

The McJunkin Messenger

News To Help You Save Time And Money

May 2011

“Hello, Dorothy”

A university professor gave his students a pop quiz. Most of the students were conscientious about their studies and had little difficulty answering the questions – that is, until they reached the last one.

The question was, “What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?” The students looked at each other quizzically, not knowing if it was some kind of joke. Some knew what she looked like; she was tall and dark-haired, about 50 years old. But none knew her name. They handed in their papers without answering the question.

At the end of the class, a student asked the professor if the last question would count toward their quiz grade. The professor replied, “Absolutely. In your careers you will encounter many people, every one of whom is significant and deserves your attention and care. Even a simple smile or a ‘Hello’ is an act of attention.”



The students learned their lesson. The students also learned the name of the cleaning lady: Dorothy.

Is there a “Dorothy” in your life?

Keith

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Happy Accidents

Some well-known products and inventions weren’t the result of careful research and planning – they were accidents that someone with a creative mind spotted some potential in:

Potato chips. In 1853, a chef named George Crum in Saratoga Springs, NY, grew

frustrated by a diner who kept sending his potato crisps back, complaining they were soft and soggy. Crum sliced some potatoes as thin as he could, fried them in oil, and sent them out. The customer loved them – and a new snack food was born.

The Slinky. A naval engineer named Richard James was looking for a way to hold navigation instruments steady while a ship was in motion. He began experimenting with springs, hoping to use them as shock absorbers, but when he saw one of his prototypes drop gracefully from a shelf onto a table, he had a different idea. Introduced as a toy in 1945, the Slinky (named by James' wife) became a best-seller.

Corn flakes. The Kellogg brothers were searching for healthy foods to feed patients at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan. They inadvertently left some boiled grain on the stove for a few days, but decided to try putting the stale remains through rollers to make dough. It turned into flakes instead, and they decided to try toasting them. After a bit of development, they came up with a tasty food that patients enjoyed, and in 1906 one of the brothers, Will Keith Kellogg, founded the Kellogg's food company.

This Is Your Teen's Brain...On Alcohol

Here's another reason to warn adolescents about the dangers of drinking: According to a report by the American Medical Association, the brain appears to be especially susceptible to alcohol damage during a person's high school and college years. While the brain physically stops growing when a person reaches the age of five, its cells continue to refine and realign themselves until a person is 20 years old.

The late-teen/early adulthood period is recognized as prime drinking years for many. As a result, the consumption of alcohol – whether moderate or heavy – could bring about long-lasting brain damage, especially in regard to memory and critical thinking.

Teen drinkers are particularly vulnerable in two areas of the brain: the hippocampus, which is responsible for the brain's memory, and the prefrontal cortex, which is paramount in decision making.

The Now

There is only the moment. The *now*. Only what you are experiencing at this second is real. This does not mean you live *for* the moment. It means you *live* the moment.
– *Leo Buscaglia*

Go Fly A Kite!

If you're someone who enjoys kite flying, you might also enjoy these kite facts, courtesy of the World Kite Museum and other sources:

- More adults in the world fly kites than children.
- Kites were used to deliver letters and newspapers during the American Civil War.

- The highest altitude achieved by a single kite: 13,609 feet above ground in August 2000. A train of eight kites reached a height of 31,955 feet in August 1919.
- The world record for the longest “kite fly” is 180 hours.
- Kites were banned in Japan in 1760 because too many people preferred kite-flying to working.
- It’s believed that the first kites were flown more than 3,000 years ago and were made of leaves.
- Each year on the second Sunday of October kite flyers in nearly every country of the world unite and fly a kite to celebrate One Sky One World.



Can You Buy Happiness?

It turns out that the conventional wisdom is wrong: It is possible to buy happiness – when you spend your money on others. Researchers at the University of British Columbia and Harvard University found that people who buy gifts for others and make charitable donations report being happier than people who spend their money primarily on themselves. The scientists studied 630 men and women and asked them to rate their general happiness, their annual income, and their monthly spending including bills, gifts for themselves, gifts for others, and charitable contributions.

Researchers also measured the rates of happiness for people who received bonuses in varying amounts from their employers. Again, they found that it was not how much money the participants received that predicted happiness levels, but rather how the recipients spent the money. Those who donated more of their bonuses to charity or used it for gifts for others rated themselves as happier than those who did not.

