



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



INSIDE: POTPOURRI, MILLER GARDEN CLUB & BUILD-A-BIKE
MOVE IN TOGETHER & FUTURISTIC GROCERY SHOPPING

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



REALTOR TRIES TO DUPLICATE DAN NOVAKOWSKI HUMOR, FAILS MISERABLY

The Realtor Viewpoint column this issue will be a bit of a potpourri of thoughts and information.

But first, a tribute to Dan Novakowski, a Miller resident for many years, who passed away suddenly on Jan. 15, 2021 at just 60 years of age. I imagine most of the readers of this newsletter didn't know Dan but in a way you did. More on that in a bit.



Dan was an extremely talented photographer, artist and writer. He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of films old and new. When it became possible to view a film in your own home (think Blockbuster Video) I partially remembered films I wanted to rent. Once or maybe several times I called Dan when I was trying to remember the title of an old movie with a vague description such as "It was about a woman fleeing from her mobbed-up husband after stealing money from him." Bam! Dan said "The Last Seduction" starring Linda Fiorentino.

Dan had a unique sense of humor. His annual Christmas newsletter was unlike any Christmas newsletter you've ever read. Loaded with unusual Christmas themed photos and of course movie reviews. His sense of humor is the reason we asked him 25 years ago to write headlines for this newsletter. That is why you know his work and humor. Here's a couple of past examples:

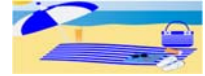
When Renita wrote Judy's column because Judy had the chairmanship of the Garden Walk, poison ivy, a birthday and an anniversary all happening when the newsletter was due Dan wrote this headline, "**While Judy Nurses Hangover, Brand New Columnist Steps In.**"

When Judy wrote about the time she and her little sister as children took the Ayers family's Woodie station wagon's back seat to their playhouse after finding it behind the Ayers garage, Dan wrote the headline "**No Driver's License? No Problem! Child Car Thief Takes One Part A Time.**" But Dan's very best work that had us laughing with tears streaming down our face usually couldn't be used in the newsletter because they were slightly off color. We will truly miss Dan. Rest in peace Dan.

It was the Spring issue of the Ayers Realtors Newsletter in 2017 when the South Shore RR Double Track <https://www.doubletrack-nwi.com/> initiative was first mentioned. The lofty goal to have double tracking from Gary to Michigan City by 2021 was set in early 2016 and was clearly aspirational. But here we are at the beginning of 2021 with terrific news of construction starting in June and completion in 2024. Other good news for Miller Beach has been revealed along the way. Lake Street north of the current tracks will not be torn up like in the past 3 summers. So the disruption will be minor. We will get a new "real" station, increased and better parking with no highway to cross, level boarding, and fresh new landscaping. Also and importantly, with US 12 and 20 combined just a few feet east of Lake Street instead of a mile west, all traffic on both highways will pass by a clearly marked entrance to our business and shopping district. Let's all rally around the idea of an overhead "gateway" placemaker structure at Lake Street. For more detailed information on the impact the double tracking will have on Miller go to our website, www.Millerbeach.com, and click on the link "What Gary can expect from the NICTD Double Track project."

Finally, if you don't want to upgrade or downsize to a different home to suit your needs better than your current home, consider refinancing. Rates will never be better.

