



646 S. Lake Street
Gary, IN 46403
(219) 938-1188
www.MillerBeach.com



INSIDE: 100 YEARS IN THE MAKING!

NAME "THIS OLD HOUSE" ...



This is picture from many years ago of a home in Miller. The first person to call the office 9am - 5pm. Mon.-Fri. and give the correct address will win a \$50.00 gift certificate to their choice of Miller Pizza Station, Beach Café, 18th Street Brewery, D & K Gourmet Salads, Flamingo, or Tequila & Tacos.

Sorry, the present owner and family cannot win. You'll have a chance next newsletter.

... AND WIN \$50.00

To sign up to receive our newsletter electronically email us at info@millerbeach.com.

You can also view our newsletter online at www.MillerBeach.com

**Celebrating
100 Years
1922 - 2022**



**WINTER
2022**

100 YEARS, WHERE HAS THE TIME GONE???
GENE KNOWS WHERE, AT LEAST HALF OF IT!

It has been fun and interesting preparing for the 100th Anniversary of Ayers Realtors. When a business has been in the same building from 4 years after its founding in 1922 there are many artifacts to sort through. Some examples are the original blueprints for the building, a 1929 Gary City Directory, a 1939 Lake County Plat book, a 1959 newspaper clipping with a short bio of my father mentioning his children including my 12-year-old self. How did these items and so much more come to reside at 646 S. Lake St.?



The first Ayers in real estate was N. Guy Ayers. Great Uncle Guy was born on a farm near Peoria, Illinois in 1888. As a young man, Guy tried mining in Colorado before coming to the rapidly growing steel mill town of Gary, Indiana. A newspaper ad from 1921 advertises property for sale through a real estate firm N. Guy Ayers owned with a partner and was located at 6th and Broadway. Guy struck out on his own in 1922.

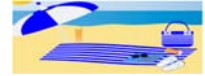
In 1926 Guy built the building at 646 S. Lake Street that we occupy today. Although his precise motivation for locating his business in Miller is unknown, a probable reason was his position as head cashier of Miller State Bank which opened in 1924 and his wife Grace's position as teller helped him decide Miller was where he wanted to locate his business. It is easy to speculate Miller's annexation into Gary at about that time made the area ripe for growth. The 1929 stock market crash and ensuing depression were tough times for Uncle Guy, but he survived. In fact, when the Miller State Bank failed, he bought their 7-foot-high, double door safe and it is still in use at our office today. Folks who remember Guy say he was a bit flamboyant. He was an entrepreneur who had a small loan business, insurance brokerage, managed seasonal rentals and of course, sold more real estate in Miller than anyone else.

In 1946, with World War II ended, Guy sensed an economic boom in the making and convinced his nephew, Bruce Ayers, Sr., to come to Gary from Roanoke, Indiana to work for him. Sadly, within a few months of Bruce's arrival, Guy was bed ridden with an illness that caused his death in 1951. Because of these circumstances, Bruce never really received mentoring when he arrived in Gary, but decided to buy the business from Guy's widow, Grace, and made it his career.

The 50's & 60's were exciting times in Miller. Over 67% of our existing housing today was built from 1946 to 1964. Bruce prospered amidst fierce competition in real estate and expanded the property and casualty insurance business, built prefabricated National Homes and partnered in building "spec homes". For over 30 years, Bruce was the agent largely responsible for growth in Miller.

In the meantime, Bruce E. Ayers, Jr. (Gene, your author and current Ayers) was born with a "For Sale" sign in one hand and a pen for signing closing papers in the other. I joined Ayers Realtors after graduating in 1970 from Indiana State University with a degree in Real Estate. The key to the front door was passed from father to son in 1976 when I bought Ayers Realtors from my father. Continuing to promote and support the Miller community through my real estate brokerage sales and community involvement as did Guy and Bruce, will always be a focus. As the celebration of Ayers Realtors' 100th anniversary continues there are sure to be more historical articles and tid bits to be found.

