

# Photographers' group provides interaction

Professional Photographers of Omaha president Steve Miller believes professional organizations are necessary to provide continuing education, colleague interaction and a standard of ethics for members.

Professional Photographers of Omaha and its state and national parent organizations offer members opportunities to compare notes, techniques and new developments, he said.

The national association offers advanced "degrees" through education and tests leading to the designation of certified professional photographer.

A member of the organization since 1974, Miller joined as a hobbyist who had decided to make his equipment investment pay off. He said he consulted "everybody in the field" for criticism of his photos.

Feeling the need for further professional involvement, Miller joined the state association (PPNe) in 1975 and the national association after that.

Each association encourages members to exhibit work for evaluation. In a recent exhibit at the state level, Miller was awarded several ribbons for his work, accompanied by suggestions for improvement. "That is how we strive for perfection," he said.

Working his way through the ranks to become president, Miller said he followed area photographer Roscoe Dupree through each step from treasurer on up, working closely with his colleague in publishing a newsletter for the 60-member organization and setting up monthly dinner meetings with speakers.

One advantage offered members, said Miller, is the cooperative Yellow Pages listing by area under Professional Photographers of Omaha.

A specialist in bridal and wedding photography, Miller emphasized the point of hiring a professional for "keepsake occasions."

"This is not the time for an uncle to take snapshots," said the Plattsmouth High School graduate. There may be unusual lighting situations "and besides, they'll want the uncle in some of the pictures, too."

Miller, who said he has had to learn video taping techniques to complement the use of stills, cautions against having a video tape as the only pictorial record of an occasion. He said faulty VCR machinery can ruin tapes, and the quality of single images produced by tape is not as clear as still photography.

Another problem consumers have difficulty understanding about videotape is that it does not work well in low-light situations, Miller said. He tells his clients he cannot guarantee good videotape results in a dimly-lit reception hall or church.

"Lighting presents the biggest single obstacle to good photography," said Miller. Most amateurs are unaware of the effects of certain lights, for example tungsten, on certain films, he said, and shadows and glare are other problems sometimes overlooked. Some automatic cameras take a light reading for the immediate vicinity of the camera, he said, but don't take into account the light surrounding the subject.

Miller said many brides are spending more time with preset group photos of the wedding party and are becoming increasingly more attentive to details. He sees the special-effect double and triple exposures as "contrived," preferring to stay with more natural and candid shots.

Miller, who will become PPO president at the Sept. 8

meeting of the group at Kenny's Restaurant, gave two items of advice to potential professional photographers.

The first, and most important, he said, is to find a professional photographer whose subject matter and technique he would like to master. Then "do anything you can to work in his studio to get near it." He suggested being a "weekend golfer" for the working professional, because professionals can generally use a second set of hands.

The second thing to do on the way to professionalism in photography is to attend professional photography schools beyond Metro, which is fine for basics, he said. Many area professionals have attended the Mid-America Institute of Professional Photographers and Winona in Illinois, both of which have



**Professional Photographers of Omaha president Miller on the other side of the camera . . . advises new photographers to "find a professional who does the kind of work you want to do and follow him around."**

classes conducted by other professional photographers, Miller said.

Another dimension of his profession was recently opened up to Miller as part of the continuing educational experience offered by the state organization. Miller and several colleagues put together a slide show for the summer session of the PPNe. They edited 500 pictures to 300 images utilizing four projectors, scripted and accompanied by music to tell a 10-minute story of Omaha to other Nebraskans.