



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



SPRINGTIME IN MILLER BEACH-COMMUNITY CALENDARS ARE FULL,
VOLUNTEERS REIGN SUPREME, WASCALLY WABBITS CHANGE ZIP CODES
& QUICHE IS ON THE MENU

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

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



SPRING
2021

Miller Beach Real Estate Keeps On Keeping On

Last Spring I started writing my Realtor Viewpoint column on March 24th - the day Governor Holcomb's stay at home order went in effect at midnight due to the Corona virus pandemic. My first thought was "Oh boy, we've been through so much. What now?" At Ayers Realtors "We" means ALL of us in the community of Miller Beach. Not just Realtors, but homeowners, businesses, and the city.



I went onto enumerate all of the major trials and tribulations our beloved Miller Beach community in Gary had endured and despite those tough times has thrived. It is now a year later and we and the entire world have faced unprecedented circumstances and continue to do so.

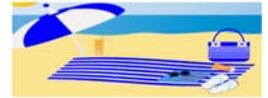
My focus a year ago was centered, as one would expect, on the local real estate market that has over my 50 years as the Miller Beach Realtor endured many challenges. As you review the Market Facts column you'll see we had 2 ½ times more homes sold in the 1st quarter of 2021 than in the 1st quarter of 2020. In fact, most of the country has seen a surge in activity in residential real estate sales. My concern for how the pandemic would damage the real estate market in Miller Beach did not materialize but another concern in part due to the pandemic did.

A couple of recent Chicago Tribune articles have underscored the problem of a shortage of available homes for sale. There are several reasons for this. First time buyers represent a smaller segment of home buyers, about 33% according to a recent study. This entry into home ownership doesn't create a new listing of a home for sale. Many more home buyers have a house to sell as part of their buying process. But, if you own a home and you are out of work, you are not putting your home on the market. The reason is you are not able to qualify for a mortgage on the home you would have bought. This has a bit of a domino effect as does a new construction purchase by a person who then sells their home. Another reason for low inventory is the segment of homeowners who didn't and in many cases still don't want strangers (read virus) in their homes. Although it has been pointed out we had more sales in the first quarter this year than last, the count for the entire year of 2020 was lower than 2019. Clearly, less sales will happen if fewer owners want to sell.

Low inventory has led to a market unlike we have ever seen before in our market area. If you needed to sell in 2020 or the 1st quarter of this year, the real estate gods smiled on you with multiple offers and escalating prices. If you were a buyer, you had the opportunity to take advantage of historically low rates. But many buyers found themselves in multiple offer situations where they are given a deadline to submit their "highest and best" offer. We have had buyers lose 3 homes before they had the best and winning offer. What was once an occasional situation has become far too routine for our buyers. The law of supply and demand can be sweet or brutal. We've seen some homes go up 30 to 40% in just 2 or 3 years.

It is clear that people from Illinois have found us in greater numbers than in the past. Also, Airbnb and VRBO buyers/investors have also found us (more on that phenomenon in another issue). Is it all good news? It seems so. Time will tell, as always.