In a third look at this phenomenon, the researchers gave participants a \$5 or a \$20 bill and asked them to spend it before 5pm on the same day. Half were given the instruction to spend the money on themselves, half to spend it on others. The half who spent their money on others reported feeling better at the end of the day than those who didn't. The researchers say that even spending a small amount on someone during the day can significantly improve our feelings of happiness.

Thought Of the Month

Texans Enjoy Affordable Real Estate Values

It is no secret that Texans enjoy some of the most affordable real estate values in the country.

The chart (page 5) as printed in the Tierra Grande Magazine's April 2011 publication shows just how affordable our home prices in Texas are.

Only 5 states have real estate more affordable than ours, and those are just slightly more affordable .

Nationwide, the median-home price to median-income ratio has dropped from its peak of 4.8 in 2005 to 3.3 in 2010. This means that in 2005 it took 4.8 times the median annual income to purchase the average priced home.

A ratio of around 3 is generally considered normal. In Texas the ratio declined from a peak of 3.3 to a current 2.9. This is another indicator of how Texas avoided a price bubble during the housing boom.

In Hawaii, the most expensive real estate market in the United States of American, it takes more than 8 times the median income to purchase a median priced home. In Honolulu, the median income was \$81,700 in 2010 x 8.1 would make the median price over \$660,000.

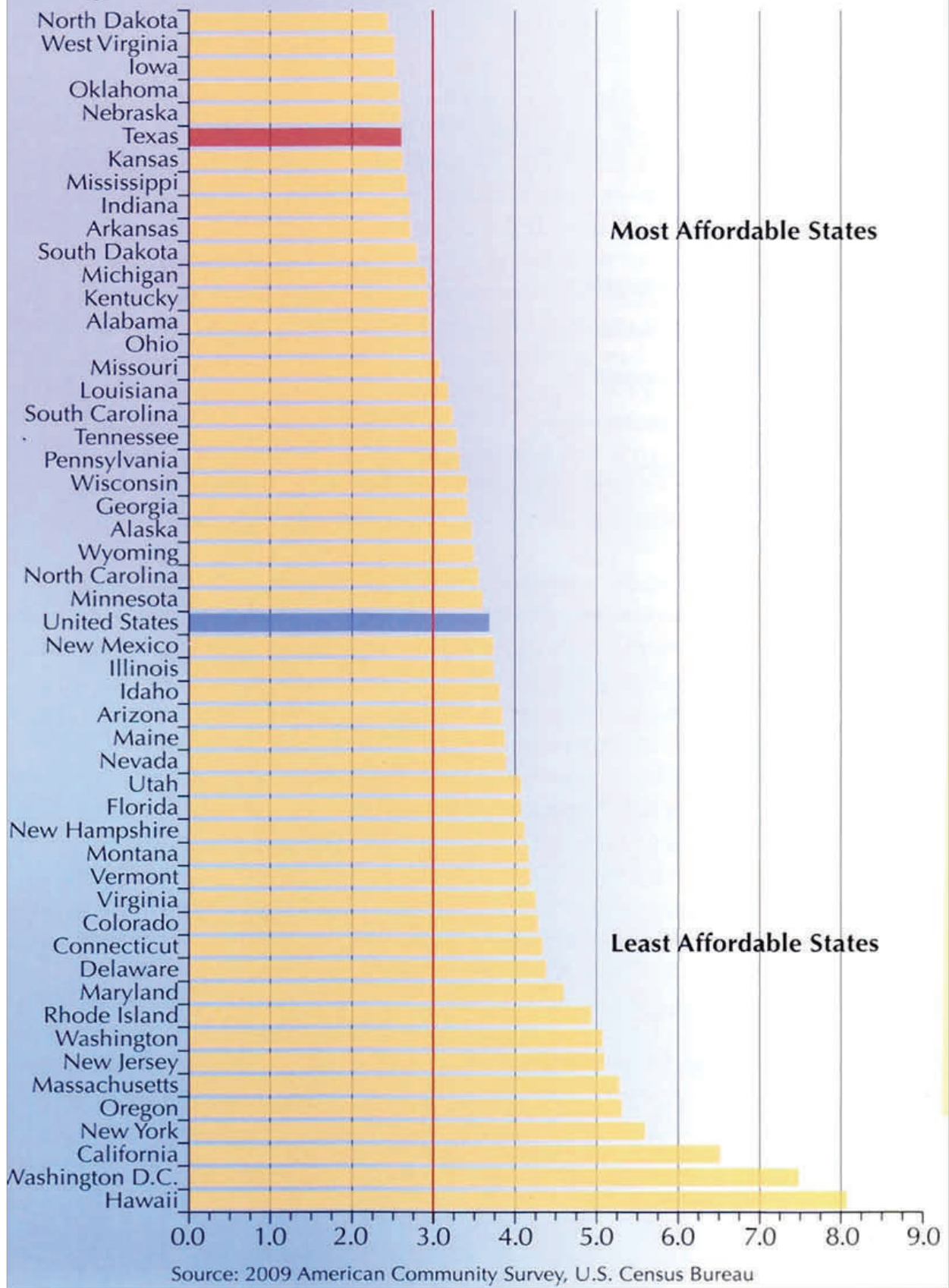
Texas home prices have held up well while those in the rest of the country generally declined. Most of the metropolitan areas in the state experienced price increase during the past 5 years although the increases were lower in 2010.

