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## Letters

### LIGO detectors: Sites unknown

"R&D budget: Civilian gains outpace defense" (SN: 2/3/90, p.7) is in error in asserting that the proposed Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detectors would be located at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. While LIGO is a scientific collaboration between Caltech and MIT, the sites for the detectors have not yet been chosen. Indeed, they cannot be located in Pasadena or Cambridge because one of the main criteria for site selection calls for relatively remote areas to eliminate seismic and acoustic noise. About the most we can say at this stage is that one detector will be located somewhere in the western U.S. and the other somewhere in the east.

You correctly state that the detectors will sense changes "down to a fraction of an atomic nucleus" along their 4-kilometer

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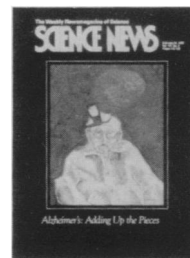
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- 120 Toward a Future With Memory

Cover: Physicians first recognized Alzheimer's as a particular kind of senile dementia more than 80 years ago, but they have yet to uncover its basis, delay its onset or provide a cure. In the United States, the pressure to understand Alzheimer's builds every year as the population ages. Using newly developed tools of molecular biology, neuroscientists and others are accelerating their efforts to grasp the essence of this devastating disease.  
(Illustration: Randy Fletcher)



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length. Your readers might be interested to learn that that fraction is one one-hundred-millionth the diameter of a hydrogen atom, or  $10^{-16}$  centimeter.

*Robert Finn*  
*Science Writer, Public Information Officer*  
*California Institute of Technology*  
*Pasadena, Calif.*

### Addiction theory 'ludicrous'

Ronald K. Siegel's suggestion that the use of addictive drugs represents a "fourth drive, on a par with sex, thirst and hunger" ("Drugs of Choice," SN: 12/16/89, p.392) has to be one of the most irresponsible contentions I've ever read in a scientific publication. I suppose you must present a variety of viewpoints on a given subject, but this one seems to be well out of the mainstream.

To the millions of us who are recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction, the concept is potentially life-threatening. To suggest that our disease is little more than an

inability to control a natural human "drive" sends a strong message that the miserable lifestyle to which we finally progressed was due simply to this "natural drive" gone out of control, and that all we need is a little education and a good "utopian." This, of course, is hogwash.

The progression to addiction is a complex and variable process. Each alcoholic or addict will tell a different story of how he or she got to the same place. If one wants to understand the disease, one needs to *listen* to the individual stories. If one wants to understand the cure — at least the most effective to date — one need only read the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

In my opinion, questions about the etiology of alcoholism and addiction will never lend themselves to global or absolute scientific answers. This doesn't mean we shouldn't try to understand the disease through scientific inquiry. I would hope, however, that respecta-

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