

# The New York Times

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER JR., *Publisher*

Founded in 1851

ADOLPH S. OCHS  
*Publisher 1896-1935*

ARTHUR HAYS SULZBERGER  
*Publisher 1935-1961*

ORVILLE E. DRYFOOS  
*Publisher 1961-1963*

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER  
*Publisher 1963-1992*

## The News Sections

BILL KELLER, *Executive Editor*  
JILL ABRAMSON, *Managing Editor*  
JOHN M. GEDDES, *Managing Editor*  
WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT, *Deputy Managing Editor*

Assistant Managing Editors

DEAN BAQUET  
TOM BODKIN  
SUSAN EDGERLEY  
GLENN KRAMON

GERALD MARZORATI  
MICHELE McNALLY  
JIM ROBERTS

## The Opinion Pages

ANDREW ROSENTHAL, *Editorial Page Editor*  
CARLA ANNE ROBBINS, *Deputy Editorial Page Editor*  
TRISH HALL, *Deputy Editorial Page Editor*

## The Business Management

SCOTT H. HEKIN-CANEDY, *President, General Manager*  
DENISE F. WARREN, *Senior V.P., Chief Advertising Officer, General Manager, NYTimes.com*  
YASMIN NAMINI, *Senior V.P., Marketing and Circulation, General Manager, Reader Applications*  
ALEXIS BURYK, *Senior V.P., Advertising*  
ROLAND A. CAPUTO, *Senior V.P., Chief Financial Officer*  
THOMAS K. CARLEY, *Senior V.P., Planning*  
TERRY L. HAYES, *Senior V.P., Operations and Labor*  
MICHAEL VALENTINE, *V.P., Human Resources*

MARTIN GOTTLIEB, *Editor, Global Editions*

## Relief for States and Businesses

So many people now receive jobless benefits that 30 states have run out of their unemployment trust funds and are borrowing \$42 billion from the federal government. Three of the hardest-hit states — Michigan, Indiana and South Carolina — have borrowed so much that they triggered automatic unemployment tax increases on employers, and the same thing is likely to happen to 20 more states this year.

The crisis could prove to be a point of friction between Republican governors and members of Congress. On Tuesday, the Obama administration unveiled a smart proposal to delay those tax increases and provide some relief to both employers and state governments. Congressional Republicans reflexively objected to the idea, which could produce higher taxes in three years, but this plan provides relief that might stimulate hiring now when it is most needed. Republican governors in desperate states like Michigan and Indiana are likely to find that more attractive than party members in Washington do.

Under the plan, which is subject to Congressional approval, there would be a two-year moratorium on the increased taxes that employers would otherwise have to pay to support the unemployment insurance system, which could save businesses as much as \$7 billion. During those same two years, states would be forgiven from paying the \$1.3 billion in interest they owe Washington on the money they have borrowed. The stimulus bill provided a grace period, but it expired last year.

In 2014, when the economy will presumably have recovered somewhat, employers will have to make up for the moratorium by paying higher unemployment taxes

to the states. Specifically, they will have to pay taxes on the first \$15,000 of an employee's income, instead of the current \$7,000. But, even then, unemployment taxes will be at the same level, adjusted for inflation, as they were in 1983, when President Ronald Reagan raised them.

The administration is proposing to cut the federal unemployment tax rate in 2014 so that employers would pay the same amount to Washington as they do now. States, if they choose to do so, could collect more from each employer to repay the federal government and restock their own unemployment trust funds.

Republicans immediately derided the proposal as an irresponsible tax increase. On his blog, Representative Eric Cantor, the House majority leader, criticized the higher taxes in 2014, but he did not mention the two-year moratorium on the automatic tax increases in 20 vulnerable states.

The proposal is not a bailout for the states or employers but rather a recognition that the automatic tax increases built into the benefits system could put a brake on hiring — and in precisely the states where employers need the most incentive to bring people back to work.