BEACH BITS



- **Miller Pizza** - 622 1/2 S. Lake St:
You can order your favorite pizza online and pick it up on your way home!!! Their hours are Mon.-Thurs. 11am - 10pm and Fri. & Sat. 11am - 11pm, closed Sunday. www.millerpizza.net
- **Miller Beach Arts & Creative District** - Gardner Center for the Arts - 540 S. Lake Street:
Yoga classes, Chair Yoga is Tues. & Thurs. noon to 12:30pm - \$3.00 and Mat Yoga is Weds. 6:30pm to 7:30pm - \$10.
Upcoming events:
Sat. May 1 - Opening Reception and Artist Talk 6:00 to 8:00 pm
Weekends May 1 - May 30th - Art from Excess II, Return of Excess - artist Chris Toeopher
If you would like to get involved contact MBACD and together you make a difference!! For more info visit their website <https://millerbeacharts.org/> or for more info on how you can show your support go to <https://millerbeacharts.org/support/#contact>
- **Humane Society of Northwest IN** - 6100 Melton Road:
Thanks to a generous donor, changes are coming to the facility that will be both animal and people pleasing. The facility will remain open and donations can still be made through Amazon, with direct delivery to the facility. Please visit their website for more info - <http://humanesocietynorthwestindiana.org/>
- **Paul H. Douglas Center For Environmental Education** - 100 N. Lake St:
Come out and visit their new hands-on exhibits with scavengers hunts and videos and other fun activities for families to enjoy safely while social distancing. Families can also check out a free backpack with ID sheets and binoculars to enhance your visit. Hikers are welcome to hike the Miller Woods trails. For more info - www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS or www.nps.gov/indu
- **Miller Beach Water Safety** -
Fri. May 21st - 1st Water Safety Social 6:30 pm at the Marshall J. Gardner Center - 540 S. Lake St. For more info - watersafetysocial@gmail.com
- **Miller Beach Farmers Market** - 667 S. Lake St :
Opening date for the outdoor Farmers Market is Sun. May 16th 11:00 am to 1:00 pm; The Farmers Market is looking for volunteers for the 2021-22 season. Please contact them by emailing market@millerbeacharts.com or 219-238-6758
- **Temple Israel** - 601 N. Montgomery St.:
Wed. May 19th 11:00 am to 2:00 pm - Sisterhood will be hosting Penny Harvest at Miller Pizza. For more info please call: 219-938-5232
- **Miller School Shops & Spaces** - 665 S. Lake St.:
They have a wide variety of classes. Reservations are required for all classes and you can RSVP at the Front Desk during normal business hours: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Masks and social distancing are required for all classes. For more info about programs and classes please visit their website at <https://millerschoolshops.com/> or on Facebook
- **Ken Parr Build a Bike Program** - The 6th season will start in June. Due to Covid-19, 25 lucky kids will get their own toolkits and bikes to repair at home (with virtual lessons and paperback handbooks). The applications are open on a 1st come 1st served basis. Go to <https://www.takebikethestreets.org/> or you can contact Jessie Renslow at 818-294-4240 for a paper copy. Follow them on Facebook.

THE FACTS ARE THE FACTS
NOTHING BUT THE FACTS

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 first quarter statistics are now available in the area within the newly designated Indiana Dunes National Park, defined by the Lake on the North, County Line Road on the East, Ash Place on the South, and Gibson Street on the West. This Market Facts report will start with historical details of the units sold in the first quarter. As noted many times over the years the first quarter reports a low number of statistical data points causing sometimes unreliable conclusions/results. Last year in the first quarter there were 6 sales, looking backward in 2019 there were 17 sales, 2018 had 17 units sold, 2017 had 21, 2016 had 10, and in 2015 just 9 units were reported sold. This year the first quarter had 15 sales. The average listing price in the first quarter was \$379,000. The average selling price was \$365,000. The average selling price in the first quarter has varied greatly from one year to the next but nothing like this year's statistic. Here are the last 4 years average selling prices: 2020 - \$144,500, 2019 - \$145,797, 2018 - \$105,741, 2017 - \$128,724. Even considering the low statistical sample often cautioned about, truly something dramatic is happening.

In the Realtors Viewpoint column, the causes of low inventory are addressed. Here are the local market facts. At the writing of this column last year there were 33 active listings in all of 46403, a broader geographic area than our statistical tracking area within the National Park. The actives held steady in the 30 to 39 range until mid year when actives steadily dropped to the teens for most of the year. This past winter active homes for sale dropped below 10 briefly. January 1st there were 17, February 1st actives were at 21 and March 1st there were 11. As I am writing this there are 14 homes actively for sale. All of this information comes from a market area where 75 active listings was not uncommon previously and historically over many, many years.

The bargaining statistic, that is the reduction from asking to selling price percentage, supports the price and inventory statistics. In the first quarter of 2020 the bargaining statistic was very high at 12.82% when customarily it ranges between 4% to 6%. This year's bargaining percentage in the first quarter was 2.8%.

Thank you for your support as we approach our 100th anniversary next year.

BUY SOME PLANTS & FLIP FLOPS, GET SOME CULTURE
& TIP YOUR HATS TO THOSE GONE
BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



Hey, what are you doing sitting there reading the Ayers' Newsletter if it's Saturday, May 1st? There is a Miller Community Clean Up going on (7am-11am) and you should be out volunteering. It starts at the corner of Grand Boulevard & Miller Avenue (the old "Ralph's building) where you will be outfitted with gloves, garbage bags & trash pickers then sent on your way to help rid our community of trash that has accumulated along our streets and vacant areas. Just leave the bags where you fill them and they will be picked up and taken where the garbage should have been in the first place...in the dump.

Spring has sprung and so has the Miller Garden Club. They have been zooming (their meetings) and things are blooming. The club attends to the care of 7 community gardens in Miller and will welcome you with open yard waste bags if you would like to help. Go to www.Millergardenclub.org to see the clean-up schedule for work days. And don't miss their annual Plant Sale, May 8th, 10am-3pm @ the Aquatorium. You may also want to pencil in the 20th Annual Garden Walk – "Pot Luck", July 10th & 11th at the Aquatorium. The next general meeting will be at 10am, June 19th at the Aquatorium. Weather permitting the meeting will be held outdoors and socially distanced.

