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## Rescuer: 'Some other power' helped me save man

### Driver saved from burning car recovering

*By Larry Hertz  
Poughkeepsie Journal*

TIVOLI - A day and a half after she pulled an unconscious motorist from his burning car, Tivoli resident Stacy Behan said she believed "some other power" had helped her make the rescue.

Behan, 40, was unexpectedly awake at 1:44 a.m. Sunday, helping her 7-year-old son, Conor, cope with a bleeding tooth, when she heard a crash on Route 9G a few hundred feet from her home. She rushed to the scene of the crash and pulled Germantown resident Robert Chilinski from his burning, mangled car.

Chilinski was reported in good condition at Westchester Medical Center on Monday.

Behan said she fielded numerous calls from friends, relatives and other well-wishers - including a news crew from WCBS-TV and state assemblyman and former Tivoli mayor Marc Molinaro - on Monday. She said many of them asked her what had prompted her to crawl into the burning car to pull Chilinski to safety rather than wait for police or firefighters.

Behan said part of the reason "was just adrenaline." But she said she also believed her decision had something to do with events she had witnessed while Conor was battling leukemia for more than three years at Albany Medical Center and other hospitals.

"I watched a lot of young children fighting to survive, and I think that changes your perspective about how valuable life is," Behan said.

She said she was up with Conor when the crash occurred because the boy still takes cancer medication that can inhibit clotting and she was concerned about his bleeding tooth.

"I was up watching him to make sure he was OK, and then he needed water, and then I heard the crash," Behan said.

"If I hadn't been up with Conor and if it hadn't been a warm night and I had the windows open, I don't know how quickly I could have responded," she said, "Some other power was working to help me."

## Man's family grateful

Chilinski's sister, Kate Chilinski, of Warwick, R.I., said their sister called a few hours after the accident. Kate Chilinski then logged on to the Internet search engine Google to see if there were any news accounts of the crash. It was then she learned of Behan's heroics.

"When I read about what Stacy did, I immediately began crying," Kate Chilinski said. "On behalf of my entire family, we'll be forever grateful to her."

Molinaro said he called the Behans Monday morning after reading newspaper accounts of the incident. He said he and Sen. Steve Saland, R-Poughkeepsie, planned to invite the Behan family to Albany when they read resolutions on the Assembly and Senate floors praising Stacy Behan for what she had done.

"I told her I thought this was a brilliant display of compassion," Molinaro said. "It just goes to show you should never underestimate what mothers are capable of doing."

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