

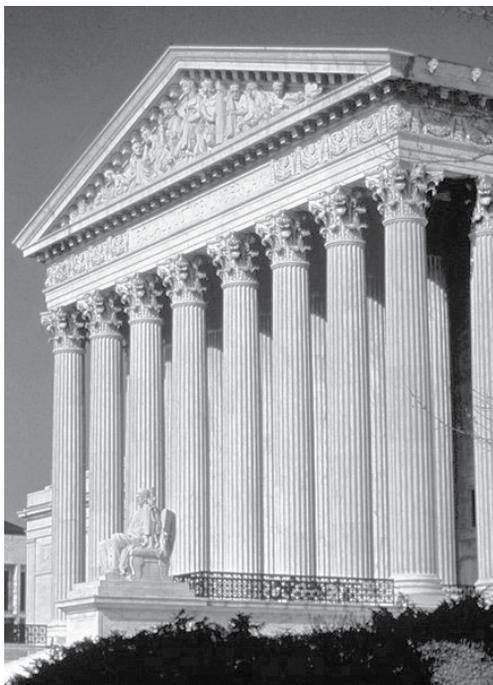
News Currents

Vol. 61 No. 29

Week of April 9, 2012



Supreme Court debates health care law



NewsCurrents has been selected as one of District Administration magazine's "Reader's Choice Top 100 Products of 2011"

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



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Titanic items up for auction

Titanoboa: Monster Snake

"Sweet Silent Thought: Whistler's Interiors"

**Country of the Week:
Dominican Republic**

**This Week in History:
The Civil Rights Act of 1968**



Who Am I?

Can you answer this question? If not, here are some clues.

BASIC/GENERAL

) I am an American country singer, songwriter, and actress. I was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, and I am 22 years old. I began writing songs as a young girl.

B) I recorded my first album in 2006. So far I have made three albums, each of which has sold millions of copies. I have also won many awards for my music.

C) For the second year in a row, I won the Entertainer of the Year award at the Academy of Country Music awards. One day earlier, I was honored by Michelle Obama on the Kids' Choice Awards for my charity work. **Who am I?** (*Taylor Swift.*)

ADVANCED

A) I am an American singer, songwriter, and actress. My musical styles include country, pop, and dance music. I was born in Pennsylvania in 1989, but as a young girl my family relocated to the country music center of the world, Nashville.

B) I released my first album in 2006. My three albums so far have each sold several million copies. My single "Mean" off my most recent album was named Best Country Song at this year's Grammy Awards.

C) At the recent Kids' Choice Awards, Michelle Obama saluted me for my charity work. A day later, I was named the Entertainer of the Year at the Academy of Country Music Awards. Afterwards I gave a shout-out to 18-year-old cancer patient Kevin McGuire, who was going to be my date for the ceremony, but was too ill to attend. **Who am I?** (*Taylor Swift.*)

News Names, News Places, News Words

News Names

James McNeill Whistler — 19th-century American artist

John Jacob Astor IV — American businessman who died in the sinking of the Titanic

Leonel Fernandez — President of the Dominican Republic

Lyndon Johnson — 36th U.S. president

Supreme Court — The highest court in the United States

Titanoboa — A type of snake that lived 60 million years ago, and the largest snake ever discovered

News Places

Canada

Colombia

Dominican Republic

New York City

United Kingdom

Washington, D.C.

News Words

artifact — A manmade object of cultural or historical interest

auction — A public sale in which goods or property are sold to the highest bidder

biracial — Having ancestry from more than one race

commerce — The practice of buying and selling

discrimination — The unfair treatment of groups of people based on prejudice

fossil — The remains or outline of a prehistoric plant or animal preserved in rock

immigrant — A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country

occupation — In this case, the control by one country of another country by military force

self-portrait — A portrait of an artist produced or created by that artist

Supreme Court debates health care law

The justices heard arguments about the most controversial aspects of the law.



BASIC

Two years ago, President Obama signed a bill into law that made big changes to the health care rules in the United States. Congress is the part of our government that makes laws for the country. **Who can name the two parts of Congress?** (*The Senate and the House of Representatives.*) Congress argued over the bill for more than a year, but the bill passed. No Republicans voted for the bill. **Which political party does President Obama belong to?** (*Democratic.*) The president's health care law is meant to help millions of Americans get health care who couldn't afford it before. But 26 states say they do

not want this law and they want judges to make a decision about the case. Now the highest

court in the U.S. is looking at this case. **What is this court called?** (*The Supreme Court.*) Here you see the judges on the court, called justices. The Supreme Court will decide whether parts of the health care law go against the U.S. Constitution. **What is the Constitution?** (*The basic set of rules on which all U.S. laws must be based.*) NEXT

GENERAL

Two years ago, President Obama signed a bill into law that made big changes in the U.S. health care system. The picture here shows him signing the bill into law. During his presidential campaign, Mr. Obama vowed to fix the health care system. **What do you think are the biggest problems with the health care system?** Going to the doctor or to the hospital costs a lot of money. People buy health insurance to help pay these costs. They pay the insurance company a certain amount each month and in return the insurance company pays their medical expenses when that is needed. But health insurance costs have gone up a lot. The president's bill was designed to help millions of Americans get health insurance who couldn't afford it before.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress

ADVANCED

On March 23rd, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a bill that made the biggest changes to health care in the U.S. in nearly 50 years. After more than a year of heated debate on the issue, the final bill passed the House by a mere four votes. Every Republican voted against it. **Do you remember seeing the dramatic passage of the bill in the House?**

During his 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama vowed to make fixing the U.S. health care system a priority. **What do you think are the biggest problems with the system now?** Most people agree that the main problem is the cost, both for health care and health insurance. We'll look more closely at this issue shortly. The health care

were very divided on this bill. **Which party does President Obama belong to?** (*Democratic.*) The final vote on the bill was very close, and no Republicans voted for it. Polls showed that the U.S. public was very divided over the health care bill and that hasn't changed. Twenty-six states have challenged the health care law in court. Now their challenge has made its way to the highest court in the U.S., the Supreme Court. Here you see the current Supreme Court justices. **Can anyone name the chief justice of the Supreme Court?** (*John Roberts. He is seated in the center of the first row here.*) The Supreme Court will decide whether the health care law goes against the basic set of rules on which our government is founded. **What is the name of this document?** (*The Constitution.*) NEXT

reform law did not contain everything that many Democrats wanted. It lacked the so-called "public option" — a government-run health insurance program that would have competed with private companies. **Do you think the public option was a good idea? Why or why not?** The law would help some 30 to 40 million uninsured Americans afford health insurance. But it remains President Obama's most controversial and divisive pieces of legislation. The public remains roughly evenly divided over it. **Why do you think this is so?**

The law was challenged in court by 26 states led by Florida, as well as the National Federation of Independent Business. The Supreme Court recently heard arguments about the constitutionality of one of the more controversial aspects of the law. NEXT

Health care law (cont'd)

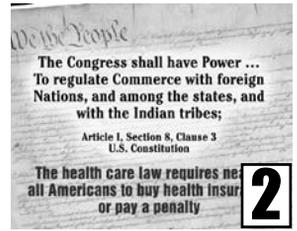
The Commerce Clause allows Congress to regulate interstate commerce.

