

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Blog Watch

By **BECKEY BRIGHT**

Updated March 31, 2008 12:01 a.m. ET

GARDENING

- **GARDEN WISE GUY**

GardenWiseGuy.blogspot.com (<http://GardenWiseGuy.blogspot.com>)

Billy Goodnick writes this informative and thought-provoking blog on sustainable gardening and other topics, such as using the way humans perceive color and contrast to make a garden more pleasing to the eye.

THE JOURNAL REPORT

Planning corporate gatherings is getting a lot easier -- and a lot less expensive. Plus, Chevron's CIO discusses information overload, consumer tech at work and IT project management.

- See the complete Technology (http://online.wsj.com/public/page/2_1558.html) report.

"The professor in me is always looking for 'teachable moments,' " writes Mr. Goodnick, who is based in Santa Barbara, Calif. And this blog does provide its share of instructional posts. He urges his readers, for example, to remember the mantra, "right plant, right place," which means you should try to find the best place for a plant to thrive with as little life support and coercion as possible.

Mr. Goodnick finds bliss in the perfect juxtaposition of different types of foliage. He writes: "No disrespect intended, but keep

your pink and lavender and yellow and mauve Martha Stewart flower beds....Gimme plants used as sculpture, as unresolved conflict, as an expression of the vast varieties of form and texture and foliage color."

- **THE BALCONY GARDEN**

Balcony-Garden.blogspot.com (<http://Balcony-Garden.blogspot.com>)

Sue Swift, a teacher based in Milan, hosts this flower-focused blog "for all would-be gardeners who don't have a garden at hand." She concentrates on container gardening, including advice on which flowers do best in which kinds of weather and the challenges of mixing and matching color combinations and varieties for maximum effect.

She also discusses topics such as the merits of seed banks -- which are intended to preserve genetic diversity and prevent extinction due to factors such as climate change -- and why a single plant may have not only several common names but also more than one botanical name.

- **THE HERB GARDENER**

TheHerbGardener.blogspot.com (<http://TheHerbGardener.blogspot.com>)

Herbs can be an easy introduction to gardening, since many flourish with a minimum of care. They also add a wonderful aroma to the kitchen and enhance all sorts of dishes. In the Herb Gardener, Sara Elliott provides advice for the thrifty cook, such as how to grow and harvest ginger and tips on starting garlic plants from cloves. The blog also offers ideas for ways to use herbs aside from cooking, such as in teas and bath salts.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

- **LIVING WITH ALZHIEMERS'**

Living-With-Alzhiemers.blogspot.com (<http://Living-With-Alzhiemers.blogspot.com>)

The best insight into Alzheimer's disease may come not from doctors but from those who suffer from the disease. In Living With Alzhiemers' (that's not a typo, that's the spelling on the site and in the Web address), 64-year-old Joe Potocny, in Oceanside, Calif., documents his struggle -- and decline -- after being diagnosed with the early stages of Alzheimer's in late 2004. The blog, he says, is written with caregivers, friends and medical professionals in mind, as well as Alzheimer's victims "who suffer in silence."

Mr. Potocny considers the blog his link to the outside world; responses from readers help keep his mind stimulated and aware, he says. The site includes descriptions of dementia and the stages of Alzheimer's. But this is foremost a brutally honest account of Mr. Potocny's increasing fear and confusion as his disease progresses. He writes about slowly losing "capacities to do things, remember days, names, where the heck I am....Scary[?] you bet your sweet %\$# it is."

Recently, he wrote: "What scares me is not the not knowing, but when will that line come where I step over and don't come back. Of death I have no fear [of] physical death that is, the death of me scares me for I will cease to exist...."

- **THE YELLOW WALLPAPER**

[YellowWallpaper.net \(http://YellowWallpaper.net\)](http://YellowWallpaper.net)

This eloquent blog by Rhode Island-based Deb Peterson describes her family's physical and emotional upheaval after her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in January 2005, at the age of 84. Shortly after, Ms. Peterson moved in with her mother to help care for her.

