



Chas Everitt



Berry Everitt



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**FROM THE PUBLISHER**

**Gala dinner held at the Michaelangelo launches Chas Everitt's Home Makeover charity project.**



Olympic gold-medallist Ryk Neethling and TV stars Craig Urbani, Michelle Garforth and "Die Nutsman" Riaan Venter were among the luminaries who attended the gala dinner held at the Michaelangelo recently to launch our exciting Home Makeover charity project.

Top rock band The Parlotones provided the entertainment for the evening and several pieces of handcrafted jewellery by designer Jenna Clifford were auctioned to help raise funds for the first makeover, which will take place at Kids Haven in Benoni.

Also strongly represented were Betterbond and Nedbank, which are platinum sponsors of the project, as are Jack's Paint and Hardware, STBB Attorneys, The Home Channel and Ferreira's Décor World.

The real "stars of the show", though, were Moira Simpson and Susan Daly and some of the children from the Kids Haven shelter for abandoned and abused children.

The makeover of their building will take place over the first weekend in October and will be run along the lines of the popular TV show Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, with the children being treated to an exciting holiday while their home is totally renovated and transformed into a warm, homely and welcoming environment.

The purpose of the home makeover project, though, is not only to change buildings but also to change lives by helping to make children's dreams for the future come true - and in that way to create a cycle of hope and help for others.

We know this will not be easy, but we are sure it will be worthwhile, and we are deeply grateful to all the friends and sponsors that have chosen to participate in the Home Makeover project because we are certain to achieve more for the children by pooling our resources.

\* Anyone who wants to know more about the project or would like to make a contribution should check out [www.ceihomemakeover.co.za](http://www.ceihomemakeover.co.za).

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Every month the **Property Signpost Newsletter** will be issued to all our subscribers, filled with real estate information to help you make an informed decision, whether you are buying or selling a property.

**In This Month's Newsletter:**

- **Swing to the centre as commuting woes increase**
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- **Summer tips for safe mowing**
- **Keep your cool with ceiling fans**

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**Swing to the centre as commuting woes increase**

Fuel prices have come down from their mid-year highs but most people believe that generally higher transport costs are here to stay, and this is prompting many homeowners in the new estates and security complexes on the outskirts of the big metros to look again at older properties closer to city centres.

They are weighing up the costs of commuting against the generally higher property prices in central areas, and calculating that they will be able to afford higher home loan repayments out of what they save on commuting.



And there is more than the fuel price in the reckoning here. There is also the frustration of spending hours in the traffic each day and the huge amount of time that is being lost to work and family, as well as the additional wear and tear on vehicles.

This shift is, of course, good news for those who currently have homes to sell in core suburbs, as the increased demand in these areas will underpin prices.

It is not such good news for those who want to sell in an outlying area and move to a more central location, as they are likely to face more competition for potential buyers.

What is more, the higher prices in core suburbs often mean that buyers looking for affordable accommodation in these areas are limited to homes that require renovation or repair.

However, longer term, buying a home in a central suburb and renovating it over time is likely to be a good investment, as property prices in such areas generally keep rising steadily - if not spectacularly - in all market conditions. And real estate professionals can advise on which areas are likely to perform best.

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### How to buy coastal land

As the year rolls on to the December holiday season, many people's thoughts are turning to the possibility of buying land at the sea - especially with prices in many coastal areas having taken a tumble in the past few months.

With a finite amount of coastal land available to build on, they tell themselves, values can only go up, and buying a stand now will ensure them of a spot in which to build that seaside retirement cottage in later years.

However, just like any other investment, the purchase of a coastal stand requires due diligence and a commonsense, step-by-step approach to finding out if this is a good move.

For a start, you should not buy site-unseen, even in an estate that has already been proclaimed, pegged out and walled off. You should visit the stand and look it over closely to establish what's on it - and what's on the neighbouring land.