BASIC

Going to the doctor or the hospital can be very expensive, so most Americans buy something called health insurance. People pay the insurance company a certain amount every month and the insurance company promises to pay for some or most of that person's health care costs. The president's health care law says that almost all Americans must buy health insurance. If they don't, they must pay a fine, or money to the government. The groups who are against the law say the government cannot force people to buy anything they don't want to buy, including insurance. People who are for the law say that since everyone

will need health care someday, everyone should pay for health insurance. Supporters

also say the law is allowed under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution. "Commerce" means buying and selling things. The words from the Constitution here say that the U.S. Congress can make laws about commerce between states. **Do you think there should be a law to force people to buy health insurance? Why or why not?** NEXT



GENERAL

The main reason for the challenge to the health care law has to do with one requirement it contains. The law says that nearly every American must buy health insurance or pay a penalty. **Why do you think this is part of the law?** The idea behind it is to get as many people as possible to buy health insurance, even young, healthy people who might not think they need it. That way, the insurance companies would have enough money to pay for more of everyone's health care.

The states that are challenging the law say that nobody should be forced to buy something they don't want to buy, even health insurance. They say this would be like the government telling everyone they have to buy broccoli. **Do you think it is fair to compare these two things? Why or why not?** Supporters of the law say that because

everyone will need health care eventually, everyone should have to buy health insurance. They claim that health insurance is different from other products because people who don't buy it will cause the price to go up for everyone. That's because all taxpayers pay the health care costs of people who don't have insurance.

Supporters of the law say it is legal under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution. "Commerce" means buying and selling. Congress can regulate commerce with other countries and between states, including buying and selling health insurance. But people against the law say it doesn't regulate commerce. Instead, they say, it creates commerce by forcing people to buy something. **What do you think? Can the government require people to buy health insurance? Why or why not?** NEXT

ADVANCED

The legal challenge to the health care law is directly related to the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, and something called the "individual mandate." Under the health care reform law, the individual mandate requires nearly every U.S. citizen to buy health insurance by 2014 or pay a fine. The idea is to get young, healthy people to buy insurance. This increases the pool of money available to insurance companies to offer coverage for everyone. **Is this an effective way to achieve this goal? Why or why not?**

The Commerce Clause allows Congress to regulate, among other things, interstate commerce. Most experts agree that regulating the health care industry, which makes up one-sixth of the national economy, falls

under the Commerce Clause. Opponents of the law say the individual mandate doesn't regulate commerce; rather it creates commerce by forcing people to take part in it against their will. They say that if the government can force you to buy insurance, it could force you to buy other things as well. Supporters of the law say that health insurance is a unique product. **Who knows why?** (*Taxpayers foot the healthcare bill for people who don't have insurance.*) Supporters point out that everyone will need health care at some point, so there is no way to opt out of the health care market the way people can opt out of buying other products. **What do you think? Does the individual mandate exceed the reach of the Commerce Clause? Would the law work without the mandate?** NEXT

Health care law (cont'd)

The health care reform law includes more than the individual mandate.

BASIC

The health care law makes a lot of changes that are supposed to help more Americans get better health care. Not all of the changes would happen at once, though. Here you see some of the biggest changes. For example, insurance companies can't stop someone's insurance because he or she gets sick. They also can't stop paying for health care when someone uses a certain amount of it. They can't refuse to pay for a child's health care if the child is sick with a serious disease. And young adults don't need to buy their own insurance until age

26. Until then, they are covered by their parents' insurance.

And big companies will have to offer health insurance to their workers or the government will make the companies pay fines. **Do you think these are good rules? Why or why not? Do you think businesses should have to pay for their workers' health insurance? Why or why not?** NEXT



GENERAL

The health care law makes a lot of changes to the health care system besides requiring people to buy health insurance. Not all of these changes happen at once, though. Here you see some of the biggest changes under the health care law. The last one on the list doesn't take effect until 2014. **Why do you think some changes are being made gradually?**

Under the law, insurance companies cannot cancel someone's insurance just because he or she gets a serious illness. And they can't set lifetime limits on insurance. That means they can't cut off someone's insurance once a person has used a lot of it, which can happen to very sick people. Insurance companies can't deny insurance to children with so-called "pre-existing conditions." This means they can't refuse to insure children who are

already sick. And young people can be covered by their parents' insurance until they are 26. **Do you think these rules are fair? Will they help people?**

So-called health insurance "exchanges" will also be created under the law. These exchanges will offer several different health insurance plans for people whose jobs don't offer health insurance, or for small businesses that can't afford regular health insurance for their employees. The price of health insurance in these exchanges could not go above a set amount. Large companies would have to pay a fine if they don't offer health insurance for their employees. **Do you think it's fair to make companies pay for part of their workers' health care? Why or why not? How else do you think we could pay for everyone's health care?** NEXT

ADVANCED

The scope of the health care reform law goes well beyond the individual mandate. Some of these changes have already taken effect, while others have yet to be phased in. The last item on this list has not gone into effect yet. **Do you think it was necessary to make some changes gradually? Why or why not?**

As it stands now, insurance companies are no longer permitted to cancel someone's insurance because that person is sick. Lifetime limits — the policy of cutting off someone's insurance when he or she reaches a set limit — is no longer permitted. Insurance companies can no longer deny insurance to children because of pre-existing conditions. Under the law, this rule will apply to everyone in the

future. And young adults can now stay on their parents' health insurance plans until they are 26. **Do you think these rules are reasonable? Why or why not?**

In 2014, health insurance exchanges would be set up, allowing people without health insurance to shop from a variety of competing plans. Small businesses could also participate in these exchanges. A formula of individual risk factors would determine the maximum price of any plan within the exchange. And larger employers will be required to offer their employees health insurance or pay a fine. **Do you think employers should be responsible for their employees' health insurance costs? Why or why not? What do you think will happen if the Supreme Court strikes down this law?** NEXT

Health care law (cont'd)

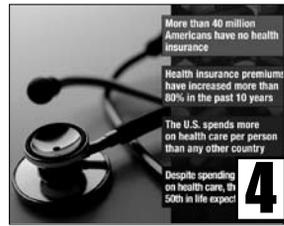
The U.S. health care system is the most expensive in the world, but lags behind in quality.

BASIC Here you see some of the biggest reasons that many people think the U.S. health care system needs to be fixed. More than 40 million Americans don't have health insurance. This makes everyone's costs go up. That's because when people without health insurance need medical care, the government may have to pay for it. And that cost gets paid by everyone in the form of taxes. The reason so many people can't afford health insurance is because the costs have gone up a lot in the past several years. The price of health insurance is a monthly fee called

GENERAL Here you see some of the main reasons that many people believe our health care system needs to be fixed. **How many Americans have no health insurance?** (*More than 40 million.*) When uninsured people need medical care they can't afford, the government sometimes pays for it, or people go without the care they need. But this drives up costs for everyone, because the government's money comes from taxes paid by everyone. The reason many people don't have insurance is that they can't afford to buy it. And many small businesses can't afford to buy it for their employees. The monthly fee people and businesses pay for health insurance is called a premium. **How much have premiums gone up over the past 10 years?** (*More than 80 percent.*) The cost of health insurance for a family

