



Grasuela Lopez Rios

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see story on page 8



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# Asheville pilots get Kilpatrick and family home for Christmas

ASHEVILLE, Dec. 21, 2009 – It was the most beautiful reception you could imagine. Tyler Kilpatrick, a UNCA student and Hendersonville High graduate, made it home for

Christmas.

What had been an educational trip to live with a host family in Cuernavaca, Mexico, turned into a tragic experience for the young

exchange student when she was viciously attacked by a cab driver. She fought back ferociously but was stabbed more than a dozen times, suffering life-threatening injuries.

Her life was saved by Mexican paramedics and more than two weeks of surgery and intensive care in a Cuernavaca hospital.

While her life hung in the balance, no one could guess that she might be home for Christmas. But thanks to two local pilots, she and her father, J.J. Kilpatrick, arrived at the Asheville Odyssey Aviation Center Monday evening. It will be a joyous Christmas for the Kilpatrick family.

Despite it all, Mr. Kilpatrick had nothing but positive things to say about Cuernavaca, and his daughter's host family.

"Cuernavaca is the most beautiful place I have ever been," Kilpatrick said

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Pilot Mike Summey, co-pilot Jason Summey, Tyler Kilpatrick and Dr. Robert Wells after their landing in Asheville Monday night.

## White Christmas



A lake in Flat Rock is half-frozen, just after a snow blizzard struck Friday and lingered in recent days. The blizzard dumped up to a foot of snow in some local areas, led to wrecks and power outages. Slightly more snow or sleet is forecast for Christmas Eve, then rain on Christmas Day as the temperature reaches the mid-40s. Photo by Pete Zampas.

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# Asheville pilots get Kilpatrick family home for Christmas

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from Mexico as he prepared to bring his daughter, Tyler, back to Hendersonville. "We have been blessed to be with our host family, the nicest people you can imagine."

Maybe that's not the reaction you'd expect from a man whose daughter was assaulted, stabbed and almost killed in this highland town of some 350,000 residents just 53 miles South of Mexico City. But that was the message Kilpatrick wanted to convey as he and Tyler

prepared for the long flight home. "We have been blessed with the most wonderful host family you could imagine," Kilpatrick said. "The experience Tyler had to go through was terrible, but through it all we have had the support of her host family who are really part of our family now, just as they made us part of theirs."

Tyler Kilpatrick is a Hendersonville High graduate and a student at UNC-Asheville. She was in Cuernavaca on a student exchange program to learn more about Mexico and to improve her Spanish. Unfortunately, she was assaulted by a taxi driver, receiving more than a dozen stab wounds that did serious internal damage. She was treated in one local hospital then transferred to another for improved care.

And thanks to local businessman Mike Summey and his son, Jason, the Kilpatricks made it home for Christmas.

The Kilpatricks flew back to a warm and moving reception at the Asheville airport late Monday afternoon after a grueling 1,500 mile flight from Cuernavaca. The Summey's left Asheville Sunday morning making a layover in Brownsville, Texas. They flew into Cuernavaca Monday morning to pick up the Kilpatricks.

The return flight carried them 500 miles from Cuernavaca back to Brownsville for refueling and U.S. Customs inspection, then a long 1,100 mile hop directly back to Asheville.

I thought about it and realized he was right. We contacted Mr. Kilpatrick and I've been on the telephone just about constantly for the past two weeks, making the arrangements and getting the

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Tyler Kilpatrick after landing in Asheville. Photo by Bill Fishburne.

Summey said the trip was his son's idea, one with which he readily agreed.

"Jason came by the house after the news broke about Tyler being attacked. He said, 'Dad, we could bring them home for Christmas.'

paperwork in order." They were accompanied by Dr. Robert Wells of Asheville, an Internist who practices at Mission Hospitals. Prior to the trip,

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# Asheville pilots get Kilpatrick family home for Christmas

Continued from page 4

Dr. Wells consulted with Tyler Kilpatrick's Mexican physicians.

Part of the paperwork Summey referred to involved getting clearances to take his aircraft into Mexico. "I was working for two days just to get the clearances," Summey said. "We had to talk to the Mexican government, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, Congressman Shuler's office, and some other folks. I also had to get a customs deal to go on the airplane."

"I had to go into EAPIS on-line to learn how to use it, then to fill out flight manifests in both directions."

Summey said he had no real idea how much the trip would cost but fuel alone would be in excess of \$6,000. Part of the expense is being borne by the Buncombe County Council of Independent Business Owners (CIBO) organization.

"They've never done anything like this before," Summey said, "but they sent out an appeal to the

Kilpatrick fund, care of CIBO, P.O. Box 3215, Asheville, NC 28802. Questions can be directed to Mike Plemmons or Patty Beaver at CIBO, 828-254-2426.

Summey also noted that Jeppesen, an aeronautical chart maker, had donated all the charts he and Jason needed to navigate the route.

More than \$2,000 in contributions for medical and other expenses were also raised in Henderson County by Chuck Hill, a golfer, professional photographer, and Henderson County's most popular radio personality. Hill is on the air 3:30 p.m. until 6 p.m. weekdays on WHKP-AM 1450.

"Tommy Laughter pulled together a bunch of money from golfers at the Crooked Creek Golf Club," Summey said. "It's all going to be needed, and not just for fuel for the airplane. This young lady was very seriously injured. Her recovery is going to take awhile, and it's going to be expensive."

Summey said he has flown into

Mexico before, "but not since 9/11. Everything has changed. It's a lot tougher to get in and out now."

Summey's Beechcraft King Air is a six-passenger, pressurized high-performance turbo-prop capable of cruising at 225 knots at 24,000 feet. He is an experienced pilot and a successful businessman. Writing

with Roger Dawson, Summey has produced four best-selling books in the Weekend Millionaire series. Earlier this year he was honored with a personal profile in Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association's "Pilot" magazine.



Another requirement was that Summey register all the people who would be on the flight each way with the border patrol, using the Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (EAPIS).

membership to pitch in. If they have anything left over it'll go toward Tyler's medical care."

Contributions may be made by sending a check to the Tyler

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