

## AIR CONDITIONED HARDSHIP

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It has been a hot summer. Twice recently the air conditioning system in the operating and delivery room suites at St. Francis went on the blink. We became aware of how accustomed all of us have become to working in optimum comfort. On those occasions, after an hour or two under the lights and smothered and soaked under gowns and drapes, tempers grew short, impatience appeared and nerves became jangled.

As we threatened to cancel surgical cases and the anesthesiologists muttered aloud, predicting disaster and dire outcomes for the post-operative patients as a result of fluid loss and electrolyte imbalances, we found ourselves wondering how we ever managed to carry on in those earlier years of unregulated atmospheres.

We recalled a hot, mid-summer Sunday afternoon some twenty years ago and a hurried call to our senior resident for help in delivering a difficult primiparous breech. He arrived in a Sunday silk suit and, throwing off his coat, put on gown and mask over his clothes and dived in. By the time the delivery was over, we all looked like we had been in a hot shower for hours. All of us doctors, mother and baby somehow survived but the silk suit was never the same again.

Every time we get discouraged nowadays and decide to chuck it all and take off for Central Africa to help Dr. Albert Schweitzer in his steaming jungle, the memory of that flushed and dripping senior resident in the clinging suit of soaked silk pops up again to dampen our day-dreaming.

Unless Dr. Schweitzer decides to move his hospital to the highlands, we guess we will just have to tough it out here in our air-conditioned cars, offices and hospitals and suffer the hardship of an occasional equipment breakdown.