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## Letters

### Web accuracy not linked to domain

Your sidebar regarding accuracy on the Web ("Science Safari in Cyberspace," SN: 12/20&27/97, p. 397) seems to imply that ".com" sites may be inaccurate because they have some commercial interest. My feeling is that the ".org" and in some cases ".gov" sites are sometimes more inaccurate. Sites from animal rights activists and some environmental organizations, for example, are clearly inaccurate and pushing their own agenda.

*Alan L. Mendrala  
Sanford, Mich.*

### Raising a point about climate

"Children of the C<sub>4</sub> World" (SN: 1/3/98, p. 14) left out a very important detail about the Himalayas.

During the Miocene, the Himalayas were rising. As they pushed up into the atmosphere, they drained carbon dioxide, reducing the greenhouse effect and resulting in a cooling of the planet and the onset of ice ages.

This decrease in carbon dioxide would

make a perfect growing climate for C<sub>4</sub> grass all over the planet.

*Sev Slaymaker  
Rockport, Me.*

### Paddling in circles?

Did the British tourists find it odd that the horse-powered ferry only went in circles, or is there an error in the drawing of the gearbox in the sketch on p. 26 ("Freshwater Finds," SN: 1/10/98, p. 24)?

*John T. Chard  
Brattleboro, Vt.*

*There's no error in the drawing, although its small size may not have revealed the details of the gearing. The paddle wheels on each side of the boat were joined by a rigid axle, which forced them to turn in the same direction, says Kevin J. Crisman. The ferryman used a lever (visible in the top view of the boat, just aft of the gearbox and extending downward in the drawing) to engage the transmission from the turntable to one of the geared wheels on the axle, but not to both at once. The sketch shows the transmission lever*

*in the unengaged position, Crisman says.*

—S. Perkins

### To dream, perchance to forget?

In "To dream, perchance to scan" (SN: 1/17/98, p. 44), you mention reduced blood flow to the frontal lobes of the brain. Since these lobes "make possible temporary recall of related items," reduced blood flow to the frontal lobes may be the reason dreams are often hard to remember.

*Paul Etzler  
Mountain Springs, Nev.*

### Look to tick as well as spray

"From fleas to brain tumors" (SN: 12/13/97, p. 375) may have overlooked the obvious. Researchers whose studies associated flea-and-tick foggers and sprays with brain cancers might consider the likely exposure to ticks and fleas themselves as suspect. These creatures transmit a number of pathogens, most significantly the tick-borne *Borrelia* bacteria, which have an affinity for brain tissue.

*Bonnie Bennett  
Gig Harbor, Wash.*

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**Cover:** Greater flamingos have high divorce rates—one study reports that 100 percent of pairs fail to reunite. At the other extreme, waved albatrosses almost never split. Scientists are studying divorce as part of a new interest in bird family life. **Page 153**  
(Photo montage: Mark Gilvey/Design Imaging)

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