

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

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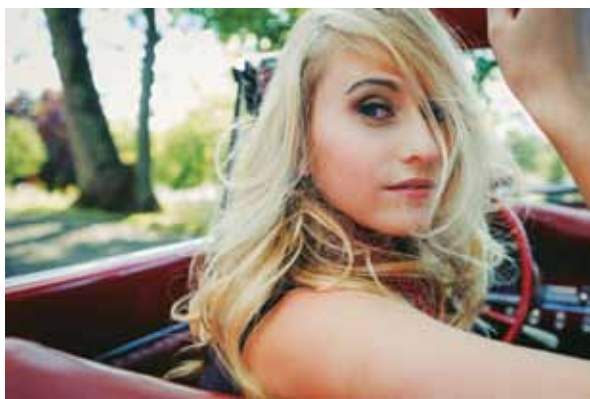
**Mikell Nielsen**

Since she was a young girl accompanying her grandfather in his darkroom, Mikell Louise

Nielsen of Williams has been interested in photography. She was fascinated watching him develop his own images and casually began taking photos of her own in elementary school, continuing into her mid-30s. Always self-taught, she was hooked after taking a photography workshop about how to shoot in manual mode (adjusting the settings of each shot for varying light). "My love for people and photography fueled me," she says.

Acrylic painting catches her passion as well, but she prefers the creative tempo of photographing, which goes from image to idea almost instantly. Photography, as she sees it, is like painting with light, emotions, colors and shadows.

She loves shooting portraits most of all, including senior photos,



maternity shoots, or, her specialty, boudoir (classy/flattering portraits of women in intimate settings). She also does wedding and engagement sessions.

"My boudoir style is simple, tasteful and sensual more than in-your-face sexy," she says about the many photos of women on her website. When I told her that another photographer once told me that women may be more at ease when photographed by other women, she said, "As a woman myself, I am sensitive to the insecurities women have about their bodies. I see and appreciate the beauty that all women possess no matter what size or shape they are. And really, beauty radiates from the inside out."

Whether boudoir photos go to boyfriends, husbands, or partners, ultimately it's about women celebrating themselves.

Mikell's website provides an overview of her professionalism and personality. Photographic collections for women come with professional hair and make-up as well as styling assistance. Not sure what you want? She is happy to provide advice or her own interpretation and personal style. You can then access your photos on an online gallery from which you can download and print them yourself, or order them directly from her.

"Photography helps people to see," a quote by Berenice Abbott (an American photographer), is a favorite of Mikell's. In her case, photography helps her subjects to see themselves. "I found that, as I worked more and more with people, their emotional reactions to their images meant I was actually helping *them* to see... That's a pretty powerful and amazing experience to share with someone. When they look at their images and they cry or laugh—what a gift to both of us."

**David Gibb**

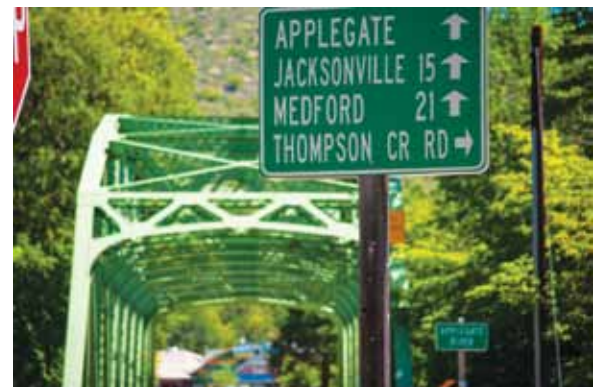
David Gibb, who has been an active photographer for over 30 years, lives and works in Jacksonville. His love for photography began as a hobby at age 10 or 11 with an Argus C-3, a film camera handed down from his father. From there his interest and desire to learn took off, and he began taking classes and workshops. Born in the visual arts hub of Rochester, New York, he lived there until the age of 19. Rochester is the location of Kodak headquarters (George Eastman House), Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb (known for specializing in lenses).

