



Ted Hayes, 25, a graduate student at the hyperbaric lab, monitors a sheep dive testing

fetal susceptibility to the bends.

Photo by Connie Burke

Research continues in diving effects on fetuses

By CONNIE BURKE

Battalion Reporter
Research that a Texas A&M University professor has been working on for the last 14 years has provoked condemnation from a women's activist group, comment from a public official and concern from thousands of women divers.

Dr. W.P. Fife, a research biologist, has been trying to determine whether diving can harm the fetus of pregnant women. So far, his research has shown that diving can harm the fetus while the mother breathes no signs of decompression sickness, referred to as "the bends."

"Ten years ago, a student working with pregnant rats found the fetus OK when the mother had a lethal dose of the bends," Fife said.

"But during a sheep dive later conducted, the fetus was harmed when something happened to the mother," he said.

To conduct this experiment, Fife and one of his assistants puts a sheep in a compression chamber and then simulates the air pressure within the chamber to different depths under water. This is what Fife calls a dive.

Decompression sickness, more commonly known as the bends, is caused when nitrogen and oxygen bubbles are trapped inside the body after someone has been diving. If a person swims to the surface of the water too quickly after a dive, bubbles can form in the tissues, muscles and bloodstream of the body. These bubbles can slightly affect a person's vision and cause a small amount of pain. At other times, they can permanently paralyze its victim or even cause death.

Research that a woman may experience no side effects from diving, but the fetus she is carrying may be harmed without her knowledge. So far, research he has conducted on sheep has confirmed his worries. Fife has found that diving may cause women to abort the fetus or give

birth to a deformed baby.

Fife chose sheep for the experiment because the circulation of the animal's placenta is more similar to that of humans than other animals.

Fife's research has had its share of attention. For example, his work was a sore spot to some women who advocated that Fife's research is the work of a male chauvinist. He said Nikki Van Hightower, a leader of a women's activist group, has accused him of conducting the research to limit work available to women.

"At first, I found women who were calling me 'macho.' But I like to see women enjoy sports, too," Fife said.

Fife said he gets calls from women concerned about the effects of diving.

"They will say they just found out they are pregnant and that they have been diving. They want to know if the baby will be deformed and if they should have an abortion," Fife said.

Fife said he tells them he doesn't know for sure whether diving causes birth defects, but he thinks it is best to tell them not to dive if they think they may be pregnant.

A one-sentenced, off-hand remark by Gov. Bill Clements caused Fife's research to gain more publicity. Clements implied that scuba diving could be a swift, comfortable way to have an underwater baby abortion. This remark was repeated in newspapers, magazines and on radio and television stations.

"As far as I'm concerned, it was a harmless remark," Fife said. He said Clements made the comment when he was being quickly reviewed on all the research projects at Texas A&M University.

Those concerned with Fife's work include more than public officials and women activists. Women divers who are employed as professional divers or who frequently dive as a hobby are concerned about dangers to a fetus when diving.

Fife said his research has not cre-

ated any laws which forbid pregnant women from diving or from continuing their work. Every woman may still decide for herself whether or not she wants to dive while she is pregnant, but his research may begin to alert employers about the possible setbacks of hiring women divers. If a woman has pregnancy problems resulting from diving, her employer will have to give her time off work and possibly give her workman's compensation payments. Her employer may later decide it is more economical to hire only male divers rather than hiring potential compensation collectors.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, it does not resolve questions regarding the rights of pregnant women.

Employers have traditionally considered pregnancy as a voluntary condition that interferes with work performance. In such cases, an employer would not be obligated to pay her during the time she misses work. However, payment could be collected if there was an employment agreement or union contract previously secured.

When Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the law changed to provide women with the same company policies relating to disability. The employer may not terminate the woman because she has reached a certain stage of pregnancy. Instead, she will be permitted to remain on the job until she is no longer to perform the work.

