



Rick Greif's

RickRealtor News

"Insider Tips For Healthy, Wealthy & Happy Living..."

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Austin, Texas

☞ Summer/Fall ☜

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Elm & Oak? The streets were named after trees that were here before the developers cut them down.

Go Underground

And get in touch with your primal self.

Touring caves is an inexpensive option for fun any time of year. There are several outstanding "show" caves nearby to choose from and visiting these caves is a great way to learn some fascinating Texas history.



Here are five very cool caves to get you started!

Natural Bridge Caverns ~ This is the largest commercial cave in Texas and is still growing. Open year round with many special events held throughout the year, although Summer is the most popular time to visit the caverns. Natural Bridge Caverns is located between San Antonio and New Braunfels 8 miles west of I-35. The general tour is about 1.5 hours long and there is even a "wild" caving opportunity for those on the more adventurous side.

Longhorn Caverns ~ This is one of the few river formed caverns within the state and has an interesting history dating back to the Comanche Indians and to its use during the civil war. Apparently, it was a Confederate stronghold where gunpowder was manufactured in secret during the Civil War. Today it is one of the most visited caverns in the state and is a part of the state park system. Located in Burnet County, Texas, just 6 miles west of U.S. Hwy. 281 on Park Rd 4.

Cascade Caverns ~ You may never want to leave this cave with its perfect year round temperature of 68 degrees and beautiful 100 foot water fall. The Caverns are located just outside of San Antonio near Boerne Texas off of I-10. Put this cave on your must see list.

Cave Without A Name ~ Some say this is the most beautiful cave in Texas. It is located just 12 miles outside of Boerne, Texas. This cave is also still growing and offers an easy tour of 6 beautiful rooms with beautiful and delicate formations highlighted by colorful lighting. The temp ... a cool 66 degrees year round!

Inner Space Caverns ~ In 1963 a construction crew building Interstate 35 discovered this enormous cavern system located directly below the highway. There are areas of the cave that are still being discovered today. The rooms in this cave, more than any other in Texas, have a surreal other-worldly feel to them and remind you of what a glorious and rich geological history Texas has. The caverns are located 20 miles north of Austin off of I-35, they offer general tours as well as two "wild" cave tours for adventure travelers.

Have a Laugh!

A doctor moved his family to a small town in Montana. An Italian American raised in Philadelphia, he wanted his kids to enjoy the benefits of clean air and the outdoors.

The locals were thrilled to have a doctor of their own, and were always inviting him and his family over for dinner.

During one visit, one of his daughters told a rancher's daughter, "We're Italian."

Somewhat confused, the little girl replied, "We're Ranch."



My brother and I arrived at boot camp together. On the first morning, the drill sergeant assembled us outside.

"My name's Sergeant Jackson," he snarled. "Is there anyone here who thinks he can whip me?"

My 6'3", 280-pound brother raised his hand and said, "Yes, sir, I do."

Our sergeant grabbed him by the arm and led him out in front of the group. "Men," he said, "this is my new assistant.

Now, is there anyone here who thinks he can whip both of us?"



This duck walks into a bar, and asks the bartender, "Do you have any grapes"?

The bartender says, "No we only sell beer here".

The next day the duck asks the bartender, "Do you have any grapes"?

The bartender says, "No. I told you we only sell beer, and if you ask me again I'm going to nail your beak to the bar." So the duck leaves.

The next day the duck asks the bartender "Do you have any nails"?

The bartender says "no".

The duck asks "Do you have any grapes"?

Keep Pets Safe



Dogs suffer more during hot humid weather ... especially older dogs, overweight dogs, or breeds like bulldogs and pugs because of their snub-noses.

Never leave your pets in a car. Even if outside temps are only in the 70s a closed car will heat up to dangerous temperatures in just a matter of minutes, so temps in the 90s can be fatal *fast*.

If possible, keep all your animals inside your home in the summer. Take them for walks in the in the cool early morning or late evening. Always provide plenty of water and access to shade. And avoid excessive exercise, especially after meals.

Be Aware of Poisons. Pets can get bored indoors and nibble on your houseplants. Common toxic plants include amaryllis, azalea, caladium, Easter lily, day lily, lily of the valley, peace lily, golden pothos, mistletoe, oleander and philodendron.

Also be alert to antifreeze and coolants from cars. It's sweet taste can attract animals and be fatal.

If you believe your pet has ingested a poisonous substance of any kind, you can call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center any time, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. (888) 426-4435

Did you know your dog's tongue will get wider when he gets hot? Check it out the next time your dog is panting after exercise, it will be considerably wider than usual.



3 Cleaning Tricks Using Cotton Balls

Scent the room ~ Saturate a cotton ball with your favorite cologne and drop it into your vacuum cleaner bag. Now, as you vacuum, the scent will be expressed and gently permeate the room.

Deodorize the refrigerator ~ Sometimes the refrigerator just doesn't smell fresh. Dampen a cotton ball with vanilla extract and place it on a shelf. You'll find it acts as a deodorizer, offering its own pleasant scent.

