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INSIDE: A CLASSIC HOME ON THE RANGE STORY, BOB'S FARM
STAND MAKES CATS AND DOGS HAPPY!

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



SUMMER
2021



HAVE YOU EVER RIDDEN A PONY?



When the Covid 19 pandemic fully crippled the national economy, the real estate market took off like a Jeff Bezos rocket, but lasted a lot longer. In fact, locally the rocket is still accelerating, and we have enjoyed more than 4 minutes of weightlessness.

Before continuing to read this column, please read Market Facts for context. While nationally prices have surged dramatically higher by 24%, the drama locally has led to an amazing 45.55% price increase from the first half of 2020 to the first half of 2021. (*Here's where I make my customary small sample comment*) Because the national statistics are derived from millions of sales and our statistics are from only 34 home sales one must be cautious in their interpretation of the numbers.

On Tuesday July 27th Standard & Poor's released their Core Logic Case-Shiller national home price index revealing a 16.6% annual gain in May, up from 14.8% in April – marking the highest reading in more than 30 years of data. It is also the 12th straight month of accelerating prices. The National Association of Realtors reported that the median existing home price for all housing types in June hit \$363,300 the highest level recorded since January 1999.

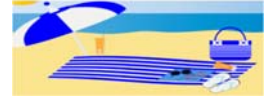
Nevertheless, in my many, many years of tracking local real estate market statistics I have never seen anything like this even when several of our high-priced lakefront and lakeview property sales bunched together to create a dramatic increase in sales prices. There are no lake front sales contributing to the spike in sales price in the 1st half of last year or the 1st half of this year.

One camp of national pundits think we are in a housing bubble a'la 1999-2007. However, bubbles require speculators buying just to resell without doing anything to improve the property. The best example of this around the country in that go go era was committing to buy a condo or single-family home before it was under construction with the expectation it would sell for more when completed than the investor was committed to pay. That hasn't happened nationally to any substantial degree. What has happened here (within the borders of our beautiful Indiana Dunes National Park) is investors are buying to acquire income producing AIRBNB or VRBO units.

Regarding predicting the future: I had the misfortune of dropping and breaking my crystal ball right after graduating from Indiana State University with a degree in Real Estate. An education teaches one what they **don't** know as much or more than what they **do** know!

Our median sales price of \$221,750 is far below the afore mentioned national median price of \$363,300, but our increase in sales prices is far higher. Have home buyers, largely from Illinois "discovered" us? Is the National Park effect just taking hold? Is our small statistical sample playing tricks on us? Let's ride this pony and find out!

