

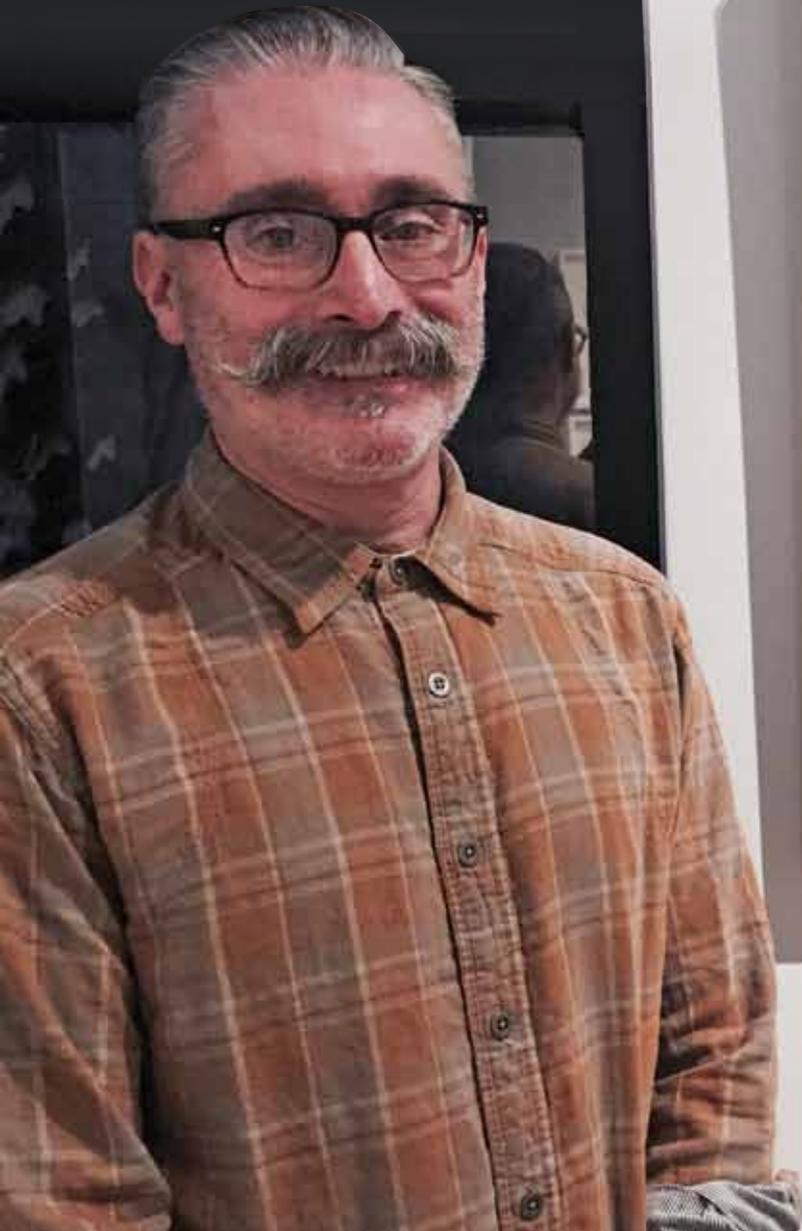
SILENTLY BENEFICIAL

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SPICE IT UP

Latin-inspired Riobamba adds flavor to Glenview, Page 31



A picture into farming past

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Greg Britton's black and white photographs are on display in Historic Wagner Farm's community room. PHOTO SUBMITTED

Frozen in time

Resident's photos preserve changing rural landscape

SARAH HAIDER
Assistant Editor

Wagner Farm is preserving the past in more ways than one with its new photography exhibit. The farm has decided to add art from local residents to its spacious community room. The first display features photographs of farms from Glenview resident and photographer Greg Britton. The black-and-white film photographs feature barns, silos, tractors, fields and animals taken from all across the United States over the past 15 years.

Britton, who grew up in rural Henry, Ill., bought his first camera in 1978. Although he doesn't remember having a strong passion for photography at the time, the purchase led him to a lifelong venture. He began teaching himself the ins and outs while picking up lessons about dark rooms from his stepfather. Eventually, he enrolled in classes at Oakton.

"When I started getting into photography, I was fascinated by the idea that you could take a slice of reality and just kind of stop it right there and then preserve it for however long," Britton said.

In this recent project, Britton's photos focus on the quickly disappearing agricultural climate, and many depict farms that aren't still in existence.

"Photographing some of these things, especially things that are no longer there, there is a memory



Glenview resident Greg Britton's black and white photographs of rural areas across the United States are on display in Historic Wagner Farm's community room.
PHOTO SUBMITTED

and there is a remembrance of the past," Britton said. "If a photograph is really good, I can look at an image and remember the day and remember what was going on, so I think if my photographs trigger some sort of memory in people, that is a nice thing."

The exhibit found a home at Wagner Farm after a conversation between Britton and Farm Director Todd Price.

The two met when Britton brought his photography class, which he teaches, to the farm for a photo shoot.

"I think it's a real treasure to have [Wagner Farm] in the community [so people can] get a visual of how a small farm works from that era," Britton said. "It's an important part of the community. It's so much nicer than having more homes or a condo building on that property. I think it's a nice draw for other communities and the whole area."

The farm, uniquely preserved in the northern suburb, was the last to exist in Glenview. According to Price, the Wagners weren't unique in the area, but the

farm was the last piece of history that depicted a time come and gone.

Today, it's used to educate the community and serve as a visual representation of the hard work that goes into taking food from ground to store — a process most suburbanites have become distanced from.

The photos bring a contemporary look to the educational purpose, showing the shift of agriculture in the past year as technology has crept into the field. Although the times are changing, the photos and the farm are working together to maintain the important values from the old farm ways.

"A picture says a thousand words, and when you look at the images it [gives] a nod to that vision and a space between," Price said. "Many of us aren't involved with agriculture anymore. It is a peek back in time that a lot of us aren't familiar with. The mission we have here is to talk about agriculture, not just historical, but contemporary agriculture, and [the photos are] kind of a window into that world."