

## In the game again

Karleigh Herd, 18, recovers from broken back and returns to hockey



MATHEW MCCARTHY, RECORD STAFF

Karleigh Herd, with the help of her brother Josh, has returned to the ice after healing from a fall during a hockey game.

Jeff Hicks, Record staff

**WATERLOO** — Screams filled the rink.

They came from one person. They came from 16-year-old Karleigh Herd.

Her mom Kathy ran onto the ice and lay down beside her little girl.

"Can you feel your legs?" mom asked, tapping her shin pads.

Yes, she could. She could move her toes.

But the pain in her lower back was excruciating, much worse than when Karleigh fell off a swing and broke her eight-year-old foot.

One race to the puck. One rut on the route. One tailbone-first crash into the boards.

That all added up to agony on Jan. 22, 2012.

"I don't take anything for granted."

— KARLEIGH HERD

That was the day Karleigh, a Waterloo teen playing travel hockey for Kitchener, broke her back in a hockey game at Axtiva Sportsplex.

This was no ordinary break, if there is such a thing. This was a burst fracture. The vertebrae smashed. Shards of broken bone threatened her spinal cord.

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## Region wants to boost green bin use

Organic waste bins could be made mandatory

Paige Desmond, Record staff

**WATERLOO REGION** — Don't like sorting your organic waste? Too icky? You may have to hold your nose and do it anyway because politicians will be talking about making green bins mandatory in Waterloo Region.

The region needs to meet waste diversion targets, but people just don't want to participate in the optional program.

"There's not a lot of appetite (to participate) because they don't have to," said Jon Arsenault, director of waste management.

Starting in October, the Region of Waterloo will pay the City of Guelph \$2.3 million per year for a decade to process its organics.

The price is based on 20,000 tonnes per year being trucked there, at \$116.82 per tonne. If the region doesn't meet its target, it still pays the \$2.3 million.

Right now, the region is only coming up with about 10,000 tonnes, roughly the same as 2011 and 2012. That drives the cost per tonne up to about \$230.

► Green continued on A2

## CBC Radio gets OK to put local show on air

Jeff Outhit, Record staff

**WATERLOO REGION** — CBC Radio was set to put its new local station back on the air early today. Federal regulators have given it the OK to broadcast — six weeks after broadcasts began from downtown Kitchener.

The taxpayer-funded CBC yanked its station off the air this week when private radio stations revealed it had been broadcasting without a licence since March 11.

Federal regulators approved the licence Thursday.

The Ontario Association of Broadcasters complained to regulators that the CBC was unfairly broadcasting without approval while competing for listeners.

The CBC applied for the federal licence in 2012. It says it was caught up in the momentum of launching the new station and that broadcasting without approval was a "regrettable oversight."

On Thursday, the CBC thanked federal regulators for approving its licence and thanked "our loyal listeners for their patience during the interrupted service." It's not known whether the CBC will face any penalty.

The broadcast licence runs until 2019.

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## Couple struggles with limited end-of-life options

Pair want more choice to avoid undue suffering

Linda Givetash, Record staff

**NEW HAMBURG** — Phil Thomas's medical conditions — Parkinson's disease, kidney disease and spinal problems — are steadily getting worse.

Already experiencing a loss of mobility, fine motor skills, and sense of smell, the 70-year-old began to plan his death to ensure the quality of life he wants to maintain is honoured.

"You want to plan these things now while it's not imminent. You don't plan these things when you're really in more acute suffering or emergency situations," Thomas said.

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TJUANA MARTIN, RECORD STAFF

Phil Thomas, who suffers from Parkinson's and other degenerative conditions, and his wife Marilyn McCaul urge more choices in end-of-life care, including medically assisted dying.

► Canadian wins battle for right to die on her own terms, **Canada, A3**

## Province pays off debt for child welfare agency

Frances Barrick, Record staff

**WATERLOO REGION** — The financial woes that have plagued Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region have been laid to rest by the provincial government.

The agency's board learned Thursday that the province will

cover the organization's long-time debt of \$848,000. This comes in the same month the province announced it will wipe out the group's deficit of \$3.1 million for the fiscal year ending in March.

"It's great news," said Alison Scott, the agency's executive director.

Last year was especially

difficult for this agency, which had to close two group homes and eliminate the equivalent of 32 positions because of a record deficit.

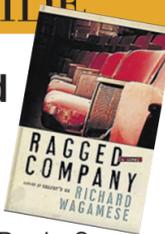
This year should be less stressful for the agency, Scott said.

