

SATURDAY OBSERVER

Stepping on the prime minister's wife's feet: Priceless.'



<p>Nadia Mostafa, 16, Grade 11, Lycée Claudel 'I've learned a lot from this magical experience: Both my left feet are very eager dancers.'</p>	<p>Anne Murphy, 17, Grade 12, Elmwood School 'I'll leave it to Bruce Springsteen: 'Show a little faith, there's magic in the night.'</p>	<p>Aldo Pescatore-Tardioli, 17, Grade 12, Nepean 'Peter Z gave me his gloves. I told him not to get his hopes up, or down.'</p>	<p>Brianna Porter, 17, Grade 12, Canterbury 'Best Cinderella moment ever'</p>	<p>Touran Reddaway, 16, Grade 11, Lycée Claudel 'Definitely worth the agony it caused my feet'</p>	<p>Jim Robinson, 17, Grade 12, Nepean High 'Why are you reading this? Go to work.'</p>	<p>Stuart Shields, 17, Grade 12, Nepean High 'I didn't think it was possible, but they taught me to dance... Watch out MJ!'</p>
---	---	--	--	---	---	--



<p>Marco Taucer, 17, Grade 12, Ashbury 'The Viennese Ball is like being on a flying motorcycle.'</p>	<p>Christopher Toller, 16, Grade 11, Ashbury 'Good times. And many more to come.'</p>	<p>Phil Vanstone, 17, Grade 12, Lisgar 'I always thought Jon had two left feet ...'</p>	<p>Carrie Wallace, 17, Grade 12, Nepean High 'It is nice to have an end to journey towards but it is the journey that matters in the end.'</p>	<p>Aleana Young, 17, Grade 12, Elmwood 'Say Paul, you're a splendid dancer, now about that foreign policy...'</p>	<p>Peter Zachar, 20, University of Ottawa 'Don't listen to Aldo.'</p>
---	--	--	---	--	--

PHOTOS OF DEBUTANTES AND CAVALIERS BY KIER GILMOUR, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN



Lauren Edwards and Phil Vanstone (foreground) practise with the other debutantes and cavaliers. The teens will perform in the ball's opening ceremony.



JANA CHYTILOVA, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN
Lee-Ann Zanelli, owner of Beauty Mark, gives a manicure to debutante Aleana Young.



Marielle McGovern and Aldo Pescatore-Tardioli.

"I think I'd have to get married in this, and divorced and then married again, to get the full value."
The hunt continues. The girls dive deeper, pushing farther back between the racks, until they are completely swallowed by silk and plastic. They emerge with smiles on their faces, dresses in their arms and heads of staticky hair.
"I can't breathe, I feel like I'm going to throw up or pass out," says Lauren, sucking in her stomach as her mom struggles to zip her up. Nope, not that one.
She tries on another: "I look like I belong on a cake," she squirms. Definitely not that one.
After an hour of trying on about half a dozen dresses, Sarah and Cheryl are giddy over their choices. They're each \$200 but will require alterations.
"I love the tulle — they look their age," says Ms. Argent, who scans Sarah from head to toe and nods approvingly. "It's age appropriate."
Meanwhile, Lauren is becoming increasingly frustrated at having to

try on yet another dress.
She reverts to her pile of rejects. She's getting desperate and willing to give them another shot.
Again she is zipped into one of the first gowns she tried. She stares in the mirror and sways her hips. The room is silent except for the sound of whirling silk. The saleslady, who is now working overtime, holds her breath.
Minutes later, the decision: it's a keeper.
"You look so beautiful, like a princess," coos Sarah. "I think I'm going to cry."
The two burst into giggles and Lauren's eyes moisten.
They've been best buds since Grade 1 and have shared almost everything together: first kiss, first boyfriend, first heart break and now, first ball.
Apart from graduation, this will be one of the last big experiences they share before heading off to different universities.
"We do everything together and we're at the point where we're mak-

ing different choices," Lauren says later, when she's alone.
"This has been a great experience because it's resolidified our friendship. There's no one else I'd rather share this with.
"It'll be weird to see Sarah in a big ball gown. I'm the wussy one, so I'll probably be crying. I've been practising the blotting technique to make sure my makeup doesn't run."
She demonstrates the technique with an imaginary tissue, swiftly blotting each corner of her eye.
"Outside, inside, outside, inside."
When the ball was only two-and-a-half weeks away, Nadia's was determined to make up for lost time.
Being the granddaughter of the former Egyptian ambassador to Canada, she has attended many formal events, often avoiding the dance floor.
But the wallflower has blossomed: In its place, a young woman has sprouted who is keen on showing off her fancy footwork — even if

it has two left feet.
She has been taking private dance lessons at Fred Astaire so she can waltz, rumba and swing into the night.
"I don't want to be the kind of person who just sits and eats \$350 (worth) of food."
With each passing day the level of excitement rises. She has already drawn up a detailed schedule for "THE Saturday, THE Day," which she calls "Ze Plan":
• 10 a.m., rehearsal at gallery
• 1 p.m., finish practice and go for "light-but-filling lunch"
• 1:30-1:45, take bus to hair salon
• 2, be seated in chair to get primped, prodded and sprayed
• 3, have coffee, stress out, relax
• 4, get makeup done
• 4:30, call cab
• 4:45, get into cab
• 5, arrive at gallery for rehearsal
She's not leaving anything to chance, particularly when she already has two unruly feet with which to deal.
None of her friends at school

seems to "get" it, she says, except for Touran Reddaway.
"My friends are like, 'What the heck are you doing? That's not modern, that's not cool.' But it's fun, it's different."
At her school, there are cliques of kids, such as the punks and the rappers, who are so image-oriented they'll recoil from anything remotely different or uncool, she says.
"I've never done anything like this before — it's something special I won't forget," she says. "It feels like you've gone back in time and when you look at the TV and (see) the dances they're doing, you go 'Whoa, that's insane!'"
Initially, Nadia admits, she was skeptical about being a debutante. It took the gentle coaxing of Touran to convince her otherwise.
Touran's father, the British High Commissioner in Canada, approached her with the idea last summer.

Story continues on PAGE B4