

# Duncan's



# News

News To Help You Save Time And Money

Robin Clark Editor January 2012

## A Dad's Lesson In Integrity

A father who had been laid off from his job had been watching expenses closely for months. But he'd made a promise to his two sons, who were twins, that he'd take them to a nearby amusement park for their tenth birthday.

When the day came, the father withdrew some money from his savings and he took his two sons on the bus to the amusement park. When they reached the front gate, he saw a sign:

"General admission: (ages 10 and up) \$10."

"Children under 10: \$5."

If he'd come a day earlier, the father realized, he could have saved 10 dollars—five for each of his twin sons. But with a sigh he led the boys up to the ticket window and said, "Three general admission tickets, please."

The woman in the booth looked them over and smiled. "How old are you boys?"

"I'm 10 years old today," said one son.

"So am I," said the other. "We're twins!"

The woman leaned forward. "You know," she whispered, "you could have asked for two 'Under 10' tickets, and I never would have known."

"Yeah," said the father, "but they would have."

**Remember that actions speak louder than words, especially to kids.**

*Duncan Clark*

## Entrepreneurs: Loving the Lifestyle

If you're itching to be your own boss, start your own business, and take charge of your own career, you're not alone. According to an Aflac survey, 77 percent of adult full-time employees say they'd leave their current jobs to become entrepreneurs; 69 percent report that the main reason they stay on their jobs is the promise of a regular paycheck.

Among those who have taken the entrepreneurial plunge, almost 60 percent report that they're satisfied with their situations (according to a survey by MBO Partners). Despite lingering long-term unemployment rates, more than half (55 percent) say they made a proactive decision to go independent, and 63 percent plan to remain on their own regardless of the direction the economy takes.

## English Majors Make Good!

Being an English major doesn't mean you'll spend your life discussing poetry in coffee shops while plotting your novel and wondering where your next rent payment is going to come from. Here's a list of some rather successful English majors who defied the stereotype:

- **Alan Alda** (actor), Fordham College
- **Michael Eisner** (business executive), Denison University
- **Sally Ride** (astronaut), Stanford
- **Diane Sawyer** (journalist), Wellesley College
- **Paul Simon** (musician), Queens College
- **David Duchovny** (actor), Yale
- **Conan O'Brien** (talk show host), Harvard
- **Joan Rivers** (entrepreneur/comedian), Barnard
- **Martin Scorsese** (director), New York University

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## The Power Of Why

Whether you're managing a team of employees or you're on your own, remember that although what you do and how you do it are important, it's the "why" that provides real motivation to succeed. An experiment conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business demonstrates the power of "why."

At a university call center where employees phoned alumni to solicit contributions to scholarship funds, the staff was randomly divided into three groups: The first read stories written by former call center employees about the benefits of the job (improved communication and sales skills, etc.); the second read accounts from former students about how their scholarships helped them (with education, careers, lives); the third, a control group, read nothing.

Measuring the results of the three teams after a month, the researchers found that the first group and the third group raised roughly the same amount of money from alumni after the experiment began as before. But callers in the second group, who'd read inspirational stories about the impact of the scholarships they were raising funds for, raised twice as much money from twice as many alumni as they had before.

Understanding the importance of their work—the "why"—had apparently motivated them to get better results.

## Can You See Me Now? High-Tech Glasses May Help

A new set of glasses may help people with serious vision impairments. The *Popular Mechanics* website reports that scientists at Oxford University are adapting technologies used in smartphones and gaming systems for use in frames that can help people with age-related macular degeneration and other eyesight problems.

The high-tech glasses have tiny video cameras mounted at the corners. Facial recognition software running on a device in the wearer's pocket can identify people and objects. Then the minuscule LED arrays

embedded in the lenses highlight objects in specific colors that help the wearer identify them. The Oxford scientists also believe they might be able to use optical character recognition to render text into a voice that is sent to headphones on the glasses, enabling wearers to read signs when they're out in public.

Developers are hoping to produce the glasses for about the same cost as a high-end smartphone.

## Conan Doyle's First 'Case'

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is famous for creating the enduring character Sherlock Holmes, but he started out doing far less creative and glamorous work.



He once commented that the turning point in any writer's career is not when he or she first starts sending stories to publishers, but when publishers begin commissioning stories from the writer.

Doyle's first commission is said to have been a translation of a German article for *The Gas and Water Gazette*. The title: "Testing Gas Pipes for Leakage."

