



APRIL 2007

GET READY FOR A  
GREAT SUMMER...

AS I WAIT FOR MY THIN SET CONCRETE MIX TO STIFFEN, I WILL BANG OUT A QUICK FIRE APRIL NEWSLETTER. I am re-tiling / re-designing my fireplace since I am working and have something new....an income ;-)

PRESIDENT'S  
CORNER

BY  
*Konrad Fry*



Diving has been lousy because it is spring and all the little and big critters are reproducing and that plus bi-directional wave from Alaska and the South Pacific equal bad vis and big surge. Since our raft-up was a great time with lousy vis I decided to share the above water pictures and submit an article about a horrible little catfish that everyone has been referencing lately. In fact I heard about it again today on NPR in regards to a swimmer who swam the entire Amazon! He was afraid of this little buggler, but as long as he did not pee in the water, he was safe. You will **not** believe this:

The **candirú** or **canero** (*Vandellia cirrhosa*) or **toothpick fish** is a freshwater fish in the group commonly called the catfish. It is found in the Amazon River and has a reputation among the natives as the most feared fish in its waters, even over the piranha. The species has been known to grow to a size of 6 inches in length and is eel shaped and translucent, making it almost impossible to see in the water. The candirú is a parasite.

### Parasitism

The candirú parasitizes other fish. It swims into the gill cavities of other fish, erects a spine to hold itself in place, and feeds on the blood in the gills, earning it a nickname as the "vampire fish of Brazil". Recent research [1] has shown that candirú do not suck blood, but rather latch on to an artery and have blood pumped into them.

It is feared by the natives because it is attracted to urine or blood<sup>[2]</sup>, and if the bather is nude it will swim into an orifice (the anus or vagina, or even the penis—and deep into the urethra). It then erects its spine and begins to feed on the blood and body tissue just as it would from the gills of a fish. The candirú is then almost impossible to remove except through surgery. As the fish locates its host by following the water flow from the gills to its source, urinating while bathing increases the chance of a candirú homing in on a human urethra.

A well-circulated myth is that the candirú is capable of swimming up the stream of urine in mid-air to a victim standing on shore or a boat. However this is physically

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impossible as the maximum swimming velocity of the fish is opposed by the downward velocity of the urine stream, and the further impossible act of the 5-14 mm wide fish maintaining position *and* thrust within a 2-7 mm wide column of fluid.

A traditional cure involves the use of two plants, the Xagua plant (*Genipa americana*) and the Buitach apple which are inserted (or their extract in the case of tight spaces) into the affected area. These two plants together will kill and then dissolve the fish. More often, infection causes shock and death in the victim before the candirú can be removed. Though there have been documented candirú attacks on humans, there is no evidence the fish can survive once inside a human. It was recently sought after by Nick Baker, a wildlife specialist on British TV in a series about the world's strangest animals.



So..... Diving in icky spring Southern California waters ain't so bad after all!

We have Wendy's Farnsworth trip this month and a Raftup on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Our April speaker is world famous Dale Schekler speaking on Channel Island diving. Stay tuned for our next picnic and maybe if we are really good Don will put together a nice day at the races. Oh well, back to the tile job. See you Wednesday.

*-Konrad*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Wendy's SOCDC Dive Boat Trips*

**April 15th (Sun)**

**Sundiver**

**Farnsworth Banks**

**Aug 18 (Sat)**

**Sundiver**

**Santa Barbara Island**

**Oct 21 (Sun)**

**Sundiver**

**Catalina Lobsters**

**Dec 16 (Sun)**

**Peace**

**Anacapa Island**

We plan to get a San Diego Yukon Dive in the schedule.



**THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER  
DALE SHECKLER**

*By Paul Miller*

**This months speaker will be Dale Sheckler. Dale will be talking to us about Catalina Diving and giving us an update for the 2007 Scuba Show. Here's Dale background information...**

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**Long Beach Convention Center  
Saturday June 2nd & Sunday June 3rd**

<b>EXHIBITOR LIST</b>	<b>SEMINARS</b>	<b>CASINO PARTY</b>	<b>PHOTO CONTEST</b>
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## *Ask Dr. Debbie...*

Health and Travel: Part 1 of 2

*By Debra A. Hill, MD*

**G**REETINGS FROM SINGAPORE! My husband, Bob, and I are en route to Manado, Indonesia for some of the best Muck Diving in the world. So, health and travel have been on my mind, and I believe on many of your minds too in view of the Club's upcoming plans to travel to Bonaire this summer. When I travel abroad, I always see my Infectious Disease Doctor at least 2-3 months before leaving in case I will need updates on immunizations. Some Immunizations may need to be administered in two parts several months apart in order to be effective, Some Immunizations may require advance administration to be effective, others can be received days before departure. But, don't take any chances or make any assumptions as it is not wise to travel without the proper immunizations. Another good source of information as to what is required in terms of immunizations, and travel tips to stay healthy too, is the Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/) . Beyond immunizations, there are also recommendations as to preventing malaria, which requires taking a pill which you will need a prescription for. I am not going to go in to detail at this point, but will refer you to the CDC website for more of the details—see the link above.

That's all for this month. By the way there has been some research lately that indicates the health benefits of travel –which from a psychological perspective, I do agree is a necessary part of one's mental health. It's always valuable to take a step outside of our microcosm of life and see how others in the world live, think, and feel—both under the sea and on land too!

Happy Diving!

*Debra A. Hill, MD*



# *Raft-Up Photos*

The club Raft-Up is a chance for everyone (divers and non-divers) to get together, and really enjoy the local waters and the great friendship that our club is known for. This summer promises to be one of the best ever - make sure you sign-up for one of these great events.



*Meeting is April 11th at 6:30 - Fudd's*

*Our trip to Roatan is just about full...  
only a few spots left. Sign-up NOW.*

*Want to see a PREVIEW? Click on this  
link to see an overview of the Fantasy  
Island Resort*

<http://www.fantasyislandresort.com/us/index.html>



**Come join us Wednesday Night  
for Good Food and Good Friends!**

