

Lawsuit may be in the works

Woodmere boy burned by chef

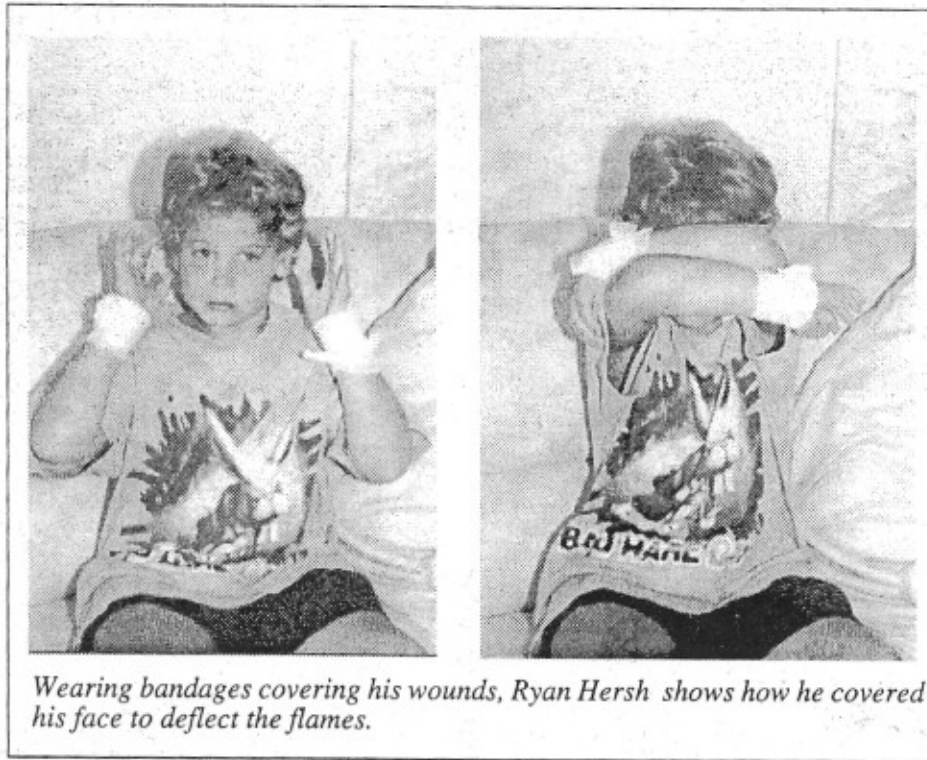
By ROBERT SNYDER

"It was like a fire-breathing dragon."

The words of 8-year-old Ryan Hersh of Woodmere describe his impression of a ball of flames that engulfed him recently at an Island Park restaurant. The mishap has resulted in second-degree burns to both the boy's arms and a possible lawsuit against the Japanese establishment where the tableside fire show went astray.

According to Ryan's parents Daniel and Jodi Hersh, on Aug. 21, they took their son and 11-year-old daughter, Jayme, to the newly-opened Shogun restaurant. The family sat at a arched table with some seven other patrons, including a 2-year-old child. In the center of the table was a hibachi grill where a chef put on a show as he prepared the food.

"The chef," said Daniel, "asked the kids, 'Do you want to see fire?'"



Wearing bandages covering his wounds, Ryan Hersh shows how he covered his face to deflect the flames.

He sprayed vodka on the grill and a small flame shot up. Then, he asked, "Do you want to see big fire?" He sprayed more vodka on the grill, but rather than rise up, a ball of fire went 10 feet across the table toward Ryan.

My son held up his arms to block the flames from his face. Still, the fire burned his wrists, arms, hands and hair."

Jodi says, "Flames were rolling over him. It was horrific. Dan and

another man, Ed Savage, jumped up and patted out the flames."

The Hershes say that their daughter's hair was also singed, but their son was seriously injured and in shock. "Ryan didn't speak a word for an hour and a half," says his father.

"The chef," says Daniel, "dropped to his knees, crying and apologizing profusely."

Ryan was treated at the scene by paramedics and later by his pediatrician. Hersh attorney Cary Scott Goldinger says that the boy will likely receive further treatments from a plastic surgeon, dermatologist and a psychologist.

As for a possible lawsuit, Goldinger says, "I have served a letter of representation to the restaurant in which I request to have its insurance company or its lawyer contact me. I am also trying to find out who the owners of the building are. I will serve them with a similar letter."

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In regard to the amount of monetary compensation, Goldinger says, "We need to know the extent of injury and emotional damage to Ryan and if there will be permanent scarring. But, this is a clear cut case of negligence. In fact, I'm talking to legislators about changing the laws concerning such restaurant shows."

Shogun owner Raymond Chen was not available for comment. However, in a published report, he said that the incident was unusual, because he instructs his chefs to take special care, especially when children are seated nearby.

Daniel points out that supervisor Herman Wiegand of the Nassau County Fire Marshal's office, told him that there is no law against such fire shows. But, he said, to let the fire flare up as it did is stupidity. (Wiegand could not be reached for comment.)

Jodi Hersh, who owns Wood-Hew Travel in Woodmere with her mother Miki, agrees that the accident was "stupid." She says, "What if there had been an elderly lady sitting there? Or, if the fire hit the 2-year-old child of the man who helped save Ryan? It was such an horrific, stupid thing."

...yeshiva...

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students and the educational process. "The Almighty endows every person with special tools and a unique character.

Our job is to recognize that special quality in each student and help her develop it." He adds, "If you want to mold a girl that is special you have to

do special things for her."

One of the special things that Rabbi Ginian intends to do is find the resources to provide the girls of Reenas Bais Yaakov with the best possible environment for learning and achieving personal and spiritual growth.

Hurricane precautions...

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destroyed property for your insurance company adjuster.

- Meet with your adjuster before

signing any contracts with lawyers, contractors or public adjusters.

For further information on natural disaster preparedness and insurance coverage, call your local independent