



Miller Message for April 2015

Special MCC/MBA meeting

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE COMBINED MILLER CITIZENS CORP. (MCC) AND MILLER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (MBA) BOARD MEETING AT **7:30 PM ON MONDAY, APRIL 13** AT THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. THE MEETING WILL FEATURE SPECIAL GUEST DAN VICARI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GARY SANITARY DISTRICT, WHICH DISPOSES OF WASTE WATER AND TRASH.

Saint Mary of the Lake church is fighting for its life

Saint Mary of the Lake Church on Miller Avenue has been struggling for a long time. Parish income has failed to cover the expense of keeping up the parish ministry, the large church building, a school and a gym. At the same time, the level of parish activity has declined: few baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and other activities. As a result, the new Catholic Bishop of Gary, Donald Hying, came to the Miller parish last week to announce that the church would be closed. However, he was met by members of the parish and by community members not associated with the church, pleading for a little more time. As a result, the Bishop decided to think some more about the appeals he had heard, and pray about the decision he was about to make.

COME EAT SPAGHETTI – MAY 2

St. Mary of the Lake parish has established an Outreach Committee, which announced, for its first activity, a spaghetti supper, as a fundraising event and an opportunity to connect with the

community. **Spaghetti Saturday** is set for **May 2 at 5:00 pm** in the church gymnasium on Miller Avenue. Meanwhile, “Support St. Mary of the Lake” signs dot the community, and the many people who promised to help are being challenged to follow through. The church also has a page on GoFundMe for accepting contributions: <http://www.gofundme.com/stmaryofthelake>

Be sure to vote - May 5

ON TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015, CITIZENS WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO VOTE ON CANDIDATES FOR A NUMBER OF LOCAL OFFICES AND ON A SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM.

PRIMARY ELECTION

Here in Miller, interest in the election is high. On March 10, the Miller Citizens Corp. (MCC) and the Miller Business Association (MBA) jointly sponsored a debate by candidates for the First District seat on the Gary Common Council, and 170 persons attended to hear the views of Mildred Shannon (the incumbent Council-woman), Eric Reaves, Rebecca Wyatt, Jackie Lee, and Herb Smith, all of whom are vying for the job.

First District voters will also be participating in contested races for **Mayor of Gary** and for the **three Council at Large seats**. The web site for the Lake County Board of Elections and Voter Registration lists all the candidates who have filed for these offices.

MCC ADVISES: VOTE “NO” ON PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM

The Gary Community School Corporation is sponsoring a referendum which will appear on the May 5 ballot, asking voters to approve an increase in property taxes for a period of 7 years, beginning with taxes payable in 2016; at a rate not to exceed .41% of the net assessed valuation; for the purpose of funding teaching positions, staff positions, and educational programming. If it passes, this tax will be an addition to all other property taxes and will be on top of the 1%-2%-3% tax caps.

The additional tax will be based on the **net** assessed value of the property, after all exemptions have been taken. For owner-occupied residences, the deductions are usually significant, so this will substantially reduce the impact of the .41% added tax. However, businesses, rental properties, and vacant land have very few deductions, so the added tax, for them, will be substantial.

The MCC is the original sponsor of property tax caps in Indiana. In 2004, we worked with Governor Kernan to implement the first “2% cap”, and we subsequently led the fight for general tax caps and for adding the caps to the state constitution, since nothing else worked to keep property tax rates under control. In this context, the MCC has voted to continue its opposition to property tax increases above the caps, and advises voters to vote **NO** on the referendum question.

REMEMBER THAT VOTERS MUST BE REGISTERED AND MUST PRESENT A PHOTO-ID WHEN THEY COME TO THE POLLS.

Clean up Miller – May 2

The annual Miller Cleanup has taken place every spring for more than 40 years. The 2015 cleanup is being sponsored by the MCC, the MBA, and the Miller Garden Club. Last year’s event brought out more than 100 volunteers, and we’re hoping for even more participants this year.

The cleanup will take place on **Saturday, May 2 from 7:00 am to noon** (Come when you can.). The command center for the event will be the former Ralph’s parking lot at Grand Blvd and Miller Avenue, where volunteers will be signed in, will receive supplies (i.e., plastic bags) and equipment (i.e., gloves, etc.) and will move out to various highways and byways to pick up trash and plant flowers.

Cleanup coordinator George Rogge is also looking for volunteers with **pick-up trucks**, to collect bags of trash from the roadsides and deliver them to the big, new garbage truck, supplied by the Gary Sanitary District, which will be waiting at Grand Blvd and Miller Avenue. Contact Rogge at georgerogge88@gmail.com if you can help out with a pick-up truck.

