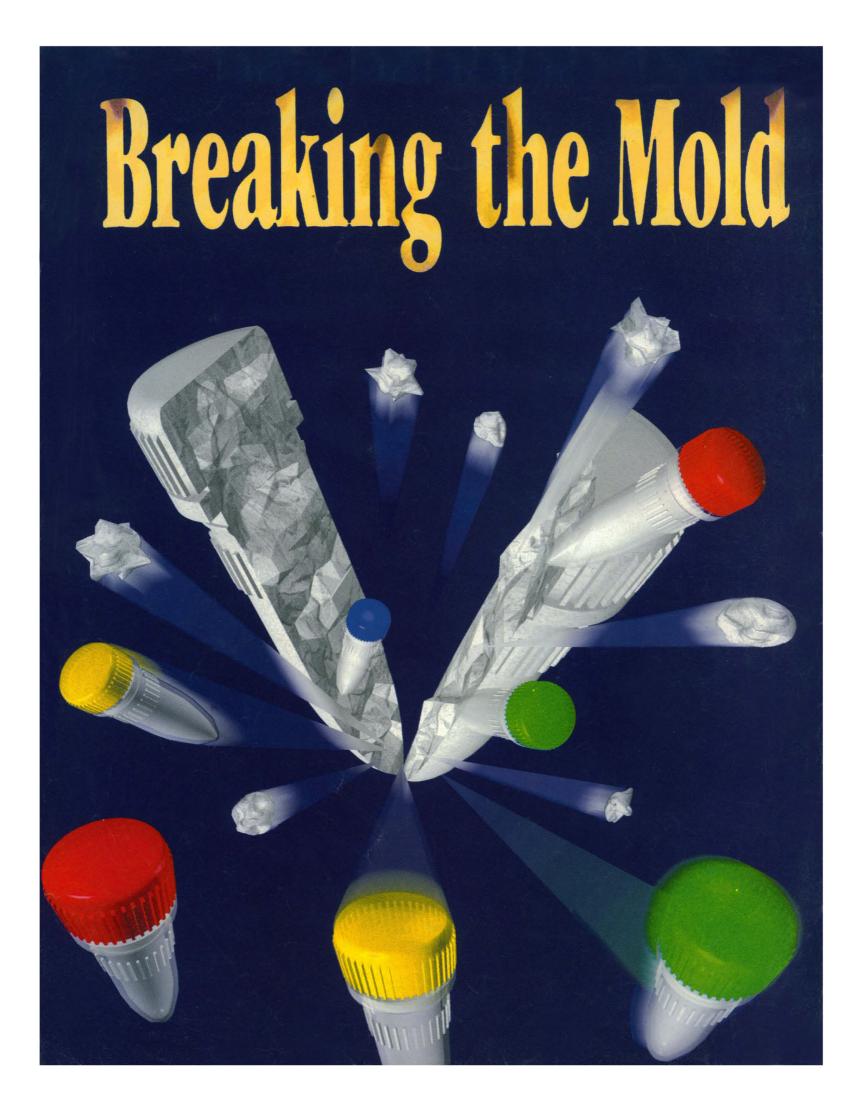
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3. Mathur, E., et al. (1992) The San Diego Conference on Nucleic Acids Abstract #10.



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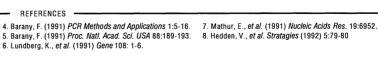
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ISSN 0036-8075 17 DECEMBER 1993 VOLUME 262 NUMBER 5141



**NEWS & COMMENT** 

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1816 Possible r high for supercond	new	850 •-	-
tivity critic temperatu	al	9	
		8	

