ceived by people living in the mountains." Since the rule of thumb is that cosmic radiation increases in the order of 1 millirem per year for each additional 100 feet of altitude, even the spectacular Austrian Alps cannot have many people living at 17,000 feet.

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Mercury Vapor Sources

I read with great interest Robert S. Foote's report on mercury vapor concentrations in buildings (11 Aug. 1972, p. 513) a few days after I installed a new fiberglass air filter, which was laced with mercury, in my furnace. I would be interested to learn if similar filters were in use in the buildings that Foote tested, and what effect they may have had on his results. The use of mercury on air filters in central heating systems would seem to be an excellent means of distributing mercury vapor throughout the home.

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Foote found high concentrations of mercury vapor in three doctors' examination rooms. He comments that mercury thermometers had been broken there in the past.

I wonder if a more likely source of the mercury vapor might be the mercury-containing sphygmomanometer used by most physicians. In this instrument one pumps air from a rubber bulb through a flat rubber bag which has been fastened tightly around the patient's arm, and then through a rubber tube into a mercury reservoir. Air pressure forces mercury from the reservoir into a vertically positioned glass tube. At the end of the procedure a valve on the pumping bulb is opened, permitting the air in the system to rush out under pressure. In this manner, air containing mercury vapor could enter the room. Perhaps Foote would care to examine the mercury concentration in this effluvial air. If this is indeed a significant source, then thought should be given to redesigning these instruments.

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Concentrations of mercury in wood-paneled or nonpainted homes, in which fiberglass filters (of unknown brands) were used in the furnaces, were very low. It appears that little mercury contamination is caused by the use of such filters.

Paint containing mercury compounds was probably the contributing factor in homes where high mercury concentrations were found.

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A Decent, Hardworking Word

Why do you allow a pair of silt-stained brigands like Irving and Harington ("Upper Pleistocene radiocarbon-dated artefacts from the northern Yukon," 26 Jan., p. 335) to arm themselves with bone awls and flint knives, sneak up behind a decent, hardworking word like "artifact," and stab it in the "i"?

Even Webster's Third, which sanctions everything from the Precambrian to the Aquarian, prefers the "i," although it suggests that if we really are going to get our usage from layer d of fluvial and lacustrine basin-fill sediments, we could go all the way to "artefac."

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Although I am diffident about matching my pedantic talents against Sartwell's, I draw encouragement from the knowledge that Harington and I do not stand alone in our position with respect to the proper (I do not insist that it is correct) spelling of artefact. It is the custom of members of the Society for American Archaeology to spell "artefact" with an "e," for the very good reason that this would have been the spelling in Latin had the word been current when Latin was. Thus, also, "archaeology," with an "ae" rather than the vulgar neologism spelled with an "e" alone.

It is a question of values, which those of us who labor in the traditions of antiquity perceive, perhaps, more clearly than do most of those who do not, and which in any case we steadfastly refuse to relinquish, even in these times of wholesale abandonment of values, standards, and even whole fields of scholarship (for example, etymology) for the racy, the new, and, let us hope, the short-lived fads so prevalent today.

The use of "i" is but one more example of cultural mutation, one that should be suppressed lest its deleterious effect spread to bring about, for example, "eliphant" and "Sartwill."

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The Dryden Papers

Over the past 22 months, the Milton S. Eisenhower Library of the Johns Hopkins University has been collecting and collating the papers of the late Hugh L. Dryden (1898–1965), who was aerodynamicist at the National Bureau of Standards from 1919 to 1947, director of the old National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics from 1947 to 1958, and deputy director of NASA from 1958 to 1965.

His papers have been located at Johns Hopkins at the request of Mrs. Dryden because Dryden received his Ph.D. in mathematics and physics from Johns Hopkins in 1919, when he was 20 years old.

The basic collection of Dryden papers is now complete. An archival system is ready to accommodate all other letters, memoranda, notes, reports, photographs, and other forms of documentation that directly relate to Dryden's life and times.

It is hoped that those friends and associates of Dryden who presently hold correspondence (and other relevant documentation) in their private files will donate these items to the Dryden collection. In cases in which the material may have intrinsic value to the donor, Xerox copies will be equally satisfactory.

Dryden's career cut across the lives of tens of thousands of persons in hundreds of different ways. In addition to documentation, the collection will also include what rarely gets put on paper. Anecdotes live only in the minds of mortal men, and when they die the anecdotes die with them. Those persons who have Dryden anecdotes to contribute are especially invited to send them in.

Those who wish to contribute their Dryden materials to the Hugh L. Dryden Papers should send their materials to the address below.

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