
relating to the patient what will happen to him or her in this type of treatment. However, one should understand that the first response is for the doctor to treat the patient. Secondly, as a diver myself, it is quite common that the knowledge and procedure of treating dive related accidents is very alien to most divers thus, at the time of treatment, it could become very frightening. I have thus concluded that Dr. Rodriguez followed all procedures properly and displayed no unprofessional conduct.”

When I contacted Joel Dovenbarger, DAN’s Director of Medical Services, about this incident, he told me, “I am familiar with this problem. I have talked with Mr. Kramer, Dr. Rodriguez and with Mr. Moreno who heads up the Sub-aquatic Safety Services Recompression Clinics here in the U.S. and have also been in contact with Dr. Rodriguez about the Kramers’ problem. I went back over all the records that we have of treatments conducted among Americans at the Belize chamber and found no record of any prior complaint, but I did find several compliments for Dr. Rodriguez. I don’t know just what to think. I wasn’t there at the time and all I can do is hear both sides. And what I hear is contradictory.”

I then called Mr. Moreno of Sub-aquatic Safety Services in Dallas, Texas, about what the Kramers experienced. Mr. Moreno told me, “Unfortunately, Mr. Kramer does not speak Spanish and Dr. Rodriguez’s English is not the best. When people have difficulty speaking with each other, there is often misunderstanding.”

When asked why Mr. Kramer had been enticed into the chamber, Mr. Moreno replied, “We try to have someone that the patient trusts with them while treatment

is going on. It seems to reassure them and make them more comfortable. . . . The fact is a patient came in with symptoms of decompression sickness and left free of any symptoms. We have done our job.”

The facts that English is the official language of Belize and that Dr. Rodriguez has been in practice there for 12 years don’t lend much to the theory of the the language barrier. In fact, Joel Dovenbarger at DAN told me, “I do not speak enough Spanish to save my life. And I could understand Dr. Rodriguez perfectly.”

I made several attempts to contact Dr. Rodriguez at his office

telephone number, supplied by the Belize Tourist Board, but the phone was never answered. Even had I been able to talk directly to Dr. Rodriguez, it seems unlikely that I could have drawn any hard conclusions. As Mr. Dovenbarger said, “I wasn’t there at the time and all I can do is hear both sides. And what I hear is contradictory.”

However, the Kramers’ bizarre incident has prompted me to back off a bit more from diving the limit, hang another minute or two at 20 feet, and discuss with my dive buddy where I want him or her to be in case of my hyperbaric treatment — on the outside, please.

C. C.



DON’T LOSE YOUR BOAT ON DEAD MAN’S CHEST. “Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest/Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!/Drink and the devil had done for the rest/Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum....”

When Linda Sorensen wrote her *Guide to Diving and Snorkeling the British Virgin Islands*, she knew that the infamous pirate Bluebeard was said to have left 15 men with a bottle of rum and a saber to fight out their differences on the small island of Dead Chest. In the guide she speculates that the island’s name may have originated from the unsuccessful attempts of the sailors trying to make the half-mile swim over to Peter Island.

But, Linda, did you know that Dead Chest was the key to the age-old mystery of the lyrics to the sea chanty made popular by Robert Louis Stevenson in his classic 1883 novel *Treasure Island*?

In *Geographical*, published by Britain’s Royal Geographical Society, explorer Quentin van Marle says he found from local history and folklore that pirate Edward Teach, known as “Bluebeard,” punished a mutinous crew by marooning them on Dead Man’s Chest in the British Virgin Islands, which has high cliffs and no water and is inhabited mainly by pelicans and snakes.

Each sailor was given a cutlass and a bottle of rum. Teach's hope was that the pirates would kill each other, but when he returned after a month he found 15 men had survived. Which, says van Marle, explains the famous song lyrics.

Van Marle describes the island as "eerie and infamous." He has firsthand experience of its eeriness because he was briefly marooned there on a scuba diving trip in 1969 when he lost his boat's outboard motor.

GET THE SPIRIT. If you're booked on the live-aboard *Spirit of Borneo*, you'd better hustle a new trip. The *Spirit*, which was diving Sipadan and the South China Sea, has been taken out of service. It's not a big surprise; the boat has been having maintenance problems and was fighting a short dive season in the South China Sea. Rumor is that the *Spirit* is up for sale.

THREE PLANS, NO CHOICE. I've planned my dive carefully so as not to go below 130 feet, the recognized recreational diving limit, but just as I'm starting to head back up, I look down to see my buddy acting strange below me. I quickly drop down to her — she's my wife, what else can I do? Not much of a problem; a current is flowing down the wall and she's hanging onto the side. Together we swim harder toward the surface, but not before slipping down to 131 feet. Back on the boat, I'm the one acting strange: I feel dizzy and I have this pain in my shoulder. It's time to get to a chamber. Damn! My DAN insurance is no longer any good — I went below 130 feet.

The only part of the above story that's true is that two of DAN's new insurance plans won't cover you if you go below 130 feet. As of May 1, DAN is offering three choices of insurance. The Standard Plan costs \$25 and includes \$45,000 coverage for getting bent or embolized, but won't cover accidents that occur below 130 feet. The Plus Plan, which costs \$30,

includes \$50,000 coverage on getting bent or embolized and adds \$10,000 for accidental death and permanent disability, but still doesn't cover accidents below 130 feet. The Master Plan, for \$35, includes the \$50,000 for getting bent or embolized plus \$15,000 accidental death and permanent disability, and will cover accidents at any depth.

Even if I never planned to dive below 30 feet, I'd still buy the Master Plan. Things don't usually go as planned when something goes wrong, and I would hate to think that for \$10 a year I wasn't covered at any depth. For information, telephone DAN at 919-684-2948, extension 626.

MONSTERS OF THE DEEP. Blue whales can grow to over 100 feet long; the largest fish ever caught, a tiger shark, weighed almost 1,800 pounds. Squid can grow to 55 feet, and there's even an octopus with a 32-foot tentacle span. But what about a BIG sea monster?

Biologists recently determined that two huge masses of flesh that washed ashore over the past 100 years, including the so-called Bermuda Blob of 1988, were not remnants of an enormous mythical octopus, as some scientists and fishermen had theorized. Tissue specimens saved from the 150-foot-long remains of an unidentified creature grounded on a Florida beach in 1896 are almost certainly part of an ordinary whale, the researchers concluded. And a similar fleshy mass that washed ashore in Bermuda seven years ago was probably part of a very large fish or shark.

I think this is a good call by the biologist that will make night dives along deep walls much more relaxed.

IT'S REALLY FOR ADVANCED DIVERS. I hate to admit to a mistake, but on the *Serenade's* star chart, in the April issue, the ratings for advanced divers and beginning divers were reversed. Due to some strong currents, the diving on the *Serenade* for beginners should have been 2½ stars and diving for advanced divers 4½ stars.

In Depth is the consumer newsletter for sport divers that reviews scuba destinations and equipment. We accept no advertising. Subscriptions are \$60 a year (addresses in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, add \$15; other foreign addresses, add \$30).

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