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CONTRIBUTORS

It was a treat to work with writer CINDY GILL — (“How to Make Coffee”). It’s not every day you get to assign something to your “big sister.” Gill is the editor in chief of our sister publication, Pitt Magazine. In the Thomas Detre era, she was on the staff of Health Sciences Review magazine. (She recalls being interviewed for that job by Detre, giant of psychiatry and longtime Pitt administrator, who was “both charming and imposing.”) When you read her essay, you’ll get a sense for her dad’s Pontiac. She still thinks about that old car. “That door, it never did open. We ended up junking the whole thing,” she says with a smile.

If you call photographer MYRANDA ZARLENGO-VARGAS (“So You Want to Change the World?”), you’re likely to hear the roar of a train in the background. The Chicago native and self-declared city girl lives next to the El. She loves her location—perhaps because from there, she can be next to so many people so quickly, and photographing people is her first professional love. She’s currently working on a project about generations of women that she hopes will become a book. A “huge women’s libber,” she was thrilled to meet Pitt alumna Catherine DeAngelis, editor in chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association. That said, a large part of her strategy as a photographer is to go into a shoot unbiased. “People are often categorized,” she says, “and it’s so great to unravel some of those layers—to bring out part of a soul. That’s a great photograph to me.”

COVER

The toll neurodegeneration takes on our communities is staggering. In this issue, we focus on two heavies: Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases. In a follow-up story, we’re invited along on a father-daughter journey. (Illustration © Michael Lotenens.)

FEATURES

Stolen Lives 12
Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s: 5.5 million Americans afflicted, and that figure’s slated to increase. Is there no stopping these diseases? Our neurogurus respond. In a follow-up story, we learn how bugs might save our brains. (It makes more sense than you’d think.) In another, a Pittsburgh writer takes us on an eye-opening journey with her father.

Twin Portals to the Brain 24
An astounding new surgical procedure was kept quiet at Pitt for five years. Why? Because you’d better have your act together before you tell people you can remove brain tumors the size of baseballs through the nose.

So You Want to Change the World? 28
Some people might say Catherine DeAngelis has reached a point in her life where she’s no longer afraid. “But I’ve never been afraid,” clarifies the editor in chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association.