BEACH BITS



- **Miller Pizza** - 622 1/2 S. Lake St:
Will be open on Superbowl Sunday, Feb. 13th 12pm - 9pm, delivery & carry-out available and pre-orders are welcome!! And online ordering is encouraged! Regular hours: Mon.-Thurs. 11am - 10pm and Fri. & Sat. 11am - 11pm. For more info: www.millerpizza.net
- **Miller Beach Arts & Creative District** - Gardner Center for the Arts - 540 S. Lake Street:
Welcome Jennifer Vargo Okamura as the new Executive Director!
- Mondays - Yoga w/ Dan Hart 6:30-7:30pm, fee \$10
- Tuesdays - Pilates w/ Angie Reens 6-7pm, fee \$10
- 1st Sat. of Each Month - Family Yoga w/ Dan Hart, fee \$15
- Every 3rd Thursday of each Month - Movie Night: Doors open @ 6:30pm, movie starts @ 7pm, fee \$10. Popcorn & soft drink included, cash bar - beer & wine.
- Last Thursday of each Month - "All in Jest Trivia" w/Josh Gamble: Doors open @6:30pm, trivia starts @ 7pm, fee \$5 per person, cash bar - beer, wine, soda and prizes.
- Fri. Feb. 4th - Celebrating Black Heritage: Reception Feb. 4th 6-8pm, exhibition ends Fri. March 18th.
- Friday April 29th - Indiana Humanities Film Tour: This film takes a look at IN waterways, the culture & livelihoods surrounding them. For more info visit their website <https://millerbeacharts.org/>
- **Humane Society of Northwest IN** - 6100 Melton Road:
- Thurs. Feb. 10 - Tails of Love - Taste of Italy Fundraiser: 5:30pm - 7:30pm - 5150 E. Lincoln Hwy., Merrillville, IN. Free will donation.
- Sat. March 26th: Pet Rock 2022: County Line Orchard. For more info visit their website <http://humanesocietynorthwestindiana.org/> or call 219-938-3339
- **Paul H. Douglas Center For Environmental Education** - 100 N. Lake St:
Rangers will check out snowshoes, snow permitting, to both adults and children most Sat.'s & Sun.'s in February 9am-3:30pm. Call 219-395-1824 for snow conditions or visit www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS or www.nps.gov/indu
- **St. Mary's of the Lake** - 6060 Miller Ave:
-Wednesday March 2nd - Ash Wednesday: Mass @ 7pm, w/full choir. You do not have to be Catholic to receive ashes. All are Welcome!
- Friday March 4th - Lenten "Drive-Thru" Fish Fry, 4pm - 7pm. Three steps are required; #1 - Preorder your meal ticket - \$15, tickets can be purchased from a St. Mary's parishioner, or call the office Mon. - Fri. 9am - noon. Some same day meal tickets may be available. #2 - On the Feb. 4th pick up your order at Lessard Hall on the church campus. #3 Enjoy your dinner! Donations - monetary and non-perishable food will be accepted. For more info: [www.http://stmaryofthelakegary.org/](http://stmaryofthelakegary.org/)
- **Temple Israel** - 601 N. Montgomery St.:
- Tuesday March 8th - Eric Tallackson, longtime film critic and aficionado, is speaking at the Temple Israel's film night prior to the Oscars! Wear a mask and donate \$5.00
- **Miller School Shops & Spaces** - 665 S. Lake St.:
- Friday Feb. 4 - thru Sun. 27th - MELANBED 219 - A showcase of 8 talented artists from the region 6pm. For more info: <https://millerschoolshops.com/>

LACK OF INVENTORY STILL EVIDENT IN RECORD PRICES

The statistics included in this section of the newsletter are from the Greater Northwest Indiana Association of Realtors MLS. Because the high priced houses and the lower priced houses in all neighborhoods are included, the average for your specific neighborhood will be substantially different.



The 2021-year end real estate statistics are now available for the Miller Beach Market area.

There were 85 home sales reported during the year. This is up from 65 sales in 2020 and more in line with 81 sales in 2019 which was considered very active and 76 in 2018.

The average list price in 2021 was \$270,084 an increase of 14.98% over the average in 2020 of \$234,893. The average sales price last year was \$263,286 a substantial increase over 2020's average of \$225,850 and 2019's average of \$192,192.

For some context on these statistics, the Indiana Association of Realtors provides sales statistics by State and County using median price rather than average sales price. The Lake County increase from 2020 to 2021 was 14.4%; Porter County was 5.8%, and in Miller Beach the increase in median price was 28.6%.

The lack of inventory issue grew in importance as evidenced by the remarkable list price to sales price percentage in 2021. We've for many years tracked this number as an indicator of market health. In our market the healthy range has been 4% to 6% bargaining. This year the bargaining was 2.36%.