The Miller Garden Club would also like to recognize a couple of people who over the years have so kindly helped the club do what it does. Jan McLaughlin was the longtime manager and co-coordinator of the Aquatorium and she must have had a big eraser on her pencil because no matter how many times dates and/or times of garden club events needed to be changed or gates unlocked, Jan was always helpful, patient and kind. Jan passed away a few weeks ago and she will be truly missed.

Another friend, neighbor & community supporter who passed away in April was Gary Goldberg. He was easily recognized by the stacks and stacks of pizza he donated to the Miller Garden Club during set up and take down of their various events as he did for so many organizations in Miller Beach year after year. Gary was committed to seeing Miller Beach thrive and survive. There are no words to say what he meant to the Miller Garden Club and the Miller Community in general.

There's a new shop in town, "Dimes & Divas Boutique" located at 621 S. Lake Street (next to D & K Salads) and owned by Diann Powers. Her first shop was located in Merrillville and when the owners of D & K Gourmet Salads suggested she move her shop to Miller and that the building next door was available for rent – Diann took action. She offers women's clothing and accessories and plans to add beachwear, flip flops, & bathing suits. Although the official Grand Opening will be June 12th, the store is open for business now. Let's all stop in and wish Diann good luck and tell her how happy we are to have her on Lake Street.

Mark your calendars for a two part event focusing on Richard Wright and his ground breaking novel, "Native Son". Sunday, May 16 @ 4pm hear Artistic Director at Morning Bishop Theatre, McKenya Dilworth deliver perspective on "Native Son" 80 years after publication. Limited copies of the novel will be available for purchase. Return Sunday, June 27th @ 4pm for a book discussion of "Native Son". Both events will take place at the Nelson Algren 616 Sound Stage at 616 S. Lake Street. The event will be moved to another venue in case of rain. \$10 @ the door, masks & social distancing required.

There's a couple more horns to be tooted here in Miller. The first goes to our local Humane Society for the ongoing kind & loving care they provide to the saddest, most unlucky, homeless creatures until homes are found for them and they have hopeful futures. Hats off to the Humane Society of Northwest Indiana.

The second horn should more accurately be a 21 gun salute to a local resident who so completely believed in our local Humane Society, the people who work there, their creed and kindness that upon her recent death donated the proceeds of her estate to our Miller Humane Society to enable them to continue their good work. It has been reported upon the announcement of this bountiful news the critters currently in residence showed overwhelming tail wagging, purring and jumping for joy in expression of gratitude and thanks.

WACKY WITER ALL WAPPED UP IN WANGING

WASCALLY WABBITS

Home on the Range



On December 26, 2020, my mother's best friend passed away at the age of 103. I was first introduced to Laura Jones when she met my parents, her neighbors, at their front gate as they brought me home from the hospital when I was 5 days old. Ever since then she was my friend too.

Since the first of the this year I have helped carry out Laura's wishes concerning the contents of her house. I am proud to say a fine and honorable job was done by her Executor and myself and I felt I was given one last chance to honor a lady who was more than kind to the pesky little

kid who lived 2 doors down the street. Along the way she taught me several lessons with kind explanations about right and wrong and often on the subject as to why I shouldn't pick other people's flowers.

While cleaning out Laura's house much to my surprise we came across many articles I have written over the years in "Home on the Range". She often wrote comments on her copies that mentioned the Hancock Street neighborhood and the cast of neighbors we both knew. I chose to use this story again because it is a Springtime story (2004) and because Laura wrote a note on her copy saying: "Tell Judy - over the years I've had a few pests in my garden, too".

Wacky Witer All Wapped Up in Wanging Wascally Wabbits

Early one morning this spring about 6:00am, shortly after Gene left for the health club and after I put my time in on the treadmill in the basement, I made a cup of tea, walked into the living room to look out the window and was surprised to see signs of Spring that weren't there a couple of days earlier. There were buds on trees and Forsythia was coming alive. I couldn't quite see evidence of the bulbs I planed last Fall but I was able to see other perennial signs of life. A couple days and another daze out the window and I could see Mother Nature was in full swing - bigger buds, greener grass - but still no sign of bulbs or Hosta. I figured they were just slow to emerge.