(



1828 & 1852 Making a quick transition

<b>CERN: Alone on the Frontier</b> A Leader by Consensus	1808
Hubble Telescope: Repairs Rekindle 3-Year-Old Dreams	1810
DOE Lifts the Veil of Secrecy From Laser Fusion An 'Openness Initiative'	1811
Research Ethics: Scandal Scars Minnesota Medical School	1812
RESEARCH NEWS	
A Big Step for Superconductivity?	1816
New Bind for Ulcer Bacterium	1817
'Bubble Boy' Paradox Resolved 🗾	1818
Ancient Climate Coolings Are on Thin Ice	1818
Is the Future Here for Gallium Arsenide?	1819
AIDS Vaccine Research: A New Goal: Preventing Disease, Not Infection	1820

	DEPAR
THIS WEEK IN SCIENCE	1797
EDITORIAL The Lessons of the Super Collider	1799
LETTERS Success in Science: W. E. Frick • Engineering Students: D. N. Frey	
Degrees: D. L. Gottheil, T. G. DePalma • Conflict of Interest:	Waldrop; A. D. F. Klein;

A lein D. E. Koshland Jr. • NIH: Intramural and Extramural Programs: C. Kupfer • Japanese Superconduct ing Computer: T. Sakamoto • Saving Old-Growth Forests: D. A. Perry

PERSPECTIVES				
Transition States of Chemical I828 Reactions G. C. Schatz				
Two Jobs for the Origin Replication I 1830 Complex C. S. Newlon				
ARTICLE				
Distributions of Phytoplankton Blooms 1832 in the Southern Ocean C. W. Sullivan, K. R. Arrigo, C. R. McClain, J. C. Comiso, J. Firestone				
RESEARCH ARTICLES				
Origin Recognition Complex (ORC) In Transcriptional Silencing and DNA Replication in S. cerevisiae M. Foss, F. J. McNally, P. Laurenson, J. Rine				
Yeast Origin Recognition Complex I 1844 Functions in Transcription Silencing and DNA Replication S. P. Bell, R. Kobayashi, B. Stillman				
Chronic and Chronic March 1997 Statements				

### DEPARTMENTS

1797	SCIENCESCOPE 1807		
1799	RANDOM SAMPLES 1814		
	New Start for Behavioral Researchers • Study Sec-		
1801	tions Not Kosher?, etc.		
ity of	BOOK REVIEWS 1906		
Ph.D.	In the Name of Science; Targeted; The Hijacking of		
; A.	the Humane Movement; Monkey Business, reviewed		
(lein;	by H. Herzog • Beyond the Wall, K. Macrakis •		
amu-	Symmetry in Chaos, J. D. Crawford • Thermodynam-		
duct-	ics in Geochemistry, J. Walther • Vignettes • Books		
owth	Received		
	PRODUCTS & MATERIALS 1914		

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SCIENCE • VOL. 262 • 17 DECEMBER 1993

### COVER

Model of the protein lysin superimposed on the shells of a red abalone. To fertilize the egg, the abalone spermatozoon must disrupt the protective vitelline envelope. Lysin binds to the filamentous glycoproteins that form the envelope and creates a hole by means of a nonenzymatic process. The lysin-glycoprotein association also contributes to the species recognition between sperm and egg. See page 1864. [Cover design: Peggy Myer. Digital photography: Bob Turner. Molecular model: Mike Pique]

1877

Interleukin-2 Receptor y Chain:

