



THE ZEPHYR

Real estate Sales page 20

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GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 1

HOCKEY MANIA HITS CHICAGO

JUNE 3, 2010



We're old enough to drink. The Zephyr has been around for 21-years, which is about 20 years longer than most of our critics ever thought we'd survive. As we enter our 22nd year of publishing, there will undoubtedly be many changes in store. The newspaper and magazine business is reinventing itself and we have no idea how it will shake out. We thank you for joining us for the ride.

Mercury falling?



by Mike Kroll

Bloomberg News began reporting last Thursday that Ford Motor Company would soon be eliminating the Mercury brand from its lineup. The recession has hit American car companies very hard and a number of domestic brands have been the victims of restructuring at competitors Chrysler (Plymouth) and General Motors (Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Saturn and Hummer) while Ford itself has shed Volvo, Jaguar and Land Rover brands in recent years. In each case the profitability of these various brands dramatically decreased along with sales and the parent company's reorganized around fewer brands and models. The Washington Post noted that in 1978 Mercury reached its sales peak of greater than 580,000 vehicles while the Wall Street Journal says Mercury sold almost 360,000 in 2000 but less than 93,000 last year. All these news reports quote unnamed company insiders as saying that Ford CEO Alan Mulally intends to seek approval from the Ford board of directors to eliminate the Mercury brand.

Allegedly descendants of company founder Henry Ford have already consented to the plan which would end Ford's mid-priced car line founded by Edsel Ford in 1939 to mimic competitor GM's tiered brand strategy falling between the Ford and luxury Lincoln brands. While the Mercury brand has had big hits in distinct models like the Cougar and Marquis recent years have seen much less product differentiation between the Ford and Mercury lines other than minor body style and, more significantly, price. Ford spokesman Mark Truby is cited in a number of these

stories refusing to either confirm or deny the fate of Mercury but a memo sent out by Kenneth Czuby (Ford vice president of U.S. Marketing Sales and Service) to its dealer network seeks to dismiss these concerns.

"Many of you are aware that several media outlets on Thursday published stories speculating on the future of the Mercury brand. ...As we reinforced in the media, like any good business, we always are assessing our business portfolio and product plans. However, we have nothing new to announce at this time (emphasis mine). ...we will not announce major business decisions without first communicating with you."

I spoke with Jeff Klinck, president of Galesburg Lincoln Mercury - Nissan, about this very issue and he is not concerned. He joined his father in the business back in 1992 after working for Illinois Power. His father, K.G. Klinck, finally retired and sold the business to Jeff late last year. "I assumed official control of the day-to-day operations on December 1, 2009," said Jeff. His father just completed sale of his Galesburg home (also to Jeff) and moved to a retirement community outside of Atlanta late last month.

"As the memo states, these news reports are merely speculation and we dealers have been given no indication of any impending brand change but we have been told that Mercury is about to unveil a totally redesigned Marquis later this year. The Mercury line fills a niche that perhaps could be better handled by broadening the Lincoln line of cars, something else

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Farm in the City

by Peter Schwartzman

Some say that dreams don't come true. Well, in Galesburg this just doesn't seem to be the case. Witness the springing up of several community gardens over the past few years, and there's no doubt that some dreams literally do blossom here.

Mound Community Farm, located at what was once 449 W. Tompkins St., is doing just this. In what had been a vacant lot owned by the city for the past six years, now springs fruits and vegetables to satisfy almost any palate.

Community gardens/farms

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might not seem to be that important a development. Some see them as passing fads or short-lived experiments. Others around the country, however, are showing that these gardens can play a major role in solving our current food problems. The garden plots not only bring people together, creating support networks, but also they produce a lot of food.

Everyone needs to eat. Yet, unfortunately, not all of us in the community have access to the food we need. Worse yet, some of our hungry are children, who don't have the ability to fend for themselves. One of the best ways to tackle this problem is to grow food in the community where it can be consumed locally.

Despite living on some of the best soil in the world, most of the local farms are producing soybeans and feed corn, that is, not producing food for local consumption nor adding much nutritional variety to the food stream. Meanwhile, there's a national health epidemic, where people are eating poor diets full of processed and high-sugar content foods. Once again, the way for us to counter this trend revolves around our growing healthy food.

So last summer when city lots came up for sale, I couldn't help but think of all the possibilities. Thanks largely to John Derge, one of our local farmers and an active proponent of neighborhood gardening, and a neighbor who let me "borrow" his backyard for my first sizable garden last summer, I came to realize the value of a neighborhood/community garden. This experience inspired my successful bid on, and subsequent purchase of, a one-third acre lot located just south of Hope Cemetery near downtown. And when The Hunger Action Group formed this past autumn, it appeared that I was destined to start a garden. Yet, things weren't to be that simple. Apparently, city ordinances prohibited the growing of a garden on an open lot. Thus, unless I was willing to build a house on the property, I could not plant crops on the land.

Fortunately, city administrators saw

the illogic nature of the current law and worked to change it. This change became finalized on May 3rd. With the city's blessings, Mound Community Farm would soon be born, at least that's what was hoped. One critical piece was still needed for it to be a reality—the community.

For the past nine weeks, actually beginning before it was "officially" a garden, people from all sections of town started pitching in. First, on March 30th, a generous person with a riding tractor came and tilled the main food garden plot as well as a patch of land for flowers. Soon after, a deal made with a local tree cutting business resulted in free tree mulch being delivered. Then a neighbor contributed ~100 bricks to border the flower plots. Following that, a local tree lover donated two baby persimmon trees, a six-foot hazelnut tree, and a young currant bush. And at various points in the process, Joel Gruver, a soil scientist who teaches at Western Illinois University, provided invaluable free counsel. As if this wasn't enough, others came to build mounds for the squash, tomatoes, and cucumbers to thrive. It is these mounds, which combine rich compost, wood chips, pellets of rabbit food, and a clump of sheep's wool, to give the crops a conducive habitat and the garden its personality.

It took a wonderful confluence of people coming together to make Mound Farm what it is today (just 65 days into its formation); it is considered a farm, not a garden, to emphasize the amount and variety of produce that we expect to grow on the parcel. And, so, when three full bags of spinach and swiss chard were shared with nearby residents this past weekend, all 114 hours of collective labor seemed worth it. Even more exciting, all told, we will have 30 different vegetables and fruits growing on Mound Farm for the remainder of this, its inaugural, year. That's not bad for something that was deemed "illegal" less than a month ago. It's also not bad considering how many healthy meals people will consume over the next several months because a few people dared to dream that something like this



was possible.

If you want to become part of Mound Farm Community, there are many ways to get involved. If you want to nurture the soil, come out at one of the following times (Sunday, 8-Noon; Tuesday, 6-8 PM; or, Thursday, 8-11 AM) and lend a hand. If you have old farm/garden equipment that you want to donate, please, let us know (email: thepeopleingalesburg@gmail.com; 344-

0046); we are particularly in need of an old push roto-tiller. If you just want to keep abreast of the goings-on at the Farm, you can visit www.thepeopleingalesburg.org/moundfarm.html for photos, or ask to be on its email list which will include regular updates as the season progresses.

You have to dream to see the future that you want to make.