BEACH BITS



- **American Legion Post 0279** - 6601 Hobart Rd.:
Sat. Aug. 28th - American Legion Fundraiser - Entertainment by Sidestreets, doors open at 6:30pm with a Taco bar, band starts @ 7:30 to 11:30pm
- **Miller Beach Arts & Creative District** - Gardner Center for the Arts - 540 S. Lake Street:
- Aug. 6th - Artists Talk - Hear from artists Sara Peak Convery, Tony Lipka, Randy Buvala, & Gary Price, plus a sidewalk sale. Gallery opens at 5pm for First Friday.
- Fri. Aug. 20th - Opening reception for "Layers" by Lee Ligoski
- Sept. 20th - MBACD Golf Outing - The NEW Innsbrook Country Club, tickets are \$125. Dinner only option, tickets \$40. Contact Ann at annrosebacd@gmail.com or 219-902-9642. Don't forget to subscribe to the Miller 500 - your best charitable giving option available. Proceeds from Miller 500 are used to keep the place running.
- Tues. & Thurs. - Chair Yoga - Noon to 12:30pm fee is \$3.00, Mat Yoga is Wed.s 6:30pm to 7:30pm fee is \$10. For more info visit their website <https://millerbeacharts.org/> or info on how you can show your support go to <https://millerbeacharts.org/support/#contact>
- **Humane Society of Northwest IN** - 6100 Melton Road:
- HSNi will be at Albanese Candy Factor, 5441 E Lincoln Hwy, Merrillville, IN every 4th Saturday 11am - 3pm.
- Bob's Farm Stand will be donating his total days income to the HSNi from his Miller Beach Farmer's Market Stand. Watch NextDoor for the date. Please visit their website for more info: <http://humanesocietynorthwestindiana.org/>
- **Paul H. Douglas Center For Environmental Education** - 100 N. Lake St:
- Every Sat. - Wetland Wonders for Families, 10am to noon.
- Every Sun. - Sunday Miller Woods Hike with a ranger at 1:30pm.
- Sat. Aug. 28th - Junior Wildland Firefighter Program at 10am. Youth get to meet the Indiana Dunes National Park fire staff.
- Fri. Aug. 6th - Sunset Paddle at the Lagoon - Enjoy a leisurely float in the Marquette Park Lagoons with park rangers, canoes and kayaks provided.
- Every Sat. thru Aug. 28th - Diana of the Dunes Hike - 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Meet rangers along the West Beach Succession Trail at West Beach. For more info - www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS or www.nps.gov/indu
- **Miller Beach Farmers Market** - 667 S. Lake St : (the old Miller School)
- Sundays 11am - 1pm
- Sun. Aug. 1st - Ken Parr Build-A-Bike will be at the Market with information, fundraising, & bike give-away.
- Sun. Aug. 15th - Dunes Calumet Audubon Society will be at the Market to share information about shorebirds in our community. market@millerbeacharts.com or 219-238-6758
- **Temple Israel** - 601 N. Montgomery St.:
- Sun. Aug. 29th - Sisterhood's Annual BBQ at 6pm. Price is \$30 for adults & \$10 for kids. Please RSVP by Tuesday Aug. 24th with your choice of entrée. Sorry no walk-ins. For more info - call 219-938-5232 or templeisraelmiller@gmail.com
- **Miller Beach Business Association** -
- Sat. Sept. 18 - Fest in the First - Celebrate Gary's First District Neighborhoods presented by Reimagine Gary. Vendors contact festinthefirst@gmail.com
- **St. Mary of Lake** - 6060 Miller Ave:
Sat. Aug. 7th: 4pm - 9pm - Festa Italiana: Spaghetti Dinner, & Beer Garden, and much more, tickets are \$15.00. This evening kicks off with a parade on Lake St. at 3pm; 3rd Ave. down Lake St. to the church.

DRAMATIC RISE IN PRICES IN THE 1ST HALF OF THE YEAR

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 average list price of properties sold in the first half of this year was \$265,692. This was an increase of 39.13% over last year's first 6 months when the average list price was \$190,305. The average sales price was \$260,241, a 45.28% increase over the first half of last year which saw an average sales price this year of \$179,129. There were no lakefront sales in the statistical sample and there was none in 2020 either so the average price bump up in the first half of the year was without the influence of one or two high dollar sales in our average sales price data. There will be at least one lakefront sale in the 3rd quarter of this year. Historical statistics seem relevant and help me put current facts into perspective. From 2015 through 2020 the average number of sales in the first half of the year was 32.5. In 2021, 34 units closed. Last year in the 1st 6 months available inventory kept sales low throughout the country. The number of active listings in the Multiple Listing Service at any one time is a bit up this year to 21 as this is written from 19 last year. This is still amazingly lower than the historic range of 75 to 85 actives in the 46403 market area around this time of year. The bargaining percentage is down from 6.86% in 2020 to a very low 1.95%. The average time a home was on the market was down substantially from 87 days in 2020 to 24 days in 2021. This is a reflection of multiple offers on hot new listings.

It remains a FACT in our MARKET Ayers Realtors is the market leader in Miller Beach.

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

Thank you for your support for 99 years.



ZULLY LEAVES BIG SHOES TO FILL



On First Friday, August 6th, Lake Street Gallery (613 S Lake Street), 5-7pm Meet & Greet Artist David Ciscsko creator of Miller Beach Water Safety Mascots, a lifetime swimmer & kayaker will give a short talk at 6pm. Drop by and give it a try.

Friends of Marquette Park Shoreline Committee welcomes new members Kim Swift (National Park Service – MillerWoods) and Samantha King (Dunes-Calumet Audubon), new members who care about the Lake Michigan Shoreline and our parks. Welcome and thanks

for your support and participation.

Golf Cart permits are now required in Miller Beach, Gary, Indiana. Only licensed drivers 16 years old or older are allowed to drive a golf cart on Gary/Miller streets and are obligated to follow the same driving and parking laws as cars. Contact Don Ploh, Vehicle Maintenance at 219-702-8247 to buy a golf cart permit.

Miller resident and advocate for universal accessibility extraordinaire, Zully Alvarado, is moving to Florida. In just nine years as a resident of Miller Beach, due to her extraordinary energy, we have an accessible kayak launch at Marquette Park Lagoon, a beautiful sensory and native garden with chess tables, sculpture, benches and sidewalks, The Disability Network, and much, much more. Thank You, Zully! You will be missed but always remembered.

