

Search This Blog [input] Search

All NYTimes.com Blogs »

Comments of the Moment

“Why is leaving town a must? -- Landlord greed... Landlord lust. Why not stay & own your own? -- Credit crisis... Jumbo loan.”

— GG
Bloomberg the Poet. Did You Know it?

“It would be nice if Brooklynites had an easier ferry access than having to travel to Manhattan first. Any seconders?”

— Michael M.
An Elusive Island of Good Intentions

“My father died in pieces thanks to smoking. He eventually lost both legs, although it was after five years of amputations and angioplasties. He spent the last 10 years of his life in a wheelchair, toting oxygen tanks.”

— Carol
City Unveils Another Hard-Hitting 'Don't Smoke' Ad

TAKING QUESTIONS

Brooklyn Modern

This week, through Friday, Diana Lind will be answering questions about architecture and interior design of Brooklyn brownstones. Answers, April 16 » Ask a Question »



PODCAST

Agent of Change

Sam Roberts recalls how Barry Gottehrer and his reporting team for The Herald Tribune shook up the chaotic New York of the 1960s with their report, "A City in Crisis."

Recent Posts

Back to front page »

April 16, 2008, 4:52 pm

City Unveils Another Hard-Hitting 'Don't Smoke' Ad

By JENNIFER 8. LEE

Updated, 6:08 p.m. | First, the city introduced us to the [man who could only talk through a hole in his throat](#). Then, we met the sad children of dying smokers. Now, we meet the woman who is missing four fingers (and bits of at least three more).



The star of the Health Department antismoking campaign's latest ad is Marie from the Bronx, whose smoking-related illness led to a number of amputations.

In its increasingly graphic (and [perhaps effective?](#)) antismoking campaign, the [city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) continues to highlight the perils of extreme smoking-related health conditions. In this case, it is profiling a Bronx woman — Marie, who has had nearly 20 amputations — to coincide with its free nicotine patch giveaway that will last from now until May 1.

A [series of somewhat gruesome television commercials](#) shows close-ups of Marie's amputated fingers, shaded out images of the human anatomy representing her amputated body parts, a sinister bone saw and a mysterious set of clippers. The bone saw and clippers are the actual ones used in Marie's amputations. The photos of the medical instruments were taken at her doctor's office.

According to the Health Department, Marie developed Buerger's disease, a condition that narrows arteries, reducing blood flow to the arms and legs. She has lost parts of most fingers, as well as a leg and a part of one foot. In the commercial she recounts going to the emergency room because she was in so much pain. She pauses, then says, "And that's when the amputations began."

The advertisements began today on television, radio and the Internet, in taxi cabs and in the New York City subway cars.

These commercials have been only part of [Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's](#) antismoking efforts. Others included bans in bars and restaurants and higher taxes. An increase in state tax will push the price of a pack of cigarettes up to \$8.50 in June.

[Dr. Thomas R. Frieden](#), the health commissioner, has been a strong proponent of hard-hitting ads, arguing that they work. A survey last year of 2,000 adults, conducted in August and September, showed that 9 in 10 smokers had seen the earlier ads — and half said the earlier ads made them want to quit. However, even as smoking rates have dropped 20 percent between 2002 and 2006, smoking kills about 8,000 New Yorkers a year, according to the Health Department.

As with [Ronaldo Martinez](#), the man missing a larynx, the commercials featuring Marie serve to highlight the subtle ways that life changes with severe health problems. In the commercial, Marie can't even change the light bulbs because she does not have enough finger tips. She also ended a romantic relationship with a man who couldn't take it anymore.

She says: "At one point, I wasn't even living. I was just alive."

Marie came to the attention of the Health Department through a routine telephone health survey of smokers. When she talked about her experience, the surveyor explored whether she'd be interested in sharing her experiences. "It takes a lot of courage to do what Marie is doing," Dr. Frieden said.

One upbeat thought: Marie quit smoking in 2006 with the help of a nicotine patch, similar to the ones now being distributed free by the city.