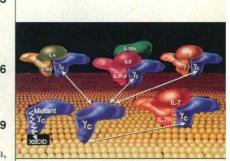
### REPORTS

	A Functional Component of the
Evidence Suggesting Superconductivity Z 1850	Interleukin-7 Receptor
at 250 K in a Sequentially Deposited	M. Noguchi, Y. Nakamura,
Cuprate Film	S. F. Ziegler, M. Tsang, X. Cao,
M. Laguës, X. M. Xie, H. Tebbji, X. Z. Xu,	
V. Mairet, C. Hatterer, C. F. Beuran, C. Deville-	Interleukin-2 Receptor y Chain:
Cavellin	A Functional Component of the
	Interleukin-4 Receptor
The Transition State of the $F + H_2$ <b>Z</b> 1852	S. M. Russell, A. D. Kee
Reaction	Y. Nakamura, M. Noguc
D. E. Manolopoulos, K. Stark, HJ. Werner,	M. C. Friedmann, A. Miyaj
D. W. Arnold, S. E. Bradforth, D. M. Neumark	W. E. Paul, W. J. Leonard
D. w. runou, o. L. Diadiorui, D. M. redinark	w. L. Faul, w. J. Leonard
Nitrogen-15 and Oxygen-18 1855	Active Oxygen Species in the In
Characteristics of Nitrous Oxide:	of Plant Systemic Acquired Resi
A Global Perspective	by Salicylic Acid
KR. Kim and H. Craig	Z. Chen, H. Silva, D. F. Klessig
RR. Riff and H. Craig	2. Cheff, 11. Oliva, D. 1. Riessig
Superheating Effects on Metal-Silicate 1858	Functional Requirement of a Sit
Partitioning of Siderophile Elements	Ribose Methylation in Ribosom
D. Walker, L. Norby, J. H. Jones	K. Sirum-Connolly and T. L. M
D. walker, E. Norby, J. H. Jones	R. Onum-Connony and T. E. W
Orphan Strontium-87 in Abyssal 1861	Inhibition of Transcriptional Re
Peridotites: Daddy Was a Granite	Yin-Yang-1 by Association with
J. E. Snow, S. R. Hart, H. J. B. Dick	A. Shrivastava, S. Saleque,
J. E. Onow, O. R. Hart, H. J. D. Dick	S. Artandi, S. P. Goff, K. Calam
The Crystal Structure of Lysin, a 1864	0.7 Italidi, 0.1. Ooli, R. Calali
Fertilization Protein	Attachment of Helicobacter pylo
A. Shaw, D. E. McRee, V. D. Vacquier,	Human Gastric Epithelium Med
C. D. Stout	Blood Group Antigens
C. D. Stout	T. Borén, P. Falk, K. A. H
A Europtional Decembinant Mussin II 1967	S. Normark
A Functional Recombinant Myosin II 1867	5. INOMIIAIK
Lacking a Regulatory Light Chain–Binding Site	S CTD D: 1: 1 CTI
T. Q. P. Uyeda and J. A. Spudich	Separate GTP Binding and GTI
	Activating Domains of a G $\alpha$ Sul
Isolation of ORC6, a Component of 🗾 1870	D. W. Markby, R. Onrust, H. R
the Yeast Origin Recognition Complex	
by a One-Hybrid System	Linearity of Summation of Syna
J. J. Li and I. Herskowitz	Potentials Underlying Direction
	in Simple Cells of the Cat Visua
Sharing of the Interleukin-2 (IL-2) 🗾 1874	B. Jagadeesh, H. S. Wheat, D. F
Receptor y Chain Between Receptors for	
IL-2 and IL-4	
M. Kondo, T. Takeshita, N. Ishii, M. Nakamura,	
S. Watanabe, Ki. Arai, K. Sugamura	
AAAS Board of Directors	Indicates according to the second

### Noguchi, Y. Nakamura, S. M. Russell, . Ziegler, M. Tsang, X. Cao, W. J. Leonard leukin-2 Receptor y Chain: 1880 inctional Component of the leukin-4 Receptor M. Russell, A. D. Keegan, N. Harada, Nakamura, M. Noguchi, P. Leland, C. Friedmann, A. Miyajima, R. K. Puri, E. Paul, W. J. Leonard ve Oxygen Species in the Induction 1883 ant Systemic Acquired Resistance alicylic Acid Chen, H. Silva, D. F. Klessig tional Requirement of a Site-Specific 1886 se Methylation in Ribosomal RNA Sirum-Connolly and T. L. Mason bition of Transcriptional Regulator 1889 Yang-1 by Association with c-Myc Shrivastava, S. Saleque, G. V. Kalpana, Artandi, S. P. Goff, K. Calame chment of Helicobacter pylori to 1892 an Gastric Epithelium Mediated by d Group Antigens Borén, P. Falk, K. A. Roth, G. Larson, Normark rate GTP Binding and GTPase 1895 vating Domains of a Ga Subunit W. Markby, R. Onrust, H. R. Bourne

