

MM

NEW MOBILITY

LIFE ON WHEELS

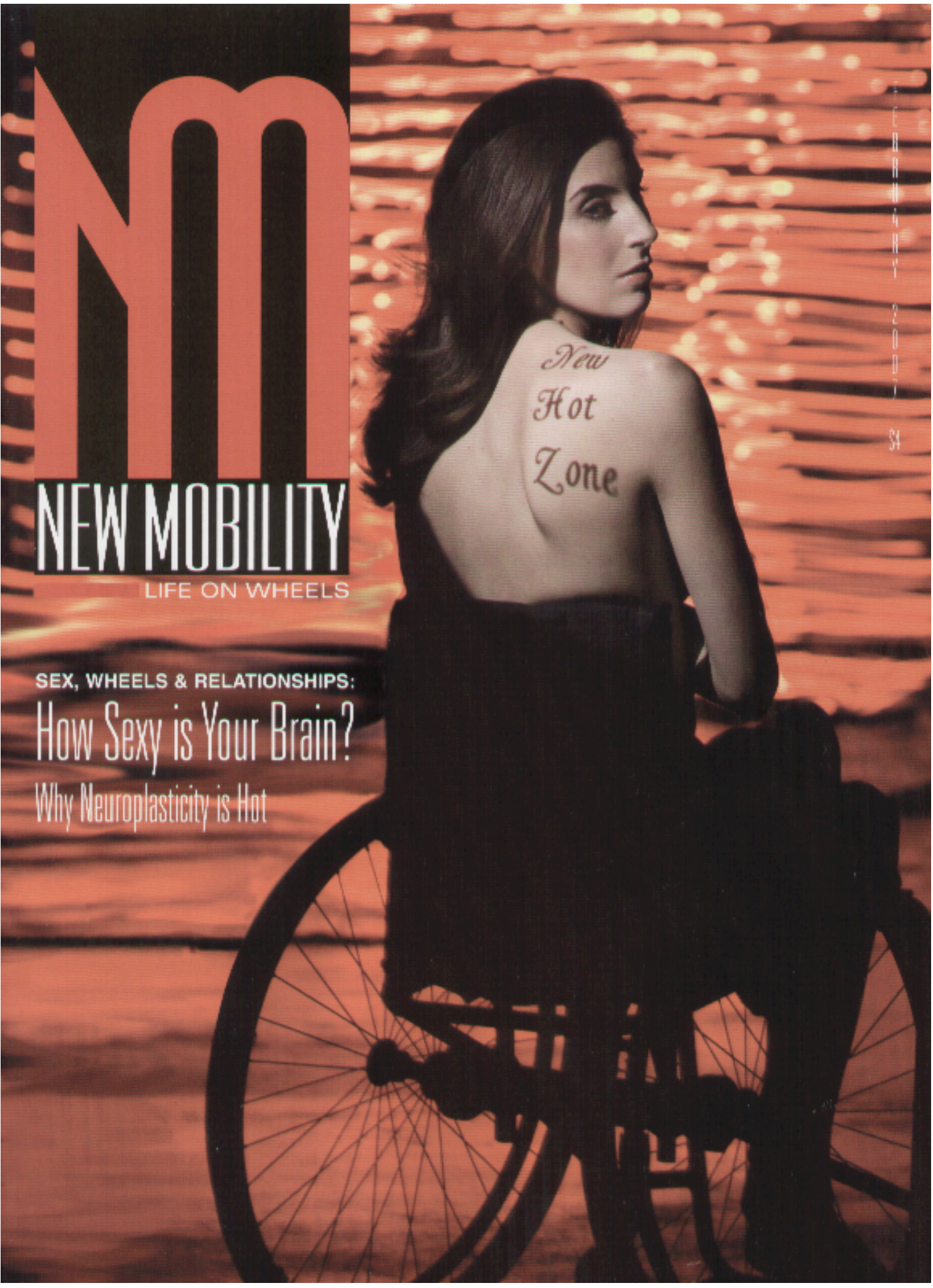
SEX, WHEELS & RELATIONSHIPS:

How Sexy is Your Brain?

Why Neuroplasticity is Hot

*New
Hot
Zone*

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]



By Josie Byzek

For Your Book Shelf

Having trouble keeping a New Year's resolution to exercise more? The book *Exercises for Multiple Sclerosis* might help. Written by fitness professional Brad Hamler, this fairly short paperback spends a great deal of time discussing how people with MS can do a gait analysis and minimize falls by relearning how to walk in a straight line. This is harder than it seems, even for those with MS who still walk more than they roll.

For those who don't walk anymore, many of the exercises are shown from both a standing and a sitting position. He even tells how to use those large Pilates balls that many of us have and yet have no idea what they're actually for.

Since exercise is touted as a major way to treat such MS symptoms as fatigue, balance problems and muscle weakness, it's good to have an ongoing program of some sort. A book can't substitute for a gym, but it's worth the price just for the diagrams of how to properly do such simple exercises as a neck stretch without pulling something that'll hurt for days.

Exercises for Multiple Sclerosis is published by Hatherleigh Press and retails for \$15.95.

Valerie Millerick's MS Coping Tips

Valerie Millerick was diagnosed with MS in 1987 and started her own business in 1991. "I can't be happier that I did because I still work, have income and feel useful," says Millerick, president of Renal Care Registered Nursing. This was great planning on her part. Although at first she was nervous about starting a business, she correctly figured owning her own business would allow her to keep working in her field, even when her MS got worse.

Millerick's MS coping strategy is to keep the disease on the back burner. "While MS is part of my life, it's not my life," says Millerick, 62. "I just deal with it, which I think is a better way than thinking about it all the time, letting yourself get overwhelmed, and then becoming paralyzed with fear."

Now semi-retired from her New York, N.Y.,

based business, Millerick says her coping strategy works for others as well. "I do dialysis, that's my business, and I've found the

people with chronic illnesses who incorporate their disease into their lives but don't focus on it, do better, both emotionally and physically," she says.

She has also found that sometimes having a disability can open windows into aspects of life that otherwise might never be experienced. "Since I got a van with a lift, I've met so many people in the community who are disabled themselves, and everybody helps

each other," says Millerick, who primarily uses her scooter for such chores as shopping. "I've learned, too, that people are nice. If you ask for help, they never say no, and sometimes they offer without you asking, and it's such a good feeling."



2006 Research Round-Up

A brief synopsis of some of the National MS Society's "research highlights" from 2006:

- The oral drug Fampridine-SR had good results from its phase 3 clinical trial, including improving walking speed by 25 percent. In addition, just about every major MS drug manufacturer has reported successful trials for oral treatments, so the end of the needle era may be nigh.
- Since Tysabri's return to the market last summer, no new

cases of the potentially-fatal progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported. But just in case, new safety measures are in place.

- Johns Hopkins University successfully used mouse embryonic stem cells to restore some spinal cord function in rats. Although researched primarily as a treatment for SCL, if successful, it could work for people with MS as well.

- Applying testosterone gel to the skin of 10 men with relapsing-remitting MS improved cognitive function and slowed brain

tissue loss. Studies with larger numbers of subjects are planned by UCLA.

- UCLA also studied the effects of the hormone estriol on 130 women with early relapsing-remitting MS. If successful, this could lead to treatments for other autoimmune diseases that primarily affect women as well, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

- Vitamin D may slow MS progression and smoking cigarettes may speed it up. So snuff out that cigarette and chug some milk.