BEACH BITS



- **Miller Pizza** - 622 1/2 S. Lake St:
Will be open on Superbowl Sunday, Feb. 7th at noon, delivery & carry-out available and pre-orders are welcome!!! And remember you can order online!!! Their hours are Mon.-Thurs. 11am - 10pm and Fri. & Sat. 11am - 11pm www.millerpizza.net
- **Miller Beach Arts & Creative District** - Gardner Center for the Arts - 540 S. Lake Street:
Yoga classes are still going on, Chair Yoga is Tues. & Thurs. noon to 12:30pm - \$3.00 and Mat Yoga is Weds. 6:30pm to 7:30pm - \$10.
Upcoming events:
Fri. Feb. 5 - Opening - Engage with artists & participants with hors d'oeuvres
Fri. Feb. 12 - Round Table Talk - Panel discussion on Politicking, you can also stream this event online
Fri. Feb. 19 - Community Photos - Anderson will be on site taking photos of anyone who would like to be part of the Unapologetically Noir series
Fri. Mar. 5 - Artist Talk - Breaks down vision behind the exhibit.
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 the community for all the generous support in 2020. They are hoping their fund-raisers will be back this year. They've made it easier for you to show your support, there is now an Amazon link on their website that will take you directly to a list of items that will help them continue to help their four-legged friends and staff. Please visit their website for more info - <http://humanesocietynorthwestindiana.org/>
- **Paul H. Douglas Center For Environmental Education** - 100 N. Lake St:
Join them for some Winter fun, once there is an inch or two of snow on the ground, rangers will check out snowshoes to both adults and children Sat. & Sun.'s. Snowshoes will be distributed from the back door of the center 9am-3:30pm. They invite you to use the trails from 1/2 to 3 miles in length. For more info - www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS or www.nps.gov/indu
- **Miller Beach Water Safety** -
Just a reminder, even though the Winter season is not fully upon us, please remain diligent when walking the beach and please STAY OFF THE SHELF ICE one it arrives. The lake is very deep in many areas along the shore, so don't be fooled. For more info please contact them at watersafetysocial@gmail.com
- **D & K Salads and Catering** - 625 S. Lake St :
Salads, Wraps, Soul Food Rolls, Soul bowls, Johnny Cakes, Sandwiches, Smoothies, Debra's famous Peach cobbler, Banana Pudding, Pound Cake and Catering. Their hours are: Tues. - Fri. 11am - 6pm, Sat. & Sun. 11am - 5pm. For more info <http://www.dkgourmetsalads.com/> or like them facebook <https://www.facebook.com/dkgourmetsalads>
- **St. Mary's of the Lake** - 6060 Miller Ave:
Friday Feb. 19th - Lenten "Drive-Thru" Fish Fry, 4pm - 7pm. Three steps are required; #1 - Preorder your meal ticket, tickets can be purchased from the office Mon. - Fri. 9am - noon, call 219-938-1373, or after Sunday Mass 11am - 11:30am, #2 - On the evening of the Fish Fry, drive up to Lessard Hall for you order, & #3 Enjoy your dinner! For more info www.http://stmaryofthelakegary.org/
- **Hip Hop Chicken** - 5729 Melton Rd:
Cooking your way Everyday! Their hours are Sun. - Thurs. 10am - 10pm & Fri. & Sat. 10am - 12am. They have a large menu and for faster service you can call in your order and pick up by way of their drive thru window. For more info call them - 219-951-0845

GOOD NEWS
KEEPS COMING

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 2020-year end real estate statistics are now available for the Miller Beach Market area within the Indiana Dunes National Park.

There were 64 home sales reported during the year. This is down from 81 sales in 2019 and 76 sales in 2018. Statewide the number of single-family residential homes was up 6.4%. The low number of homes purchased was caused in part by the absence of repossessed homes available for purchase - perhaps a bit of lemonade from lemons thought process on my part but true. Secondly, 2019 was a very active year and hard to match.

The average list price in 2020 was \$234,893 an increase of 15.99% over the 2019 average list price of \$202,503. The average sales price last year was \$225,850 an increase over the 2020 average of \$192,192. This is a remarkable increase in average sales prices of Miller Beach homes of 17.5%. The average list to sales price percentage was 95.12% and the average days on the market was 71 days.

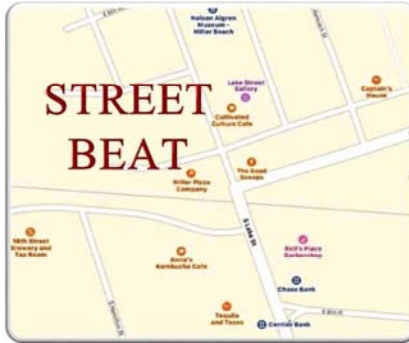
Most years the newsletter must be sure to analyze the effect of Lake front home sales on the overall market sales because of the dramatically higher lakefront prices. This year is no exception. There were 5 lakefront homes sold at an average price of \$694,400, with a high sales price of \$825,000. The highest home sale price of a home not on the lakefront was \$440,000. The median sales price in 2020 was \$175,000 in Miller Beach. In all of Lake County the median price in 2020 was \$187,900 and statewide it was \$190,000. However, our average sales price of \$225,830 beat the statewide average of \$218,286. Very interesting statistics to contemplate.