Over the next decade, as more people return to work and the states repay their debt more quickly, the proposal is expected to bring more dollars back to the federal government than the temporary moratorium will cost, so the long-term effect on the deficit should be positive. The full details of the plan's costs and benefits will be available when President Obama submits his 2012 budget to Congress next week. When he does, both parties should take a close look at the numbers and seize the opportunity to keep this fundamental safety net solvent.

## A Debate Bigger Than Reform

While the federal courts consider whether the health care reform law is constitutional, there is an intense and even wider debate playing out in political and legal circles about the Constitution and Congress's power to solve national problems.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing last week on the reform law, two witnesses argued fiercely opposing views. Walter Dellinger, a former acting solicitor general under President Bill Clinton, made a compelling case for the law's constitutionality. He said that the commerce clause was the main source of Congress's power for regulating the nation's economy, an argument going back to Chief Justice John Marshall.

Randy Barnett, a Georgetown law professor, made a counterargument based on what he calls "the lost Constitution," an interpretation that would limit much of that basic law, including the commerce clause.

He made plain that his attack on the health care statute is a means to severely limit the power of Congress, urging senators to reach their "own judgment about the scope of Congressional powers," regardless of "how the Supreme Court" has ruled.

To Prof. Dellinger, the Constitution's commerce clause gives Congress broad authority to regulate economic activity crossing state lines if the regulation is necessary and proper. The statute's linked provisions prohibiting companies from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions and requiring most Ameri-

## Digging a Hole Instead of a Tunnel

With states and cities in such a bad way, it is worth remembering how a previous generation rebuilt America during the Depression's bleakest years. The elegant George Washington Bridge opened in 1931. The Triborough Bridge followed five years later. Ribbons were cut for the Lincoln Tunnel in 1937, and La Guardia Airport opened officially in 1939.

Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey must have missed those history lessons. In recent months, he canceled the first new commuter rail tunnel between New Jersey and New York in 100 years. That project, with the federal government committed to footing as much as a third of the bill, would have created jobs and relieved commuting congestion sure to get much worse.

Now Governor Christie is trying to reroute \$1.8 billion of the \$3 billion the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey had committed to the tunnel project to help pay for road maintenance in his state. Those repairs should be covered by the State of New Jersey, most easily by adding a tiny increase in its low gasoline tax.

That sensible idea doesn't sit well with Mr. Christie and his conservative fan club. Instead, he wants to take

## .24 Karat Gall

When we last wrote about National Collector's Mint, in 2004, the company was in trouble with New York's attorney general for selling Sept. 11 commemorative coins that it claimed were legal tender from the Northern Mariana Islands, supposedly struck from silver recovered at ground zero. It was a galling case of deceptive advertising for which the state extracted more than \$2 million in fines and penalties.

The company, which sells its coins and collectibles out of Port Chester, N.Y., hasn't stopped trying to turn tragedy into cash. For the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, it has issued a commemorative coin bearing images of the World Trade Center and the U.S.S. New York, a ship built partly from ground zero steel.

It costs \$29.95, a price that is hard to justify, no matter what claims the company makes about the source of the coin's silver coating. It is not real currency and has not been authorized or licensed by the United States government.

The United States Mint is the only body that can

make real United States coins. That mint, which has

posted a warning on its Web site about the National Collector's Mint, will soon start selling the government's official 9/11 medal — also not legal tender — with profits helping to build the ground zero memorial.

Senator Charles Schumer and Representative Jerrold Nadler, both of New York, have urged the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether the company claimed official sanction and broke any laws by doing so.

They point to how the mint aligns itself with outfits that sound official but aren't — like the Secret Service Uniformed Division Benefits Fund, a private group that runs a gift shop in Washington. The Secret Service recently sent the fund a letter telling it to stop letting the Collector's Mint use "Secret Service" in its advertising.

There is nothing wrong with companies selling memorabilia linked to moments of catastrophe or triumph, but both the law and basic decency should set some limits. These coins should come with big disclaimers: This product is 100 percent shame-free.