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# Terminally ill Canadian dies with aid of doctor in Zurich

Susan Griffiths fought for the right to die in Canada

Steve Lambert

WINNIPEG — A Manitoba woman won her battle Thursday for the right to die on her own terms, with the help of a doctor, before she could be completely consumed by a disease that was robbing her of control over her body.

Susan Griffiths, 72, died peacefully with some family members by her side at the Dignitas clinic in Zurich, a friend confirmed.

Switzerland is the only country that allows physician-assisted suicide for non-residents.

Griffiths did not go quietly, though. She went public with her story in the hope that Canada may change its laws.

“While it has been wonderful having some of my family around me, I am saddened that other close friends and family members are unable to be with me in my final days,” she wrote in one of her final messages — an email to The Canadian Press on Wednesday.

“I sincerely hope that Canadian laws will change soon to allow individuals like myself to make end-of-life choices at home.”

Killing oneself is not illegal in Canada, but helping someone die is against the law.

Griffiths was already losing strength from a deadly disease called multiple system atrophy, which has symptoms not unlike Parkinson's — an ever-increasing loss of balance, movement and control of virtually every bodily function. She was in pain and taking dozens of pills daily. She dreaded the prospect of no longer being able to lift her arms, clean herself and — eventually — swallow or breathe.

“The future is totally downhill and totally ghastly, and who on Earth wants to head that way when you have to eventually have everything done for you?” Griffiths said in an interview earlier this month from her son's home in Germany.

Her children struggled to accept Griffiths' decision, but supported her.

“She could have chosen to remain in Canada and to take her life using any number of awful methods,” daughter Natasha Griffiths wrote in an email before her mother's death. “She would have had to have undertaken this act completely on her own, however, with the added risk of failing in her attempt.”

Canada's law banning doctor-assisted suicide is currently under review by the courts. British Columbia's Supreme Court ruled last year that the law is unconstitution-



RUTH BONNEVILLE, WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Susan Griffiths smiles days before leaving her home in Winnipeg for the last time to board a flight to Europe. Griffiths died peacefully on Thursday with the help of a doctor in Zurich.

al. The federal government appealed the decision at a hearing last month before the B.C. Court of Appeal and a ruling is expected later this year.

The Quebec government has been looking at ways to allow the terminally ill to end their lives without the act being considered an assisted suicide under federal law.

There are also support groups that help inform people about options available to them — even if it requires a trip overseas, as was the case with Griffiths.

Supporters of the current law, including

many disability rights groups, say that allowing assisted suicide would make things hard on the disabled.

“We have not had the discussion in our society about safeguards to ... ensure that people who choose to do this are doing so of their own free will and not being encouraged by others, or not feeling that they're being a burden on others or the medical system,” Laurie Beachell of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities said Thursday.

The Canadian Press

## Creating clear directives offers some relief to couple

► Dignity continued from A1

Working with his wife Marilyn McCaul, 62, his family doctor and a social worker, Thomas indicated what medical interventions he no longer wants that prolong life and those he does want to reduce pain and discomfort.

“It's just a changing stance, not wanting to endure any immediate pain for long-term gain,” Thomas said.

In the past year, he reduced the medications he takes from over 60 pills a day to 31.

But he would like to have more options.

Both Thomas and McCaul are members of the Grand River chapter of Dying With Dignity, a national charity that informs people about end-of-life options, provides tools for advance care planning and supports them with their decisions.

The organization also advocates for a change in legislation in Canada regarding medically assisted dying.

The issue of medically assisted dying has gained a great deal of public attention, most recently with Canadian woman Susan Griffiths publicly advocating for her right to die due to her diagnosis of a deadly disease, multiple system atrophy. Griffiths had her

wish met to die with medical assistance Thursday at a clinic in Zurich, Switzerland — the only country where the procedure is legal for non-residents.

Thomas and McCaul said they would like to see legislation in Ontario similar to that in Oregon, where terminally ill citizens can voluntarily end their lives with lethal medications prescribed by a physician.

“If Ontario's laws were the same as Oregon's, I would consider that as an option,” he said.

“What appeals to both of us in principle is that you have a choice ... There's that sense of if I get to the place where it's too hard, I know I could be released,” McCaul said.

The couple also supports Quebec's investigation of amending laws to legalize medical aid-in-dying despite the federal criminal code, but feel a change will not be passed any time soon.

As assisted suicide remains illegal in Canada, the couple are making the best of the decisions available to them.

Although Thomas needs an increasing amount of care, with personal support workers and other medical professionals visiting the home regularly, he said he's happy with his quality of life now.

Thomas loves music and goes to concerts with McCaul as much as possible.

The former chemistry teacher also discovered his artistic talent through classes offered at the

Alzheimer's Society. He now paints, makes pottery, designs cards and edits photographs on a computer set up to accommodate his physical limitations.