## Cucumbers To The Rescue!

The humble cucumber can be far more useful than something we just toss into a salad. Here are a few more uses for this common vegetable:

Cucumbers battle the mid-afternoon slump. Instead of guzzling a Red Bull, try nibbling a cucumber. It contains B vitamins, Vitamin C, calcium, and other nutrients that can perk up your energy level.

Because they are rich in potassium and magnesium, cucumbers may help lower blood pressure. They may also regulate uric acid and may prevent kidney and bladder stones with their high moisture content.

Place a slice of cold cucumber over each of your eyes for about 15 minutes. The moisture will cool your skin and allow the blood vessels in your eyes to contract, easing swelling and pain.



## A Diamond In The Sky?

Astronomers and gem dealers alike were no doubt excited by the discovery of a distant world that appears to be crystalline in its structure and chemical makeup—in other words, it's a big fat diamond. The planet, which orbits a pulsar some 4,000 light-years from Earth, is about 20 times denser than the planet Jupiter (the largest planet in our solar system) and is about five times the diameter of Earth.

As reported by the journal *Science*, scientists in Australia, Europe, and the United States detected the planet by analyzing the radio signals emitted from the pulsar it orbits. (A pulsar is a neutron star that gives off bursts of electromagnetic radiation as it rotates.) It's located in the constellation Serpens (the Snake).

The world is currently known as PSR-J1719-1438, but we're hoping for something with a slightly catchier ring. Like, how about Zirconia?

## Attack Of The Giant Red Crabs - For Real!

It sounds like a 1950s science fiction movie: Giant Red Crabs attack and cause devastation wherever they go! But it's real, and it's happening in the Antarctic. The *New Scientist* website reports that king crabs measuring more than a meter across are invading the waters underneath the South Pole, laying waste to an ecosystem more than 14 million years old.

Over one million *Neolithodes yaldwyni* (king crabs) have migrated to Palmer Deep, a basin beneath the continental shelf of the Antarctic Peninsula, where they're crashing through the ocean floor's fragile sediment with their long legs.

They appear to be devouring sea urchins, starfish, and other aquatic life, reducing the number of species in colonized areas to just a quarter of



that in other, not-yet-invaded regions. Scientists say that warming temperatures have allowed the crabs to expand their home base; if the warming trend continues, the invading crabs could spread to areas as shallow as 400 meters within the next 20 years.

Next stop? Who knows . . .

## Mothers: They're Human, Too!

Being a mother can be stressful. But admitting that you sometimes need a break can be hard, given the expectations that society has for the "perfect" mother. A survey of some 25,000 moms (reported on the *Parenting.com* website) uncovered some secrets about what mothers want, and don't want, from their lives. Some of the longings and preferences the mothers admitted to were:

- 23 percent say what they want most is some time alone.
- 49 percent have sent their children to school knowing that they were sick.
- 18 percent have medicated their children to ensure a quiet car trip or flight (and 8 percent have done so for the sake of a quiet night at home).
- 88 percent admit they harshly judge other mothers for such things as a child's misbehavior or weight.
- 14 percent admit to favoring one child over another.
- 84 percent admit they have used their parental responsibilities as an excuse to avoid other obligations.



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*You have enemies? Good! That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life - Winston Churchill*

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*You miss 100% of the shots you don't take - Wayne Gretzky*



## A Heartwarming Newfoundland Christmas Story

A man in Newfoundland calls his son in Calgary three days before Christmas & says "I hate to ruin yer day but I'm divorcin' your mudder. Forty-five years of misery is enough."

"Faudder! Whadda ya talkin about ???" the son screams.

"We can't stand da sight of each hudder any longer" the father says. "We're sick'n'tired of each other & I'm sick of talkin' about dis, so ya call yer sister in Vancouver & tell 'er."

Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "No way dey're gettin' divorced!" she shouts, "I'll take care of dis."

She calls Newfoundland immediately & screams at her father.

"Yer not gettin' divorced. Don't do a single ting until I gets dere. I'm cawin' me brudder back & we'll both be dere by da-mar. Until den don't do nutin', DO YOU 'EAR ME???" and hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone & turns to his wife. "Okay" he says, "Dey're comin' for Christmas & dey're paying deir own way!"

***May the New Year bring you health and happiness and continued holiday spirit  
of friendship.  
Duncan Clark***

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