

# Business

PAGE 16B

# Local

Florida 14  
BULLETIN BOARD 4  
OBITUARIES 14-15  
WEATHER 24

J - SENTINEL | SATURDAY | OCTOBER 11, 2003 | SECTION B

## Breakers guest wins suit over infection

### ■ BREAKERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Lofink sought medical treatment after returning home, and her thumb became red and swollen, according to testimony. Her doctor said he was concerned because she had a heart condition and didn't want the infection to migrate to her heart, although she was at low risk for that.

He said she was hospitalized and treated with intravenous antibiotics, but the infection eventually moved into her thumb bone, making it more difficult to treat. Lofink had to undergo surgery to remove the infected portion of bone. Her thumb has since healed, but the movement of the top joint is limited, according to testimony.

"She has lost the use of her right thumb. She can't really pick up things," Brumer said.

He said he argued that the sterilization

of the manicure equipment wasn't sufficient to protect against infection, a contention disputed by the resort.

"The spa is fully committed to the safety and personalized service of its guests. It maintains the highest standards of sanitation throughout its facility and has competent, well-trained staff whose focus is to create a secure and tranquil environment for their clients," Kay said in her statement.

Kay noted that this was the first complaint of such an incident since the spa opened in 1999.

The jury awarded Lofink nearly \$30,000 for medical expenses and \$768,000 for past and future pain and suffering. Another \$50,000 was awarded to her husband.

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## Jury awards resort guest \$847,000

### Manicure at Breakers caused staph infection, woman says

BY PETER FRANCESCHINA  
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A federal jury has awarded a South Carolina woman \$847,000 in damages, after deciding she contracted an infection during a manicure at The Breakers resort on Palm Beach that limited use of her right thumb.

Julie Lofink, 63, a retired nurse, and her husband were staying at the resort in September 2001 when Lofink received a free manicure as part of their package at the opulent, 140-acre beachfront resort, said their attorney, Marc Brumer of Miami. He argued that the manicurist punctured the guest's skin at the base of a nail, allowing a staph infection caused by bacteria to set in.

"It was very painful. It hurt

immediately," Brumer said.

The trial began in U.S. District Court in Fort Lauderdale on Tuesday, and the jury reached its verdict Thursday after about two hours of deliberations, Brumer said.

The Breakers denied that the infection was caused by improper sterilization methods used in its spa.

"The Breakers is shocked at the conclusion reached by a Fort Lauderdale jury," P. Kristen Kay, director of legal services for The Breakers, said in a statement Friday. "This is a perfect example of how illogical and unpredictable a jury can be. The Breakers completely disagrees with the verdict and fully intends to appeal."

■ BREAKERS CONTINUES ON 2B