"Dying young versus not dying young doesn't motivate smokers," said Dr. Frieden. "What Ronaldo showed us is that suffering and being disfigured motivates smokers."

He added, "We're going against an industry that has spent maybe a trillion dollars to create an image that smoking is cool," he said. "For every smoker who dies there are dozens who develop serious illnesses as a result."

As for the free nicotine patches and gums that the city is offering, Dr. Frieden said, "Get them while they last."

(This City Room reporter once asked her medical school friends what was the single most important thing they learned about health in medical school. The answer? Don't smoke. It raised the risk, they all said, of almost every affliction listed in their medical textbooks, and not just obvious diseases like emphysema or lung cancer.)

[E-mail this](#)

[Share](#)

Health and Hospitals, ads, Michael R. Bloomberg, smoking

Related

- [Podcast: We Are Not the Biggest Losers](#)
- [Many Smokers Avoid Cigarette Tax, Report Finds](#)
- [City Unveils Grisliest Antismoking Ads to Date](#)
- [Bloomberg's Rhyme? Two Replies, in Due Time](#)

28 comments so far...

1. April 16th, 2008 5:11 pm And this is exactly why the latest campaign has been ineffective, because of its over-the-top grossout theme reminiscent of torture porn like the "Saw" movie dreck.
This Buerger's disease is so rare I, and you, have never heard of it. I

RECENT POSTS

- April 16 1 comments **Judge Upholds Revised Calorie Rule**
The new regulation, which survived a court challenge, will require all restaurants operating in the city that have 15 or more outlets here or across the country to post calorie counts as prominently as the price of each menu item.
- April 16 28 comments **City Unveils Another Hard-Hitting 'Don't Smoke' Ad**
A woman missing four fingers and bits of three more is the latest star of advertisements in the city's aggressive antismoking campaign. The city is distributing nicotine patches for free until May 1.
- April 16 0 comments **Bloomberg's Rhyme? Two Replies, in Due Time**
Call this post poetic justice? Nah, just call it two spirited attempts by reporters to respond to Mayor Bloomberg's poem about news conferences.
- April 16 5 comments **The Mercedes-Benz of City Buses (This Is Only a Test)**
It's sleek. It's hybrid. It's made by Mercedes-Benz. And no, it's not the German challenge to the Toyota Prius. It's a bus that could be coming your way.
- April 16 0 comments **The 'Clock Man' Gets Pope Style**
Joe Piazza, 78, of Staten Island, a fixture around Rockefeller Center and St. Patrick's Cathedral and a favorite among tourists, is excited about the visit of Pope Benedict XVI.

Monthly Archives

Select Month

Welcome to City Room

City Room® offers breaking news updates, features and reader discussions about the five boroughs to supplement the daily [N.Y./Region report](#). Reader comments are moderated [[Details](#)]. Please stay on topic and avoid personal attacks, profanity and SHOUTING.

BROWSE POSTS BY BOROUGH

- [Brooklyn](#) | [The Bronx](#) | [Manhattan](#) | [Queens](#) | [Staten Island](#)

ABOUT CITY ROOM

- [Welcome: Your City, Your Room](#)
- [Who's Who at City Room](#)
- [How to Get on Our Blogroll](#)
- [Comment Moderation Policy](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

REGULAR FEATURES

- [Morning Buzz](#)
- [Politics 5B](#)
- [Podcast: Only in New York](#)
- [Taking Questions](#)
- [Blogtalk](#)

CITY ROOM ON THE WEB

- [Sites That Link to This Blog](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING

- [Shared Items From Other Blogs](#)

Feeds

We Want Your Videos

We invite readers to submit video clips to City Room. Whether you have scenes from your neighborhood, or eyewitness video of breaking news, we really want to see it.
[Details and Instructions »](#)



had never in my life heard of smokers having fingers amputated until now, and neither had you I'd bet.

On the other hand, I'd known diabetics have amputations all the time for as long as I've known of diabetes. Diabetes can of course be caused later in life by eating very unhealthily, getting very overweight, and having far too much high fructose corn syrup in the diet.

So to this anti-smoking campaign I'd say, lose some weight then fatso.

