

SCIENCE FOR THE CURIOUS

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MAY 2018

## A Safer OPIOID?

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Addiction-Free Drug P.42



The Fat-Reduction  
Formula P.36

New Research in  
Male Birth Control P.30

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Why can't scientists create a safe, reliable birth control for men? BY NATHANIEL SCHARPING

#### **36** One Big Fat Truth

A lot of research has gone into why people are overweight. Perhaps it's simple: More calories in than calories out equals weight gain. BY TAMAR HASPEL

#### **42** Building a Better Painkiller

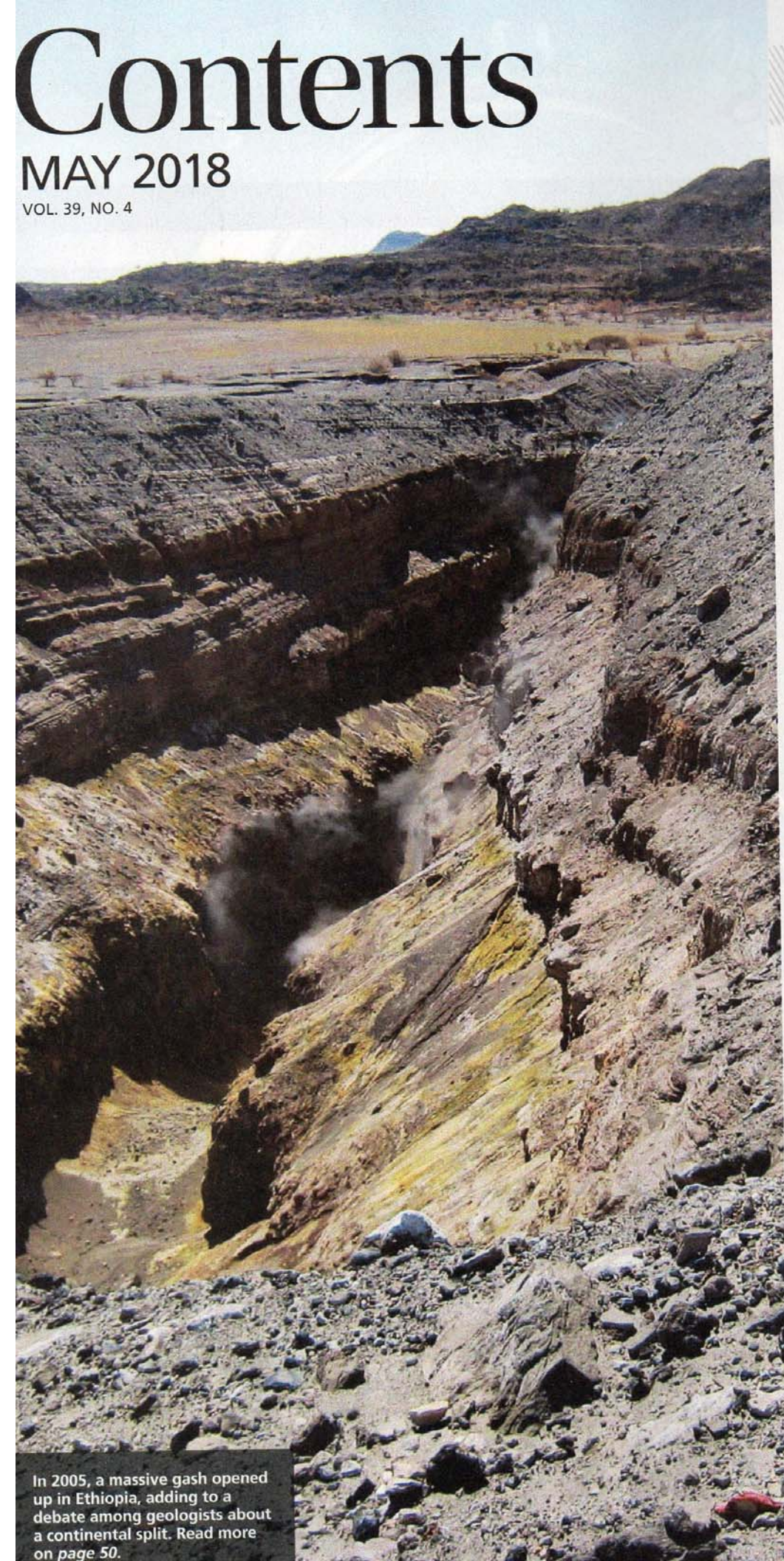
Opioids are effective at treating chronic pain, but they're also addictive and sometimes deadly. In the midst of an opioid epidemic, researchers are on the hunt for safer painkillers.

BY JONATHON KEATS

#### **50** Africa's Big Break

Earth's continents once constituted a single landmass called Pangaea before geological forces ripped it apart. Another continental tear — the first one we can study in real time — could be underway.

BY SHANNON HALL



In 2005, a massive gash opened up in Ethiopia, adding to a debate among geologists about a continental split. Read more on page 50.



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Drug marketing wields plenty of influence on doctors' prescriptions; jockeys, horses and science are a big part of the Kentucky Derby; and more.

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A father's frenzied behavior appears to be drug-related, but his blood tells a different story.

BY JULIA MICHIE BRUCKNER

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A researcher travels the world collecting undiscovered species — before it's too late. BY MICHAEL STONE

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The estimated number of galaxies has jumped from billions to trillions, thanks to improved tech; and in 1930, a captivated nation thought up names for a new world, known only as Planet X.



Mollusks from Papua New Guinea are among the rare species collected by a globe-trotting scientist. Read more on page 26.

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The remnants of a World War I battle that decimated a landscape are now habitats for flora and fauna.

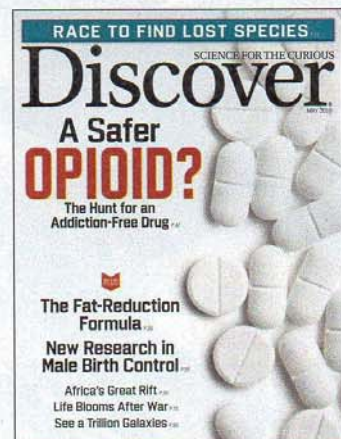
BY KATHERINE KORNEI

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BY ELISA R. NECKAR



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