You should also do some homework on the area to find out if it's growing economically, who the main local employers are, what amenities and what plans there are for new roads, schools and shopping centres. Even if you're buying a stand for your own later use, you should still try to make sure it will appreciate in value.

A reputable local estate agent can help you with this, and while you're in the area don't just look at one stand or one waterfront development - ask the agent to show you everything that is suitable and in your price range so you can ensure you are getting the best value possible for your money.

Something else you should consider is broadening your search and buying a piece of land that already has a house or a cottage on it that you can rent out. Instead of just waiting to build, you may be able to get something now that can actually create a cash flow.

And finally, you must consider high water levels and flood lines when buying coastal property, and be sure the land will not be under water when there is a hundred-year storm or a spring tide.

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### Summer tips for safe mowing

Summer's here, and with it the smell of freshly cut lawn on a Saturday afternoon - but the relaxed atmosphere makes it easy to forget how dangerous lawnmowers can be, especially if you're tempted to have a couple of cold beers while you mow.

Mowers can and do throw up stones and other hard objects that can cut shins and damage eyes, and whirring blades can easily slice fingers and toes if you don't bring them to a standstill before emptying the grassbox. And with electric models, there's always the danger of cutting the cable and getting a severe shock.

So unless you are going to opt for an energy-saving (and body-building) push mower, it is worth bearing the following safety tips in mind:

\* Dress properly. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants. Don't wear flip-flops, shorts or baggy clothes that could get caught in the blade. Protect your eyes with safety glasses or goggles.

\* Guard your ears. A petrol mower can exceed 85 decibels, enough to cause permanent hearing loss over time. Earmuff-style headphones or tight-fitting earplugs significantly reduce the danger.

\* Clear the area. Go over the lawn and pick up all toys, sticks, stones, dishes, dog bones and anything else that could be shredded or flung by the blade. Then clear the lawn of children, so they won't run in the mower's path and you won't be distracted from focusing on safe mowing by their noise or activity. Make sure you know the positions of hidden obstacles, such as sprinkler heads and stumps.

\* Know your machine. Read the instruction manual and follow it. Also don't disable any safety devices such as blade guards, even if they annoy you; each safeguard was invented because someone got hurt. And never attempt to free a jammed blade without first removing the spark plug on a petrol mower or unplugging an electric mower.

\* Ride alone. Don't carry children (or anyone else) on a ride-on mower. The mower can tip or children can fall off. And if you teach children to think of the machine as fun, they may be

tempted to try to ride it themselves when you are not around. Be super-careful when reversing to ensure that there is no-one behind you.

\* Don't let kids mow. Mowers are hazardous items of equipment, not toys. Children under 12 should not operate a walk-behind mower and no-one under 16 should use a ride-on mower.

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#### Keep your cool with ceiling fans

Staying cool in summer is no easy task, and air conditioners can chew costly electricity. So it's ceiling fans to the rescue - they produce a "windchill" effect that makes you feel cooler regardless of the temperature and they're efficient, consuming less energy on average than a 100W light bulb.

To get the full benefits, however, you have to install the right size fans in the right position. Sizes generally run from about one metre across to two metres and optimal air circulation occurs in square areas. A 1,5m fan will suit a three metre by three metre room and if you're cooling a large, rectangular room, you should use two fans, evenly spaced.

You also need to consider ceiling height. Most manufacturers recommend a three metre fan-to-floor distance if possible. To accommodate taller ceilings, you'll need an extension, or down rod. In rooms with lower ceilings, fans should be flush-mounted without a down rod.

Other factors to consider include the number of fan blades and the materials they are made from. To work properly fans should not have less than three or more than six blades, but balance is more important than the number - uneven blades can cause fans to wobble. This makes it essential to select fans with rust-free finishes and blades that won't warp - especially in damp coastal climates.

If you're replacing an overhead light with a fan, you'll probably want a fan/light combination - and that raises the question of what sort of controls you should look for. Some companies have moved away from the pull chain entirely, while others include it but also give an option for a wall-mounted power and speed control. Some new models even have handheld remotes.

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