And sure smoking's unhealthy, but highly addictive. Life is fatal though. If you really, really want to cure all us evil misbegotten smokers of our vice, just annihilate the tobacco companies and pillage all the tobacco farms. I'd appreciate it really, it would enforce quitting. Foreign cigarettes would still exist of course but are prohibitively expensive.

One thing's for sure, every time one of these outrageously exaggerated sickening torture porn ads comes on, I look away from the TV for the whole ad, and light a cigarette. So it's actually been making me smoke more, thanks a lot. Muttonheads.

– Posted by Dan Stackhouse

2. April 16th, 2008 5:29 pm
My kids see these ads and are now genuinely scared of smoking. Job well done, Mr. Bloomberg & Co.

To Dan Stackhouse: Even before the 1964 advent of the Surgeon General's warning on every pack of cigarettes, it was well known that smoking was both unhealthy and addictive.

I don't like that the Tobacco companies target youngsters, but it remains the decision of each individual to start, or not start, smoking. And to continue smoking or seek help quitting.

Get yourself a free nicotine patch and stop belly-aching at everyone else.

– Posted by Parent of Three

3. April 16th, 2008 5:31 pm
Mr. Stackhouse, You are soooooo in denial, and such angry denial too. Call 311, get the patch and try some zen meditation instead of smoking.

– Posted by Judith

4. April 16th, 2008 5:36 pm
The answer is to keep restricting the places where people can smoke. That would be most fair to us non-smokers. I'm sick of having to walk down the street inhaling second-hand smoke from the person walking in front of me or from people clustered in front of buildings. Obviously they don't care about their health, but I care about mine and shouldn't have to put up with this.

– Posted by Daisy

5. April 16th, 2008 5:39 pm
Hmmm...nicotine is even more addictive than heroin, and heroin is banned because it is addictive?

They're both destructive.

– Posted by fred

6. April 16th, 2008 5:39 pm
The William Talman ad did it for me.

– Posted by Chris Ward

7. April 16th, 2008 5:41 pm
this is as silly and over the top as the 'this is your brain on drugs' ads from the 90s, the ones with the frying egg.

– Posted by bob

8. April 16th, 2008 5:43 pm
Mr. Stackhouse: If you ever happen to stop by a hospital I'm sure the doctors would be glad to show you just how many people there have complications from smoking. You should try calling 311 and quitting.

Germany's hot spot of the moment

Also in Travel:

- [A shopper's paradise in Mexico](#)
- [A red carpet for gay weddings](#)
- [A weekend away in Berkeley, California](#)

URBANEYE

The Best of New York Today

Read Melena Ryzik's UrbanEye report each weekday to find out about New York's newest restaurants, cultural events, weekend activities, latest styles and more.

[Go to UrbanEye »](#)



Beats

Government & Politics	Crime & Public Safety
Schools	Transportation
Housing & Economy	People & Neighborhoods
Albany	Borough Politics
Buildings and Landmarks	City Hall
City Sports	Community Boards
Courts and Law	Cultural Affairs
Demographics	Environment
Health and Hospitals	Higher Education
Immigration	Jails and Prisons
Labor	Land Use and Planning
Local History	Offbeat

– Posted by j

9. April 16th, 2008 5:45 pm
 Whatever works. There are still far too many smokers who are oblivious to others' right to breathe. We wait at the curb for the light to change and the oblivious one next to me blows his smoke into my face. Smokers still stand in doorways blocking the doorway with their smoke.
 We pray they find a home in Beijing where smoking in restaurants and bars is allowed.

– Posted by Francis E. Dyer

10. April 16th, 2008 5:46 pm
 Mr. Stackhouse and others:
 My father died in pieces thanks to smoking. He eventually lost both legs, although it was after 5 years of amputations and angioplasties. He spent the last 10 years of his life in a wheelchair, toting oxygen tanks. His final death was from sepsis due to bed sores.
 When his legs and feet first pained him, his doctors told him to stop smoking or face death. When his first toe turned blackish, he was told he could have his legs or his cigarettes, but not both.