You will soon notice new signage in Marquette Park that will explain and mark significant locations and mark trails. This is a project of Friends of Marquette Park who planned, funded and implemented the project. More information on Facebook – Friends of Marquette Park

Watch for information about an upcoming Nelson Algren Museum of Miller Beach event on August 28th to raise funds to have PBS Lakeshore Television screen the documentary - "Algren: The End is Nothing, The Road is All." Also, September 17 at 7 pm will be the organization's year end extravaganza with biographer Wendy George-Warren speaking about the life of Janis Joplin followed by a Janis Joplin tribute band. For more information check out www.nelsonalgrenmuseumofmillerbeach.com.

Having recovered from yet another spectacular, fabulous, and amazing garden walk, the Miller Garden Club is taking the month of August off – no monthly general meeting – and they are going on a field trip. On Sat, Aug, 21st. The club will travel to Indiana University Northwest to visit the Little Calumet River Prairie & Wetlands Nature Preserve. Dr. Spencer Cortwright from the Biology department at IUN will show and tell why the area in which we live is such a great botanical area. Also the garden club has opened a shop inside the Miller School Shops where they sell garden related note cards by local artist, Carol Smith, watercolor prints by the late Jim Wilson and other garden related items; 11am – 1pm Fri, Sat & Sun at the corner of Lake Street and Highway 12 – just North & East of the South Shore Station.

The Miller Community Fund has donated monies for the purchase of rose trellises at the Woodson Library on Lake Street in Miller which will help maintain the roses that were donated and transplanted to the garden by Rozvan Bascon and are lovingly cared for by Miller Garden Club members Dawn Vanzo, Tonia Flowers, and Martha Paine. Members of the garden club will be able to read an article about the garden in the next club newsletter. To join the Miller Garden Club and receive monthly newsletters go to www.MillerGardenClub.org where you will also be able to view beautiful photos of the club's recent garden walk taken by local photographer, Marty Bohn.

Well over a year ago the Miller Beach Arts & Creative District started a sustainable fund raising effort and named it "The Miller 500". The idea is to get 500 supporters of the MBA&CD to pledge a small amount monthly to give the organization funding stability. Example: 500 supporters pledge \$10 or \$20 per month and a steady \$5000 or \$10,000 a month comes in. The MBA&CD feels there are at least 500 Millerites and others who believe in the arts and their value to the community. Let's prove them right! For more information go to www.MillerBeachArts.org.

Sometimes there just isn't enough time in the day to get everything accomplished that needs to be done - including the Ayers Newsletter. And for that reason and the need to beat the press I decided to rerun a "Home on the Range" story from the past for this edition. This story is from the Spring issue 21 years ago. Reading it again brought back a lot of memories and the reminder that the Risotto recipe is still pretty darned good.

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Battle of the Sexes: Lethal Bra vs. Circulation-Stopping Corsage

Home on the Range



After going to Key Market in Miller a couple of weeks ago, I noticed demolition that was taking place just east of the grocery store. Many incarnations ago the pile of rubble that was being hauled away was once Jackson's Restaurant - a long ago fine dining establishment in Miller and more importantly - home of post prom parties for Wirt High School in the 60's. I paused a moment and enjoyed a flashback of a prom night many years ago. As I sat in my car I could almost hear the music of Oscar and the Majestics, remember my date, what I wore and all it took in terms of high school level angst to get to the prom.

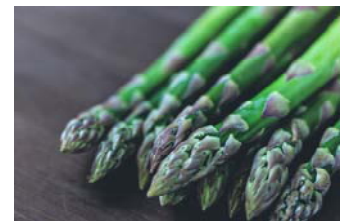
First of all you had to be invited, buy a dress, have shoes died to match - all of which needed to be coordinated with the boy's cummerbund. On the day of the prom - always a Friday - we only had a half day of school so girls could go to a beauty shop, have their hair done and still have time to go home and cry about how it turned out. Even with Mr. Jerry's magic (Mr. Jerry's was *the* place to go for having your hair styled and shellacked) none of us ever turned out looking like the pictures we cut out of magazines and took along to show Mr. Jerry how we wanted to look. More often than not we turned out looking like direct descendants of Lady Bird Johnson. Who knows what possessed girls who wore plaid skirts and penny loafers by day to try to wear Beehives and French Twists the night of the prom.