ADVANCED Here you see some of the enormous problems that lead many to believe the U.S. health care system is broken. Without employer assistance or government programs, the vast majority of Americans could not afford health insurance under the current system. Employers, particularly small companies, are finding it harder and harder to afford health insurance for their employees. Increasingly, employee-based health care plans are passing on higher out-of-pocket costs to their employees. **What effect do you think this is having on the economy?** About 15 percent of the population is without health insurance at any given time. Medical costs have become the largest single cause of personal bankruptcy in the United States. And among those bankruptcies due

a premium. As you can see, the U.S. spends more than any other country on health care costs. But we rank behind other countries in the quality of our health care. And we rank 50th in the world in life expectancy, or the average number of years people live. In most of the countries that rank better than the U.S., the government pays for everyone's health care. **Do you think the U.S. government should do this, too? Why or why not?** END



can be more than \$10,000 a year. Without health insurance, however, a person who has a very serious accident or illness can end up owing hundreds of thousands of dollars to the hospital. **Can you imagine owing that much money because you got sick or injured?** The United States spends more on health care than any other country in the world. But U.S. health care is ranked behind many other countries in its quality. And the U.S. ranks 50th in life expectancy. **Who knows what "life expectancy" means?** (*The average life span of the population.*) In most wealthy countries, including most of the countries ranked above the U.S., the government pays for everyone's health care. **Do you think our government should do this? Why or why not?** END

to medical costs, the majority are people who have health insurance. **Why do you think this is true?** (*Often health insurers won't cover all procedures. Since they are for-profit companies, they seek to limit their costs as much as possible.*) Many of those who are not covered are forced to go to the emergency room to get treated for non-emergency sicknesses. **How would this drive up costs overall?**

The U.S. spends more per capita on health care than any other country, but lags behind other developed nations in overall health and life expectancy. The U.S. is also the only industrialized nation that does not provide national health coverage for all of its citizens. **Do you think the U.S. government should provide health care for everyone? Why or why not?** END

Titanic items to be auctioned

This month, artifacts from one of the world's most famous shipwrecks, the Titanic, will be auctioned.

BASIC On the screen is a photo of a famous ship. **Can you name it?** (*The Titanic.*) The Titanic was one of the biggest, and finest, ships of its day. One hundred years ago this month, it made its first trip. Sadly, it was also its last. The ship sank, and about 1,500 passengers were killed. Ever since then, people have been very interested by this story. The shipwreck was found deep in the ocean in 1985. Since then, divers have brought back many artifacts from near the ship. An artifact is something that was made by humans, usually something old. This month, these items will be sold in a public sale called an

auction. In an auction people get to say how much they are willing to spend on something. The person willing to pay the highest price gets to buy the item. For this auction, all the items will be sold together. They will probably go to a museum. **What kinds of items do you think are in the auction?** Some of the items include jewelry and dishes from the dining room. At bottom right is the ship's telegraph, something that used to be used for receiving and sending messages. NEXT



GENERAL This month marks the 100th anniversary of a tragedy that continues to fascinate the world. The Titanic was a huge and very fancy ship that was called "unsinkable." But on its first voyage, it hit an iceberg and sank, killing more than 1,500 of its passengers. **Have you heard of the Titanic?** The shipwreck was finally discovered in 1985, more than 2 miles below the surface of the ocean. Since then, researchers have taken seven trips to the site to recover artifacts from the sunken ship. **What's an artifact?** (*A man-made object that is of historical importance.*) Now, more than 5,000 of these artifacts are to be sold in an auction. **What is an auction?** (*A public sale in which goods or property are sold to the highest bidder.*)

But this auction is special. According to a court decision, one buyer must buy the entire collection, which is valued at about \$190 million. **Why do you think the court decided this?** The reason is that these items are considered to have great historic value. The court and the sellers believe they should be kept together and that the public should be able to view at least part of the collection. **Would you like to see some of these items? What kinds of items do you think will be sold?** Some of the items include a bracelet with the name "Amy," as well as other jewelry, clothing, binoculars, and dishes from the dining room. At bottom right is the ship's telegraph, a device for receiving and sending messages, which is also part of the auction. NEXT

ADVANCED The tragic story of the "unsinkable" luxury ship Titanic has fascinated people around the world, sparking dozens of books and movies. **Are you familiar with the story of Titanic? Did you see the 1997 blockbuster movie of the same name?** One hundred years ago, on April 15th, 1912, the doomed ship sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic, taking more than 1,500 passengers with it. Marking the 100th anniversary will be an auction of more than 5,000 artifacts recovered from the wreck's 13-mile debris field. These were gathered during seven expeditions to the wreckage, which was found two and one half miles below the ocean's surface. The items, collectively valued at around \$190 million, must be sold as a single collection,

according to a Virginia court. The company that funded the expeditions is looking for an institution or private buyer to maintain the entire collection and make at least part of it available to the public. **Who do you think is likely to buy the collection?** The court wants to make sure the Titanic artifacts are maintained for posterity. Some of the items include a pair of binoculars, a bracelet, a bronze cherub that adorned the grand staircase, dishes from the ship's dining rooms, and the ship's telegraph, shown at bottom right. At top right is a photo from the wreckage. **What do you think it would be like take part in one of the diving expeditions to the Titanic? Would you want to do it? Why do you think the story of the Titanic still fascinates people today?** NEXT

Titanic (cont'd)

The sinking of the Titanic led to major improvements in maritime safety.

BASIC

Most people never dreamed the Titanic would sink. It set sail from Great Britain on April 10th, 1912, traveling to New York City. Some very wealthy people, like a man named John Jacob Astor, were on the ship. But many poor people were also on board. More than 1,000 people from countries in Europe were traveling to make new lives in North America. People who leave one country to make a life in a new country are called immigrants. Late on the night of April 14th, the ship hit a big iceberg and water started pouring in. Because no one thought the ship

could sink, there weren't enough lifeboats. About 700 people were able to get in the lifeboats and were later rescued by another ship. The rest died when the ship went down, about 375 miles southeast of Canada. Many people were very upset and angry that this happened. It led to some new rules that made traveling by ship much safer. **Do you understand why people are interested in the Titanic? Would you want to see an exhibit of its artifacts?** END



GENERAL

The Titanic was a marvel. It was a sixth of a mile long and stood 11 stories high. First-class passengers could enjoy the finest modern luxuries. One of these passengers was John Jacob Astor IV, one of the wealthiest people in the world. But the passengers also included more than 1,000 immigrants, people from European countries who were looking to start new lives in North America. The Titanic set out from England on April 10th, 1912, heading for New York City. Late on the night of April 14th, someone in the crew spotted an iceberg, but it was too late to steer around it. Many people thought there was no way the Titanic could sink, but they were wrong. The iceberg ripped a long hole in the side of the ship and water started gushing in. The ship had only 20

lifeboats, enough to hold less than half the passengers. The crew, asking for "women and children first," began loading the lifeboats, but the ship sank before they could be filled. **What do you think it was like aboard the Titanic that night?** A few hours later, another ship finally reached the site where Titanic had gone down, which was about 375 miles southeast of Canada. This ship rescued about 700 people on lifeboats. People all over the world were shocked and angry about the tragedy. The design of the ship was flawed, there weren't nearly enough lifeboats, and the ship had no plan for disaster. The Titanic's sinking helped put in place some needed rules that made traveling by ship safer. **Why do you think people are still so interested in the Titanic story? Does it interest you?** END

ADVANCED

When the Titanic set out on its maiden voyage on April 10th, 1912, it was considered a shipbuilding marvel. It was the biggest ocean liner of its time. Its nine decks stood 11 stories high. The ship left Southampton, England, and made stops in Ireland and France before embarking for New York City. Its 2,224 passengers included some extremely wealthy people. One of these was real estate tycoon John Jacob Astor IV, one of the richest men in the world. Passengers also included more than 1,000 European immigrants, seeking a new life in North America. Late on the night of April 14th, about 375 miles southeast of the coast of Newfoundland, Canada, the ship hit an iceberg. The collision ripped a huge gash in the ship's side. There were 20 lifeboats aboard the ship, not nearly enough to carry the ship's

2,200 passengers and crew. Just before 2:20 a.m. Titanic broke up and sank bow-first, with more than 1,000 people still on board. Those in the water died within minutes from hypothermia. The 710 survivors were rescued from the lifeboats by the RMS Carpathia a few hours later. **What are some of the elements of this story that make it so compelling and dramatic?**

The world responded to the disaster with shock and outrage at the huge loss of life and the many failures that had led to the disaster. **Do you know what some of these failures were?** (*The design of the ship was flawed, there weren't nearly enough lifeboats, and the ship had no plan for disaster.*) But public inquiries that followed led to major improvements in maritime safety. END

Titanoboa: Monster Snake

A prehistoric monster snake went on display at the Smithsonian Institution last week.