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# 1818, 1874, 1877 & 1880

Common subunit for interleukin receptors

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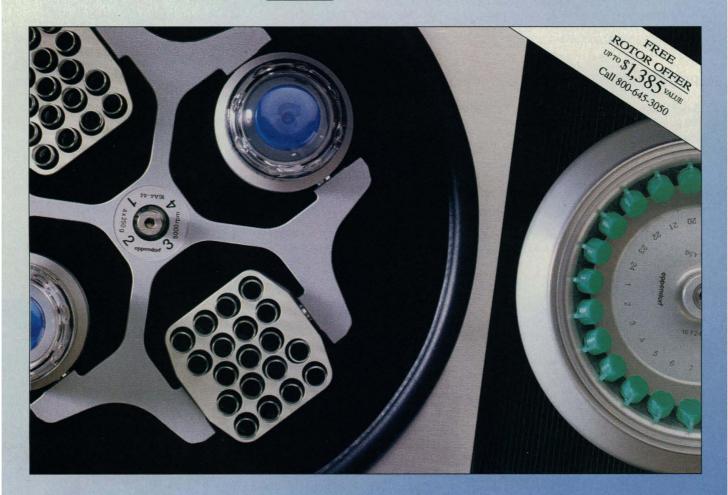
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# THIS WEEK IN SCIENCE

edited by PHIL SZUROMI

### Origins and silence

In yeast, extra copies of the mating-type genes are silenced, or maintained in an inactive state. Silencing requires flanking sequence elements (silencers). One silencer, HMR-E, contains an ARS consensus sequence, a sequence found at yeast replication origins. A link has now been made between transcription silencing and DNA replication (see the Perspective by Newlon, p. 1830). Foss et al. (p. 1838) found a mutation in a gene ORC2 that disrupts both transcriptional silencing and the cell cycle. The sequence of this protein matches that of a protein subunit (ORC2) of the origin recognition complex (ORC) characterized by Bell et al. (p. 1844). Li and Herskowitz (p. 1870) screened for proteins that bind to the yeast ARS sequence and found another ORC subunit, ORC6, which was also characterized by Bell et al.

### Pinning down the transition state

Although numerous studies have been made of the elementary reaction between F and  $H_2$ , quantitative agreement between theory and experiment has been elusive. Manolopoulos et al. (p. 1852; see the Perspective by Schatz, p. 1828) used photoelectron spectroscopy to characterize the FH<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> intermediate, which undergoes electron photodetachment near the transition state, for the para and normal populations of the hydrogen rotational state. Exact quantum reactive scattering simulations of these spectra on a highly accurate ab initio potential energy surface yielded excellent agreement. Such agreement could not be obtained with semiempirical potential energy surfaces that have normally been used.

### Pushing superconductivity to 250 kelvin?

One characteristic of the various families of high-temperature cuprate superconductors is that the transition temperature is roughly a function of the number of  $CuO_2$  layers. However, it has proven difficult to synthesize pure phases for materials with more than three layers. Laguës *et al.* (p. 1850; see news story by Pool, p. 1816) report the epitaxial growth of a thin film of an artificial cuprate compound of the BiSrCaCuO family with building blocks of eight adjacent cuprate layers. This material was grown by sequentially imposed layer epitaxy on a single crystal of SrTiO<sub>3</sub> at a substrate temperature of 500°C. The resistivity of this material drops five orders of magnitude between 280 and 250 K, and it exhibits a diamagnetic variation of susceptibility and magnetization below 290 K. These and other results suggest the possibility of a superconducting transition at 250 K.

