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News From The Upledger Institute, Inc.®

UpClose

MAY 2004

HealthPlex Clinical Services

CRANIO SACRAL THERAPY UNRAVELS EFFECTS OF NECK TRAUMA

Gary Fellers lives in South Florida's flourishing equestrian community of Wellington, located about 15 miles due west of West Palm Beach. An avid polo player, Gary always knew that a big fall was a possibility. On September 3, 2003, the possibility became reality during a match at the Royal Palm Polo Club in Boca Raton.

"My opponent cut in front of me and accidentally tripped my horse [aptly named Tumbleweed]. She went down at a full gallop and buried me into the ground head-first," he says. "I was like a missile that crashed and burned."

What Gary experienced next is the stuff of near-death legend. "I started to go down the life tunnel that people talk about," he says. "Then all of a sudden, whoosh, I came back into my body." All of that occurred in the space of a mere 30 seconds. That's the amount of time it took the quick-acting medical crew to get to Gary from the sidelines and revive him. "I found myself in a clump on the ground, with no feeling in my arms or legs," he says. "I knew I was in some serious trouble."

Gary describes the fall itself. "Normally in that kind of fall the horse goes down and flips over on top of you. But she landed right on her knees and I took all the fall here," he says, pointing to his head. "With the quickness of the fall, I didn't have time to get my arms up. I knew I'd injured my neck."



Gary Fellers with fiancé Jeanette Sassoon

Within minutes Gary was strapped to a backboard and on his way to the nearest hospital with trauma facilities. In shock and on pain-relieving medication, he doesn't remember much from that point on.

Enter Jeanette Sassoon, Gary's fiancé. She remembers quite vividly what she experienced when she arrived at the hospital some 45 minutes after receiving the news at home.

"They wouldn't let me see him," she says. "I walked around about an hour and a half before I could get any type of acknowledgment as to what was going on in there. I was going crazy."

Continued inside

PRACTITIONERS

**JOHN E. UPLEDGER,
DO, OMM**

**MYA BREMAN,
LMT, LCSW, CST-D**

**CLOÉ COUTURIER,
LMT/CO, CST**

ROY DESJARLAIS, LMT, CST-D

DAVID HALFON, LMT, CST-D

**FRANCINE HAMMOND,
LMT, CST-D**

**REBECCA FLOWERS GILES,
OTR, SCP, CST-D**

**SHERYL MCGAVIN,
MBA, OTR/L, CST-D**

LEE NUGAN, MA

CHAS PERRY, PhD, CST-D

KEVIN ROSE, LMT, CST-D

LISA UPLEDGER, DC, CST-D*

ROBYN WALPERT, PT, CST

TAD WANVEER, LMT, CST-D

NANCY WESTPHAL, LMT, CST-D

UI HealthPlex Hours

8 AM - 7 PM, MON - THURS

8 AM - 6 PM, FRI

9 AM - 1 PM, SAT

*The specialty recognition identified herein has been received from a private organization not affiliated with or recognized by the Florida Board of Chiropractic Medicine.



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CST UNRAVELS EFFECTS OF NECK TRAUMA

Continued from front cover

By Jeanette's estimate, it took at least three hours to get the right doctor there to treat Gary's injuries. Making matters worse, they had to transport Gary to another facility two miles away just to get a CAT scan because the hospital was without the needed equipment.

Gary interjects with a chuckle, "Jeanette was there keeping an eye on me and the reins on them. It was a delicate balance."

By this point Gary had started to get feeling back in his arms and legs and could move his right arm slightly. "The good thing was that I felt, and was led to believe, that at least I wasn't going to be paralyzed," he says.

A couple of days later, the official prognosis of a broken neck came in. "They said I'd broken [cervical vertebrae] C1 and damaged C2," Gary says. "Their recommendation was to put me in a halo. I had a friend who was a polo player about 15 years ago who broke his neck and they put him in a halo. I somehow knew intuitively that it wasn't the right thing for me."

Doctors conceded to trying a brace, but were concerned that if the protection was violated Gary could end up paralyzed. "That got my attention," Gary says. More X rays and MRIs followed.

"We never really got the results, though," Jeanette says. Gary agrees saying, "Nobody ever sat down and said 'Here's what your problem is.'"

After seven days of feeling inadequately cared for, Gary and Jeanette decided they'd had enough and checked Gary out of the hospital. "I went home with a collar on," Gary says. "I was able to walk a little with a walker, but basically I was in a wheelchair."

That's when a respected friend of Jeanette's intervened and insisted that she call UI HealthPlex to get an appointment for Gary with Dr. John Upledger. Jeanette recalls her friend's exact words being: "I don't care how you do it, but you have to see Dr. John."

It wasn't a hard sell. Dr. John remembers his assistant Alena catching him one day while he was walking down the hall.

"She said, 'There's a patient who just signed himself out of the hospital with a broken neck. He seems the kind of guy you'd like to take care of.'" She was right.

Dr. Upledger Explains His Approach

At their first appointment, Dr. Upledger began with an assessment of Gary's injury at the first and second cervical vertebra. From there he began looking beyond the obvious. "Usually, the only thing that's paid attention to in these cases is the broken vertebra," he says. "But what about all the rest of it? When you fall on your head, there has to be a whiplash or compression of the whole spine.

"It's essential to take care of those things because they draw your energy. If we can get rid of the other pieces of the spinal injury that are taking healing energy away and let all the healing energy go up to the fractured vertebra, then we're money ahead."

During the course of treatment, Dr. Upledger found a number of old injuries that also needed to be addressed along with the spinal compression. Among these were the residual effects from broken ribs Gary had sustained in yet another horse-related accident.