BASIC

Can you imagine a snake as long as a school bus? You can see one at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. It isn't alive, though; it was built by scientists and artists. But it looks just like the real one that lived 60 million years ago. The snake you see here is an artist's drawing of what it looked like. In 2004, scientists in Colombia discovered the fossil bones of the snake in a coalmine. **Where in the world is Colombia?** (*South America.*) A fossil is the remains or outline of an ancient

plant or animal preserved in rock. The snake is called Titanoboa, which means "giant snake." It is the largest snake fossil ever discovered. When it was alive, it could have swallowed an animal the size of a cow. But it probably ate things like giant turtles and crocodiles. **Would you like to see a snake this big? What do you think scientists can learn by studying this fossil?** END



GENERAL

What is the biggest snake you've ever seen?

If you visit the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., you can see one that is much bigger — as big as a school bus. It's a man-made reproduction, but it looks just like the real one looked when it was alive 60 million years ago. The picture here is an artist's drawing of what it looked like. In 2004, scientists in Colombia in South America discovered the fossil of a giant snake in a coalmine. **What is a fossil?** (*The remains or outline of a prehistoric plant or animal preserved in rock.*) The fossil belonged to a snake that was 43 feet long, and weighed 2,500 pounds. It was discovered near the Cerrejón — *ser-ray-HONE* — coal mine, so scientists named it "Titanoboa cerrejonensis." "Titanoboa" means "giant boa" or "giant snake." **Have you ever seen a boa constrictor snake?**

ADVANCED

A life-size replica of the 48-foot-long, 2,500-pound Titanoboa is the centerpiece of a new exhibit at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. The replica exists thanks to the 2004 discovery of Titanoboa's fossilized vertebra and skull in a coalmine in Colombia. Here you see an artist's rendering of what Titanoboa would have looked like. The fossil was discovered in the El Cerrejón — *ser-ray-HONE* coalmine, and scientists dubbed the newly discovered species "Titanoboa cerrejonensis." Ordinary boas are capable of swallowing cats or small dogs, but the Titanoboa could have swallowed a bison whole. Its diet, however, likely consisted of giant turtles and crocodiles. Like other constrictors, Titanoboa would have wrapped itself around its prey, suffocating it. **Have**

When fully grown, modern boa constrictors can swallow whole animals the size of a cat or dog. When the Titanoboa was alive, it could have swallowed an animal the size of a cow or a bison — whole! But scientists say the Titanoboa's diet was probably made up of animals like giant turtles or crocodiles. **Can you imagine seeing a giant snake swallowing a crocodile?**

When Titanoboa was alive, it was probably the largest species of land animal on Earth. But scientists think it spent a lot of time in the water catching its prey. Because of its size, it probably moved faster in the water than on land. Snakes are cold-blooded, and need heat to give them energy. Scientists say for this snake to survive, the temperature had to be at least 86 degrees on average, warmer than Colombia is now. **Would you like to see the Titanoboa exhibit?** END

you ever watched a constrictor kill and eat its prey?

Titanoboa was probably the largest non-marine species on the planet when it lived about 60 million years ago. **Who knows when the dinosaurs are thought to have become extinct?** (*About 65 million years ago.*) Scientists say the discovery of the Titanoboa fossil was very valuable because of the lack of information about the 10-million year period following the extinction of the dinosaurs. It also helped scientists extrapolate new information about Colombia's climate at the time. For the cold-blooded Titanoboa to survive, it required temperatures of at least 86 degrees, warmer than the country's average today. **What else do you think can be learned by studying this fossil?** END

Sweet Silent Thought: Whistler's Interiors

A Washington, D.C., museum exhibit features the “interiors” of American artist James McNeill Whistler.



BASIC

James McNeill Whistler was a very famous American artist who lived from 1834 to 1903. A museum in Washington, D.C., is showing some of his paintings and drawings, mostly his “interiors,” which means scenes from indoors. At left is a self-portrait of Whistler, meaning he painted it himself. **Have you ever painted or drawn a self-portrait?** Whistler liked to paint people doing things like reading, drawing, or playing the piano. **What would you paint if you could paint anything?** “Pink Note: The Novelette” shows a young

woman reading. At right, “Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room”

was painted at the home of Whistler’s half-sister, Deborah. She is shown playing the piano, reflected in a mirror, at left. Her daughter, Annie, Whistler’s niece, is reading in a chair. A family friend is standing. **What do you think of these paintings?** Let’s learn a little more about Whistler’s life. NEXT

GENERAL

A museum in Washington, D.C., is featuring the work of a famous American artist, James McNeill Whistler, who lived from 1834 to 1903. The exhibition contains Whistler’s “interiors,” meaning paintings or drawings of indoor scenes. The paintings are mostly of his family or people he knew. At left is a self-portrait of Whistler. **Have you ever painted or drawn a self-portrait? What can you tell about the artist from this portrait?** Whistler often painted people reading, making music, or simply lost in thought. **Do you understand why he was drawn to these subjects?** Whistler often gave his paintings titles with musical words in them, like the two here. He believed music and art are closely related. **Do you agree?** At left is “Pink

Note: The Novelette,” a watercolor painted around 1884. It is a quiet scene of a young woman reading. **What do notice about this painting? Do you like it?** At right is “Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room.” This was painted at the home of his half-sister, Deborah. She is shown playing the piano, reflected in the mirror at left. **Why do you think he painted her reflection?** Her daughter, Annie, who posed for many drawings and paintings for her uncle, is sitting in the chair reading, and a family friend stands in the center of the room. **What do you think of this painting? What do you notice about his use of color?** Let’s look at two more of Whistler’s famous paintings and learn a little more about his life. NEXT

ADVANCED

James McNeill Whistler was one of the most prominent American artists of the 19th century. But Whistler spent much of his life in the United Kingdom after he decided to pursue art as a career. At left is a self-portrait Whistler painted in 1872, when he was in his 30s. **What can you tell about him from this piece?** The Smithsonian Institution’s Freer Gallery is holding an exhibit of “Whistler’s Interiors,” his paintings and drawings of domestic or family scenes. Reading, music, and self-reflection — the “sweet silent thought” of the exhibition’s title — were recurring themes in his work. **From what author’s works does the phrase “sweet silent thought” come?** (*Shakespeare.*) These works also reflect the mindset of the Victorian era, when women were idealized and

identified mostly with the home and quiet pursuits. Whistler often gave his pieces musical titles, in keeping with his idea that art and music are closely related. **Do you agree?** At left is “Pink Note: The Novelette,” a watercolor painted around 1884. **What does this painting convey to you?** “Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room” is set in the home of his half-sister, Deborah Haden. Deborah, playing the piano, is reflected in the mirror at left. **Why do you think he painted her reflection?** Her daughter Annie reads in a chair, and a family friend stands in the center. Some critics have noted that the tone of this piece is slightly claustrophobic and that the figures are disengaged from one another. **Do you agree? What else do you notice about this piece?** NEXT

Whistler's Interiors (cont'd)

Whistler spent most of his life living in London.