### Riding high

Nitrous oxide  $(N_2O)$ , a greenhouse gas, is currently increasing in abundance in the atmosphere. Like CO<sub>2</sub>, its global budget seems to be out of balance between known sources and sinks. To estimate fluxes from sources better, Kim and Craig (p. 1855) measured nitrogen and oxygen isotopic ratios of N<sub>2</sub>O in several soils and in stratospheric gas samples. The data imply that there is a large back flux of N<sub>2</sub>O from the stratosphere, but this flux appears to be so large that it must in turn be balanced by a large input of N<sub>2</sub>O from the oceans.

### Separation anxiety

The abundances of siderophile (metal-loving) elements such as nickel and iridium in the Earth's mantle seem too high to account for equilibrium fractionation of the iron-rich core at temperatures up to 1600°C, the limit of earlier measurements. A recent controversial proposal is that this imbalance can be explained by the separation of the core at higher pressures and temperatures where the distribution coefficients for siderophile elements between iron melt and silicate mantle are closer to unity. Walker *et al.* (p. 1858) report measurements of distribution coefficients for some of the problematic elements at temperatures up to 3000 K. Coefficients for germanium, gold, sulfur, and nickel do decrease significantly with temperature, but discrepancies among elements are still evident. The data for sulfur also suggest that it or carbon, rather than oxygen, may be the light element in the core.

# Share and share alike

Mutations in the g chain of the interleukin-2 receptor (IL-2Rg) can lead to X-linked severe combined immunodeficiency (XSCID) in humans, yet mice that do not produce IL-2 still develop a population of mature mature T cells. The IL-2Rg was found to be a component required for high-affinity binding by the IL-4 receptor (Kondo et al., p. 1874, and Russell et al., p. 1880) as well as the IL-7 receptor (Noguchi et al., p. 1877). The cytokines IL-4 and IL-7 both exhibit T cell growth factor activity; disabling activation in several receptor systems may account for the virtual absence of T cells in XSCID patients (see news story by Nowak, p. 1818).

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### Oxygen signal

When infected by a pathogen, plants may produce both local and systemic defensive responses. This phenomenon, termed systemic acquired resistance, is mediated in part by salicylic acid (SA). Chen et al. (p. 1883) have cloned an SAbinding protein that has catalase activity and is inhibited by SA. Inhibition increases the amount of active oxygen species and induces the expression of defense-related genes. Active oxygen species as well as SA seem to be critical elements in the signaling pathway from infection to systemic resistance.

### In one package

Many cellular functions are controlled by guanosine triphosphate (GTP)-binding proteins. Hydrolysis of GTP by these proteins causes their inactivation. The small GTP-binding proteins like Ras are regulated by GTPase activating proteins or GAPs. However, the heterotrimeric GTP-binding proteins (G proteins) that couple receptors on the cell surface to intracellular signaling pathways have intrinsically high GTPase activity. Markby et al. (p. 1895) present evidence that G proteins contain a separate domain that functions as a GAP. The GTP-binding and GAP-like portions of a G protein  $\alpha$  subunit were expressed separately and shown to retain their essential functions. The results suggest a mechanism by which GTPase activity may be enhanced.

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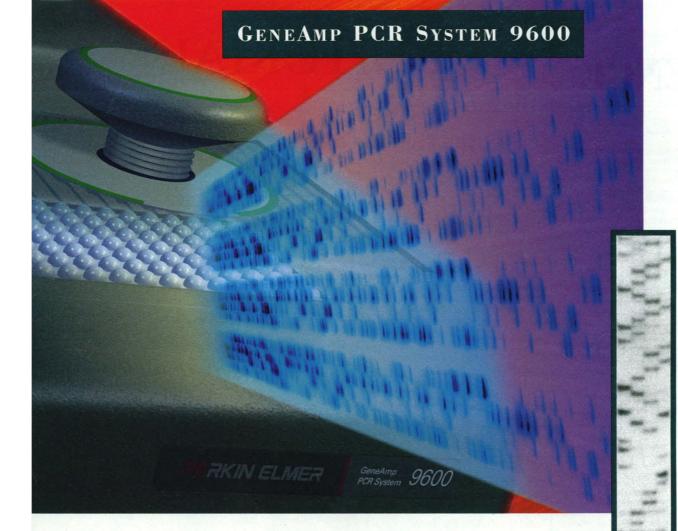


