



# THE RIDER REPORT

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## CAREFUL ANALYSIS IS KEY IN FAMILY LAW CASES

When families fall to pieces, there are people like Michelle Prosser who take the time to put the pieces back together. Each case is a different puzzle with unique facts and unique people, however every client is going through a stressful life-changing event and needs a strong advocate to guide them.

Michelle is the attorney managing the Vancouver law firm of Stahancyk, Kent and Hook, P.C., a firm that practices family law the way old-time family physicians practiced their craft – family-by-family with focused attention to the details and no calling hours. “I joined this firm because it is a client-focused firm,” said Michelle, when recalling her move two-plus years ago.

“The scariest thing for clients,” Michelle explains, “is not knowing what’s going on or what’s next.” Michelle has observed colleagues who decided to leave the family law field after two or three years. Why did Michelle stay, and why has she thrived for 11 years? “I pay attention to how my clients process information in addition to the specific questions they ask. I strive to put my clients



in a space that they are not distracted by the emotion of the situation...a space where they are focused, informed and participating.” Being creative to diffuse, coalesce and move forward requires a certain intensity and attention to detail.

Michelle admits to preferring puzzles to board games, and as a child she used to help her father when he crafted projects and remodeled. One of her great prides is self-taught remodeling projects.

“I became interested in the details and in learning how to get it right,” she mused. “I strongly believe you can learn how to do anything...I think that’s what I bring to my career, a penchant to find a solution. Back on the job, she is a relentless observer, looking for any detail that can bring a lasting solution for her clients. She knows she is providing the level of service she strives for when her clients tell her: “I think I must be your only client!” Michelle credits the firm’s senior shareholder, Jody L. Stahancyk, for giving her the opportunity to run the Vancouver office. “I really appreciate her confidence and support.” ■

## TIME FOR A LITTLE EXERCISE

Speaking of fall, it’s the ideal time to get in a little exercise that you don’t normally get and simultaneously keeping the environment green.

Instead of using one of the fancy leaf-blowers, why not get the old-fashioned metal rake and take time to rake leaves in piles? The sweeping motion and whisking gives the arms, back and legs a vigorous workout.

You can turn a piece of your property into a compost bin too. According to the Audubon Society, American yards generate two tons of clippings each year. Much of that goes to the trash truck rather than enriching gardens.

Choose an area that’s away from the house but close to the garden. You can add food debris to add nutrients to the pile, but avoid animal waste which can produce harmful bacteria.

Keep the compost damp and turn it periodically to facilitate decomposition. When the leaves have broken down sufficiently, soak the finished product to create a liquid mixture that can be sprayed on lawns and gardens to give them an energy boost through the winter months. ■



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## THIS YEAR’S FOLIAGE SEASON ONE OF THE BEST

**IT’S** just a natural fact that autumn presages winter. And while many folks shudder when the weather gets cooler, others revel in the changing colors of the deciduous trees before their leaves drop.

Foliage season is a billion dollar industry in many states. And this year’s colors were among the best. Why?

“It’s really what happens in late July to late September that sets the stage,” says Michael Schlacter, a meteorologist at Weather 2000, Inc. in New York.

There are three factors that determine what kind of colors you will see: chlorophyll production, temperature spread and storms.

Chlorophyll, the necessary ingredient for photosynthesis to work – when plants turn sunlight into sugar – provides the green color. Carotenoids, which as the name sounds, gives carrots and butternuts their orange and yellow hues, respectively, and anthocyanins, which causes us to see apples as red and plums as purple, are hidden from view.

When the temperatures get cooler and the nights get longer, plants stop producing chlorophyll. That’s when oranges and yellows appear. It’s only when the temperature spreads are greatest – at least 20 degrees – that the reds take over the stage.

That’s because when it’s warm, plants produce lots of sugar, but when it’s cold the plants don’t spread that sugar onto the leaves. If you see lots of red leaves, you have the entire palette of colors that Mother Nature brings into full view.

Of course, the biggest culprit to this cinematic display is wind and heavy rain. This year, in many states, there were very few damaging storms in the early fall. Tourists could spend their weekends going to parades and festivals associated with this brief interlude of color. ■