Guys were lucky. First of all they never would even think of going to Rex the barber a day or two before the big dance and have Rex do something drastic to their hair. And guys always looked good in a tux - except for one guy on the prom night I was thinking about. It was my first prom and my date's first formal dance since moving to Miller from Chicago. I was mortified when I opened the front door and there he stood wearing a robin's egg blue tux with a ruffled shirt and he handed me flowers to wear on my wrist instead of a nosegay. Apparently they did things differently across the state line. Wirt guys always wore traditional tuxes or white jackets and tuxedo pants. I'd known this since I was a little kid and watched the girl next door leave for proms. On prom night her hair always looked kind of funny in a Mr. Jerry sort of way but she wore the most beautiful formals and her dates always looked like guys in story books. They wore regular prom gear and never once did she have her flowers strapped to her wrist with elastic. She carried a bouquet of flowers that perfectly matched her dress and she knew all the neighbors were watching so she smiled and waved like Queen Elizabeth as she walked down her long sidewalk to the car and off they drove to the prom at the Pavilion. To me, a chubby little kid with skinned knees from roller skating and who always had a new, too curly, permanent, I thought she was the most beautiful girl in the world and I couldn't wait until someday I got to go proms. Someday had come. However, my prince looked not so charming and more like a relative of the Sopranos. He slipped my circulation stopping flowers on my wrist. I pinned a boutonniere on his blinding blue jacket and off we drove in his Buick Electra 225 to the prom at the Pavilion. Couple pictures taken that night captured the agony of my elbow length gloves, high heeled shoes, and a pointy, strapless bra that was just one slow dance away from risk of puncturing my date's lungs. Something must not have fit quite right on my date, either because he too, had an agonized, almost amphibian look on his face.

From the day he learned who I was going with to the prom my dad said he didn't like this kid. And he said it everytime the kid's name was mentioned. Sometimes he wouldn't even put the newspaper down to say it. He said it in the morning when he was shaving and reminded me numerous times - on the way to school, at the supper table, as he was going out the door - that he really didn't like my choice of prom dates-as if a girl who was just outgrowing her too tight curly permanents actually had a broad range of prospects from which to make her escort selection. In retrospect, having observed the same selective service he provided for my sister I came to realize it was his job because he was a dad not to like any youthful male of the species in dating mode. He thought this kid, my first prom date, looked like a frog. Although I couldn't see it then I can see it now in that old dance picture and it turns out my dad was right. That year's prom date turned out to be just the first in a series of frogs that had to be kissed after a lot more advise from dear old dad and before the real prince charming came along many years and trials and errors later, driving an old yellow convertible that had for sale signs in the truck of his car.

At dinner that night, after the prom and before the post prom party I was unable to order petite filet mignon like the rest of the girls. I was wearing new braces on my teeth and they had been torqued to the tightest degree so I ordered cream of mushroom soup. I wish I would have known about risotto back then because I could have ordered it that night and appeared to be, oh, so sophisticated.

Asparagus-Gorgonzola Risotto



YUMMY!!!

- 1/2 lb. asparagus, stem end discarded & cut in 1/4" pieces
- 2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) chicken broth
- 1 TBS olive oil
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 8 oz. (one rounded cup) Arborio rice
- 1/2 C dry white wine
- 1 TBS butter
- 1/2 C (2 oz.) crumpled Gorgonzola cheese
- 1/4 tsp ground white pepper - it seems pretty important to use ground white pepper
- 1/8 tsp salt

Bring chicken broth to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add asparagus and cook about 2 minutes, until tender-crisp. Remove asparagus with a slotted spoon and set aside. Keep broth at a very low simmer. Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add shallot and sauté for 1-2 minutes. Add rice and stir to coat with oil. Add wine; cook medium heat until it evaporates. Add 1/2 C reserved broth and cook, stirring occasionally, over very low heat until liquid evaporates, about 10 minutes. Repeat until rice is tender and all broth is used. When rice is creamy stir in butter and cheese. Season with white pepper and salt. Stir in asparagus. Makes 2 servings.#

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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

1920's Lakefront Home



PENDING! 7500 Oak Ave.
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50 foot of frontage

LAGOON FRONTAGE!

ADJACENT TO NATIONAL PARK!



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PENDING! 6017 Juniper Ave
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PENDING! 510 Tippecanoe Pl.
\$225,000

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