

SURGERY

Hearing Aid Monitors Breathing of Patients

► HEARING AIDS now play a life-saving role in the operating room by monitoring the breathing of unconscious surgical patients.

This new application of the tiny amplifiers has been developed by Drs. Harry Ashman and Sylvan M. Shane, Lutheran Hospital of Maryland, Baltimore, who describe their apparatus, called the Breathophone, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Jan. 26).

The Breathophone consists of a hearing-aid transistor amplifier, an earphone that does not have to be worn in the ear, and a microphone that is removed from the hearing aid and placed in a T-tube connected to the anesthesia breathing apparatus.

As the unconscious patient breathes, the slightest breath in the tube causes air to strike the microphone and the sound is magnified and heard through the hearing-aid earphone. The earphone can be placed in a small open-mouth jar or paper cup, which acts as a loudspeaker and can be heard all over the operating room.

Amplifying the breathing sounds is the most accurate way of checking an unconscious patient's respiration, the doctors reported. If these sounds are not audible, the only other way to check respiration is by watching the slight rise and fall of the rubber breathing bag.

That method is "fraught with inefficiency and danger" since it is almost impossible to keep looking at a moving breathing bag without eventual self-hypnosis, they report.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

GENERAL SCIENCE

Hungarian Scientists To Learn About America

► HUNGARIAN SCIENTISTS will learn about their new country in an eight-week course recently started at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.

The first 20 of more than 100 Hungarian scientists and scholars who have come through Camp Kilmer, N. J., are now living on the campus, Dr. Lewis Webster Jones, president of the University, said. Both individual scientists and families will take part in the program.

"With the sponsorship of the National Academy of Sciences, Rutgers is conducting a unique program to help Hungarian scientists and other scholars to prepare for more effective participation in American life," Dr. Jones reported.

The group of scientists, housed in a new University dormitory, will receive instruction in English and learn both academically and practically about their newly adopted country.

Dr. Jones explained that members of the Rutgers faculty, visiting professors and other specialists will be used to give the Hun-

garian "students" a grasp on the American way of life.

The program calls for some tailoring to fit the talents and interests of the Hungarian scholars. It includes lectures on American politics, history, art and music; trips to nearby museums, industrial plants and communities, and visits with representative American families.

The program will be directed by the Rev. Bradford S. Abernathy, Rutgers chaplain, who served as director of the European students' seminar program of the American Friends Service Committee in 1953-54.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

MEDICINE

High Flying for Whooping Cough

► A RATHER unusual type of "airlift" has been reported as a cure for whooping cough in Europe from time to time. Children and adults with whooping cough are taken on high altitude flights for varying lengths of time and many of them are reported cured as a result.

The first "whooping cough flight" took place about 30 years ago and was based on the idea that high flying was a very special kind of climate therapy. Since then, whooping cough flights have remained very popular in many European countries, although physicians are still skeptical about them.

In 1953, doctors at the Children's Clinic, Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany, took 100 whooping coughers up for a flight which lasted an hour at an altitude of almost 10,000 feet. The airplane's cabin was left unpressurized so that the inside and outside pressures would be the same. One week later, the whooping cough attacks had completely disappeared in 18 children, had been reduced by half in 44 more, and caused no change in the other 38, Dr. G. A. Von Harnack reports in the German medical journal, *Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift*.

High altitude flights in U. S. Army planes were also arranged for thousands of children during the whooping cough epidemics in Austria in 1953 and 1954. Exactly why the flights work is still unknown.

In this country vaccines and antibiotics have greatly reduced the seriousness of whooping cough, a U. S. Public Health officer said, and no whooping cough flights are on record.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

● RADIO

Saturday, Feb. 9, 1957, 1:45-2:00 p.m., EST.

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, Director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS station.

Mr. Walker L. Cisler, President of the Detroit Edison Company, Detroit, Michigan, and Chairman of the National Edison Birthday Celebration, will discuss "Edison and the Present" in connection with the 110th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Alva Edison.

ZOOLOGY

Giant Sea Turtles Found In Far Northern Waters

► TURTLES may be slow travelers but they are taking longer trips these days. The capture of three giant leatherback turtles in the northern North Sea, off the coast of western Norway, has been reported by J. F. Willgohs, University of Bergen, Norway, in *Nature* (Jan. 19).

The leatherback turtle is one of the most unusual of all sea turtles and differs from all of its brethren by having a smooth, scaleless black skin on its back. The huge creatures are strong and at times dangerous adversaries that use both flippers and jaws with telling effect when attacked from a small boat. Many observers report they have voices that resemble wails, groans, and sometimes roars.

The first one sighted in the northern North Sea battled its captors for two and a half hours before being dragged aboard a fishing vessel. It measured over six feet from stem to stern and weighed over 850 pounds.

The captures are "remarkable" because they all took place at short intervals within a limited area and very far north, Mr. Willgohs reported. This may indicate "a more extensive movement" of the giant reptiles in the North Atlantic, Mr. Willgohs believes.

They have been known to range the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, and have been spotted as far south as Mar del Plata, Argentina.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

GENERAL SCIENCE

Hillary Sets up Camp In South Pole Regions

► SIR EDMUND HILLARY, conqueror of Mt. Everest, is busy setting up New Zealand's camp for the trans-Antarctic expedition.

His camp is three miles from the United States' "Deep Freeze" base in McMurdo Sound.

The Americans, under Lt. Richard Bowers, are helping the New Zealanders build their camp. The camp at present consists of only one small tent.

The New Zealand expedition is not large. Only 22 men will winter at the camp in contrast with 120 Americans at McMurdo Sound.

Before starting his camp, Sir Edmund sent three dog sled teams westward with 880 pounds each to set up supply caches on the Ferrar Glacier. Food and fuel dumps will be established for 300 miles towards the South Pole.

The New Zealanders will make full use of dog teams. They have 60 dogs, twice the number the Americans brought to Antarctica. The Americans use dogs only for search and rescue operations.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957