## The Decline of the Science Fair

To the Editor:

Re "It May Be a Sputnik Moment, but Science Fairs Are Lagging" (front page, Feb. 5):

As a junior in high school, I want to clear up some misconceptions about science fairs and projects. First, they do take time, but any amount invested pays steep dividends in experience gained. I can attest to this. Through my science fair career I have learned everything from the scientific method everyone buzzes about to writing research papers, fine dining and even particle physics.

Additionally, I have found it beneficial to have a mentor in the process, but it is by no means necessary. Furthermore, in my experience science fair students do their own work; mentors may plant the seeds of a project idea and provide assistance, but by no means do they do the project for you.

Finally, science fair is a life skill, just not for everyone. My interest is in computer programming, and my local science fair has fostered my growth in that field. Four years ago I couldn't write a single line of code. I began my fifth year of science fairs on Saturday, and I'm proud to say that my current project is written entirely in C++, a complex programming language. WILLIAM BAUER  
Cloquet, Minn., Feb. 7, 2011

To the Editor:

An exhibition, not a competition. Doing science is all about the process — the exploration, the questioning and the adventure of trying to find the answer. We need to allow our children to do science for the joy of finding out and then sharing their discoveries without the focus on reward or lack of one.

For 30 years, as a science educator, I encouraged my students to engage in science investigations of their choice. Their findings were then presented at the science fair. It was a privilege to be part of the fair, and that was the reward toward which each student strove.

Investigations and testing hypotheses were the core of the curriculum. The science fair highlighted the science processes that the students learned. The intrinsic joy of discovery was the outcome and led many of these students to continue into careers in science.

Competition has its place, but the freedom to wonder without repercussion is a rare opportunity presented to our students. HELEN SULTANIK  
Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 2011

To the Editor:

Your article points to deep budget challenges that many school districts are facing and problems with the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind law.

But it does not mention much of the Obama administration's extraordinary agenda for improving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in this country: for example, the commitment to prepare 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next 10 years, the \$4 billion Race to the Top program's support for innovation in teaching these important subjects, and the administration's blueprint for updating the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year.

Recognizing that government alone cannot be the answer, moreover, the president has also called upon the business community, foundations, professional societies and others to do more. Already, the president's "Educate to Innovate" campaign has attracted more than \$700 million in nongovernmental financial and in-kind support for science and math programs.

And more than 100 chief executives have responded to the president's "all hands on deck" call to action by launching "Change the Equation," an unprecedented program to scale up effective models for improving STEM education. JOHN P. HOLDREN  
Washington, Feb. 7, 2011

The writer is President Obama's science and technology adviser.

## Helping the Economy

To the Editor:

Re "Job Gains Slow Even as Recovery Looks Stronger" (front page, Feb. 5):

America's consumers have kept their end of the bargain in righting the economy. America's business sector has not.

While the public has been shopping and spending more, businesses continue to outsource jobs and to sit on jobs rather than hiring people, despite record profits and other positive signs that the economy is on the upswing.

Consumers cannot lift the American economy on their own. PIETRO ALLAR  
New York, Feb. 5, 2011

## Cue the Planets

To the Editor:

Michael Byers ("Even More Things in Heaven and Earth," Op-Ed, Feb. 4) says "nine planets will always seem more fitting than eight." But some of us live by the Holst Criterion: if Gustav wrote the movement, it's a planet.

