

# ASIA Reader's digest

HOURS  
OF  
GREAT  
READING

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Gave Up on LPs

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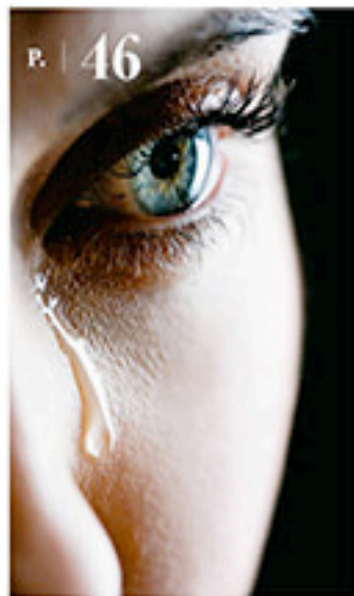
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POWER OF ONE

# She Took on Tobacco

BY HELEN SIGNY

When this cancer specialist realised that pension funds were investing in the growth of the tobacco industry, she felt it was time to challenge the status quo

*"A tobacco-free world is the way of the future":  
Melbourne oncologist  
Dr Bronwyn King*



# Unlocking Paralysis

A bold new treatment for strokes saves time – and lives

BY LISA FITTERMAN

**MACY MILLS LIES ON A STRETCHER** in the emergency department of Toronto Western Hospital, paralysed, as doctors and nurses hover above her. The 38-year-old triathlete and mother of three, who gave birth to her youngest child only five months ago, knows she has had a stroke. She remembers a dull headache that suddenly turned into a drill burrowing into one spot in her brain, sharp, hot and insistent. She was driving to her older children's school to volunteer at their sports day.

*For Macy Mills, clot retrieval was available just in time*

Overcome by pain, and numb along her left side, instinct helped her lurch the car into a parking space and, after her mobile phone dropped to the floor, lean on the horn for help.

Now, no more than an hour later, a CT scan has shown that, like the majority of strokes, hers was 'ischaemic': a clot is blocking the arterial flow of blood to her brain. In her case, it is a large one on the right side, which is why the left side of her body is affected.

Dr Richard Farb, a neuroradiologist at Toronto Western Hospital, asks her husband to sign consent forms for a procedure that has not yet been tested in Canada. Macy will be the first Canadian to undergo it.

This groundbreaking procedure is officially called an endovascular thrombectomy with a 'stent retriever' – a tiny wire mesh tube with an opening on one end. It was first tested in the Netherlands, while its first trials in Germany and Switzerland have proved promising, too. Its nickname, 'Mr Clean', reflects its ability to clean an artery out in 40 minutes or less.

*What choice do I have?* Macy thinks. She tries to nod and say, "Do what you have to." The words come out muffled, as if she is speaking under water.

Within minutes of a local anaesthetic taking effect, she feels Farb puncturing a tiny hole in the femoral artery near her groin. He then uses radiographic imaging on a nearby screen to carefully thread a catheter that contains the stent up through

her vascular system to the artery that feeds her brain.

At the opening of the artery, the catheter is retracted and Macy feels some pressure, as if someone is pinching her brain. It's the stent, which has opened to envelop and trap the clot within the mesh.

"When is this going to be over?" she asks.

But it already is. Farb gently pulls the stent containing the clot out the same way it went in. From start to finish, the entire operation has lasted less than two hours.

"Try to move," he says.

She lightly flexes the fingers of her left hand, which three hours ago could not hold on to her mobile phone.

Soon Macy is pumping breast milk in the intensive care unit, griping about the lack of a television set and feeling very, very lucky.

**IT IS JUNE 15, 2011.** Three years and five months later, the Canadian trial of the 'Mr Clean' procedure, which involved 316 patients, ends early because it's clear it's already a success.

Dr Timo Krings, the head of neuroradiology at Toronto Western Hospital, explains it this way: "Before, surgical stroke treatment was a gamble. Anything we tried took at least two hours. Now, on the operating room table, we can see patients starting to speak again and move their limbs. And it's fast. We've done one surgery in 14 minutes."

PHOTO (PREVIOUS PAGE): JASON GORDON

Our tears are far more important  
than scientists once believed

# Why We Cry

BY MANDY OAKLANDER  
FROM TIME

**THERE'S A LOT** scientists don't know - or can't agree on - about people who cry. Charles Darwin once declared emotional tears "purposeless", and nearly 150 years later, emotional crying remains one of the human body's more confounding mysteries. Though some other species shed tears reflexively as a result of pain >>



# The End of Parking

Could ride-sharing and robocars make our cities greener and our lives less chaotic?

BY CLIVE THOMPSON  
FROM MOTHER JONES

ILLUSTRATION BY  
RAYMOND BIESINGER

**IF YOU DRIVE OUT** to West Edmonton Mall, in Canada, you'll arrive at the world's biggest car park. With room for 20,000 vehicles - that's at least 300,000 square metres - and another 10,000 in overflow parking, the area is comparable to the size of 84 American football fields (including the end zones).

That mall - and its Guinness World Record-holding car park - isn't alone in its



expansive approach. Parking is, after all, most of what cars do: the average automobile spends 95 per cent of its time sitting in place. A 2010 study from the University of California, Berkeley, found that the US has between 105 million and 2 billion parking spots, for roughly 300 million vehicles.

The metastasising of parking has had profound effects. On an aesthetic level, it makes cities grimly ugly. It's expensive to build. And the emissions it causes may be worst of all.

When Donald Shoup, an urban-planning professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, looked at Westwood Village, a small neighbourhood near his university, he calculated that cars circling around in search of open spaces burn 178,000 litres of petrol and generate 662 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. Those numbers, Shoup says, are reflective of the situation in most cities' congested cores.

But for the first time, urban experts see an end in sight. We are, they say, on the cusp of an era when cities can begin dramatically reducing the number of parking spaces they offer.

Why? For starters, more and more people are opting to live in city centres, where they don't need - or want - to own a car. We're also seeing the rapid emergence of self-driving technology, which could have huge benefits for urban design and the environment. After all, if cars can drive themselves, fleets of them could scurry around

picking people up and dropping them off with robotic efficiency. That could result in many choosing not to own cars, causing the amount of parking needed to drop as well.

Gabe Klein, who has headed the transportation departments in Chicago and Washington, D.C., sees enormous potential. "All that parking could go away, and then what happens?" he asks. Klein imagines much of this paved-over space suddenly being freed up for houses, schools, playgrounds - just about anything.

**NORTH AMERICA'S OBSESSION** with parking began in the 1940s and '50s, when car use exploded. Panicked cities realised they would soon run out of kerb space. In an effort to ward off that possibility, they passed minimum parking requirements: if a developer wanted to erect an office or apartment building, it also had to build parking.

Decades of perverse incentives served to cement the car as North America's main mode of transportation. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, roughly 15.4 million Canadians travel to work, and four out of every five do so in a private vehicle. Based on these statistics, about 11.4 million workers drive to their jobs in cars, bringing along an additional 867,100 passengers.

Numbers like these make parking seem like an intractable problem. But something strange is happening to our relationship with cars.

FOR MANY, completing the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea's rugged Stanley Owen Range is a way of recognising the hardships and sacrifices of the soldiers who fought there in World War II.

## JOURNEY THROUGH KOKODA

Kokoda is a difficult trek, both physically and emotionally, and those who complete the 96-kilometre walk speak of being changed forever.

For **Simon Bouda**, walking the Kokoda Track meant many things, but above all, it meant fulfilling a promise to a friend

*Right: Australian soldiers and Papua New Guineans display a Japanese sword, Kokoda, September 19, 1942*

PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