A few days later I decided my garden needed a jump start so I bought violas and pansies and planted them so they could be seen when we pull into the driveway and at the crack of dawn from my sentry position in the living room. The next morning, post pansy planting, creature of habit that I am, I kissed Gene good bye, went directly to the treadmill, walk, walk, walk, hurried up stairs, tea bag, hot water, rushed into the living room, looked, looked again, squinted, rushed to fireplace mantel for binoculars, back to window, focus, focus, focus...where in the name of Euel Gibbons were my violas and pansies? All that was left in the previously planted pots was little green stubbles.

On closer inspection I could see hoof marks in flower beds which meant the Hosta weren't slow to emerge. They were being ingested and digested as fast as they could grow. And as I continued to scan the terrain with my binoculars I focused on what appeared to be the same cute little rabbit that often scampers across the yard at night when we pull into the driveway. The bunny rabbit didn't look nearly as cute in the light of day, he staring at me, me staring at him, he with a mouthful of my leaves.

Years ago when we first saw deer in our yard it was a Kodak moment. A few months later we didn't have enough film to capture their friends and family that came to dine on our greenery. I eventually persuaded the deer to dine elsewhere by using a spray repellent, the ingredients of which are claimed to be environmentally safe and biodegradable. The product, "Liquid Fence", was developed by an 81 year old retired chemical engineer who was determined to find an effective deterrent to his own pesky rabbits and deer. One whiff of the stuff, keeping in mind statistical odds of prostate problems and bladder frequency in octogenarian males, and I was pretty sure I knew how he came up with his formula.

Last year it took a hit man and his environmentally friendly traps to capture three rascally raccoons and the six woodchucks who provided answer to the riddle about just how much wood a woodchuck could chuck. After our nine sharecroppers were given a new zip code-green seemed to once again rein supreme.

In reading a book about gardening. "Old Herbaceous" by Reginald Arkell. Reginald, (now deceased and probably driven to an early demise by a yard full of moles) thought "gardening may be the most exasperating occupation under the sun, but it gives as much as it gets - no more no less. Maddening catastrophes are followed by spectacular triumphs. One minute you are flat on your face, and the next you are soaring on the wings of morning." With these thoughts in mind, I have decided to enact tried and true strategies to send my free loaders elsewhere and give new definition to the Victory Garden. Hope springs eternal and I am ready to take to the battle ground once again, spray bottle in one hand, cell phone in the other with the Fury Friend's Trapper phone number punched in and ready to call. That's not to say I am finding it easy to resist the temptation to suggest a recipe for a nice rabbit stew.

Quick Crust-less Quiche

This quiche is very easy to make and since making pie crust is not involved there is plenty of time for gardening or standing sentry.

8 Slices of bacon, cooked until crispy then crumbled
 1 C shredded cheddar cheese + a little more to sprinkle on top
 1 ½ C milk or low fat ½ & ½
 ½ C flour
 4 eggs, slightly beaten
 2 green onions, finely sliced (green parts, too)
 2 TBS melted butter
 ½ tsp salt
 2 C frozen broccoli florets, thawed and squeezed dry (or roasted fresh broccoli)
 Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees
 Lightly grease a 9 inch pie plate
 Sprinkle 1 cup cheese over the bottom of the pie plate and top with bacon crumbles
 Whisk together milk and flour in a large bowl, whisk in eggs, green onions, butter, salt and broccoli
 Pour into pie plate
 Bake until set 35-40 minutes; Sprinkle with more cheddar cheese as soon as it comes out of the oven. Serve hot or cold. Another good combination is ham & asparagus. #



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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

Gary Goldberg September 17, 1943 - April 14, 2021

Most of the readers of this Newsletter know the sad news of the passing of Gary Goldberg who along with his wife Elsie, was the owner of Miller Pizza. Many of you may have known Gary better than I did and of his many good works for the community he lived and worked in. I want to share an example. Many of you were there, the night of this recollection.

It was a beautiful 1st Friday on the patio of Miller Pizza. The young musicians in the band were keeping the crowd and the staff hopping. It was at dusk when several of us saw a large group of young people walking north on Lake Street toward Miller Pizza. Soon they were standing outside the fence on the grass. Clearly, they were enjoying the music and not there to cause any trouble.

Soon Gary found out they were a youth group from Ft. Wayne Indiana that had come to help clean up our city. With that knowledge Gary immediately, with patrons helping, began to lift tables over the fence and began serving the kids free pizza and pop. Imagine the stories told by the youth group back in Ft. Wayne. This was just one example of the spontaneous and committed generosity he always gave to our community. That was Gary Goldberg.

Wooded Lot

Gently rolling duneland lot

Lake view lot



9419-9425 Juniper Ave.
\$17,500



1078-1094 N. Wells St.
\$200,000



1109-1119 Union St.
\$119,900