

Patient Feels 'Lucky' To Be Alive

By LORI BAKER
Gazette Reporter

After two near-fatal accidents within two years, Cory Baker of Scottsdale considers himself lucky.

"I can't believe that this happened to me for the second time but I'm glad I'm still alive," Baker said today.

The 20-year-old is recuperating from a freak accident in which a 3/4-inch nail was fired by a compressed air tool into his head while he was working for Dix Construction Co. It was his first day on the job.

Two years ago, Baker was involved in a car collision while on his way to Paradise Valley High School where he was a senior. A truck crossed the center line and collided head-on with Baker's car.

BAKER SUFFERED severe head injuries and fractured his left arm in that mishap. He had plastic surgery but a scar is still prominent on his forehead.

It took him about eight months to rehabilitate his arm.

Baker's recent accident occurred about 11 a.m. Sept. 3 while working on a construction site. The back of his head touched the barrel of an air tool and the nail was fired into his skull. Baker was unaware the nail was in his head.

He was not wearing a hard hat at the time of the accident. Family members say he was not provided one by his employer.

The injured man amazed everyone in the medical community because he continued working four hours, then drove himself to his girlfriend's house. Dr. Volker K.H. Sonntag, chief neurosurgeon on the case, said.

Feeling dizzy and nauseous, Baker subsequently went to the Paradise Valley Emergicenter where X-rays were taken.

The photos showed the nail imbedded in his skull. He was immediately air evacuated to St. Joseph's Barrow Neurological Institute.

SONNTAG SAID he was surprised Baker still

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Cory Baker and his mother, Laurie Flowers, visit at hospital. A nail was imbedded in Baker's head (shown in



X-ray) when he bumped into a nail gun. Dr. Volker Sonntag (lower right) calls Baker's recovery "remarkable."

Gazette Photos by Ed Gray