

CHAT ROOM



LEN MCCULLOUGH

Head injuries can result in brain damage

An estimated one million children in this country sustain a traumatic brain injury each year. Every 21 seconds, a head injury occurs in the U.S. The majority of these are mild closed head injuries, also called concussions.

A concussion is a head injury in which the skull has not been broken. The brain can be injured from the inside by banging and bouncing against skull walls. Sudden movement within the skull can cause bruising, tiny tissue tears, swelling, and chemical changes. Very often, x-rays will not detect the damage. However, the impact on a child's functioning can be drastic.

It was previously thought that the head had to hit something for there to be a concussion-like injury. This myth has been proven wrong during recent years. A whip-like motion of the head back and forth can cause damage. A loss of consciousness is not necessary for the brain to be injured and this myth has been repeatedly disproven in research and clinical studies.

Actually, a disruption in consciousness no matter how brief, such as mildly dazed, constitutes concussion. And repeated concussions can have a cumulative effect as often seen in boxing. Even more dramatically, it takes only three seconds to permanently damage a child's brain as in the so-called shaken baby syndrome.

Common after-effects of significant concussion injuries to children can include: problems with attention and concentration, with memory and learning, frustration, irritability and anxiety. These may not show up immediately after injury but may develop as weeks and months pass and chemical changes that take place inside the brain become more pronounced.

It can be a good idea to have a child who has experienced a head injury to be examined by a neuropsychologist. He would conduct tests that measure memory, intelligence, verbal and non-verbal reasoning, perception, motor skills and emotional functioning.

Then the neuropsychologist would consult with the school and might work in conjunction with a rehabilitation specialist to develop a treatment plan. Special education laws now include programs for traumatically brain-injured children.

Treatment could consist of individualized cognitive exercises, memory retaining, and psychological therapy for emotional trauma often acquired in accidents. After accidents from motor vehicle collisions, assaults, falls and sports related concussions, there may also develop posttraumatic stress reactions, commonly seen after a sudden traumatic experience.

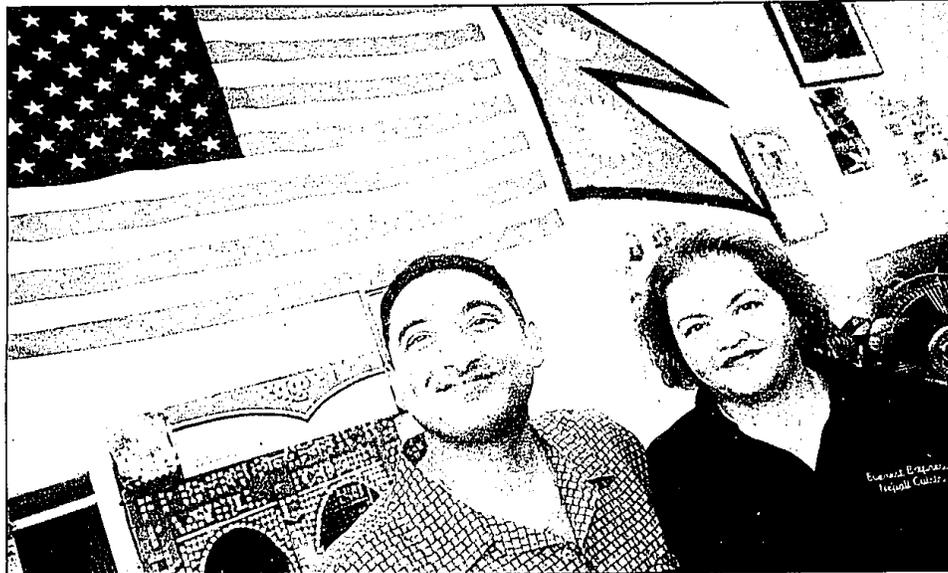
More resources than ever are now available for children, parents and teachers to learn about these conditions and ways to remedy the consequences of such injuries. In addition to the natural process of brain healing, the likelihood of recovery of adjustment to closed head injuries can be increased by working with rehabilitation specialists.

We need to devote attention to prevention. It's estimated that 90 percent of closed head injuries and concussions could be prevented if people took more precautions. This means consistently using seat belts, protective helmets in sports, while riding bikes, scooters and roller blades. Additional prevention is to keep in mind is to firmly anchor climbing gymnasium equipment and to know the depth of water before diving into pools.

In the final analysis the greatest tool we have against traumatic brain injury is prevention.

Resources: Brain Injury Association of Michigan, 1-800-772-HEAD; National Brain Injury Association, 1-703-236-6000; Farmington Hills Police Department, Summer Helmet Giveaway Program, 1-248-474-6181.

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Happy Fourth: Everest Express co-owners Pradip "Rocky" Poudel and Nidhal Gorges display both an American and Nepali flag at their restaurant in Farmington.

STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMAYER

Only in America Restauranters 'on top of the mountain' in U.S.

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYSBY
SPECIAL WRITER

One night soon after Nidhal Gorges came to the United States from Iraq, she had a dream. In it, she was standing on top of a white-covered mountain in a beautiful white dress with her arms outstretched.

"The dream, to me, represented freedom — a great sense of freedom," says the West Bloomfield resident. Little did she know then, more than 23 years ago, how significant this dream would be in her later life.