BASIC

James McNeill

Whistler was born in Massachusetts, but he lived most of his life in London. He knew he wanted to be an artist from the time he was a boy. Whistler had strong opinions about art. He didn't think it needed to have a moral or tell a story. "Just as music is the poetry of the ear, so painting is that of the eye," he said once. **Do you understand what he meant? Do you agree?** Whistler wasn't shy and liked to be the center of attention. But his paintings are quiet and not flashy at all. His most famous painting is of his mother, who came to

live with him in the 1860s. When it was first shown, many people didn't like it.

They said it was too plain and boring. But it became one of the most famous paintings in history. **What do you think of "Whistler's Mother"?** The piece at right was painted in a fishing village. You can see in this piece that Whistler was very interested in color. **Do you like either of these paintings? Do you have a favorite artist?** END



GENERAL

James McNeill

Whistler knew he wanted to be an artist from the time he was a boy. He was born in Massachusetts, but when he was 21, he went to Paris to study art, and he never lived in the U.S. again. **What would that be like? Would you miss your home country?** At that time, Paris was the center of the art world. Whistler met some of the most important artists of his era. A few years later, he moved to London, where he lived for most of the rest of his life. Whistler was the sort of person who always drew attention to himself. He was not at all shy and sometimes did and said things just to shock people. Yet his art was very different from his public personality. Whistler believed that good art didn't need to have a moral or some kind of deeper meaning. He believed in "art for art's sake." **Do you**

understand this point of view? Although Whistler didn't always get along well with some people, he was a very loving son. In the early 1860s, his mother, Anna McNeill, came to live with him. At left is a portrait he painted of her. When he painted it, many people didn't like it. They thought it was too simple and plain. But it became his most famous piece, and is one of the most recognizable pieces of art in the world. **Does this piece look familiar to you? Why do you think it became so famous?** The use of color was very important to Whistler, as shown in the right image. "The Beach at Selsey Bill" was painted during a visit to a friend in a fishing community in England's south coast. **Do you like this painting? What do you notice about each of these works?** END

ADVANCED

James McNeill

Whistler was born in Massachusetts in 1834. When he was a child, his family spent time in Russia and in London due to his father's position as a prominent engineer. At the age of 21, he moved to Paris to begin his art career, and quickly adopted the "bohemian" lifestyle of a Parisian artist. **What do you think it was like to live in Paris during that era?** Whistler became known for his flamboyant, eccentric, and even outrageous behavior. He was known for his distinctive attire: a straw hat, a white suit, black patent-leather shoes, and a monocle. Yet, his art was known for its sensitivity and subtlety. Four years later, he relocated to London, where he spent the rest of his life. Whistler's belief, somewhat radical for his day, was that art shouldn't have a

moral or literary meaning; he believed in "art for art's sake." "Art should be independent of all clap-trap — it should stand alone," he famously said. Whistler was a founder of the tonalism movement, which valued simplicity and often used a monochromatic color scheme. His painting of his pious mother, who came to live with him in the early 1860s, became his most famous work and is one of the most famous images in art. **Are you familiar with this painting? Why do you think it became so famous?** At right is "The Beach at Selsey Bill," painted during a visit to a friend in a fishing community on England's south coast. The vast beach and sky dominate the painting. **What do you note about his use of color here? Do you like either of these paintings? Why or why not?** END

Country of the Week: The Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic shares a Caribbean island with Haiti.

BASIC

The Dominican Republic is a small country that shares an island with an even smaller country, Haiti. The island itself is called Hispaniola, which means “Little Spain.” It is in the beautiful Caribbean Sea, southeast of the United States. The Dominican Republic is a fairly poor country. But millions of people visit the country for its beautiful sand beaches and warm climate. **How does this help the country?** Dominicans grow a large amount of sugarcane as well as coffee and tobacco. Parts of the country are also mountainous. The highest peak is called Pico Duarte. Most Dominicans

are biracial.

What does this mean? (*Having ancestry from more than one race.*) Many Dominicans

have both African and European ancestors. About 9 million people live in this country, which is about the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined. The capital city, shown in the left photo, is Santo Domingo. Also pictured is President Leonel Fernandez. Dominicans will elect a new president in May. **NEXT**



GENERAL

The Dominican Republic is a small island nation in the Caribbean Sea. It is in the unusual position of sharing an island with another country, Haiti. The island these two countries share is called Hispaniola, which means “Little Spain.” Both of these countries are quite poor, but because it has been more stable politically in recent years, the Dominican Republic is in a better economic position. Part of its growth has come from tourism. The country’s gorgeous white-sand beaches and warm climate draw millions of visitors a year. **What kinds of jobs does tourism create?** The main photo shows the capital, Santo Domingo.

Parts of the Dominican Republic are mountainous. The tallest peak is Pico Duarte, more than 10,000 feet high. Dominicans grow a large amount of

sugarcane as well as coffee and tobacco. Most Dominicans are biracial or multiracial. Many are descendants of the Taíno — *TY-no* — the native people who first lived here, as well as Africans who were brought here as slaves. Many Dominicans also are part European, because Europeans controlled the island for several hundred years. About 9 million people live here.

Can you guess the official language here? (*Spanish.*) In the last four decades, many Dominicans have immigrated to the United States. Today there are more than 1 million people of Dominican heritage in the U.S. Here you see President Leonel Fernandez, who has been in office since 2004. But he has served as many years as the country’s laws allow, so residents will vote for a new president in May. **NEXT**

ADVANCED

The Dominican Republic shares an island with the nation of Haiti. **What is the whole island called?** (*Hispaniola, or “Little Spain.”*) Both of these countries are poor, but the Dominican Republic is in better shape economically than Haiti. **Can you speculate on some of the reasons for this?** (*Greater political stability for one thing.*) One of the main drivers of The Dominican Republic’s economic growth is tourism. Millions of people come for its beautiful beaches and inexpensive resorts. The country’s capital, pictured here, is Santo Domingo. It is the oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in the Americas.

Much of this country is mountainous. Pico Duarte, the Caribbean’s highest mountain is located here. Most Dominicans are biracial or multiracial. Many claim

ancestry from the Taíno — *TY-no* — the native people who lived here when the Spanish landed in the 1490s, along with African and European heritage. About 9 million people live here, in an area about the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined. Haiti’s population is nearly as large as the Dominican Republic’s, yet it has only about half the land. Because of Haiti’s problems, many Haitians try to sneak over the border. An estimated 800,000 Haitians are living illegally in the Dominican Republic. **What do you know about the situation in Haiti?** Many Dominicans have emigrated to the United States; more than 1 million people of Dominican heritage live in the U.S. Pictured is President Leonel Fernandez, in office since 2004. Presidential elections will take place in May. **NEXT**

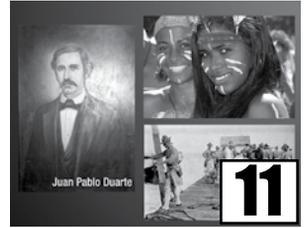
Country of the Week: Dominican Republic (cont'd)

Santo Domingo was Europe's first settlement in the "New World."