Recent posts describe the anguish of deciding to move her mother into an assisted-living facility, as well as the red tape involved in becoming her mother's fiduciary and taking care of financial affairs. "No matter how you plan," she writes, "you just don't factor in the muddle of emotions that follow doing this. A certain relief, some grief at what you can and can't control, and sadness at having moved one step further toward what terrifies you."

She also details how the disease has changed their relationship, writing: "Neither my mother nor I have ever been touchy-feely in our affections, but now...because I don't seem to reach her with words all the time, I hold her hand or lock arms with her or rub her back when she gets agitated about something. I think this contact reassures her."

- **MYSA.COM ALZHEIMER'S BLOG**

[Blogs.MySanAntonio.com/weblogs/alzheimers \(http://Blogs.MySanAntonio.com/weblogs/alzheimers\)](http://Blogs.MySanAntonio.com/weblogs/alzheimers)

Hosted by Ginny Funk, director of the Alzheimer's Association office in San Antonio, this blog contains plenty of useful information, such as how to make the home safer for an Alzheimer's sufferer, advice on documents to keep on hand, and how to decide when it's no longer safe for someone with Alzheimer's to drive.

In December, Ms. Funk posted a list of gift ideas for caregivers and those suffering from Alzheimer's. On the caregiver list: self-made coupons representing offers to help run errands or do household chores to provide the caregiver some needed time off. And for Alzheimer's sufferers: a range of items to help with remembering or keeping track of things, such as labeled drawers or trays, pocket-size diaries, erasable white boards, or an automatic medication dispenser.

TAXES

- **TAXPROF BLOG**

[TaxProf.typepad.com \(http://TaxProf.typepad.com\)](http://TaxProf.typepad.com)

Paul L. Caron, a professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law and the author

of numerous books, writes this influential and popular blog, which includes coverage of tax-reform legislation with extensive explanations.

Recent posts include a discussion of flat-tax systems, which have been adopted by more and more countries, and which Prof. Caron argues have generated impressive results, often leading to higher tax revenue because of income growth and better compliance.

Prof. Caron culls excerpts from reports, conference papers and other publications, and provides updates on Internal Revenue Service investigations, tax legislation and policy proposals.

- **TAXVOX**

TaxVox.TaxPolicyCenter.org (<http://TaxVox.TaxPolicyCenter.org>)

This blog of the Tax Policy Center -- a joint venture of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution -- provides commentary on federal, state and local legislation and on tax issues affecting individuals and businesses. Howard Gleckman, who covered tax and budget issues for the Washington bureau of BusinessWeek for nearly 30 years, is the chief blogger, but other members of the Tax Policy Center contribute. Blog categories include economic stimulus, the mortgage crisis and capital gains, among others.

"The tax break for employee sponsored health insurance is the Rodney Dangerfield of the Internal Revenue Code," Mr. Gleckman wrote in a recent post on how Washington should tackle a system that is widely criticized for providing a subsidy for those who get health care through an employer but discouraging people from buying health insurance on their own.

There are also lengthy discussions of the tax-policy proposals of the leading presidential candidates.

- **DON'T MESS WITH TAXES**

DontMessWithTaxes.typepad.com/dont_mess_with_taxes
(http://DontMessWithTaxes.typepad.com/dont_mess_with_taxes)

This blog by Texas journalist Kay Bell aims to provide tax and personal-finance tips and advice "that will put more money in your bank account, not the government treasury." Ms. Bell, who previously worked for the House Ways and Means Committee in Washington and now writes about taxes for Bankrate.com, offers different approaches to make taxes less taxing.

She often puts advice in a social or historical context. For instance, in honor of Alexander Graham Bell's birthday on March 3 -- and while lamenting the recent

bombardment of calls from candidates soliciting votes -- she discussed the scenarios in which U.S. taxpayers can get a break on phone use. In other recent posts, she breaks down the economic-stimulus rebate with information that pertains to families with children, the elderly and state-by-state variations that residents should watch for.

—*Ms. Bright is an editor for The Wall Street Journal Online in New York.*

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