If she does physical work like diving and her employer has a policy of transferring the employees under medical disability to lighter assignments, then she will be subject to the same practice. Consequently, a woman who now holds a diving job cannot be fired because she is pregnant and cannot carry out her diving duties.

Attention Students:

MSC Town Hall is in the process of conducting a random survey of 2,000 Texas A&M University students.



The results of the survey will be presented to the Town Hall selection committee, which consists of three faculty members and fifteen students, that represent a cross section of campus (twelve students are non Town Hall members). The feedback from the survey and the selection committee will help Town Hall determine student entertainment preferences for the 1980-81 Town Hall season. If you receive one of these survey forms in the mail please fill it out completely and mail it back in promptly, so that we can begin our booking process for next year as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

MSC Town Hall

THE BATTALION
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1980

Page 3

SPEAKER WEEK

April 14-19

Woofer says: "I think Woofer Week still sounds better"

PS-8 Loudspeaker

"sound as clear as light"

<p>FULL SYSTEM</p> <p>Power Capacity 100 watts (clean power)</p> <p>Nominal Impedance 8 ohms</p> <p>Dispersion 120 deg. horizontal, 40 deg. vert.</p> <p>Crossover Frequency 2,400 Hz.</p> <p>Efficiency 1 watt input produces 94 dB of sound pressure at 3 feet.</p> <p>Frequency Response 80 dB at 15 feet.</p> <p>50 to 20,000 Hz plus/minus 3dB</p>	
--	--

Half air-motion transformer midrange-tweeter—the most significant loudspeaker breakthrough of the past half century. Winner of the UCLA campus listening test... "Instant acceleration."

ONLY \$189.00 each

C2 Loudspeaker

"... represents a fine achievement"

<p>Enclosure Vented (Quasi-Third Order Butterworth filter)</p> <p>Impedance (IEEE) Maximum 40 ohms — 8/6 ohms</p> <p>Nominal/minimum</p> <p>Frequency Response (Minimum Spec.) 37 to 20,000 Hz. plus/minus 4dB</p> <p>Efficiency (Approx., Based on 1 Volt in vs. SPL Out) 0.70%</p> <p>Approximate recommended min. amplifier compatibility* max. 10 watts (rms)</p> <p>Controls 100 watts (rms)</p> <p>2-Tweeter level (3 position)</p>	
--	--

"Surely, all things considered, the design of the Ohm C2 represents a fine achievement. With classical music its performance is adequate with popular music — wow!" High Fidelity — NOW/1976

The C2 is a high-efficiency speaker with ruler flat response to 37 Hz, high power handling capacity, very smooth treble response, and excellent dispersion. Considering the size of the box, performance and price, the Ohm C2 must be reckoned with as one of the better speaker values available." Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo Equipment/1977

List \$290.00 each
SALE \$209.95 each

288

The best of the bookshelves.

<p>System Components: (4-way system)</p> <p>12" (30.5cm) long-excursion air-suspension low frequency driver with large diameter high temperature voice coil.</p> <p>12" (25.4cm) foam-edge rear mounted passive radiator.</p> <p>6" (15.2cm) foam-suspension midrange transducer in separate sealed enclosure.</p> <p>1" (25.4cm) high output soft dome high frequency radiator.</p> <p>2" x 5" "Quartz Controlled" ultra high frequency exponential horn radiator.</p>	<p>Nominal Impedance: 8 ohms</p> <p>Frequency Response: 26 Hz to 37,500 Hz</p> <p>Recommended Amplifier Power Range: 5-120 watts (RMS) continuous per channel (circuit breaker protected).</p> <p>Sensitivity: 94 dB SPL, 1 meter, 1 watt input.</p>
--	--

This sound is bigger, bolder, vibrant, high-energy sound you thought you could hear only at a live concert.

List \$330 **SALE \$219.95 each**

Open Mon.-Sat. 10-6

3806-A OLD COLLEGE ROAD

846-5803

Your Number One Audio Dealer

GUSTOM SOUNDS