RECOGNIZING HALIE JACOBS FOR HER BRAVERY AND HEROISM

HON. VAN HILLEARY

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. HILLEARY. Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute today to a brave little girl who lives in Normandy, Tennessee, a small town in the congressional district I represent. Halie Jacobs is only seven years-old. Yet, when her mother's life was in danger, Halie braved darkness, angry dogs and a broken foot to walk two miles to get help for her injured mother.

On July 10th, around midnight, Halie and her mother Crystal were on their way home, driving through fog and misting rain down the kind of narrow, twisting country road that is so common in rural Tennessee. Their car hydroplaned into a ditch, leaving Halie's mother severely hurt and Halie with a cracked bone in her foot. Halie stayed by her mother's side until, according to Halie, ''I couldn't talk to her.''

Not knowing for sure if her mother was living or dead, Halie did something uncommonly brave for a seven year-old. In spite of her own injury, she set out on a pitch-black, lonely road toward home and help for her mother.

Halie found her way home, got help and showed them the way to her mother.

I am happy to report Crystal is regaining her health. She still has a long way to go, but because of her daughter's heroism, Crystal is on her way to recovery.

I know Crystal is proud of her extraordinary daughter. All of us in the Fourth Congressional District are. Bedford County, Halie's home county, awarded her its first ''911 Hero Award'' for making the right call.

Though I haven't met Halie myself, the Tullahoma News, one of the local newspapers at the award ceremony noted Halie ''handled the attention and barrage of questions from television and newspaper reporters with quiet maturity.'' The article went on to state, ''It was the same maturity she exhibited two weeks ago when she walked barefoot more than two miles, in the middle of the night, to get help for her injured mother.''

Mr. Speaker, being in a car accident, seeing your mother gravely injured and then watching her pass out would be highly traumatic for anyone, let alone a seven year-old. Yet Halie Jacobs kept her wits and did what she knew she had to do. I commend Halie for her uncommon courage and I wish her mother Crystal well as she recovers from her injuries.

For the record, I include an account of Halie's heroism that appeared in Bedford County's newspaper, the Shelbyville Times Gazette.

A BRAVE LITTLE GIRL: HALIE JACOBS, 7, DEFIES DARK, DOGS TO HELP MOM

(By Ann Bullard)

Imagine riding down a narrow, dark country road in the mist and fog when the car runs off the road and noses down into a ditch. You're the passenger in the front seat; the driver has fallen to your side and is bleeding heavily. You have no flashlight, no cell phone. You talk with the driver, your mama, until she can't talk with you any longer.

And you're only 7 years old.

That was the situation Halie Jacobs faced last Wednesday night, as she and her mother, Crystal, were driving on Rowesville Road to their Normandy home. It was close to midnight, and, like most persons of any age, Halie was afraid. Unlike many, Halie took matters into her hands.

''I stayed with Mama until I couldn't talk to her. [Then] I jumped into the back seat, opened the door and got out,'' the petite second-grader said, explaining if she'd tried to exit on her side she'd have been in the creek.

Not knowing whether her mother was dead or alive, Halie started home. In spite of a sprained ankle and bare feet, the youngster ran and walked 2.1 miles from the accident to her grandparents' home. She turned the wrong way initially, walking about .3 miles to Highway 41-A, then reversed her path, ran past the car with her mother inside down Normandy Road to Dement Road and the family trailer.

The youngster passed only one house. The light was on but she didn't know the people and was afraid to stop. As she ran down the middle of unlighted, tree-shrouded roads, she was chased by two dogs. ''Then I walked so they wouldn't come after me,'' she said. And, finally, she reached home.

''I was on the phone with her dad when Halie came in covered with blood,'' her grandmother, Teressia Jacobs, said. ''She told me, 'Me and Mama had a wreck at the end of the road. I talked to her until she could talk no more.'''

Only after reaching home, having family's arms around her and knowing they were getting help for her mama did Halie cry. Teressia called 911 and then drove to the scene, taking a reluctant Halie with her to be sure she found the car.

