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# The ESSEX FREE PRESS

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

**\$1.00** (GST included)

Whole Number 6226  
Registration No. 08565

Volume 128 No. 8

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Essex Red Raider Delina Girard, left, and Sam O'Neil go up for the block against a Brennan player during the final game of the senior girls' volleyball season last week. The Red Raiders lost the game, winning only a single set. But that was enough to secure a first place standing before entering the playoffs this week.

Photo: Andy Comber

# Raiders take top spot

## Senior Girls' Volleyball team heads into playoffs

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Essex Red Raiders senior girls' volleyball coach Lindsay Miller is superstitious when it comes to her teams.

In November, Miller coached the top-ranked senior boys' team to a win over second-place Brennan in the last game of the regular season, only to lose in a rematch for the WECSSAA championship.

Last week, the senior girls found themselves in an identical situation: facing number two Brennan in the last game of the regular season for first place before entering playoffs.

But this time things went a little differently. With a perfect record of 30-0, the Red Raiders needed only to win one set to secure first place, but the Cardinals won the other two sets.

Miller admits the loss actually made her feel at ease.

"I am superstitious, so a perfect record was making me a little bit nervous," she said. "I'm a little bit relieved to be honest. I was saying, 'oh my God it's a repeat of the boys' season,' but now it's not."

The Cardinals won the first set 25 to 23. Essex made a big comeback in the middle set, winning 25 to 15. The third set started off close and it was soon tied 6-6. Essex took a short lead but Brennan rallied and it was again tied 12-12.

There were strong blocks by Essex player Sam O'Neil and scoring by Jessica Masse.

Some helpful saves by Delina Girard and skillful spiking by Candace Garrod helped keep the Red Raiders in the game.

But Brennan eventually took the lead and Essex struggled to stay alive at 24-18, but eventually lost 25-22.

But that was hard to tell by the girls' smiles and high energy after the game.

"We're not going to let it discourage us," said No. 10 Janelle Balkwill. "We're going into the playoffs with a fight. We've had some better games...but we've had a lot of people improving."

The Red Raiders enter the playoffs this week.

Miller says she expects the team to meet Brennan again in the finals.

SEE RAIDERS, PAGE 2

# Have a heart campaign targets funding increase

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

A lack of provincial funding for Community Living agencies is forcing many of its employees to work two jobs, while those with developmental disabilities needing supports are faced with lengthy waiting lists, representatives of the organization told Windsor and Essex County MPPs last week.

Staff members of Community Living agencies in Essex County and Windsor and representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees visited MPPs Bruce Crozier, Dwight Duncan and Sandra Pupatello on Valentine's Day, as part of the "Have a Heart" campaign to ask for a multi-year commitment to developmental services.

SEE LENGTHY, PAGE 3

# Public concerned about Highway 3 construction

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Harrow resident Dan Sauve is concerned about the reconstruction and widening of Highway 3 through Essex.

The project, which is set to begin in late summer, will pass through a stretch of trail that leads from Sadler's Pond currently being constructed by the Essex Region Conservation

Authority and the Trails, Walkways and Bikeways Committee.

As a member of the TWBC, Sauve has asked Highway 3 project managers to accommodate the trail initiative by making an on-grade, 8X8-foot box culvert across the highway and have traffic travel over it.

SEE PLANS, PAGE 2

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