

# Wolf River crash survivor recounts her ordeal

**‘Definitely my heroes,’ she says of rescuers**

**By Scott Williams**  
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For weeks, Krystal Benoit could not remember anything about the moments when her car toppled into the Wolf River and she dangled upside down with water rushing in.

Then she went to a garage where the car was being stored.

Seeing the twisted

*“I felt like God was there with me.  
I stopped fighting.”*

**KRYSTAL BENOIT, survivor of Wolf River incident**

wreckage of her blue Ford Escape unlocked vivid memories of the Sept. 22 incident in which Benoit, for all practical purposes, was brought back from the dead.

Benoit, who was in a coma for eight days, has made nearly a complete recovery — with no sign of permanent injury — from the near-drowning in which bystanders pulled her lifeless body from the water.

The 29-year-old mother of two says she cannot express her profound gratitude to the three men who rescued her from the submerged car and got her breathing again before paramedics arrived.

“These three guys are definitely my heroes,” she said. “If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be coming home to my family.”

The bystanders — Jerome Hoppe, Steve Grover and Gary Effenberger

— all spotted Benoit’s overturned vehicle in the river and jumped into action. Working together, they extricated her from the wreckage and revived her on a log along the riverbank.

Grover is gratified to hear about Benoit’s recovery, saying that he still thinks often about the horrific scene on the Wolf River north of Shawano. He demurs at being characterized as a hero.

“I feel weird hearing that word,” he said. “But we certainly tried the best

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Six weeks after her horrific car accident, Krystal Benoit relaxes at home with her son Josiah, left, and her daughter, Autumn.