Many of his various jobs have been photo-related. He used to work as a process camera operator for Allan Cartography, a map-making company. Currently, his niche is primarily commercial, business and portraits, but he also does an array of other photography assignments; he likes it all! Since he began his photography career, he has worked with clients such as Harry and David, Gallup, SAIF, Henry Calvin Fabrics, Beulah Fly Rods, Rogue Design Group, Jackson and Perkins, Gary West Meats and Eastman Kodak (when they were in White City). Basic aspects of professionalism, including lighting and consistency, are what set his business apart.

David has lived in the Rogue Valley for over 24 years, having moved here from Santa Cruz, California. Jacksonville seemed like a great place to raise his son. His wife, Ronit, helps manage contacts and assists in the office, coordinating appointments. His son, who is 25, now lives in Asia. David's studio is open by appointment only and

is located on California Street, upstairs in the Kubli building.

The way photography blends science and art is a source of inspiration for David. It's both technological and creative, he feels, in the same way that music is. He likes trying out new gear. However, he points out that "it's more about the elements of photography and how one interacts with their subject, and less about the equipment. It's a people business. You want to put people at ease, make them laugh and bring about that genuine smile." To David, it's also about being professional, consistent, on time and on budget.



For more information on these local photographers

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**Jennifer Butler**

Ever since age seven when she was at Girl Scout camp, Jennifer has been teaching herself photography. She was involved with

the yearbook crew throughout junior high and high school. Originally from Southern California, Jennifer Butler has lived in southern Oregon since 1995. After working in the legal field in Los Angeles, she relocated to Williams and began a career in the dental field. Four and a half years ago, she launched her photography business full time.

She believes that the love of art runs in the family. She discovered her half-sister, who is 23 years younger, on Facebook and learned that they share a passion for photography. Her father was an artist, with sculptures in the Los Angeles Museum, and her brother has taken to the art of cooking.

Jennifer realized her "calling" while at a photo convention, Imaging USA 2011. There she discovered the national Special Kids Photography of America (SKPA), and met owner and founder Karen Dorman, whose granddaughter has special needs. Karen established a nonprofit training and certification group, under which Jennifer studied and received certification.

Children with physical and mental

considerations such as cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, autism, or epilepsy, she explains, are often challenging to photograph due to their sensitivity to light or other sensory issues. She is sad to think that some photographers even refuse to work with such children. Jennifer is certified with the state to care for the unique conditions of these individuals, who deserve to get portraits done like everyone else.

Jennifer is very active in the community. She volunteered for and was on the board of the Southern Oregon Little League Challengers (a baseball league enabling the mentally/physically challenged) for two years. She currently works with the nonprofit organization Southern Oregon Aspire, where she teaches photography to adults with disabilities. She has also been involved with HOPE Equestrian Center, a horseback-riding therapy center in Eagle Point. She is eligible to use funds from Smiles for Katie, a program through SKPA, which provides grants for qualified children—those with special needs, who are disabled, or who are seriously ill—to have their photos taken. In addition, she has been involved with the Down's Syndrome Association of Southern Oregon and Our Foster Kids in Josephine County.

Without children of her own, I asked Jennifer where her passion comes from. "I just love them," she says. "In school, it bothered me that [special needs children] went somewhere else, were isolated from the group." She also simply loves kids, but was unable to conceive due to a medical misdiagnosis and unnecessary surgery at an earlier age. However, with a family member who has special needs, she has an inclination to be protective of such individuals. Possessing patience, compassion and kindness, Jennifer has a gift for this work.

"It's also very rewarding and fun," she says. "They appear different, but in reality are not as different as we think. Adults can learn so much from them." Her goal, as stated on her blog (accessible from her website), is not to change her subjects, but for her subjects



to change her. And this takes place every time she captures the true joy and beauty of someone's child. For her, photography is all about others. She is doing what she loves and loves what she is doing.

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