BASIC

The explorer Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola on his first trip to the "New World" in 1492. The Europeans' arrival was bad news for the native Taino — *TY-no* — people. Most of them died of diseases they got from the Europeans, or from mistreatment. Spain, and then France, controlled the island for hundreds of years. In 1838 a man named Juan Pablo Duarte started a freedom movement. He is now a national hero. But the country didn't develop a strong government, and in 1916, U.S. forces landed here to try to make things more stable. They occupied the island until 1924. Today, this

country has a democratically elected government. The favorite sport here is baseball. Two of the most



famous Dominican players are Sammy Sosa and Alex Rodriguez. **Are you a fan of either of these players?** Dominicans treasure their culture and their Taino roots. These two girls are wearing Taino clothing and makeup at a festival. **Would you like to visit the Dominican Republic?** END

GENERAL

Christopher Columbus spotted this island on his first voyage to the "New World," and reportedly said, "There is no more beautiful island in the world." The Europeans brought disease and also mistreated the native people, causing the majority of them to be wiped out eventually. **Why do you think conquering countries always seem to do so much harm to native residents?** But eventually, Spain lost interest in Hispaniola, and gave the western part of the island, the area that is now Haiti, to France. In the early 19th century French-occupied Haiti took over the whole island. But in 1838, a man named Juan Pablo Duarte founded a group that worked toward independence for the Spanish-speaking side of the island. In 1844 his group declared independence from Haiti. Duarte is considered a founding father of the

Dominican Republic. But the decades following were difficult, with constant changes in government. In 1916, U.S. forces landed here, as shown in the bottom picture. The U.S. was concerned about the safety of the nearby Panama Canal, the manmade link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The U.S. occupation lasted until the 1920s. Today, this country has a democratically elected government. Music and baseball are two of the biggest interests in this country. Dominicans have made great strides in the field of baseball, the top sport here. Two famous Dominican players are Sammy Sosa and Alex Rodriguez. **Are you a fan of either of these players?** At right are two girls at a festival wearing clothing and makeup of the native Taino. **Would you like to visit the Dominican Republic?** END

ADVANCED

This island was one of the very first territories colonized by Europeans. Christopher Columbus, on seeing Hispaniola for the first time, reportedly said, "There is no more beautiful island in the world." But the arrival of the Spanish did not bode well for the indigenous people, the Taino. Thousands died of diseases for which they had no immunity. The Taino people were virtually wiped out, though many Dominicans proudly carry their bloodlines. **Why do you think colonization was so devastating to native peoples in nearly every case?** As the Spanish began colonizing the American mainland, they began to lose interest in Hispaniola, and ceded the part of the island that's now Haiti to France. French-occupied Haiti took over the whole island in the early 19th century. In 1838, Juan Pablo Duarte, considered a

founding father of the Dominican Republic, formed an independence movement and the group declared independence from Haiti in 1844. But more troubled decades were ahead for the fledgling nation. The country's instability prompted the U.S. government to send troops to the country in 1916, in part to protect the nearby Panama Canal. **Do you think the U.S. had other motives?** This turned into an occupation that lasted until the 1920s. Today, this country has a democratically elected government. Baseball is the Dominican Republic's top sport. **Can you name some famous Dominican players?** (*Sammy Sosa and Alex Rodriguez.*) At right are two girls at a Carnival celebration wearing traditional Taino makeup and clothes. **Would you like to visit this country?** END

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

The 1968 Civil Rights Act said people could not be denied fair housing for their race, beliefs, or gender.



GENERAL

In 1966, the president of the United States called a meeting of important people to the White House. **Who was the U.S. president in 1966?** (*Lyndon Baines Johnson.*) Among these people were several figures in the civil rights movement, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. **What was the civil rights movement?** (*The effort to stop the unfair treatment of African Americans and other minority groups in the U.S.*)

During this meeting, the group noted that housing was one of the biggest problems in the U.S. **What does “housing” mean here?** (*Houses, apartments, and other places for people to live.*) There were many communities where African Americans and other minority groups could not buy homes or rent apartments. Everyone in the room considered this to be discrimination. **Define “discrimination.”** (*Acts that are based on prejudice and result in unfairness or injustice toward a particular group of people.*)

President Johnson was very much against discrimination. It did not fit in his program for America, which he called “The Great Society.” “The Great Society” was President Johnson’s plan for a more equal and fair society. It included programs aimed at ending poverty, improving education, and providing health care to people who couldn’t afford coverage. The president sent a message to the U.S. Congress asking them to pass a law ending discrimination in housing. **What are the two houses of Congress?** (*The Senate and the House of Representatives.*)

Many lawmakers did not want to vote for a bill like this. Some said it would interfere with people’s rights to do whatever they wanted. Others did not want to make some of their white voters angry. And still others thought it would cause racial problems to have people from different backgrounds living together. **Do you understand any of these points**

of view? Or do you think they were just excuses to not take action against discrimination?

Over the next two years, the president continued to push Congress to send him legislation guaranteeing fair housing. Every time a bill was put forward, however, it failed to get enough support to pass, or it got blocked somehow. In 1967 and 1968, a lot of people were complaining about the programs of the Great Society. President Johnson’s ideas were called expensive, socialistic, and unworkable. But he continued to try to get people to pass this law. He knew that many states would not come up with a law on their own, so he felt that this had to be a national law.

On April 4th, 1968, a horrible tragedy occurred in Memphis, Tennessee. **Do you know what this was?** (*Dr. King was shot and killed.*) This caused a lot of sadness, and a lot of anger. There were riots and demonstrations in several American cities. **Can you understand this anger?** President Johnson reached out to Congress one more time, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, was passed, one week after Dr. King’s death.

This act said that no one in the U.S. could be denied housing based on his or her race, color, background, religion, or gender. Another minority group, the disabled, was added to this list years later. **Can you think of any groups that are still discriminated against in terms of housing?** (*It does not include gay people, for example.*) **Why was this law so important to America? What laws do you think President Johnson would want to pass today to move forward with his idea of a “Great Society”?** END



Marian Bechtel

Marian Bechtel is a 17-year-old high school student in Pennsylvania. She loves to play the piano and she is a passionate anti-war activist. She's also the inventor of a low-cost device that can detect landmines. Marian is a finalist in the 2012 Intel Science Talent Search. Her parents are both geologists, and she learned from them about projects to help detect explosive landmines. Landmines are small bombs that have been placed in war zones and often left behind even after the war is over. An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people are injured or killed by landmines each year. The device, shown in the photo here, uses sound waves to determine where the landmines are located. Marian says her inspiration for the invention came when she played certain notes on the piano and noticed that the strings of a nearby banjo would vibrate. **If you could invent any type of new invention, what would it be? Why?**

Earl Scruggs

Earl Scruggs, whose distinctive playing style made him a legend in bluegrass music and among his fellow banjo players, died recently at age 88. He was born in rural North Carolina to a family of musicians, and he developed his famous three-finger picking style by the time he was 10. In 1945 he joined Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, but soon afterwards Scruggs and bandmate Rascal Flatt left to form the Foggy Mountain Boys. They soon became regulars on the Grand Ole Opry, the most respected stage in country music. Scruggs was best known for the Flatt & Scruggs song "The Ballad of Jed Clampett," which was the theme song to the TV show "The Beverly Hillbillies." Their recording of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" became a bluegrass standard. **Have you heard Earl Scruggs' music? If so, what do you think of it?**