Fight mildew ~ There are always hard-to-reach spots in the bathroom, usually around the fixtures, where mildew may breed in the grout between tiles. Forget about becoming a contortionist to return the sparkle to those areas. Soak a few cotton balls (or paper towels) in bleach and place them in those difficult spots. Leave them to work their magic for a few hours. When you remove them, you'll find your job has been done. *Be sure to finish by rinsing with a warm-water wash.*



HOT WEATHER HUMOR

It's so hot that ...

- Hot water now comes out of both taps.
- You can make *instant* sun tea.
- You can attend almost any function wearing shorts and a tank top.
- Your car radiator overheats *before* you start your car.
- A man robbed Wal-Mart for a kiddie pool at gun point. *(True story!)*
- A woman left popcorn in her car and it started popping. *(True story!)*



Some GOOD News

Medical technology is awesome.

- The average American now retires at age 62. One hundred years ago, the average American *died* at age 51.
- Biomedical gerontologist Aubrey de Grey thinks the first person to live to see their 150th birthday is already born.

Innovation is nowhere near dead.

- MIT just created solar cells that can be printed on paper or other fabric and is almost as cheap and easy as printing a family snapshot from an inkjet printer.
- 2010 was a record year for both patent applications and patent grants.

Only 4% of humans get to live in America.

- You're probably one of them.

“Rents Soar as Projects Lag”

That was the headline in the August 13, 2011 Austin American Statesman.

So if you own your own home, be thankful that you aren't trying to get an apartment or house to lease. My recent experience with leasing a house for a client was a wake-up call, even though I knew that rents were going up. We leased the house within hours of putting it in the MLS and had to choose between several good applicants that had all rushed an application to me.

The reason rental costs are increasing is — the popularity of Austin and the influx of people to the area, the difficulty in getting a mortgage for many, and the lack of new apartments and houses under construction.

It has created a “perfect storm,” putting landlords in a good situation and renters in a bind.

It could be a difficult situation for renters for a long time to come, so I wanted you to be aware of this fact.

Is Your Foundation Thirsty?

House foundations can buckle and shift dramatically with dry, drought conditions. The use of a soaker hose around the perimeter of a home can keep the soil moist and the foundation less susceptible to shifting.

You may want to walk around the perimeter of your house to see if the soil is separating from the base of the slab. If it is, then it is a good idea to use the soaker hose treatment.

Another tell-tale sign your foundation needs water is if you have sticking doors or windows, or you see more sheetrock cracks than you usually do.

If one corner or side of your house seems to be “sinking” use the soaker hose treatment in just that area to lift it, which is what will occur when the soil expands with watering.

Don't put the hose up against the foundation; put it 6-18” from it. The amount of time you leave the soaker hose on is not an exact science. Suggested times are anywhere between 4 hours to as long as 48 hours ... or more.

Some neighborhoods are more susceptible to shifting than others. You won't want to do this unless you need to.

I've had some experience with this and I'm happy to come to your house or discuss it by phone.

I COUNT ON Your Referrals

I appreciate it when you refer friends and family to me.

I thank you and I want them to be so happy with my service that THEY thank you too!

As long as you keep referring me, I can devote my time, resources and experience to working for you and the referrals you send to me... instead of advertising and prospecting like other Realtors.

Just give me a call with their name and number and I'll be happy to follow up with them.

THANK YOU for reading
RickRealtor News!

Your comments and feedback are always welcome.

AND... if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate or just want to call and say "Hi" I'd love to hear from you...

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The Back Page

...by Rick Greif

The GREAT HURRICANE

It's not often that news of a tropical storm would be welcome, but many of us are watching the Gulf of Mexico in hopes of seeing a tropical depression that could turn into a rain-maker for Central Texas ... without causing any harm to folks on the Texas coast.

This brings to mind the story of Galveston meteorologist, Isaac Cline, and the great Galveston Hurricane of 1900.

Cline published an article in 1891, that said: "It would be impossible for any hurricane to create a storm wave which could materially injure the city." In his not-so-humble opinion, anyone who disagreed was the victim of "absurd delusion."

On the morning of September 8, 1900, after destroying the Cuban coast, a hurricane headed straight for Galveston. Since Cline's office had downplayed the danger, by the time Galvestonians realized they were in serious trouble there was no time to evacuate.

The bridges leading to the mainland had been destroyed by the storm and for many there was no place to go. A 20-foot storm surge put the island completely underwater causing staggering property damage and killing an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 people — more than any other natural disaster in America.

You would think this would have ruined Cline professionally, but that wasn't the case. He was given a promotion for his "example of courage and fidelity to duty" (another fine example of bureaucracy at work) and he was transferred to New Orleans.

His reputation survived somehow, but his house and his family did not. Therein lies the tragedy.

He continued his "distinguished" life of service and even today is revered as a pioneering meteorologist.

Notable Texas Hurricanes Since 1950

Audrey	Jun 1957
Carla	Sep 1961
Beulah	Sep 1967
Celia	Aug 1970
Alicia	Aug 1983
Gilbert	Sep 1988
Bret	Aug 1999
Rita	Sep 2005
Ike	Sep 2008

FAVORITE QUOTES

Self-consciousness is the enemy of interestingness.

Malcolm Gladwell

I CAN is 100 times more important than *IQ*.

Anonymous

Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.

Og Mandino

Obstacles are what a person sees when he takes his eyes off his goal.

E. Joseph Cassman