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COVER: The electrons (and the positrons) come down the long straight track, and then they do loop-de-loops at the end. The long straight track is the Stanford Linear Accelerator proper. In its four-kilometer length electrons can gain more than 20 billion electron-volts of energy. At the end is the PEP colliding beam ring, one of the world's two facilities that can store and collide electrons and positrons with energies up to 19 billion electron-volts. It will start experimentation in a short while. See p. 330. (photo: Stanford Univ.)

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LETTERS

More mirror reflections

Re: "Reflections on a Ten-Meter Mirror" (SN: 7/28/79, p.76): As an amateur astronomer and precision optician, may I point out that a tessellated mirror 1.8 meters in diameter was installed in the Observatory of the University of Bologna, Italy more than 25 years ago by G. Horn-D'Arturo. I met the late Prof. Horn-D'Arturo at the 1963 Astronomical League convention in Orono, Maine. He later sent me an issue of the Observatory bulletin vol VI #6 containing a paper and photos taken with this telescope.

Off axis paraboloids have been fabricated by professional and amateur opticians for some time, with modern computer controls to maintain the figure of the mirrors — as in the so-called rubber telescopes, it should be feasible to build a 10-meter instrument. Optical designs are known using spherical mirrors and correcting lenses, that might be adaptable. Production methods also exist to fabricate a large number of high-accuracy smaller mirrors. Although no one has ever worked such a large glass, a 33-foot diameter, 6-inch-thick mirror would be extremely difficult to keep from flexing while worked and tested.

Last, to my knowledge, observing technicians have been employed at the Agassiz Station of Harvard Observatory in the past, to assist astronomers and students.

Walter A. Singer
Washington, D.C.,

A low blow

In questioning the efficacy of topical fluoridation (SN: 9/1/79, p.152), you have hit dentistry in the teeth. A preponderance of evidence leads to the opposite conclusion reached in the study reported.

According to HEW, the number of children participating nationwide in fluoride mouthrinse programs has increased from 2 million to 8 million in the last 2 years. A 20 percent to 35 percent reduction in caries can be anticipated. In California schools, a $1-million, 2-year mouthrinsing program is being underwritten by California Dental Service (CDS), the Delta Dental Plans affiliate in that state. As a result, CDS officials fully expect to see a substantial reduction in the $1.2 billion that Californians currently pay annually for dental care.

R. Alan Stewart, DDS, FAGD
Wilmington, Del.

Correction: An incomplete copy of a research paper on graffiti (SN: 10/20/79, p. 268) did not include the following, which would have been added to the end of the story: "Neither of these interpretations . . . may offer realistic appraisals of the emotional states of either men or women . . . it may be that some women frequently find no means other than graffiti by which they may express their anger, frustration or sexuality. It may be that their male counterparts have other, socially acceptable outlets for these concerns. Or, it may well be that men in our society, due to the still-popular ideal of masculinity, consider no outlet . . . to be appropriate for their expression."

—Ed.

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Please limit letters to 250 words.