Burma

Pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi has won a seat in Burma's parliament following Sunday's landmark election. The win marks a major milestone in Burma, where the military ruled for nearly 50 years. The elections were Burma's first free elections since 1962, when the world's longest-lasting military dictatorship took power in the country. Ms. Suu Kyi's party won elections in 1990, but the military government disregarded their outcome. Ms. Suu Kyi spent nearly 15 years under house arrest in Burma, and won a Nobel Peace Prize for her work to bring democracy to her country. Aung San Suu Kyi described the elections as a "triumph of the people," and the "beginning of a new era." **Do you think these elections will make Burma a freer and more democratic country? Why or why not?**

United Kingdom

The British government's plan to tax a favorite British snack has caused an uproar in the U.K. The tax would affect the Cornish pasty (*rhymes with "nasty"*) — individual meat-and-vegetable-filled pies that are a traditional favorite among British students and workers. Pasties were first baked for British tin miners in the 17th century because they were sturdy enough for the miners to carry with them to the mines, and hearty enough to fill them up for their long, hard workdays. The newly released federal budget would close a loophole that allowed some bakery items, including the beloved pasties, to avoid the country's 20 percent sales tax. The proposed pastry tax sparked a major controversy, and was portrayed as the Conservative-led government attacking the working class people of Britain. **Do you think the British government should tax pasties? Why or why not?**

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

reproducible activity

Write the names and numbers of the locations on the map next to their descriptions below.

- a. American-born artist James McNeill Whistler spent much of his life in this country. _____
- b. The Titanoboa was found in this country. _____
- c. The doomed ship Titanic was en route to this city when it sank. _____
- d. This country shares a Caribbean island with Haiti. _____
- e. The Supreme Court meets in this city. _____
- f. The Titanic sank off the coast of this country. _____

Answers on inside back cover



Cartoon of the Week

This week's cartoon looks at the many faces of Mitt Romney.

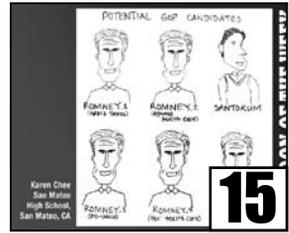
BASIC

This week's cartoon was drawn by Karen Chee, a student at San Mateo High School in California. Karen's cartoon is titled "Potential GOP Candidates." **Does anyone know if the letters "GOP" stand for the Democrats or the Republicans?** (It is the nickname for the Republicans, and it stands for Grand Old Party.) This cartoon shows six faces, but it really shows only two of the candidates for president — Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum. Mitt Romney is shown five times. **What is the difference between them?** (They all have different political positions under them —for health

care and against health care, for example.)

Mitt Romney was governor of the state of

Massachusetts for many years. His opinions now do not always match up with the opinions he had when he was governor of Massachusetts. Some people have criticized him for changing his opinions over the years. **How do you think the cartoonist feels about Mitt Romney? Do you think this is a good editorial cartoon? Why or why not?** END



GENERAL

This week's cartoon was created by Karen Chee, an 11th-grade student at San Mateo High School in San Mateo, California. Karen's cartoon is titled, "Potential GOP Candidates." **Who knows which party the abbreviation "GOP" stands for?** (Republicans. It stands for "Grand Old Party.") **Although there are six faces in this cartoon, there are really only two presidential candidates here. Which ones are they?** (Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum.) The cartoonist has drawn one Rick Santorum but five Mitt Romneys. **Why do you think she did this?**

Underneath each picture of Mitt Romney is a different political opinion, and some of these opinions are the opposite of other opinions. For example, Mitt Romney #2 is against health care, and Mitt Romney #4 is for health care. **Why do you think the**

cartoonist did this? Mitt Romney used to be the governor of a state on the East Coast of the U.S. **Who knows which one?** (Massachusetts.) As you know, Mitt Romney is a Republican. But Massachusetts is known for having a lot of Democrats. In order for a Republican to be elected in Massachusetts, a candidate usually has to get the votes of at least some Democrats. While he was governor, Mr. Romney supported a health care plan for his state that is much like the one President Obama signed into law. But now, Mr. Romney says he is against the president's health care law. **Why do you think he changed his position? What do you think the cartoonist is saying about Mitt Romney in this cartoon? Do you think it's a good cartoon? Why or why not?** END

ADVANCED

This week's cartoon was created by Karen Chee, an 11th-grade student at San Mateo High School in San Mateo, California. Karen's cartoon is titled "Potential GOP Candidates," but it is focused on the positions of just one candidate — Mitt Romney. Although there is only one Santorum in this cartoon, there are five Romneys, all with different positions. **What point do you think the cartoonist is making here? Why do you think she chose the particular positions she included in the cartoon?**

Mitt Romney built his political career as a Republican governor of a state with a reputation for being liberal. **In which state did he serve as governor?** (Massachusetts.) **Why do you think he was able to be elected in Massachusetts?** As governor,

Romney's positions were moderate enough to appeal to some moderate Democratic voters. For example, he was pro-choice, and was a supporter of Planned Parenthood at one time. He also created a health care system for Massachusetts that served as the basis for the one President Obama signed into law. As a presidential candidate, however, Romney has shifted farther to the right wing of the party. He is no longer pro-choice; he now opposes abortion. He also does not support the president's health care law. **Why do you think he changed his positions on this issue? What do you think is the cartoonist's opinion of candidate Romney? Why do you think the cartoonist didn't put any political positions under Rick Santorum's name?** END

Newspaper Activities

Learn new words

The first American dictionary was published on April 14th, 1828. Find five words in today's newspaper that you have never heard before. Look up the definitions for these words and then use each one in a sentence.

Baseball predictions

Now that baseball season is underway, check your newspaper's sports section for results from the early games. Then make a prediction of who you think will win in each division. Put your predictions away in a drawer and take them out in September to see how close you were to being right.

Internet links



Who am I?

See first lady Michelle Obama present Taylor Swift with the "Big Help Award" at the 2012 Kids' Choice Awards.

<http://tinyurl.com/6s83zxb>

Supreme Court/Health Care

The SCOTUS blog looks at the arguments the court heard about the individual mandate.

<http://tinyurl.com/7feggfn>



Titanic auction

Watch footage from expeditions to the wreck, and hear interviews with Titanic survivors.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eilYwEjPeMg&feature=related>



Titanoboa

You can watch a Smithsonian documentary on Titanoboa at YouTube.

<http://tinyurl.com/7wdnkya>

Whistler

Learn more about the "Sweet Silent Thought" exhibit.

<http://tinyurl.com/79alwxb>

Important people

Your newspaper has a lot of news about people in your state. Look through your newspaper and make a list of your choice of the ten most important people in your state. In each case, explain the reasons for your choice.

Writing Activity

Health care law

The Supreme Court is hearing a challenge to President Obama's health care reform law. Look for newspaper stories on the arguments being put forth by opponents of the law and supporters of the law. Remember this is a complicated law with many provisions. Based on what you read, how would you rule if you were on the Supreme Court? Would you keep the whole law, parts of it,

Country of the Week

Read BBC News's country profile of the Dominican Republic.

<http://tinyurl.com/5jp8m9>



This Week in History

Lyndon Johnson remarks on signing the Civil Rights Act of 1968

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q11kvbJy0cs>

Marian Bechtel

MSNBC has more about this story.