Lot sale numbers were again up in 2020 after coming down in 2019 to 7 sales and 21 sales in 2018. This past year there were 19 vacant lot sales. Ayers Realtors participated in 11 of the 19.

Finally, Ayers Realtors has over 3 times the volume of sales in Miller Beach over the nearest competitor. Also, another fact is in the entire city of Gary, Ayers Realtors has a higher volume of sales than the next two competitors combined due to the hard work and success of Nancy and Beth. It remains of FACT in our MARKET that Ayers Realtors is the market leader.

Thank you for your support for 99 years.

IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE! HOW TO WARM THE COCKLES OF YOUR HEART, GROW FLOWERS, BUY VALENTINES GIFTS & BUILD-A-BIKE!



Here's a tidbit that will warm the cockles of your hearts....It's only 120 days till Memorial Day, the traditional opening of Wells Street Beach. And if there are warm days earlier in May - Wells Street will open sooner. The end of winter is in sight!

Like all things perennial, the Miller Garden Club is about to come out of hibernation and get growing again. In their February newsletter, Jack Tonk, past garden club president and gardener extraordinaire, will write about what we need to do now to have fabulous veggies this summer. March will be the first general meeting of the year and will be on Zoom with a program by Rebecca Koetz from Purdue Extension on the Master Gardener program, youth gardener's programs and demonstration gardens. There will be another Zoom meeting in April with a program on happy, healthy houseplants. And you would be blooming goofy not to right now mark your calendars for the garden club's annual plant sale on Saturday, May 8th, 10 am – 3 pm at the Aquatorium. It will be a masked, socially distanced, outdoor event.

There's all kinds of things happening at The School House Shops & Spaces although due to the persistence of COVID classes have been postponed for now but hopefully will resume in March. There are several new vendors and there are still spaces to rent or for consignment. In February there will be a pop-up shop honoring Black History Month and on Valentine's Day weekend shops will have special sales and deals. Shop Local!

As mentioned in our last newsletter – Due to City of Gary plans to raze the former Ralph's Grocery building at Grand Boulevard and Miller Avenue (which was the location of the Ken Parr Build-a-Bike work space) and the Miller Garden Club's need for storage space for all the paraphernalia it takes to maintain our community gardens, and because of the generosity of Mayor Jerome Prince and Eric Reaves, both organizations were offered use of former Firehouse #11 at the corner of Randolph and Indian Boundary. From May to October the Build a Bike portion of the building welcomes cyclists to bring their bike for tunes ups and to learn how to repair their bikes. For more information visit the Build-a-Bike Facebook page.

LOCAL COUPLE POSE AS ADORING ELDERERS IN INTERSTATE HEIST OF CAULIFLOWER AND FRESH MEAT

Home on the Range



Statistically speaking, I'm pretty sure I am in the minority of those who like to grocery shop and plan meals. Grocery shopping was always a good way to spend time with my mother and we rarely let anything interfere with our weekly outings. We walked up and down the aisles in our favorite grocery store, chatted with each other and over the years we got to know the people who worked there. My mother has since passed away but I

often think how she would enjoy an update on "our" grocery store and how things have changed since we last shopped 7 years ago. The effects of the COVID virus and the scarcity of several items like tissue paper, toilet paper and bleach would have been relatable to her having lived through rationing during World War II. So, when I read about the opening of an Amazon Fresh grocery store in Naperville, Illinois I really wanted to see what it was all about.