That musical judgment has been confirmed by scientific consensus only reinforces our convictions. EDWARD REID  
Tallahassee, Fla., Feb. 4, 2011

## ONLINE: MORE LETTERS

Lamar Smith, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, responds to a news article, "Napolitano Accuses Critics of Politicizing Border Issues."

nytimes.com/opinion

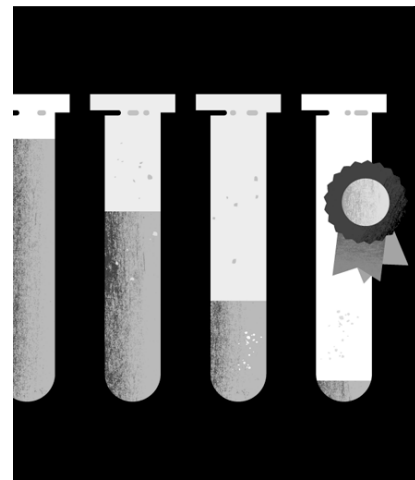
To the Editor:

While it is true that high school teachers who "seek out scientists in industry and at universities to work with science fair students" have difficulty in making connections, even when they do, there is often another more difficult obstacle that they face: federal financing for university-based research.

For example, almost on a weekly basis I receive e-mail messages from either schoolteachers who have students or students themselves wanting to join my academic research laboratory, and I must painfully inform them that I do not have enough money for additional research projects.

With the tough financing environment at both the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, academic researchers face greater competition and less money.

As such, the lack of financing not only



PART & PARCEL

affects university research, but it also certainly translates to an overall decrease in scientific training of the next generation of our high school students.

Without additional research financing, we are destined to see further declines in science literacy and fall further behind other industrialized nations.

MICHAEL HADJIARGYROU  
Stony Brook, N.Y., Feb. 7, 2011

The writer is an associate professor of biomedical engineering, genetics and orthopedics at Stony Brook University.

To the Editor:

You examine the declining participation of American high school students in science fairs. The primary reason for this decline is our increasingly sports-obsessed culture, not the curriculum.

When participation in high school sports demands 15 or more hours a week, it leaves little room in students' schedules for other extracurricular activities.

When the news media highlight every sports event, yet rarely mention winners of science fairs and other academic competitions, they imply that sports are more important.

When school boards allocate more money for sports teams than for science, math, chess, forensics, debate and other academic teams, they make it difficult for any but the wealthiest students to participate fully in the latter.

Most American students who currently excel in science fairs and mathematics competitions are Asian-Americans and recent immigrants.

If the United States desires more scientists and engineers who were born here, we urgently need to refocus our priorities. JANET E. MERTZ  
Madison, Wis., Feb. 5, 2011

The writer is a professor of oncology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

To the Editor:

Your article reveals the essential weakness of an educational system based on standardized tests: standardized tests teach how to answer questions; a true education teaches the questions to ask. JONATHAN J. MARGOLIS  
Brookline, Mass., Feb. 5, 2011

## A Spectacle on Broadway

To the Editor:

Re " 'Spider-Man' Early Reviews Set Off a Storm" (Arts pages, Feb. 9):

I hope that Broadway learns its lesson. Though I used to find it thrilling to go see a Broadway musical, I've hardly seen anything other than a revival in the past 15 years because of the trendy focus on spectacle.

The best theatrical experience is great actors performing in a great show, delivering great lines. The most indelible memories I have are of dead-on character portrayals and energetic ensemble numbers, not performers swinging on a rope.

While many productions in recent years have pandered to a crowd that wants pyrotechnics, they've simultaneously alienated the audience that appreciates the true art of stagecraft. SUSAN CUTROFFELLO MIELE  
Bronxville, N.Y., Feb. 9, 2011

## The New York Times Company

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER JR., *Chairman*  
JANET L. ROBINSON, *Chief Executive Officer*  
MICHAEL GOLDEN, *Vice Chairman*  
JAMES M. FOLLO, *Chief Financial Officer*  
R. ANTHONY BENTEN, *Senior V.P.*  
ROBERT H. CHRISTIE, *Senior V.P.*  
TODD C. McCARTY, *Senior V.P.*  
MARTIN A. NISENHOLTZ, *Senior V.P.*  
KENNETH A. RICHERI, *Senior V.P., General Counsel & Secretary*  
JOSEPH N. SEIBERT, *Senior V.P.*  
LAURENA L. EMHOFF, *V.P., Treasurer*

620 Eighth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10018