you have trouble swallowing pills, ask if the medication is available in liquid form; check with your pharmacist before crushing or chewing any drug. Don't take medications unless you understand instructions for using them safely. Don't take medications in the dark to avoid taking the wrong medication. Don't transfer medications to other containers. Don't take someone else's medication or give yours to another person. And don't stop taking medications or change dosage on your own. Avoid mixing medications with certain foods as stated on the prescription label or as advised by your pharmacist. Unless your health care provider says it's okay to mix medications with alcohol, don't! Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs, when mixed with alcohol, cause side effects that may range from drowsiness to liver damage, coma or even death. Read drug labels carefully and ask your pharmacist or health care provider if any of your medications may react with alcohol. Know the dangers and protect yourself. Always keep medications out of reach of children and pets. Do not store medications in your car's glove compartment, bathrooms, gym lockers, and above the stove. Temperature changes and humidity can cause medication to become ineffective or dangerous. Store them in a cool, dry place or as directed. Remove cotton from bottles, too. It can draw in moisture. Throw away old medications. When you travel, always put your medications in your carry-on luggage so you will have them handy. If you might run out, get refills early. Sorting out your medications may seem difficult and can be overwhelming, but a little planning and organization can ensure you take the right medications at the right times. Consult with your health care provider regularly to see whether there are any medications you can cut back on or stop taking. Ask if a generic drug is right for you. Generic drugs are chemically the same as the brand name but they cost less. Update your list when any medications are added or discontinued. Remember to post phone numbers of your emergency medical service, hospital, pharmacy and health care provider in a visible location. Health care is a team effort and you are the most important person on the team. Medications, if managed properly, can do wonders. VANESSA