



# Michael's Home News

News To Help You Save Time And Money

January 2011

## Can Smart Beat Swift?

Two men were competing in a tree-cutting championship. One of the men was very ambitious and hardworking. The other was not so ambitious or hardworking, but still very good at what he did.

While the go-getter was chopping down every tree he could at the fastest pace possible, the other was cutting down trees methodically. The hard worker toiled through the day. He never took lunch. As for his rival, he took an hour-long lunch, then resumed the race.



In the end, the man who took lunch and did not work as hard won the race. This upset the challenger, who thought he deserved to win. He went up to the winner after the race and said, "I don't get it. I worked longer and harder than you did. I didn't take a lunch, but you did. And yet you won. It doesn't seem fair."

The winner responded, "While I was taking lunch, I was also sharpening my ax."

**The race isn't always to the swift!**

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*Michael Cowling*

## Let's Get Ugli!

Have you ever eaten an ugli fruit? If not, you're in luck, because right now is ugli season!

According to [ugli.com](http://ugli.com) and other Web sites, UGLI® is the brand name for a citrus fruit that was discovered growing wild in Jamaica in 1924. A cross between a grapefruit, orange and tangerine, it's variously described as having an "unattractive, bumpy appearance" and "yellowish, pebbly skin with green blotches," and being "discolored and odd-shaped," "unsightly, rough, wrinkled" and

finally, “lopsided, lumpy and frumpy”! But...

Ugli fans – or rather, fans of ugli fruit – tell a different story: “honey-sweet, tangy, succulent, delicious, and remarkably juicy.” Slightly larger than a grapefruit and with fewer seeds, the ugli is easy to peel and separate into sections so it makes a great



snack, and it’s a wonderful addition to salads, soufflés and casseroles. It’s also a *healthy* addition; half an ugli has 45 calories, no fat, no cholesterol, and is a great source of vitamin C and fiber.

When ugli fruit are in stores, they’re ripe, no matter what their color is – green, greenish-yellow, yellow or orange. Choose fruits that are heavy with no bruises and no signs of drying at the ends. And if you can’t find the fruit at your supermarket, tell the produce manager that it’s time to – get ugli!

## A Quick Stress Reliever

Try this tip for overcoming stress when it threatens to overwhelm you: Make a list of things you like to do, that you look forward to, and that help you relax. When you’re feeling stressed, take a look at your list and pick something that you can do right away, even if only for a few minutes. You’ll feel better, and just knowing you’ve got options should help you maintain your cool.

## Caregivers Need Care, Too

People who take care of the chronically ill often are expected to do all and be all for their charges. But caregivers often feel overwhelmed and disconnected from friends and life outside of taking care of a sick family member or friend. Here’s how you can lend them some help:

**Educate yourself.** Find out about the disease or condition the sick person is suffering. Ask the caregiver for suggestions on articles or books to read. Your interest helps show your support.

**Keep in touch.** Write or call just to ask the caregiver how things are going – with him or her and with the person who’s sick.

**Have an attentive ear.** Give caregivers a chance to talk about themselves and their feelings.

**Be observant.** See what needs to be done and suggest ways you can provide help to the

### **December Quiz Answer**

**Question:** What is the world’s largest herb?

**Answer:** Banana plant.

**Source:** [banana.com](http://banana.com)

### **Congratulations to Kathleen Thomas**

Your name was selected at random from all of the correct quiz entries and you’ll receive for a \$25 Gift Certificate to Starbucks

**Watch for your name  
in a coming month!**

As an added service to our clients and due to the overwhelming demands made upon myself and my staff each month, we are compiling a Service Directory of businesses we feel comfortable referring to you, your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

We would love to receive your input for the finest individuals and businesses including any home care or personal care services: a carpet cleaner, electrician, attorney, fitness instructor, dog groomer, gardener, etc. To be included in our directory, you or your referral must be able to answer "yes" to the following three questions:

1. Did the business provider exceed your expectations, not just meet them?
2. Did the person providing the service treat you with respect?
3. Does the service provider exhibit the same high standards over time?

If you know of a business that meets these requirements, email me at [mc@michaelcowling.com](mailto:mc@michaelcowling.com) or call me at 604-276-2335. We'll contact your referral for possible inclusion in our directory.