It is the first such store outside of California and the second in the US. It looked like a regular grocery store and had most mainstream brands. In general, it had an Aldi vibe but had more services including a deli (abbreviated due to COVID), a bakery and a fresh meat counter. There was no hot bar which wouldn't be pandemic friendly anyway but there were refrigerated displays of prepared packaged food to go. We (I dragged Gene along, too) even noticed a counter for returning any items (clothing, books, etc.) purchased on Amazon and the items needn't be in boxes or even require shipping labels. There are regular sized shopping carts where groceries are checked out in regular check out lanes or you can pre-order and pick up your groceries curbside. However, if you need two bags of groceries or less you can use a very cute "Dash Cart" and your items are automatically scanned by a scanner built into the cart as items are added to the two grocery bags provided. Likewise, if you forget to scan an item or do so unsuccessfully, lights will flash and buzzers will beep and a good natured, very young employee will come to your rescue – as she did with us.

The young employee who helped us stop the flashing and beeping was nice and treated us adoringly as she would her grandparents. I've since decided it was a fun, high tech shopping adventure that was bit intense and perspiration producing. In time I would have gotten the hang of it all but I didn't get the feeling it would ever be the kind of place where I now grocery shop and where the check out lady asks about my vacation and the young guy who takes my groceries to the car tells me he got accepted to the college he wants to attend. For me there is still something to be said for friendly, kind, personal day to day relationships. So for now I think I will stick with Strack & Van Til and Jewel and great seasonally home grown produce and vegetables from Johnson's and Remus and local farmers' markets every spring and fall.

No bells. No whistles. No sweat.



Avocado-bacon toast is nothing new in the culinary world and neither are individual (2 1/2 oz) containers of guacamole that can be found in grocery stores as well as Sam's and Costco. I've started always having them in the freezer so when I get a hankering I have what I need for avocado-bacon toast or have guacamole to spread on other sandwiches. There's nothing better than fresh avocados but having one when needed and it being perfectly ripe is not always easy. Having these little containers on hand makes for a quick and easy breakfast treat or a nice accompaniment to a bowl of soup or chili.

Multigrain bread toasted and spread with guacamole

Individual containers of guacamole (1 container per 2 slices of toast)

Bacon cooked and crumbles (crumbs of bacon make the toast easier to eat & a pretty presentation)

Chopped fresh tomatoes

Lemon wedges

Spread guacamole on the toast

Sprinkle with bacon & tomatoes

Squeeze lemon over the top & season with salt & pepper

MILLER BEACH!



6999 Hemlock Ave
\$250,000

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Limestone Ranch

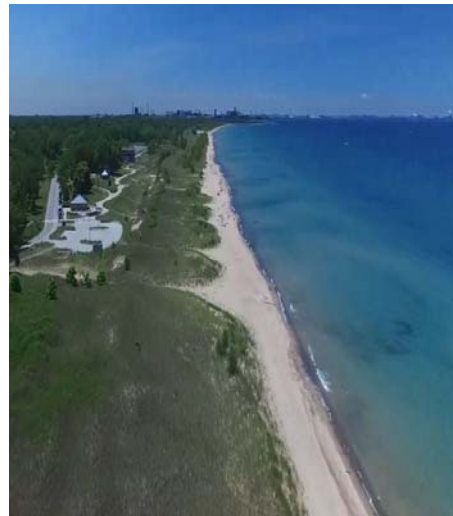
A wonderful example of a custom limestone ranch built with the highest quality materials and workmanship. Attached garage, screen porch, on wooded, private corner lot. Surrounded by Indiana Dunes National Park, 1/2 half mile from Lake Michigan beach and 2 miles to the South Shore Train to Chicago.

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

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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

Bi-level



PENDING! 747 Newton St.

\$219,900

Quality built Brick Ranch



SOLD! 6525 Birch Ave.

\$158,900

Beach Home Ready



PENDING! 1111 N. Vigo St.

\$69,900

Cape Cod



SOLD! 6417 Ash Ave.

Beautiful Lot



PENDING! 1213-1219 N. Warrick St.

\$79,900

Bi-Level



SOLD! 9134 Pottawatomie Trl.

\$154,000