

# LIFE IN THE DEEP FREEZE

## An Interview with the president and CEO of STEMBANC, Inc.

By Christen Manak



*Ed Kupp and Archie Grabinski of Stembanc, Inc.*

**A**t a time when there is much debate in the political and medical worlds over human embryonic stem cell research, Stembanc, an umbilical stem cell preservation facility, is a company enabling the most modern technology to save lives.

Under the motto, "Dedicated to the preservation of life," the president and CEO, Archibald (Archie) Grabinski, founded Stembanc "after researching technological advances with respect to the utilization of non-embryonic stem cells." In the following exchange, Mr. Grabinski offers an exciting glimpse into the cutting edge world of newborn cord blood cell medicine.

**CL:** Why did you start Stembanc?

**AG:** Stembanc was started in 2001 after I researched technological advances with respect to the utilization of non-embryonic human stem cells toward the goal of one day generating entire, perfectly matched organs. I concluded that the stem cells uniquely present in the umbilical cord blood of newborn children are the very best available at any time in a person's life. These stem cells can not only be used for "proven" applications, such as immune system rebuilding following cancer treatment, but also for lifesaving uses developing in the emerging field of regenerative medicine.

I have always been a firm believer in a person's right to life from its beginning, and saw Stembanc's intrinsically pro-life service as a way to make a difference.

**CL:** What is Stembanc's mission?

**AG:** Stembanc's mission is to communicate the benefits of saving cord stem cells to expectant families and provide this service with the greatest technical, legal and ethical integrity.

We believe that all families

expecting newborn children deserve to be more fully informed regarding the importance of saving their child's cord blood stem cells for their family's future use. Once parents really understand the life-saving implications for their family in saving these cells, most decide to go forward with this service.

Newborn, or umbilical cord blood, stem cells have already been used in the treatment of over forty different diseases and have already resulted in many lives being saved. Stembanc saves these cells, which are unique to the child and family, in five separate vials. As regenerative medicine technologies continue to develop, families can potentially gain multiple future life-saving uses from just one event of umbilical cord blood preservation.

Right now, we are the fastest growing company in the industry, which has a U.S. market potential exceeding \$30 billion per year. On a personal level, nothing would be more rewarding than dedicating my resources to help achieve passage of a Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

**CL:** Do you believe personal titling has brought blessings to Stembanc?



**AG:** I only began to recognize the truth about tithing a few years ago. I credit Ed Cup, Stembanc's vice president, with helping open my eyes in this regard.

Before Stembanc had little more than Ed, myself and a plan, I committed to tithing significantly more than 10% of any benefit our family gained to the furtherance of the kingdom of God. Since then, we have been blessed with a beautiful facility, many investors, excellent employees and a rapidly increasing number of customers.

I believe that all who faithfully tithed of their first fruits will also be blessed, and I personally believe no more worthy cause exists than defending the rights of the preborn.

**CL:** What are your thoughts on the differences between the use of human embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells?

**AG:** Human embryonic stem cells are essentially body parts that

were taken from a human being who was sacrificed (killed) for a theoretical benefit. In practice, no one's life has ever been saved using human embryonic stem cells. Despite what many in the media and those of the more liberal persuasion would suggest, researchers have ample opportunity to do their work with these ill-gotten cells. Even federal funding is available if the research is done using cells taken from human embryos sacrificed prior to President Bush's 2001 speech.

In practice, these cells have been prone to uncontrollable differentiation, genomic instability and cause cancerous types of growths in attempted applications. They will also never match anyone perfectly, because the person from whom they came is no longer alive.

Adult-obtained stem cells, however, are free of the ethical baggage that comes with human embryonic stem cells and have shown promise in numerous studies. From a pro-

life perspective, Stembanc supports this ongoing research. Nevertheless, the number and "plasticity" of adult-obtained stem cells appear to decline with age. (Plasticity relates to the ability of the cells to transform into the many non-blood tissues of the body.) They carry with them age-related problems, such as free radical oxidation damage and propagated DNA replication errors. Adult cells also have a life's history of potential environmental effects, such as from smoking, drinking or exposure to disease, and must be obtained using a potentially painful, invasive procedure.

