

February 13, 2006

THE JOURNAL REPORT: TECHNOLOGY

Blog Watch

By ANDREW BLACKMAN
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• Tax Guru-Ker\$etter Letter

TaxGuru.net¹

With tax-filing season just getting started, there are several blogs that discuss tax issues and can provide some help with questions. At TaxGuru.net, for example, certified public accountant Kerry Kerstetter has recently tackled reader questions on issues such as whether distributions from a limited-liability company are subject to self-employment tax and how to structure a 1031 "like-kind exchange" of properties. The blog also links to tax news and posts tax-themed cartoons; overall, there are several posts a day.

• Roth & Company

www.RothCPA.com/taxupdates.php²

This Des Moines, Iowa, accounting firm runs a blog mixing discussion of legislative news with practical advice for filers. December, for example, featured a series on year-end tax planning, with posts on the ins and outs of gift-tax rules, contributing to college savings plans, prepaying state and local taxes and other topics. Some of the posts are specific to Iowa, but most have a broader appeal.

THE JOURNAL REPORT



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See the complete [Technology report](#)⁴.

• Tax Prof Blog

TaxProf.typepad.com⁵

This one is lighter on tax advice and heavier on news and policy issues. It's run by law professor Paul Caron, from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, and the frequent posting throughout the day ensures comprehensive coverage of tax news. The

site posted "The Complete Tax Opinions of Judge Alito," for example, during the judge's confirmation hearings for the Supreme Court.

Some of it is geared more toward law professors and tax professionals, and the sheer volume can be a little overwhelming, but posts are categorized by topic to help you sort through them all.

• Mauled Again

MauledAgain.blogspot.com⁶

Another law-professor blog, but with a slightly different angle. The writer, Prof. James Maule of Villanova University, often writes just once a day, but each post usually goes into quite a bit of depth.

Several recent contributions, for example, were based on an offbeat news story about a New Mexico man who threw a mouse he had caught into a bonfire, only to see the mouse catch fire and run back into his house, burning it to the ground. Prof. Maule used the mouse story as a basis for discussing the rules on casualty-loss deductions.

DEATH

• www.LiveJournal.com/community/mourning_souls⁷

Benjamin Franklin's other great certainty is also well represented in the blogosphere. This LiveJournal community, for example, features photographs taken in cemeteries around the world and submitted by users of the site. The pictures vary in quality and subject, but most focus on unusual statues and sculptures.

Recent contributions include a damaged sculpture of Jesus from a French cemetery, and an angel statue in Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee. Mourning Souls is a very active community, with most photos generating a long string of responses.

• BlogofDeath.com⁸

The Blog of Death is devoted entirely to obituaries. They're written by Associated Press editor Jade Walker, and the selections are interesting: Sprinkled in with the big names like Rosa Parks, Hunter S. Thompson and Arthur Miller are a few lesser-known people

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such as Michael Vale, otherwise known as Fred the baker from the long-running series of Dunkin' Donuts commercials.

The obituaries go back to June 2003, and there's a nice set of rotating death-related quotes at the top of the page. One recent example: Brecht's maxim, "Don't be afraid of death so much as an inadequate life."

• ObituaryForum.blogspot.com⁹

This blog offers a fascinating glimpse into the craft of obituary writing, as obit writers critique their colleagues' work and discuss their own quandaries.

A December post by Cleveland Plain Dealer obit writer Alana Baranick, for example, discussed her hopes for a good Christmas-themed obit to share with her readers, and then her guilt when the wish came true and a local businessman died while dressed as an elf and lighting holiday candles. There's a new post on the site every few days, and the archives go back to September 2005.

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