"It happened two years ago, and I had totally forgotten about it," Gary says. "Then one day during a session John begins asking, 'Did you have some problem in your lungs or right chest?'" Though Gary's reply was an adamant no, Dr. Upledger persisted. It wasn't until the words "old injury" were mentioned that Gary's memory was triggered.

"I had a couple of experiences like that," Gary says, "where I was just sure John was wrong. Then I was faced with proven scientific, medical verification that what he was talking about was right. He just released the problem then, and that helped in my healing."

Within six weeks Gary was out of the hard brace he had sported since leaving the hospital and into a soft brace. "I knew the bone was healed at that point," Dr. Upledger says.



Jeanette poses with dressage horse Valiant, who receives periodic CranioSacral Therapy. Though blind due to a suspected bad reaction to penicillin, Valiant "is perfectly normal and happy," Gary says. "He has a great loving, caring relationship with Jeanette. When you watch the two of them riding, doing very advanced movements in dressage, you have no idea that he's blind."

Experience Leaves Gary Amazed

"People seeing me now don't really have any comprehension of how bad I was, and it wasn't just from the broken bones. When I first got here [UI HealthPlex], my body felt like a sack of concrete from here to here," Gary says, motioning from his head down to his legs. "I was in pain all over and felt like I was barely alive. Because of the force of the fall, both from my weight and the 1200-pound horse driving me into the ground, my whole spine was mashed from top to bottom. I just broke two bones, but everything else was jammed up.

"John just knew where to go, whether that was my ankle or my ear or my neck or my shoulder, and I could feel that release

when he put his hands on me to do the CranioSacral Therapy. He never asked and I didn't volunteer the information, so that was really an amazing experience to me."

Dr. Upledger explains, "I didn't want Gary to tell me anything beforehand because that might have influenced me. He might have told me something that was a secondary rather than a primary thing that needed to be addressed.

"What I always try to do, and what I try to get our students and therapists to do, is blend with patients so that their bodies tell us precisely what they need. If we get the primary problem out of the way, then all the secondary symptoms can disappear."

This prompts Gary to acknowledge the role of other UI HealthPlex clinicians in his recovery. "I found my experiences with other CranioSacral Therapists here

to be equally remarkable" — a fact that surprised both he and Jeanette. He clarifies saying, "It doesn't surprise me so much that one person has that kind of ability, but that he's been able to transfer those skills so successfully to so many people."

Gary continues to get regular CranioSacral Therapy and also takes advantage of the clinic's other health and wellness services, including Wednesday evening yoga classes. "The whole support system here is allowing me to get better. I think I would have had profound long-term health problems if it hadn't been for this work."

Jeanette agrees saying, "Seeing how Gary is when he walks into the [treatment] room and when he walks out, it's a whole different thing. I can't believe it."

"Because of the awareness of health I've been brought back to — and maybe I had to go through this accident to get to

it — I really feel younger now than I did a year ago," Gary says. "I do think that I will lead a normal, healthy life from here, and an athletic life."

"Jeanette and I offer our sincere thanks and deepest gratitude to Dr. John, Alena, Tad and Joanie Wanveer, and the entire staff at The Upledger Institute. We know that my speedy recovery is a result of their wonderful skills and efforts, and for that we will be eternally grateful."

— Gary Fellers

MEET MYA BREMAN, LMT, LCSW, CST-D

Sometimes it takes a mentor to see the potential we don't see in ourselves and to guide us on the path we're meant to be on. "That's what Dr. John has always been to me," says Mya (Gayle) Breman.

Mya was introduced to Dr. Upledger and CranioSacral Therapy in the late 1980s, soon after moving to Florida from Pennsylvania. "I was the caregiver at the time for a cousin who had a closed-head injury from an accident," Mya says. A neighbor who worked at The Upledger Institute recommended an intensive therapy program. "I had no clue what I was seeing," Mya remembers, "but everyone seemed to be getting better. I was so intrigued that I took a ShareCare class and started helping out with some publicity." Mya's professional background was television — everything from community relations and sales to production and on-air hosting.

Soon Dr. Upledger invited Mya to come on board as marketing director. "At the time the Institute consisted [operationally] of just four people," she says. "We were all taking two-hour turns answering the

phones, taking registrations for the workshops." Today, the Institute employs more than 50 full-time professionals to fill all the administrative positions.

Mya began studying CranioSacral Therapy because "I had to understand what I was marketing," she says. She also went to massage therapy school to learn demonstration and marketing techniques. "I got the Institute involved in conventions, and sometimes my demonstrators wouldn't show up," she says. "I needed to know what to do."

Finally one day, following an advanced CST class Mya was taking, Dr. Upledger came up to her and proclaimed, "You're going to be a therapist" — to which Mya promptly responded, "I can't do that!" By course end, however, Mya realized that applying CranioSacral Therapy rather than marketing it was, indeed, the path she needed to be on.

That was 1994. Since then Mya has gone on to earn her Diplomate certification in CranioSacral Therapy along with a master's in social work. Now a licensed clinical social worker, she says, "I use

psychotherapy along with CranioSacral Therapy, and include Somato-Emotional Release when it's appropriate."

Mya currently works in the intensive therapy programs as well as in individual sessions. Aside from her clinical practice, she lectures and teaches introductory CranioSacral Therapy and Lymph Drainage Therapy classes. She also serves as an instructor and ombudsman for the one-day ShareCare workshops. When she has the time and opportunity, Mya enjoys using her CST skills to help animals. "I work mostly with horses, but also dogs and cats," she says.

"Every day I'm amazed at how effective this work is," Mya adds. "Not a day goes by without someone saying something or responding in a way that leaves me awestruck. It's been a wonderful journey."



Mya Breman, LMT, LCSW, CST-D