

Extended Underwater Stay May Improve Respiration

A record-setting 10-day stay beneath the surface of the ocean has led an A&M physiologist to believe that respiratory functions actually improve rather than deteriorate after lengthy submersion.

Dr. William Fife studied the effects of prolonged submersion on two teams of divers as well

as on himself during the experiment. One team stayed in the Hydro-Lab underwater habitat for four days, and the other remained submerged for six. Dr. Fife remained in the structure the entire 10 days.

"We found that respiratory functions actually improved, rather than deteriorated, as many believe happen," he pointed out. "My own respiration improved

about one and one-half times, and was continuing to improve when I surfaced."

Oxygen, he explained, is extremely toxic when breathed in pure form for long periods. He said many physiologists feel that prolonged breathing of compressed air would have many of the same effects as with breathing pure oxygen.

"This simply wasn't the case,"

he said. "We believe the improvement is due to increased muscular activities required when breathing the dense compressed air. The fact that the air was clean and free of smoke and other pollutants probably had something to do with the improvement, too."

The researcher said that the experiment also showed that those complaining of smoke on

airliners and in other close conditions might have more significance than just lack of comfort.

"The crew members who participated in the experiment flew down to the site," he said. "They experienced bronchial spasms during preliminary tests, but these disappeared after two days. We think that smoke-filled airline cabins do indeed do damage to non-smokers' respiratory system."

A daily routine for the research team was a series of seven respiration tests, including tests on the amount of air the lungs are able to contain and the rate of movement of air in and out of the lungs. All crew members showed definite improvement in all seven categories, Dr. Fife said.

The Hydro-Lab, owned by the Perry Foundation, is located off

Grand Bahama Island. The facility is leased by TAMU for extensive oceanographic and physiological experiments and research.

Dr. Fife said the results of his latest project showed the habitat might be moved lower than the present 50-foot depth. He said tests are planned to see what effects would be felt by moving the structure to a depth of 65 feet.

Leland, CSSC On The Road This Weekend

Bob Leland of the College Station Swim Club left Tuesday for California where he has been invited to compete in the Santa Clara International Swim Meet.

CSSC Coach Steve Montgomery said the highly prestigious four-day meet hosted by George Haines, who coached Mark Spitz and several other Olympic swimmers, will draw entries from at least 20 foreign countries, including Russia.

Leland qualified for the meet by recording a time of 1:13.3 in the 100-meter breast stroke at the Lone Star Invitational in San Antonio earlier this month.

Montgomery said Texas A&M Swimming Coach Dennis Fosdick will accompany Leland to Santa Clara. The A&M Consolidated student will compete Friday and Sunday.

His breast stroke time is only 1.2 seconds off the time for the men's national AAU qualifying score, Montgomery noted.

Remainder of the CSSC swimmers will compete Friday and Saturday at the AAU-sanctioned Meyerland Invitational Meet in Houston. Montgomery said the club's largest entry ever—65 boys and girls—are entered in the meet at Meyerland Country Club.

Local "Hams" Setting Up For Field Day

Local radio amateurs will set up two complete radio stations near the Academic Building Saturday to participate in Field Day, planned as the world's largest simulated emergency communications test.

Kurt Freiberger, summer chairman of the MSC Amateur Radio Committee, said Field Day involves more than 12,000 "hams" in the U. S. and Canada. The event is a binational emergency communications preparedness test sponsored by the American Radio Relay League.

The local group plans to operate the stations continuously from 1 p.m. Saturday until 4 p.m. Sunday and will attempt to contact as many other amateur stations as possible. The 27-hour period will allow local participants to perfect their operating skills and test equipment while performing in the field under simulated emergency conditions.

Such preparedness is important because during an actual emergency amateur operators often provide the only communications into an affected area, Freiberger explained.

The public is invited to visit the site, he added. Committee members will be available to explain the equipment's operation and show how the committee coordinates its efforts with the Red Cross, Civil Defense, police and other authorities during an actual emergency.

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