MCC Shoreline Committee works

KIDS PARK CLEANUP. The MCC Shoreline Committee has initiated a project to clean up the Kids Park area, east of the Aquatorium in Marquette Park. The playground has been divided into a patchwork of plots, and volunteers have been recruited to assume responsibility for weeding and planting each space. Initial clean-up and training days have been scheduled for the week after Easter – **Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11 from 9:00 to 11:00 am**. The emphasis, early in the season, is to root out the troublesome sand burr plants (aka ‘stickers’) before they have a chance to develop. Carol Smith reports that several of the designated plots have not yet been adopted, so additional volunteers are needed. The Shoreline Committee is also taking care of the

garden around Fr. Marquette's statue at the entrance to the park.

The Shoreline Committee is also reaching out to thank police and fire personnel for their service by treating them to coffee and donuts on April 1. The next committee meeting will be on **Thursday, April 16 at 6:00 pm** at the Gardner Center on Lake Street.

Duly noted . . .

FARMERS MARKET OPENING. The Miller Beach Farmers Market will be opening on **May 3** and will be in operation **every Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm until the end of September**. The market is located on Lake Street, next to the South Shore tracks, and vendors will offer fresh produce, honey, cheese, baked goods, coffee, specialty food items and craft items. Musical groups will often provide entertainment as you shop. The Farmers Market is looking for volunteers for a variety of functions, such as recruiting vendors, marketing, entertainment and fundraising. Interested vendors should contact the Market Manager by e-mail at market@millerbeacharts.org or by phone at 219-678-0288. Vendor fees are \$20 per week and a 10 X 10 canopy tent is required.

ART AT THE BREWERY. The 18th Street Brewery at Lake St. and Miller Avenue, will hold its monthly Drink and Draw night on **Friday, April 3 from 6:00 to 10:00 pm**. This month, there will also be an art opening for works of Matthew Ryan Sharp from **7:00 to 11:00 pm**. Of course, the brewery offers great beer and food every day.

WINE AND DINE. The Miller Bakery Café on Lake Street is presenting the Second Annual Save the Dunes Wine and Dine event on **Sunday, April 19 from 4:00 to 8:00 pm**. Tickets for \$47 include the dinner buffet, selected wines for \$1 per glass, along with a cash bar for cocktails and beer. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Save the Dunes Council. For reservations, call 219-427-1447.

STEWARDSHIP DAYS. Join the staff of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore at the Douglas Center on Lake Street, the fourth Saturday of each month, to help restore the rare oak savanna landscape in the Miller Woods. Tools and gloves will be supplied – just dress for the weather of the day. For more information, call 219-395-1821.

PEACE AND JUSTICE SEDER. Temple Israel on Montgomery Street invites the community to share in its annual Peace and Justice Seder on **Friday, April 10 at 6:30 pm**. Cost

of the dinner is \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Reservations with payment must be received by **April 6**. Send checks to Temple Israel, 601 N. Montgomery St.

GARY AIR SHOW. Mayor Freeman-Wilson has hosted several public meetings to highlight the upcoming Gary Air Show, scheduled for July 11 and 12 at Miller Beach. The Mayor unveiled the show's logo and web site (www.gary-airshow.com), and she announced that the Thunderbirds and the Golden Knights will be performing, but she had little to say about sponsors, vendors, parking, or other activities essential to the show. The support organizations at the Gary/Chicago Airport are ready to make the planes fly, but there are doubts about the ground activities in Marquette Park.

AN INVITATION TO MEET UP. Artopia Arts and Crafts Cultural Academy, 430 S. Lake St., invites the Miller community to their weekly meet-ups, every **Saturday afternoon from noon to 3:00 pm**. Young people and adults are invited to learn crafts and create handmade items. For additional information, contact Rhondalyn Cox or visit their website at www.meetup.com/Artopia-Arts-Crafts-Cultural-Academy-by-Miller-Beach-IN.

AQUATORIUM FUNDRAISER. Looking ahead, the Chanute Aquatorium Society, which operates and maintains the Marquette Park Aquatorium, is holding its spring fundraiser "Pizza, Plaques and People" on **Friday, May 22 starting at 5:30**. Cost of \$25 will go toward keeping up this Miller landmark and much-used gathering place.

April Arts District events

ART FROM EXCESS – March 28 to April 5. An exhibit with works by twenty different contributors, who have created art from discarded materials or art portraying abandoned places and materials. For instance, one large work is an abstract "painting" made with bottle caps. The exhibit, at the Gardner Center on Lake Street, will be open **Thursday, April 2 and Friday April 3 from 6 to 9 pm; Saturday, April 4 from 3 to 9 pm; and Sunday, April 5 from 1 to 4 pm**. The works on display have already attracted quite a few buyers.

FLYING FIGURES AND FLOATING FORMS - April 24 to May 10. An exhibit of recent works by Rashelle Roos using painting, collage and cut-out techniques, and sculptures by Joe Agati using wood, stone and metal together. The gallery will be open **Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 9 pm**, with an opening reception on **Friday, April 24 from 6 to 9 pm**.

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