**CL:** What about umbilical cord blood stem cells?

**AG:** Stembanc's position is that umbilical cord blood, or "newborn," stem cells, are the best stem cells that will ever be available in a person's lifetime. Stem cells obtained from cord blood are not only ethically unquestionable, but also avoid the difficulties encountered with adult obtained cells.

What is most exciting is that these "privileged" (unexposed to disease) stem cells have demonstrated the capability of generating non-blood tissues. They are known to survive indefinitely at cryogenic temperatures and may be propagated. They also have the potential of providing a future source of cells for the treatment of diseases, adult immune reconstitution, tissue regeneration or organ replacement. The genetic match is perfect for the newborn child, virtually eliminating the potential of rejection, making these cells invaluable throughout the child's (extended) lifespan.

Additionally, these cells are of potentially immediate benefit to close family members, such as sib-

### Saving cord blood

- Umbilical cord blood is a plentiful, rich source of stem cells that are genetically unique to each child and family. They are the building blocks of the immune system and already have been used in the treatment of over forty different diseases including many cancers. Cord blood (or newborn) stem cells have also shown excellent potential for the treatment of many more diseases, such as stroke and heart disease.
- Newborn stem cells are obtained using a completely safe and painless procedure following the birth of a newborn child. After the umbilical cord is clamped and cut, and no longer attached to the child, the obstetrician drains the cells that remain in the umbilical cord and placenta into a collection kit.
- Unlike the harvesting of human embryonic stem cells, which kills a human being, the saving of cord blood stem cells is entirely moral. Pro-lifers, therefore, can support cord blood stem cell banking with confidence.
- The only way a family can benefit in the future from the fact that these genetically unique stem cells are available at the birth of their newborn child, is if they first make arrangements to save them before the child's birth.



*An exciting glimpse into the world of human cord blood stem cell preservation.*

lings or parents, and have been shown less likely to cause rejection than similarly matched bone marrow. They are approximately ten times more concentrated than the most concentrated source in the adult body (bone marrow) and have favorable "plasticity" characteristics.

**CL:** How do you see this technology developing in the future?

**AG:** I see this technology as completely revolutionizing medicine and very significantly extending the typical lifespan. The picture is ultimately being able to successfully address the great majority of health challenges that, at present, result in death if not cured, and do so using a pro-life, ethically sound means.

How long could a person live if every time their life was threatened by an organ system failure, one could call upon cells that were preserved from their birth to use as seed material for the generation of a brand new, perfectly matched

replacement organ?

The two most prevalent causes of death in the U.S. (heart disease and stroke) are already being addressed with promising results using cells such as those present in the umbilical cord blood of newborns. Can you imagine how grateful your child might be to you one day because you saved their cord blood cells at the time of their birth? This is to say nothing of the potential lifesaving benefits for you, your husband or any siblings.

**CL:** How do expectant parents obtain more information about your service?

**AG:** The easiest way is to call one of our Customer Relations Managers at 1-877-836-2262 (1-87-STEMBANC), or visit [www.stembanc.com](http://www.stembanc.com).

Christen Manak is an administrative assist at American Life League.

### Umbilical cord blood stem cells— CASE HISTORIES

**Case #1:** In October of 2002, Patrizia Durante, who was 26 weeks pregnant, learned that she had acute myeloid leukemia. When her daughter, Victoria, was born, stem cells taken from Victoria's umbilical cord blood were put into Patrizia. After seven months, Ms. Durante is in a state of complete remission. She thanked her daughter, saying, "I gave my daughter life, and then she gave mine back."

**Case #2:** Cord blood stem cells were used to cure A.J. Salazar, who, in 2000, was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of four. His mother was currently seven months pregnant, and when A.J.'s sister was born, the stem cells from her umbilical cord were transplanted into A.J. His leukemia went into remission and has remained so ever since.