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Cover: A sand castle shows how a little moisture can dramatically alter the fluid properties of ordinary sand. Physicists are trying to elucidate the basic mechanisms that underlie the behavior of both dry and wet granular materials. (Photo and sand art by Lucinda "Sandy Feet" Wierenga, <http://www.unlitter.com/feet/index.html>)



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## Letters

### Narcotics use and immunosuppression

In reply to Robert A. Palmero's question of whether narcotics cause immunosuppression independent of HIV (Letters, SN: 7/19/97, p. 35), the answer is unequivocally yes. This has been proven in HIV-negative addicts. Furthermore, addicts progress to AIDS much more quickly, on average, than do other HIV-infected people.

By the way, the obverse has also been observed. HIV-positive addicts who kick their habit increase their time to AIDS development and have better prognoses for long-

term survival than those who continue to use drugs after testing positive.

*Robert Root-Bernstein  
Professor of Physiology  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Mich.*

### New life for rocks

I truly enjoyed "Global Graveyard" (SN: 7/19/97, p. 46), but I must offer some friendly criticism regarding the title and the words on the cover, "Where Rock Goes to Die."

You have it all mixed up. Rocks experience rebirth, not death, when they plunge into Earth's center. The melting, degassing, and mixing in the mantle are highly dynamic. In fact, the experience of mechanical erosion and chemical weathering at the surface more closely resembles a petrologic graveyard.

I suggest the title "Peering into Our Lively Planet."

*Dave Haffner  
Washington, D.C.*

### Science Projects: A Taxonomy of Images

An exhibition of more than 100 images documenting scientific research from the 1920s to the 1960s will be on view at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., from Sept. 25, 1997, to early January 1998. Selected from thousands housed in the Science Service Archives of the museum, the photographs were compiled by the International Center of Photography in New York and displayed there last spring (SN: 3/15/97, p. 165).

The images were originally distributed to newspapers by Science Service and were used in SCIENCE NEWS LETTER (the predecessor of SCIENCE NEWS).

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