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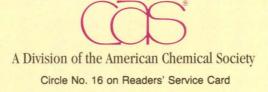
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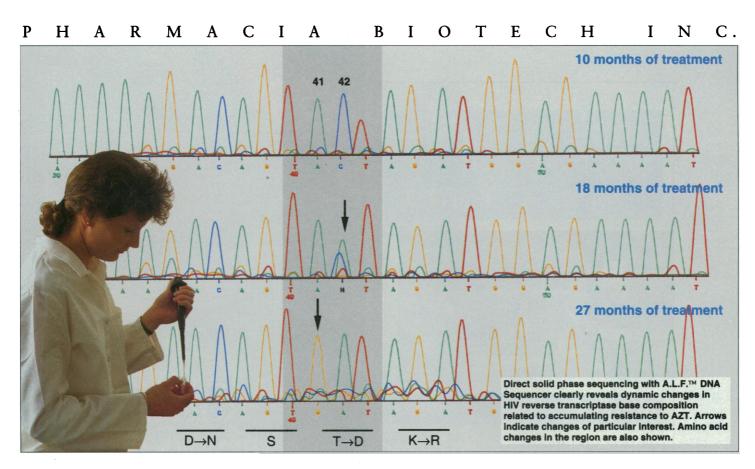
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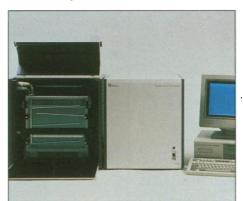
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A.L.F. DNA Sequencer accurately detects heterozygote point mutations. DNA sequencing with A.L.F. has many applications in clinical research. Furthermore, the well-proven Sanger technique, already cited more than 20,000 times, leaves nothing to chance with the reaction chemistry.

A.L.F. thus provides the accuracy needed to yield the "consensus" sequence of viral genomes in samples from HIV-1 infected patients treated with AZT.

So with A.L.F. generating precision data like this, clinical researchers can rapidly determine the molecular basis for drug resistance and more effectively plan treatment with alternative drugs or combinations of drugs. And, of course, direct DNA sequencing with A.L.F. has plenty of other clinical applications in areas such as infectious diseases, cancer, genetic disorders and forensics.

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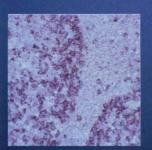
1. Dynamic changes in HIV-1 quasispecies from azidothymidine (AZT) treated patients. FASEB Journal 6 (1992), Wahlberg, J., Albert, J., Lundeberg, J., Cox, S., Wahren, B., Uhlén, M.



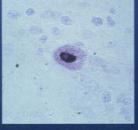
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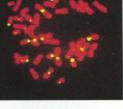


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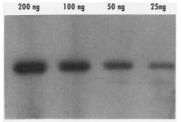
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Reference 1) Sano, M. et al. (1992) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 89, 8512-8516.

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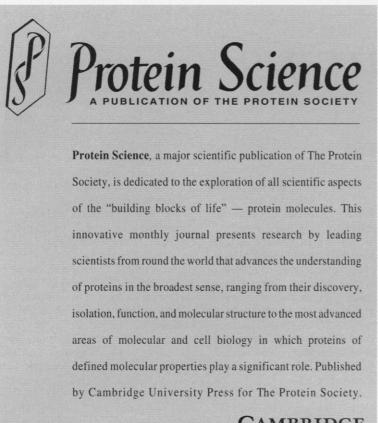
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