<http://tinyurl.com/7qhypn7>



Earl Scruggs

Go to YouTube to see Flatt & Scruggs perform "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" at the Grand Ole Opry in 1965.

<http://tinyurl.com/6wdw7jt>

Burma

BBC News has full coverage of Burma.

<http://tinyurl.com/2bu45tc>

United Kingdom

USA Today has more.

<http://tinyurl.com/7335dfs>

Cartoon of the Week

Learn more at our website.

<http://newscurrents.com/intro/edcartoons/carcon2.html>

Word Search

This week's word search is slithering and crawling with all sorts of reptiles.

NILE CROCODILE
ALLIGATOR
TERRAPIN
BOX TURTLE
HERMANN'S TORTOISE
MONITOR LIZARD
SEA TURTLE
RED EARED SLIDER
WATERSNAKE
GECKO

IGUANA
SKINK
GILA MONSTER
BOA CONSTRICTOR
MAMBA
COBRA
ADDER
PIT VIPER
GHARIAL
CHAMELEON

I I E I B O X T U R T L E N A V U H
W O T H A H E M T R M S M T E I R S
A T P E N I L E C R O C O D I L E Y
D T E R R A P I N Y Y H N I E J D D
G M N M A C U I K L M A M B A M E I
G I L A M O N S T E R M T P L A A T
H N I N U B V S B E A E P I B L R O
A T E N I R E K D V L L R T B L E U
R C G S I A E I I A Q E A V A I D A
I W A T E R S N A K E O R I K G S D
A I T O I A O K K H L N S P S A L D
L G N R P S E A T U R T L E T T I E
P U A T E S Q E W P S C O R H O D R
T A B O A C O N S T R I C T O R E Y
N N L I N E O R I U O A H B A I R O
N A E S I M O N I T O R L I Z A R D
A C G E C K O L P M B A I F P H I E

Solution on inside back cover

BASIC REVIEW QUIZ

- 1) TRUE OR FALSE: The Supreme Court overruled President Obama's health care reform law.
- 2) The health care reform law (CHOOSE ONE: does, does not) require people to buy health insurance.
- 3) The Titanic sank because it hit (CHOOSE ONE: another ship, an iceberg).
- 4) TRUE OR FALSE: Everyone on board the Titanic was rescued.
- 5) Titanoboa was a giant (CHOOSE ONE: crocodile, snake).
- 6) James McNeill Whistler was a native of (CHOOSE ONE: the United States, France).
- 7) Whistler's most famous painting was of his (CHOOSE ONE: father, mother).
- 8) The Dominican Republic shares a Caribbean island with _____.
- 9) The favorite sport in this country is _____.
- 10) The Civil Rights Act of 1968 was signed into law by (CHOOSE ONE: President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson.)

ESSAY OR DEBATE QUESTION

What do you think it would be like to live in prehistoric times, when the Titanoboa was alive?

GENERAL REVIEW QUIZ

- 1) The _____ is looking at a case involving President Obama's health care reform law.
- 2) The health care reform law requires that nearly everyone buy _____.
- 3) The shipwreck of the Titanic was discovered in (CHOOSE ONE: 1965, 1985).
- 4) The Titanic was heading for (CHOOSE ONE: New York City, Los Angeles) when it hit an iceberg.
- 5) Titanoboa was a giant _____.
- 6) An exhibition at a Washington, D.C., museum includes many of artist James McNeill Whistler's (CHOOSE ONE: landscapes; "interiors," or indoor scenes).
- 7) Whistler lived most of his life in (CHOOSE ONE: London, New York City).
- 8) The official language in the Dominican Republic is _____.
- 9) Many Dominicans are descended from the native (CHOOSE ONE: Taino, Inca) people.
- 10) President Lyndon Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which said that people could not be denied the right to (CHOOSE ONE: vote, fair housing) because of their race.

ESSAY OR DEBATE QUESTION

What is your favorite kind of art? Explain your answer.

ADVANCED REVIEW QUIZ

- 1) The individual mandate in the health care reform law requires nearly all Americans to purchase _____ or pay a fine.
- 2) Opponents of the law say it violates the _____ Clause of the Constitution.
- 3) A Virginia court has stipulated that the Titanic items must be sold as _____.
- 4) The 710 Titanic survivors were rescued from the lifeboats by the RMS _____ a few hours later.
- 5) The fossil of Titanoboa was discovered in _____.
- 6) The artist James McNeill Whistler often gave his pieces _____ titles.
- 7) Whistler was a founder of the _____ movement, which valued simplicity and often used a monochromatic color scheme.
- 8) The island that the Dominican Republic and Haiti share is called _____.
- 9) The Dominican Republic's capital city is _____.
- 10) President Lyndon Johnson's big plan for America was called "_____."

ESSAY OR DEBATE QUESTION

Do you think the individual mandate in the health care reform law exceeds the power granted Congress in the Constitution? Why or why not?

Answers to Where in the World:

a-4, United Kingdom; b-5, Colombia;
c-1, New York City; d-6, Dominican Republic;
e-3, Washington, D.C.; f-2, Canada

Solution to Word Search:

I	I	E	I	B	O	X	T	U	R	T	L	E	N	A	V	U	H
W	O	T	H	A	H	E	M	T	R	M	S	M	T	E	I	R	S
A	T	P	E	N	I	L	E	C	R	O	C	O	D	I	L	E	Y
D	T	E	R	R	A	P	I	N	Y	Y	H	N	I	E	J	D	D
G	M	N	M	A	C	U	I	K	L	M	A	M	B	A	M	E	I
G	I	L	A	M	O	N	S	T	E	R	M	T	P	L	A	A	T
H	N	I	N	U	B	V	S	B	E	A	E	P	I	B	L	R	O
A	T	E	N	I	R	E	K	D	V	L	L	R	T	B	L	E	U
R	C	G	S	I	A	E	I	I	A	Q	E	A	V	A	I	D	A
I	W	A	T	E	R	S	N	A	K	E	O	R	I	K	G	S	D
A	I	T	O	I	A	O	K	K	H	L	N	S	P	S	A	L	D
L	G	N	R	P	S	E	A	T	U	R	T	L	E	T	T	I	E
P	U	A	T	E	S	Q	E	W	P	S	C	O	R	H	O	D	R
T	A	B	O	A	C	O	N	S	T	R	I	C	T	O	R	E	Y
N	N	L	I	N	E	O	R	I	U	O	A	H	B	A	I	R	O
N	A	E	S	I	M	O	N	I	T	O	R	L	I	Z	A	R	D
A	C	G	E	C	K	O	L	P	M	B	A	I	F	P	H	I	E

Quiz Answers

BASIC QUIZ

- 1-FALSE
- 2-does
- 3-an iceberg
- 4-FALSE
- 5-snake
- 6-the United States
- 7-mother
- 8-Haiti
- 9-baseball
- 10-Lyndon B. Johnson

GENERAL QUIZ

- 1-Supreme Court
- 2-health insurance
- 3-1985
- 4-New York City
- 5-snake
- 6-"interiors," or indoor scenes
- 7-London
- 8-Spanish
- 9-Taino
- 10-fair housing

ADVANCED QUIZ

- 1-health insurance
- 2-Commerce
- 3-a single collection
- 4-Carpathia
- 5-Colombia
- 6-musical
- 7-tonalism
- 8-Hispaniola
- 9-Santo Domingo
- 10-The Great Society

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