

Sackville's unique prom tradition



Spencer Acton and Hannah Walton, both graduates of Tantramar Regional High School, greet residents of the Drew Nursing Home in Sackville before their prom on Thursday. See story on page A7. PHOTO: TOM BATEMAN/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

News

Prom tradition 'speaks volumes about these young people'

TOM BATEMAN
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

SACKVILLE • Prom marks an important milestone for students at Tantramar Regional High School but every spring, the date is also circled on the calendars of another community in Sackville.

For at least a decade, members of the graduating class at Tantramar has stopped by the Drew Nursing Home and Tantramar Residences, just down Main Street from the school, early in the afternoon on prom day - before the photo sessions, grand marches and formal festivities.

It's always an occasion at The Drew. Residents pull up chairs on the walkway outside the main entrance, and others make their way to common areas inside the home.

Slowly, the graduates make their way around the home, shaking hands, soaking up compliments, and fielding the odd inquiry about marriage plans from the residents.

The day is especially exciting for John Moss, a 96-year-old resident with a flair for formalities. He asks for a dance with



Tantramar Regional High School graduate Lena Gallant accepts a dance from Drew Nursing Home resident John Moss during a visit before her prom on Thursday.

PHOTO: TOM BATEMAN/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

several of the special guests.

Many oblige Moss, who leaves his cane with his chair and launches into a brief box-step waltz tutorial.

"It's his most favourite day," said Jay

Bohan, the activity co-ordinator at The Drew.

Bohan said the tradition started organically years ago, with grads and their dates dropping by to visit relatives in the home.

Often, the students would be stopped in the halls by other residents and soon, large groups of students started making a point of dropping by.

"The kids come in and offer great conversation - some of them were volunteers here when they were younger and ask about residents," she said.

In more recent years, the visits are only loosely co-ordinated and Bohan said the students take it upon themselves to make time for the seniors.

On Thursday, almost two hours after the first graduates came by, about a dozen students in a pearl-white stretch limo-sine stopped by to make the rounds.

One year, a group of graduates rolled up the laneway in a massive hay wagon.

The fact the tradition isn't mandated, but simply passed down year to year makes it especially meaningful, Bohan said.

"[The students] take it very seriously, they feel it's a part of their duty," she said. "It speaks volumes about these young people. They show their true citizenship."

Noreen Mosher, a Drew resident, agrees.

"They take us the way we are and they laugh with us," she said. "It's very nice."