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Letters

Radiation's relative hazards

"High-radon homes may be widespread" (SN: 11/22/86, p.325) demonstrates once again how the public has been deceived by distortion and misinformation coming from the mass media. It has been known for many years now (although big media has just "discovered" it) that the radiation exposure from radon accumulation in well-insulated homes is 100 to 1,000 times greater than would be posed if all of our electricity were generated from nuclear power plants (including both routine emissions and meltdowns). But the government and big media have so frightened the public that we are willing to spend billions of extra dollars to "protect" people from a few millirems of radiation from nuclear power plants, thereby making nuclear electricity a

This Week

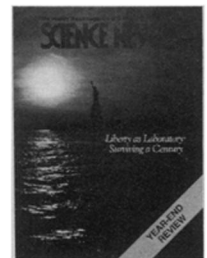
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Cover: A refurbished Statue of Liberty now stands in New York City's harbor ready to face a second century of wind and water. The restoration of the statue, completed this year, sparked several technological innovations and provided useful data about the behavior of materials over time. This information may aid future preservation projects. (Photo: Ivars Peterson)
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lot more expensive than it needs to be. People who believe that conservation (i.e., insulation) is a "safe" energy policy are now discovering it is not so safe after all.

Charles T. Rombough
Lynchburg, Va.

Sadness and sickness

B. Bower cites possible subtle reproductive and evolutionary strategies as clever explanations for the observed association between personality and immune function ("Personality linked to immunity," SN: 11/15/86, p.310). How about something simpler: that being sick a lot makes a person depressed?

Fred Phillips
Austin, Tex.

Origin of race?

There seems to be a generally held view that only one of the Miocene hominoid lines developed into *Homo sapiens* ("Fossil Finds Diversify Ancient Apes," SN: 11/22/86, p.324). What we may be seeing here is the diversification of races, not species: *Sivapithecus*, perhaps, the forebears of Mongoloids; *Afropithecus* of Negroids; and *Turkanapithecus* or *Oreopithecus* of Caucasoids.

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Lansing, Mich.

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