As Gorges reflects on her life on this American holiday, the Fourth of July, which celebrates independence, its "freedom" that she is most grateful for... this and her friend and business partner, Pradip "Rocky" Poudel, who came to America from Nepal 13 years ago with \$50 in his pocket.

Together, this single mother of two grown children and this native from the Himalaya Mountains region opened the Everest Express in Farmington in 2001. The restaurant is named after the Himalayas highest peak, Mt. Everest, and specializes in Nepali food.

Gorges believes that Poudel and the restaurant are her dream come true. "I haven't gone to the top of the mountain, (Mt. Everest) but I met and became friends with the man from the mountain!" The two met three years ago. Gorges had been working in the computer field for a number of

Taste some Nepali food

You can meet Pradip "Rocky" Poudel and Nidhal Gorges this weekend and taste the unique flavors of Nepali foods at their booth at the 2002 Comerica Tastefest in Detroit's New Center area. The festival runs from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Sunday until 8 p.m.) Admission and parking are free.

Or, you can visit them at the Everest Express, 23331 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (lunch), and 5-10 p.m. (dinner), Tuesdays through Sundays. The restaurant is closed on Mondays.

years at a hospital. All the time, she dreamed (this time, it was a daydream!) of owning her own business. Poudel, also a West Bloomfield resident, had worked for years in the hotel and restaurant business, first in his homeland, and then in Michigan. From 1995-97, he owned the New Downtown Cafe in Farmington.

"But I sold it," he says. "I was burned out from the long hours and the stress." The last thing he wanted to do was to open another restaurant! Then, one night, Poudel cooked a traditional Nepali dinner for Gorges. "The food was so good it took my breath away. I told Rocky that God has given him golden fingers when it came to cooking,

and it would be a tragedy if he didn't use this gift," Gorges said.

Her encouragement and agreement to join him in the venture led to the opening of the only "true Nepali food" restaurant in the Midwest at that time. Their joint efforts have resulted in a popular and successful restaurant.

"Our customers come from all over, even from out-of-state, for our healthy and nutritious cuisine. We use herbs, not spices, to provide the true flavor of Nepali food," said Poudel.

According to him, being in America has allowed him to be successful in many areas of his life. "Foreigners come to the United States for the opportunities available here. We are open-minded. We know that if we work hard, we will succeed," he said. "Too many Americans take things for granted. They've always had so much, that they don't see what they can truly have...what's available for them."

"If a pile of dirt is in their way on their path, many Americans just see it as mud and kick it away. Many of us from other countries, however, will stop and sift through the mud with the hope of finding a diamond. And often we find one!"

Both believe their success would not be possible anywhere else but here — in the United States of America. This is why they have an American flag proudly displayed on a wall in their restaurant, right next to the flag of Nepal.

DVDs overtake VHS

BY GREG MCGLORE
STAFF WRITER
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Watching a tape of your favorite movie on a VCR may be as outdated as listening to Boston on a Hi-Fi system in the near future.

The nation's electronics retailers have more than a feeling that VHS tapes are gradually giving way to DVDs, which offer higher quality video and sound. DVDs also have features like extra scenes, trailers, director's commentary or alternative endings.

Circuit City, the second-largest electronics retailer in the United States, is going to discontinue selling movies on VHS tapes. They still will carry some new releases of popular movies as well as blank tapes and VCRs. Tapes of movies will also still be available on the Internet. "Our customers have shown a clear preference to purchase DVD movies," said Bill Cimino of Circuit City, which has 26 different DVD players. "There's a lot more that a DVD offers over a VHS tape."

Although DVDs are a growing trend, tapes are still a dominant force in the marketplace. Blake Lughash of Blockbuster said that more than 99 million households in the United States have a VCR, while only 25 million have a DVD player.

"There's still quite a market for VHS

tapes," Lughash said. Blockbuster's DVD rentals are increasing. They made up 18.5 percent of its rentals last year, but shot up to 30 percent in the end of the first quarter this year. Lughash said it could be up to 40 percent by the end of the year.

"Generally DVDs are most profitable for us," Lughash said. The price of DVD players is coming down. Some stores offer them for about \$65. A standard player costs about \$100-\$150.

DVDs have become more affordable too. New releases usually cost slightly more than tapes. "A Beautiful Mind", which won four Oscars this year, cost \$17.99 on DVD and \$14.99 on tape at a local store.

Derek Wilson, a customer at the Best Buy in Novi, said he prefers DVDs because of the better sound and picture. He said he has both a VCR and DVD player and rents one or two DVDs a week. "I'll use the DVD player whenever I can over the VHS," he said.

Consumers also can now record television shows with them. The recorders, however, can still cost about \$1,000. "They're still a niche product," Cimino said.

Target is also scaling back its selection of tapes in favor of more DVDs, although it is going to continue to carry tapes. "There's definitely the shift towards DVDs," Brie Heath of Target said.

In concert



Stars in the Park: Paul Ventimiglia, gifted composer, arranger, conductor and keyboardist will bring his own special flair for soft jazz, rock and pop to the Heritage Park free summer concert series "Stars in the Park" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 11. The park is located at 24915 Farmington Road, just south of Eleven Mile Road. The concerts are presented by the City of Farmington Hills Special Services Department.