Have a great May!

Keith

As always, please consider referring my construction and real estate brokerage services if you have, a family member, friend or business associate that is planning on purchasing, building, or selling a home. Have them contact me to help them work through this complicated process.

Figure 7. 2009 Median Home Value/Median Household Income



May Scramble Trivia

I will give you clues to 2 words. You must figure out the first word, then subtract a "T" from that word and re-arrange the rest of the letters to get the second word. The words must be given in the correct order.

Never before seen - T = Places for hitting golf balls

Everyone who faxes, emails or calls in the correct answer by the last day of this month will be entered into a drawing for a Lowe's \$30 gift card.

Call 281.597.7300 and leave a message or email me at keith@mcjunkinhomes.com

WELCOME NEW CLIENTS

Here are some of the new clients who became members of our "Real Estate Family" this past month. I'd like to welcome you and wish you all the best!

Virginia Westmoreland

Risa Jenkins

We love giving recognition to our new friends and our wonderful existing clients who are kind enough to introduce their friends and relatives to

April Trivia Answer

Question: A piece of meat - t = A Japanese beverage

Answer: steak - t = sake

Congratulations to Lollie and Steve Wark. Your name was selected at random from all of the correct quiz entries and you'll receive Lowe's \$30 gift card

The “Are You Ready To Be A Mother?” Test

Mother’s Day is Sunday, May 8, and if you or someone you know is considering motherhood, here are some tests provided by actual moms to help you with that decision:

Mess Test: Smear peanut butter on the sofa and curtains. Now rub your hands in the wet flower bed and then rub on the walls. Cover the stains with crayon. Place a fish stick behind the couch and leave it there all summer.

Toy Test: Obtain a 55-gallon drum of LEGOs (if LEGOs are not available, you may substitute roofing tacks). Have a friend spread them all over the house. Put on a blindfold. Try to walk to the bathroom or kitchen. If you step on one do not scream – this could wake a child at night.

Grocery Store Test: Borrow one or two small animals (goats are best) and take them with you as you shop at the grocery store. Always keep them in sight and pay for anything they eat or damage.

Feeding Test: Obtain a large plastic milk jug. Fill halfway with water. Suspend from the ceiling with a stout cord. Start the jug swinging. Try to insert spoonfuls of soggy cereal (such as Fruit Loops or Cheerios) into the mouth of the jug, while pretending to be an airplane. Now dump the contents of the jug on the floor.

Night Test: Prepare by obtaining a small cloth bag and fill it with eight to 12 pounds of sand. Soak it thoroughly in water. At 8pm begin to waltz and hum with the bag until 9pm. Lay down your bag and set your alarm for 10pm. Get up, pick up your bag, and sing every song you have ever heard. Make up about a dozen more and sing these until 4am. Set alarm for 5am. Get up and make breakfast. Keep this up for five years. Look cheerful.

Final Assignment: Find a couple who already have a small child. Lecture them on how they can improve their discipline, patience, tolerance, toilet training, and child’s table manners. Emphasize to them that they should never allow their children to run wild. Enjoy this experience. It will be the last time you will have all the answers.

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