''I didn't want to look in case it was too bad,'' Halie said, tearing up when she remembered her fear that her mother had been killed.

At a little more than 50 pounds and about 3 feet 9 inches tall, the blond-haired, blue-eyed rising second-grader at Cascade School seems an unlikely candidate to be a hero. The angel pin she now wears expresses her mother's emotions.

When EMS workers arrived, they found Crystal on the passenger side of her 1995 Nissan Sentra in which both air bags had deployed. Neither Crystal nor Halie, who was beside her in the front seat, were wearing seat belts.

''It was rainy and foggy and I think I hydroplaned,'' Crystal said. According to State Trooper Rhett Campbell, the newest officer serving this district, the car had gone off the road, down alongside Shipman's Creek and came to rest on top of a pile of dirt.

How did Crystal get across the console? ''I don't know. I knew Halie was in the car and suppose I tried to protect her. When I regained consciousness, I was on the passenger side.''

''God and Granny were with her that night,'' Teressia said of the child's other grandmother who had died this spring.

Crystal was taken by ambulance to Bedford County Medical Center. It was too foggy for LifeFlight so the ambulance took her on to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville where she was treated. She was discharged until the facial swelling was reduced, then was admitted to Vanderbilt this morning for reconstruction of both sinus cavities and her cheek.

As for Halie, she is pretty matter-of-fact about it all. She is looking forward to entering Cascade School in the fall, and spends her vacation swimming, watching Rug Rats and Sponge Ball cartoons and playing on the computer.

To adults around her, the 7-year-old is a hero. Cathy Mathis, head of the Bedford County Communications Center and E-911, plans to present Halie with a ''911 Hero Award'' within the next few days.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on its celebration of the 40th anniversary of its Independence.

I will spend a brief moment describing the beginnings of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and describe its ties with the U.S.

Trinidad was settled by the Spanish a century after Columbus landed there. The original inhabitants—Arawak and Carib Indians—were largely wiped out by the Spanish colonizers, and the survivors were gradually assimilated. Although it attracted French, free Black, and other non-Spanish settlers, Trinidad remained under Spanish rule until the British captured it in 1797. During the colonial period, Trinidad's economy relied on large sugar and cocoa plantations.

Tobago's development was similar to other plantation islands in the Lesser Antilles and quite different from Trinidad's. The smaller island of the pair, Tobago became known first as Tavaco, then Tabagua, then as Tobago. This was the name given by its tribal people who used a long stemmed pipe in which they smoked a herb called Vcohiba, known today as tobacco.

During the colonial period, French, Dutch, and British forces fought over possession of Tobago, and the island changed hands 22 times—more often than any other West Indian island. Tobago was finally ceded to Great Britain in 1814. Trinidad and Tobago were incorporated into a single colony in 1888.

If Trinidad was a sugar economy in the 19th Century it became an oil economy in the 20th. With the advent of the automobile and the conversion of the British Navy from coal to oil the search for and the production of oil received a strong boost.

Oil was discovered in the Guayguaygare, Point Fortin, and Forest Reserve areas in Trinidad. Over time oil and oil related exports came to dominate the economy and transformed much of populace from a rural to an urban one.

Besides oil, another important event was the establishment of U.S. bases on the island in 1941. This was agreed to in exchange for 50 destroyers which at the time was sorely needed by an overstretched Britain. These bases included a large chunk of the Chaguramas Peninsular as well as an air base at Wallerfield. The G.I.s injected American culture and money into a stagnant economy and shifted the focus of country from Britain to the U.S. More important, U.S. Marines helped construct numerous roads including the important Northern Coast Road which still is functional today.

In the 1950s, the British sponsored the West Indies Federation as a potential post-colonial model, in the belief that most of the Caribbean islands would be unable to survive politically or economically on their own. The Caribbean peoples thought otherwise and the Federation collapsed in the early 1960s.