We will publish the Service Directory for you and our other valued clients. In this way, we'll all share the advantage of dealing with businesses that exceed your expectations by consistently providing world-class service.

caregiver. Be specific in your offer – like picking up groceries or taking books back to the library.

**Offer your time.** Give the caregiver a break – even if it's just for an hour – and sit with the person who is sick. Or, run the vacuum, do a load of laundry, and empty the dishwasher.

## Are You A Distracted Driver?

A recent survey found that 54 percent of people check their cell phones while driving. In a related study of driving and talking on the phone, only 2.5 percent of test subjects were able to do both safely. For the other 97.5 percent, the ability to hit the brakes quickly was slowed by 20 percent, and the tendency to drive too slowly to keep up with traffic rose by

30 percent. To keep from being a distracted driver, consider these tips:

- Turn off your phone when driving. Talking on the phone or texting at the wheel is illegal in many states, as well as dangerous to you, your passengers, and other drivers. Pull over if you need to talk.
- Set priorities. Part of the problem comes from the belief held by many about being accessible outside the workplace. Discuss the situation with your employer (and your family) so everyone understands that you can't always be connected.
- Have a backup. If you anticipate being needed outside the office, leave an out-of-office message on your voicemail, and provide contact information for colleagues who can assist callers in your absence. That way, urgent calls can be taken care of even if you don't answer the phone.

## Fifteen Seconds Of Fame

Miami Dolphins football coach Don Shula tells of being on vacation with his wife and two children in a small town in Maine. They went together to the local movie theater, and when they walked down the aisle, the 12 people in the theater stood and applauded.

### January Quiz Question

**In February many of us will watch a program with "XLV" in its title; what number does XLV stand for?**

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 \$25 Gift Certificate to Starbucks

As the Shulas took their seats, Don said to his wife, "It's just amazing. Sometimes I forget the power of network television and the level of interest in the game today. These people must get every Dolphin game all the way up here. And that standing ovation shows how strongly they feel about football."

At that point, one of the other customers came down to the row where the Shulas were sitting. "Excuse me, sir," the man said. "I don't know who you are, but we sure are glad to see you. The manager said if we didn't get four more people tonight, he wasn't going to show the movie."

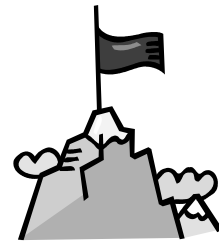
## Here's An Easy Way To Exercise

Here's an exercise you can do without ever leaving your chair – an exercise for your brain! Scientists believe that puzzles and games are useful tools for stretching your mind. Challenge yourself with these brain teasers:

1. A child was born in Boston, Massachusetts, to parents who were both born in Boston, Massachusetts. But the child was not a United States citizen. How is this possible?
2. Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the tallest mountain on Earth?
3. A child is born on December 27, yet her birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible?
4. How many times can you subtract the number 5 from 25?

Answers:

1. The child was born before 1776.
2. Mount Everest. It just hadn't been discovered.
3. The child lives in the southern hemisphere.
4. Only once. Then you're subtracting it from 20.



## How To Make A Good First Impression

To make a good first impression, most people can manage a firm handshake. But career consultant Tim Moore says that's only one-third of the process. "Making direct eye contact and having a clear enunciation of the greeting, not a mumbled hello," are the other elements of the effort, he says.

"Overall, the entire interaction should be firm, quick, and decisive. It's like a snapshot, and it's locked in. It does more on a subconscious level and can really influence someone's view of you."

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## Client Of The Month

Congratulations to our Client Of The Month,

Sandra Simpson

This Month, the Client Of The Month received a Dinner for 4 at the Keg Restaurant

**Call me to find out how you can become**

## The Price Of True Love?

If you, a family member or friend has started planning a wedding, then you know you can spend a lot of time planning that perfect day. And you can spend a lot *on* that perfect day: According to online sites such as [www.costofwedding.com](http://www.costofwedding.com) and [www.weddingbells.ca](http://www.weddingbells.ca), the average wedding costs \$20,000 (not including rings and a honeymoon), and that amount increases significantly if you're tying the knot in a major city like Manhattan or Toronto.

If you want to keep wedding expenses under control, consider these tips:

**Skip the busy season.** Most weddings take place in the summer and early fall. You can save money by scheduling the nuptials off-season.