This is not a case of a rare disease.

– Posted by Carol

11. April 16th, 2008 5:47 pm
 Reminds me of an anti-drunk driving poster we had in my high school of a guy with a missing leg and the slogan "One more for the road." Boy, did we laugh at the "ironic" humor of that one. That's the problem with reaching teenagers: they tend to be fascinated with, or revel in the kind of things that would shock adults.

– Posted by Danny

12. April 16th, 2008 5:49 pm
 Mr. Stackhouse,
 As you may know, given your vast stores of knowledge about diabetes, many cases of diabetes are also genetic and have little or nothing to do with unhealthy eating. Furthermore, given your seemingly endless knowledge of medical issues, you may also know that smoking greatly increases your risk of acquiring diabetes, and greatly exacerbates an already existing, but mild, condition. So, in fact, your entire diatribe about the harsh nature of anti-smoking commercials based in a discussion of diabetes is illogical and actually an anti-argument. Better luck next time.

-Cameron

– Posted by Cameron

13. April 16th, 2008 6:00 pm
 Mr. Stackhouse, have at it. The more you smoke, the quicker you'll be gone, and the rest of us won't have to choke and wheeze while in the same room with you. Seriously, for your own health (and the health of those around you), give it up!

– Posted by geno

14. April 16th, 2008 6:00 pm
 How sad Mayor Bloomberg and the rest of you don't give as much attention and throw as much money at preventing alcohol use/abuse. Silly me, I forgot we have the medical establishment's blessing to drink ourselves into healthiness. Sadly, our state and federal governments will never ban tobacco products because taxing it is an expedient way to balance budgets and fund healthcare for the alcoholics, prescription drug abusers, extreme sportsters, overeaters, etc. Get the picture? Money from the tobacco lawsuits and the cigarette tax should be spent on smokers period.

– Posted by sassycassy

15. April 16th, 2008 6:05 pm
 I don't know, Danny. When I was a teenager many years ago I was shown a film called "Code 11" (I think). It showed, among other accident-related horrors, a charred corpse being pulled out of a

Parks and Recreation	Police and Fire
Public Spaces	Religion
Sept. 11 and Ground Zero	Social Services
Suburbs	Utilities

Ads by Google what's this?

Israeli Terrorism Lawsuit

US-based attorneys represent victims in US courts.
www.terror-lawsuit.com

Saddam's Terror Ties

Read the new book that shows how Saddam worked with al Qaeda.
bothinonetrench.com

WMD Training & Consulting

Awareness and Operational Training Risk/Threat Assessments
www.usterrorismresponse.com

wrecked car. Even though we laughed and made fun of it, I still remember that scene today. I think that film did help me be a safer driver - I know my teenage driving escapades were mitigated whenever I pictured that corpse. Teenagers who see the anti-smoking ads won't be teenagers forever - maybe these anti-smoking ads will be their Code 11.

– Posted by C. Reaves

-
16. April 16th, 2008
6:09 pm
- Anything that convinces even one person to not smoke is good. When the Yul Brynner ad appeared after he died I was impressed, but the best ad ever was an American Cancer Society ad with a typical older very wrinkled lady sitting at a table, with the tag line “Smoking is Glamorous”, which is still isn't. It is only addictive and smelly.

– Posted by Phyllis Clark

-
17. April 16th, 2008
6:18 pm
- Mayor Bloomberg had grand ambitions for transforming the built city, most of which were thwarted, but his real legacy will be bringing down smoking, making many public places and offices more pleasant for the rest of us, and maybe even turning the obesity epidemic around. In the end, that may be the greater gift to New York and, as a model, the world.

We owe a debt to Mr. Stockhouse and all others who persist in smoking. Their early deaths save us mega\$ in foregone retirement and health benefits. I propose using the public money saved by every smoker's early death to establish a dedicated fund to build out the city's greenway.

– Posted by Hilary

-
18. April 16th, 2008
6:26 pm
- Don't you just hate anti-smoking nazi's. There will always be smokers smoking cigerattes because there are too many people making money off the tobaco companies, like taxes off cigarette sales in NYC, the states, and the federal government.