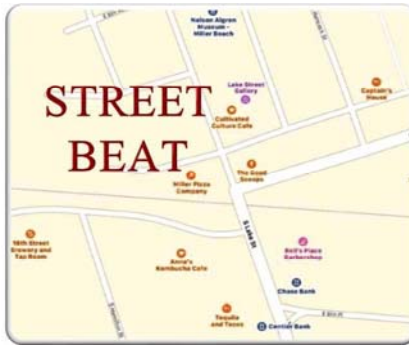
There was a \$1,000,000 lakefront sale reported in the MLS. Even so, it did not have much effect on average prices because it was only one out of 85 sales. There also was a record-breaking non-lakefront sale at \$650,000.

Although not reported in the above home sale statistics, the number of vacant lot sales was also a record. The previous record number of lots sold was 21 in 2018. Last year had 19 lot sales and in 2021 there were 30!

Finally, Ayers Realtors was the highest volume sales leader in Miller Beach again. Perhaps, even more interesting we were the highest volume office from anywhere selling property in Gary including the "big" guys. This is thanks to the incredible hard work of Nancy and Beth with the support of Renita. Thank you ladies.

Thank you for your support for 100 years.

BASEBALL, A GARDEN CLUB THAT DOESN'T SLEEP & A GREAT LAKE IN WHICH ALL CAN LEAP



Not surprisingly our Street Beat and Beach Bits items often overlap with some of the MCC newsletter information. The Current MCC Newsletter, www.millercitizenscorp.org, has a through summary of the Doubletrack and City of Gary demolition and planning efforts therefore we won't repeat those items here. Pay your \$10 Annual MCC dues and get on their emailing list. You read that correctly. It only takes \$10 or \$.83 per month or 1.7

cents per day to support your main source of community communication.

Chicagoland Popcorn is now open at 5975 Melton Road just west of BMO Harris Bank. According to their website they sell more than 250 flavors of popcorn. Open daily 10am – 6pm and when you walk in the door the aroma of freshly popped popcorn will make it hard to settle on just one flavor. Consider using their popcorn at your next cocktail party or kids' birthday party.

Baseball in February? Miller Little League merged with other area Little Leagues to form Calumet Region Little League. They have resumed their free winter training for youth 5-18 years of age at Hutson Campbell Fitness Center, 6-8pm through March. Also training for coaches will be February 19 at noon at Rail Cats U.S. Steel Yard. For more information call Tracy Brough at 219-226-5595/ www.calumetregionlittleleague or it's one, two, three strikes and you're out!

The Miller Beach Water Safety Social Group says "Stay OFF Lake Michigan's ICE! Click and watch this informational clip. When it looks solid, it's not! A gentle wind shift can send the ice out from shore with deadly results. www.ctvnews

Speaking of Lake Michigan and ice....Miller Beach native, Mary Ann Pickford Best has been swimming in Lake Michigan this winter on a regular basis. She does not just randomly jump in the lake and neither should anyone reading this. She is part of the Pickford family, owners of Wells Street Beach, probably she swam before she walked and she is one of the organizers of the Miller Beach Water Safety Social Club. She is very methodical in preparation, time in the water and re-entry to land. Hearing her describe what it's like being in water that is 35-38 degrees is like talking to a fish out of water and you get the impression she plans to keep on swimming with the fishes all year long.

It looks as though the Miller Garden Club is done with this year's "Sleeping" portion of gardening and they are "Leaping" full force into the 2022 gardening season. Starting off with fun and games at "Bingo for Branches" at Miller's St Mary of the Lake Church in Lessard Hall from 6-9 pm on Saturday, Feb 26th. Entry is \$20 per person, snacks, soft drinks and a cash bar will be available. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

March 19th, 10 am will be the first Garden Club meeting of the year (to be held at the Aquatorium) and will feature a Gardening 101 workshop. Green thumbs are welcome but not required. The April 16th meeting is same time, same place. The program portion of the meeting will feature a speaker from Lake County Master Gardeners talking about the subject of garden design. The timing is perfect for planning what you will need to buy for your garden at the Miller Garden Club annual Plant Sale in May.

STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN!

Home on the Range



Things often aren't what they seem and people aren't always what they appear to be. We can be quick to make judgments that aren't correct or fair or kind. Malcolm Gladwell, author of the best selling book "Blink" made a good case with many examples of a first look giving the correct impression. However, his premise of quick judgments doesn't always apply very well to people.