**Pick the right time.** The most popular, sought-after, and expensive day and time to book a reception hall is Saturday evening. If you can manage the ceremony and reception during the daytime you'll put less of a strain on your finances (leaving more for your honeymoon).

**Don't go overboard with flowers.** Select flowers that are in season; concentrate more on greens and less on blooms. A little color is nice, but you want people's attention to be on the bride and groom.

**Let them eat cake.** Don't overload guests with sweets. If you're serving dinner at the reception, offer your guests wedding cake or assorted desserts but not both.



**Do not borrow money to pay for your wedding.** This is a debt you could be paying off for years. If it means buying a less expensive dress, inviting 20 less people, or serving hors d'oeuvres instead of a sit-down meal (or all of these), spend only what you can afford. Isn't that the best way to start your wedded lives together?

Google "save money wedding" for lots more ideas.

## Include Family In Your New Year's Resolutions

Setting goals is a great way to nurture your growth. That's why it's important to make New Year's resolutions for family if you want your family life to change and improve. Consider including these goals this year:

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- ☑ What did that house across the street sell for?

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See page seven for all this and more.

**Pare down activities.** Families are busier than ever, so it's important to make room for consistent togetherness time. For example, think about cutting back on activities so everyone can eat dinner together most nights.

**Build confidence in children's strengths.** Parents spend a lot of time pointing out kids' weaknesses. Yet successful people become that way because they focus on their strengths. Do the same for your kids. It will give them the confidence to tackle their weaknesses.

### Consider establishing regular family meetings.

These times should be used to discuss schedules and goals and even grievances. In essence, family meetings are important to help everyone in the family

reconnect. Don't schedule family meetings during meal times.

**Make personal resolutions a family affair.** If you've decided that you want to do more charitable work, for example, consider making your personal goal a family goal. Volunteering as a family is a powerful way to build self-esteem and establish a sense of community in yourself and your children.

**Work on a parenting weakness.** There are many resources that can help you improve your parenting skills. Head to the library or start surfing the Web.

## When Failure Is Good

Failure can be one more step on your road to success – you just have to turn it around in a positive direction. Here are some creative ways to view failure:

- Failure can **push** you harder to succeed.
- Failure can **strengthen** your determination to overcome obstacles.
- Failure can make you **braver** in the face of opposition.
- Failure can help you **learn** what you need to do in order to succeed.
- Failure can **encourage** you to change your strategy.

### See An

### Interesting Home?

No need to wonder about the price.

No need to call a high-pressure sales agent who will just make you feel obligated. My computers can send you the information quickly and easily, for any house, listed or sold, anywhere in town.

**Just ask me! It's all part of my free, no-obligation HomeFinder Service.**

Leave the address on my voicemail, anytime, 24 hours a day, and I'll fax, mail or e-mail all the information to you on that listing within 24 hours.

# MICHAEL'S HOME NEWS

## Free Information Request Form

Please complete the box below and place check marks next to the free reports and information you'd like to receive.

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Michael Cowling, #160—6086 Russ Baker Way, Richmond BC, Canada, V7B-1B4 or just call me at 604-276-2335  
[www.michaelcowling.com](http://www.michaelcowling.com) email: [mc@michaelcowling.com](mailto:mc@michaelcowling.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me the requested free information selected below via  Mail  Fax  Email.

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- Five Deadly Mistakes Home Sellers Make
- Making the Move Easy On the Kids
- How Sellers Price Their Homes
- How to Stop Wasting Money on Rent
- How to Sell Your House For the Most Money In the Shortest Possible Time
- The 10 Dumbest Mistakes Smart People Make When Buying or Selling a Home

### Free Information

- Send me information about your free, no-obligation HomeFinder service.
- Send me the special computer report showing the features and sale prices of up to 15 of the most recent home sales near the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_, City: \_\_\_\_\_

or in the \_\_\_\_\_ area.

- Please let me know the listing price and features of the home at the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_.

- Please let me know the selling price of the home at the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_.

- Please call me to arrange a free, no-obligation market valuation on my house.

**Do you have a family member or friend who would enjoy a free subscription to MICHAEL'S HOME NEWS? Just provide me with their contact information, and I'll add them to my mailing list.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_



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