– Posted by joe

-
19. April 16th, 2008
6:29 pm
- Why don't we put people on TV that have had amputations due to type 2 diabetes. A lot of that disease is caused due to seriously unhealthy eating, particularly soda. Also, the disease is passed on to the next generation by example.

I don't smoke and never have, but I am sick and tired of the nanny-state that this country is becomming.

– Posted by H. Silk

-
20. April 16th, 2008
6:50 pm
- Why not a similarly gruesome series of ads against driving:
“I choose to drive... This is what it cost me.”
A tasteful approach would be to simply show rows of coffins, or family group photos with certain members randomly crossed out.
A tasteless approach (as tasteless as this anti-smoking crusade) would show bloody gruesome post-accident images.

– Posted by TS

-
21. April 16th, 2008
6:52 pm
- Many things in life come 'n' go as we mature: OshKosh overalls, stuffed animals and other varius security blankets. Smoking is no different. It's an addiction by and of choice and people are making MUCH too big a deal abotu the difficulty in quitting.

I quit smoking a decade ago cold-turkey (after smoking 2 packs plus of Marlboro lights a day for nearly 15 years) and I haven't 'cheated' since.

I didn't take drugs (pill or patch), I didn't binge eat/drink and I wasn't simple enough for hypnosis to ever take hold (at any age).

All I did was decide it was time to grow up and lose this security blanket and follow a variation of an idea I learned from a family member who spent time in AA: JUST DON'T DRINK (or in my case, smoke).

Simple, easy, effective and cheap. People whining on and on and on about their lack of will power and how they NEED it- that's just the addict in you pleading his/her case.

Grow up, grow a pair and be an adult. you were dumb enough to get yourself in this situation and you can get yourself out. There'll be no parade or celebration and most people won't notice, but you'll live longer and you can complain about them not noticing you've quit for YEARS in stead of months.

– Posted by joshua

22. April 16th, 2008
6:56 pm

Ironic that Mayor Mike has been so bad regarding protecting the rights of protesters and free speech, no?
What you say, are you ever going to stand up to Commissioner Kelly, Mayor Mike?

– Posted by Jamie

23. April 16th, 2008
7:02 pm

Leave Dan Stackhouse alone!!!! Why don't you all just leave Dan Stackhouse alone!!!! *crying*

– Posted by Enrique Esperanza

24. April 16th, 2008
7:05 pm

So, because I smoke, some of you non-smokers want me to die. Great. Good luck living forever, and enjoy the car exhaust out on the street too. Muttonheads.

– Posted by Dan Stackhouse

25. April 16th, 2008
7:12 pm

Furthermore, thanks for the wishes for my early death, and to all those who did so, I hope you die young of colon cancer acquired by eating red meat.

– Posted by Dan Stackhouse

26. April 16th, 2008
7:20 pm

I recently switched from smoking to weightlifting, and I couldn't be happier... quitting is hard work and worth every minute. It might not make me live any longer, but certainly will increase my quality of life...

– Posted by Zach

27. April 16th, 2008
7:30 pm

C. Reaves: You saw that one too? It also had all those mangled faces of people who'd gotten thrown through car windshields. I always wore my seatbelt after I saw that, but there were still several guys I went to school with who were killed in accidents while speeding, driving under the influence, etc. I guess no matter how hard you try, there's going to be some folks who sadly don't make it past that young, foolhardy stage. I think of some of the stuff I did back then and cringe, having a better understanding today of what the possible consequences could have been.

– Posted by Danny

28. April 16th, 2008
7:49 pm

Stackhouse.....slow down.as a former smoker i really appreciate your thoughts..but.....smoking is ng....I had a heart attack,etc.....again ng.....if you can quit do so...or at least try... good luck.....pete

– Posted by Pete Rinaldi

Add your comments...

Name Required

E-mail Required (will not be published)

Comment

Comments are moderated and generally will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive. For more information, please see our [Comments FAQ](#).

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [N.Y. / Region](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Autos](#) | [Back to Top](#)
[Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)