



# WATERLOO REGION RECORD

Cloudy  
High 4  
Details, F6

FRIDAY,  
NOVEMBER 2, 2012

SERVING KITCHENER, WATERLOO, CAMBRIDGE AND THE SURROUNDING TOWNSHIPS

The **R**ecord.com

## 'Front row seats to a miracle'



PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Lydia Herrle is welcomed by more than 100 people as she walks down her lane in a ceremonial homecoming with family close by, including her mom Michelle with a guiding hand of support.

### Lydia Herrle, survivor of a serious accident, gets warm welcome home from community

Linda Givetash, Record staff

**ST. AGATHA** — Hugs and high fives greeted a bright-eyed and smiling Lydia Herrle outside her home Thursday.

Less than six months after the incident that left her in a coma, Lydia walked out from Herrle's Country Farm Market down the lane to the family's Erb's Road home with her parents — James and Michelle — by her side.

While Lydia has been home since Thanksgiving, well over 100 community members lined the lane for an official homecoming, waving green ribbons to encourage the 13-year-old's remarkable

recovery.

While the plan for the event was for Lydia to ride in a golf cart decorated lime green in her honour, she decided to walk the whole way and interact face-to-face with her friends and neighbours.

"That was pretty breathtaking," said Colton Ferrell, 13.

Ferrell, with local boys Jacob Asselin, Jordan Asselin and Cameron Lorentz, sold lime-green "Stay Strong Lydia" bracelets and T-shirts to encourage community support for Lydia and help fund medical costs her family incurred.

"People who didn't even live around here would buy them," said Ferrell, who

was one of the few students on Lydia's school bus when she stepped off and was hit by a truck in May.

In the end, thousands of bracelets were sold and countless T-shirts, too.

The community's hopes and prayers for Lydia to "stay strong" were answered as they witnessed her wide grin while she hugged many of her well-wishers along the lane.

"It was good to see her again. She looked good," said Jacob Asselin, 13, who was also on Lydia's bus and spearheaded the bracelet campaign.

Although Lydia has made great strides in recovering, it will still be some time before she rejoins the group of boys and her other schoolmates at Baden Public School.

► **Herrle** continued on page A5

## PM calls Smith case a 'tragedy'

Says prison system's actions 'completely unacceptable'

Colin Perkel

**TORONTO** — Prime Minister Stephen Harper publicly criticized correctional authorities on Thursday for their handling of a disturbed teenager who choked to death in her Kitchener prison cell five years ago, prompting opposition accusations of federal government dishonesty.

The issue reached the House of Commons following the screening of disturbing jail-house video at an inquest into the death of Ashley Smith this week that shows guards duct-taping her and drugging her against her will.

"The Ashley Smith case is obviously a terrible tragedy," Harper said.

However, information has come to light that shows Corrections Canada's behaviour was "completely unacceptable," he told the House of Commons.

Outside the Commons, Liberal Leader Bob Rae accused the Conservative government of being "dishonest."

"This is a government that wanted to stop the showing of those videos," Rae said.

"This is a government that, every step of the way, attempted to keep Canadians from seeing what went on."

While federal lawyers lost a court battle to keep the videos under wraps, they are still fighting to limit the scope of the inquest, which would block scrutiny of what hap-

■ A systemic failure  
Editorial, A8

■ Prison no place for mentally ill:  
D'Amato, B1

# Continues to set goals for herself

► **Herrle** continued from A1

“She looks well ... but her brain is at a totally different spot,” Michelle said, sitting with Lydia in the family’s living room the morning prior to the ribbon waving.

Lydia continues to receive therapy with a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and a speech language pathologist to help her body regain its strength and her brain to heal.

Those sessions are topped with music therapy and academic tutoring.

“She has a full schedule,” Michelle explained.

Yet as difficult as the healing process may be, Lydia remains enthusiastic about the challenge and continues setting goals for herself.

Just as Michelle began to list the Christmas goals, Lydia chimed in that she wants “to shower by myself and go to the washroom by myself.”

As the muscles in her legs strengthen and she regains stability without help to accomplish those goals, Lydia will also be closer to reaching her dreams of playing soccer and figure skating again.

Taking small steps in recovering, Lydia has already managed to move back into her own room to sleep at night — a goal that was set for months from now — with only a baby monitor at hand to call for help when she needs it.

Throughout these past months the family has found

strength in their faith as they have “front row seats to a miracle” watching Lydia transform.

And for Lydia, the journey of recovery is about faith too.

“Without (Jesus) I wouldn’t have survived,” she said.

Regaining memory, Lydia has begun sharing her experience of recovery, including the time of her coma. Michelle said Lydia told the story that Jesus was speaking to her while still in a coma.

“She said, ‘He said to me do not worry, do not be afraid, I shall always be with you,’” Michelle recalled.

“As people of faith obviously we treasure that.”

The family, if not in awe of Lydia’s incredible progress, has been overwhelmed by the unwavering support of the community as well.

“She’s been referred to before as being this sort of community child and that everyone is rooting for her,” Michelle said.

“What a privileged position that is. ... We’re grateful.”

lgivetash@therecord.com

# October wetter, warmer than usual

More than twice the normal rainfall was recorded last month

Kevin Swayze, Record staff

**WATERLOO REGION** — The drought may be over, but it’s now 16 months and counting for warmer-than-normal weather for Waterloo Region.

In October 2012, more than twice the normal rainfall was recorded in the area: 140 mm at the Breslau airport and 146 mm at the Roseville weather station. The normal amount is 65 mm.

The rain was spread over 23 days in the month, compared to the usual 13 rainy days.

The extended, gentle and soaking rainfall was just what the Kitchener area needed after a dusty spring and summer, said David Phillips, a climatologist at Environment Canada.

“In the last two weeks, there’s been only one dry day ... this has probably been the perfect kind of month to restore water levels,” he said.

“September was also wetter than normal, 101 mm compared to 86. So you had 241 mm over September and October, when the normal is 150 over those two months.”

Local waterway flows are back to normal after the rains, the Grand River Conservation Authority reports. On Wednesday,



PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Rochelle Knox shields her baby boy Soren, 11 months, from the rain on a walk in uptown Waterloo on a typically wet October day.

local water managers cancelled a voluntary request for a 20 per cent water reduction use by large volume water users.

No weather records were set in October 2012, Phillips said. It was, however, the wettest since 131 mm in rainfall was recorded in 2001 at the Region of Waterloo International Airport.

Only two other Octobers were wetter since record-keeping began here in 1914.

In 1955, 151 mm was recorded.

In 1954, hurricane Hazel

drenched southern Ontario, setting the Kitchener October record of 190.7 mm.

All the rain in October kept temperatures above normal, Phillips said. Cloud insulates the ground overnight, retaining warmth in the ground and air.

► Average of all high and low temperatures was 9 C in October. Normal is 8.2 C.

► Average of the daytime highs in October was 13.8 C. Normal is 13.4 C.

► Average of nighttime low temperatures was 4.1 C. Normal is 2.9 C.

November is expected to have normal temperatures, Phillips said.

Look for highs of 6 C and lows of -2 C by mid-month. Precipitation will likely be bit below the normal 70 mm of rain and 14 cm of snow.

Compared to last winter — the warmest on record in Ontario — the coming winter will seem harsh, even though long-range weather models predict near-normal temperature and precipitation, Phillips said.

“It’s coming earlier, will stay later and feel harder in the middle,” he said.

kswayze@therecord.com

ON NOW UNTIL SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4  
AN INVITATION TO OUR VALUED

FRIENDS

FAMILY