Eric "Red" Anderson, a Miller resident, recently passed away. He lived in Miller for 12 years. It was on a cold and snowy day when another Miller resident, Shirley Boyd noticed him asleep at the train/bus station in Gary. She touched his shoulder and asked if he was OK. She told him she would help him by giving him a ride home. He didn't respond, he looked to be afraid and she could smell alcohol on his breath. She helped him to his feet and told him she would find a warm place for him. She wasn't afraid because she knew he was too cold and too weak to be of harm. When they made the way to her car he said he couldn't go to a hotel because he had no money. Shirley told him she had a garage he could stay in until he found a place to live. She no sooner spoke those words when it dawned on her that sleeping in her garage was not much better than sleeping at the train station. She had a heated basement. And there Eric, aka "Red" lived for the next 12 years. He never failed to pay a modest amount of rent, he cut the grass, walked Shirley's dog and was ever grateful when he found Shirley had left a container of her home cooking at his door.

Sadly, Eric continued to drink alcohol even though Shirley continued to take him to the Veteran's Administration Hospital for help. Red continued to bring Shirley and her family much joy and happiness. He never failed to thank her for her kindness. They came to know him as a quiet man, a good listener, very smart, thankful and kind. He had five siblings, all of whom like himself, were adopted. He was Valedictorian of his high school graduating class and he served in the Army for 12 years. Miller residents may remember him as the guy who sold newspapers at the corner of Lake Street and Miller Avenue. He worked as a volunteer at Miller Beach Farmer's Market and at the Gardner Center. He was helpful to all the market vendors and volunteers. At the Gardner Center he kept an eye out for the docents and the building.

Shirley, former owner of "Perfect Fit" a seamstress and tailoring business on Lake Street in what was Artistic Cleaners and is now 18th Street Brewery, continued to take Eric to the VA hospital for his addiction to alcohol - but to no avail. Eric died in his "home" on November 12, 2021....Veteran's Day. Due to his many years of service his remains qualify to be interred at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

Thank you to Shirley Boyd for this above and beyond heart warming story of the power of human kindness. It is a reminder to all of us that people and their situations aren't always what they seem.

Rest in Peace Eric "Red" Anderson.

Knowing I can't begin to compare with Shirley's home cooking and the good food she often shared with Eric – this is my recipe for a pretty good Beef Stew. It's one of those recipes that taste really good this time of year but come July – a chilled soup would probably be more appropriate.

Beef stew meat cut into 1 inch cubes

- 2 TBS olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 C frozen petite broccoli florets
- 3TBS flour
- 1 ½ C beef broth
- ½ # baby carrots, cut in bite sized pieces
- ¾ C frozen peas
- 1 C red wine

Combine first 7 ingredients in a large zip top plastic bag. Add wine & oil; pour over meat mixture. Seal and chill at least an hour. Drain well and reserve marinade.

Brown beef in an oven safe baking dish. Sprinkle with flour, cook, stirring constantly for 1-2 minutes. Add reserved marinade and beef broth; bring to a boil.

Bake, covered for 1 hour and 30 minutes or until beef is tender. Add carrots, peas, broccoli florets and bake 30 more minutes. Gravy may need to be thickened to your liking. Serve in mashed potato bowls.



**Celebrating
100 Years
1922 - 2022**

The Ayers Realtors' Team
Gene Ayers, GRI, CRS
Nancy Del Prado, GRI, CRS
Beth Buckley, Assoc. Broker
Judy Ayers, Renita Reyna



See our beach cam and virtual tours at www.MillerBeach.com

Build your dream home on this
Lake view lot



1109-1119 N. Union St.
\$119,900

FUN IN THE SUN!



PENDING! 1101 N. St. Joseph
\$495,000

ZONED R-3 MULTI FAMILY



PENDING! 1817 E. Elm St., Griffith
\$225,000

Lake Michigan just a short walk away



SOLD! 841 N. Vermillion St.

Beach cottage, 1 block to beach.



9317 Oak Ave.
\$180,000

2 HOUSES FROM LAKE MICHIGAN



SOLD! 1200 Vermillion St.

Large duneland parcel
1 block from Lake Michigan



1054-1076 Wells St.
\$250,000

You'll be surprised



PENDING! 5245 Stone Ave.
Portage \$164,900

Wooded dunetop



SOLD! 850 N. Vigo St.