Thomas still shares his wonderful sense of humour with McCaul and friends.

“I was at the door when the bus came up ... and I could hear this raucous laughter that was so loud,” McCaul said about Thomas joking with the driver of the Kiwanis mobility transit service when he was dropped off Thursday afternoon.

Thomas hopes he doesn't have to contend with a time when he can no longer share a laugh with someone.

The current draft of Thomas's advanced directives state that he wants “minimal intervention with no invasive diagnostics, as the choice has already been made not to treat.” He has a do-not-resuscitate order in place with his doctor.

Thomas said he also wants to stay at home as long as possible, rather than enter long-term care or a hospital.

Having these wishes clearly outlined provides some relief to McCaul, who may be left making hard medical decisions as Thomas's power of attorney if he no longer has the capacity to do so.

“I have a map that spells out to me I know what Phil would want,” she said.

“I think I would be supported in the difficulty of making a decision knowing that I was

honouring what was really, really important to the person that I love.”

However, his wishes, depending on how they're carried out, leave McCaul with difficult choices.

Having experienced a few instances where several of his ailments were acting up simultaneously to cause physical and emotional distress, Thomas decided he will stop eating and drinking, rather than tolerate great suffering or loss of quality of life.

It's not ideal and a difficult death to imagine, Thomas said, but it's the only legal option.

With power of attorney, McCaul may be the one to actually make the decision to withhold food and drink if Thomas can no longer articulate the wish himself.

“I would far rather know I didn't have to be a part of this,” she said. “I would far rather that aid (in dying) if it's needed doesn't come from me.”

The couple hope they won't reach that point — but it in the event they do, they at least have a plan.

“You always have to have a Plan B or a Plan C,” McCaul said.

For Thomas, he also has the peace of mind his wishes will be honoured.

“I see the prospects of what can be down the road,” Thomas said.

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### IN BRIEF

#### TORONTO Wynne Liberals grilled over missing drug plan reports

Ontario's Health Ministry took another hit Thursday when the Progressive Conservatives demanded to know why annual reports on the province's public drug plans have gone missing for five years. The government is required by law to issue a report each year on the \$4.4 billion dollars it spends on the plans, but the most recent one available on the ministry's website is from 2007-2008. Tory Frank Klees cornered Health Minister Deb Matthews during question period, asking why the government hasn't done its job and made the information public. Matthews didn't answer the question in the legislature, but told reporters later she would investigate.

#### EDMONTON Suncor spill toxic to fish, but Ottawa closes the file

Environment Canada has ruled out any further federal investigation of a recent toxic spill from Suncor's oilsands plant into the Athabasca River, despite suggestions from an Alberta investigation that laws may have been broken. “Environment Canada's enforcement branch conducted a thorough review of the circumstances surrounding the Suncor spill,” said spokesperson Jirina Vlk in a three-sentence email. “There was not sufficient evidence to indicate a violation of the Fisheries Act. The file has been closed.” Her statement came in response to a letter from an environmental law firm asking what actions the federal government was taking over the spill. The letter to Environment Canada came after a provincial investigation concluded that the spilled waste water was toxic to fish.

#### QUEBEC Co-workers shocked by priest's murder in Haiti

Members of a Catholic religious order in the Quebec City area were in shock Thursday after hearing a colleague had been shot to death in Haiti just one week before he was due to return home. Richard E. Joyal, 62, a member of the Marian order, was killed as he left a bank in the capital of Port-au-Prince. Police said Joyal had just withdrawn \$1,000 at about 10:30 a.m. when two men on a motorcycle approached and grabbed a bag he was carrying. The passenger shot him three times in the back. Father Marc Turcotte, a Marian priest, said his colleague was in Haiti to help relocate students after the earthquake of January 2010.

#### HARRIETSVILLE, ONT. Loose piece of metal hits car, kills driver

Ontario Provincial Police are trying to figure out how a piece of metal roofing came off a trailer and crashed through an oncoming vehicle's front windshield, killing the driver southeast of London. OPP Const. Kevin Howe says the piece of metal struck the vehicle around 2:30 p.m. Thursday in the community of Harrietsville. The male driver died in hospital of his injuries. His name has not been released.

#### REGINA Saskatchewan toughens laws to stop cyberbullies

The Saskatchewan government and the Opposition NDP have unanimously passed a motion to help stop cyberbullies. The motion, introduced in the legislature Thursday by Premier Brad Wall, says the province supports federal efforts to combat cyberbullying, including changes to the Criminal Code that would make it an offence to share intimate images without consent. Wall acknowledged there are harassment and pornography laws, but he said police need tools to hold perpetrators accountable.

News services

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