

Montreal/Quebec

by *Elba Villareal*

TC Elba Villareal here to tell you all about the first ever Space City Eastern Canada Ski Trip - March 1 through 9.

SATURDAY - enthusiastic skiers (and a non-skier) gathered at the airport. ATC Ladye Freitag had stress balls for everyone to release the stress they might have had preparing for the trip, especially **Guillermo and Silvia Uribe** and their son, **Guillermo Uribe, Jr.**, since they were flying that morning from Mexico.

The adventure started in Houston when we discovered that not everyone had confirmed seating between Newark and Montreal. In Newark, all but three of our group were able to board the flight to Montreal. Due to weight restrictions, an additional 11 passengers would have to leave the plane. With offers of travel vouchers, 14 SCSC members volunteered to go on a later flight. Luckily, Continental placed them on an Air Canada flight, which arrived only 10 minutes after the main group had arrived in Montreal.

After clearing customs we boarded the bus for a two hour ride to Chateau Mont Tremblant, a five star ski-in ski-out resort which opened in November of '96. What a beautiful hotel with great service and all the amenities you could want. Due to an exhaustive day just about everyone retired shortly after check in.

SUNDAY - With a good night's sleep, the skiers got their first taste of snow. We were very pleased with The Laurentian Mountains. Skiing was great! Neal Pleasant lost his wife, Leona, on one of the runs down the mountain, so handcuffs were suggested to keep them together. Due to a prior knee injury, ATC Ladye Freitag was unable to ski.

Other imports from Mexico were Danae Patiño and her mother, Irma Patiño. This was Danae's first time skiing and she was having a blast! At the end of the first ski day, everybody



Montreal/Quebec (continued)

headed to the whirlpool, but for safety reasons only a limited number of persons were allowed into the spa and many were turned away very disappointed. According to ATC Ladye Freitag, that was the same day that she got into Russell Benham's pants (*you'll have to ask her on this one*). Later, a social gathering took place in the TC's room where everyone reminisced about the day and made dinner arrangements. After dinner, most people retired except Tess Ong who was urged to party into the wee hours by Russell Benham and Greg Roberts who continuously, for some reason, repeated the phrase "Trust me".... "Trust me"....

MONDAY - another skiing day.... except for Nancy Mitchell who decided to try snow plowing for the day. Watch out abominable snowman! Barb Penkala was seen going in and out of shops all day long! Inseparable life time friends, Rosa Caffarena and Angelica Pinochet teamed up with Gary Haley, CC Childs, and me for skiing. Talking about Gary Haley, the hat he wore with a big bone across the top, gave us peace of mind knowing that if he fell in deep snow a dog would come to dig him out. Doug Broussard would not ski with us because his idea of skiing is "just point your skis down hill and go." Carmen Mikhail, who had lived in Montreal abandoned us to visit with old friends who came to see her. Evangeline Ressler met a French doctor in the lounge of the hotel and went to dinner and dancing that evening. Again, we gathered at the TC's room for the "Social Hour." Wayne Vitale's Italian blood surfaced after having a wonderful dinner and drinks at a French restaurant. He serenaded everyone singing "Oh Sole Mio."

TUESDAY - Last day in Mont Tremblant. Serious skiers like Martha Davenport, Maureen Irwin, Greg Roberts, Russell Benham, and Tess Ong, went back to the slopes while Barb Penkala, Evangeline Ressler, Ladye Freitag, Bonnie and Rodney Hughes, Rena and Wayne Vitale, Gary Haley, CC Childs, Rex Henderson and yours truly explored the village and tried traditional French cuisine. We all went to a quaint "Cr  perie" where the desserts were to die for!

Mid-afternoon we loaded up the bus and headed to Quebec City, known by its French old world charm and excellent cuisine. As usual on all SCSC trips, the luggage was abundant and we had to place a few pieces inside the bus. Seats and aisles were full but this didn't put a damper on the card game in the back of the bus. Gary Haley, CC Childs, Yvonne Guy, Evangeline Ressler, Charles Miller and Rex Henderson demonstrated how lively a card game can be! They teased everybody that needed to use the WC. Approaching our destination through the City of Quebec, we were fascinated by the magnificent victorian architecture until we reached our hotel, The Chateau Frontenac. Ooh-la-laaa!!! It was truly a



breathtaking 5 star hotel where even the coffee shop would be categorized as one of the best restaurants in the Michelin Guide.

WEDNESDAY - The skiers were up bright and early to take the bus to Mont-Sainte-Anne where we had our own room to change clothes and keep our skis during our stay. The view from the summit was spectacular with the St. Lawrence River in the background. Lynda Henry and Jim McLaughlan, instead of skiing, decided to head to a shopping district. They were having breakfast in a nearby shopping mall and ended up receiving 50% off coupons for the 3-D IMAX about Quebec. Non-skier Rex Henderson and convalescent Nancy Mitchell, who was unable to ski due to minor surgery, were seen walking around old Quebec near the ice covered river.

In the evening, Chateau Frontenac hosted a great wine and cheese reception for SCSC. Everybody dressed for the occasion. Afterwards we all went to try the wonderful "Cuisine Qu  b  coise."

THURSDAY - We awoke to blizzard conditions, but that didn't stop the "die hard" SCSC skiers. During the bus trip to Mont-Sainte-Anne we decided to return earlier than scheduled due to white out.

Arriving at the summit we found the wind to be so strong that we defied gravity in our attempt to begin our down hill run. My one and only run of the day ended with me taking refuge in the coffee shop only to find most of the other skiers already there thawing. *It was so cold!!!* Carmen Mikhail, Gloria Lopez and Miriam Glover were spotted making friends with a very attractive man during lunch.

In the evening, everyone continued to try the superb French restaurants. Larry and Deborah Christie accompanied Barb Niland to celebrate Jack Miller's birthday. Wayne Vitale, Evangeline Ressler, Barb Penkala, Russell Benham, Charles Miller, Rosa Caffarena, Angelica Pinochet, and Dave Doucette headed to the piano bar after dining.

FRIDAY - Last day in Quebec. Everybody decided to sight

(Cont'd on pg. 10)

Montreal/Quebec (continued)

see except **Maureen Irwin** and **Guillermo Uribe, Jr.** who went back to Mont-Sainte-Anne. It was a clear beautiful day but the temperature was about 10°F and very windy.

Pat McLaughlin wanted to take a short walk around the boardwalk and **Greg Roberts** decided to join him. Well, the boardwalk was endless and about an hour later they found themselves outside the wall that surrounded Old Quebec and Chateau Frontenac. Needless to say, **Greg** won't say "Yes" to any short walks any time soon.

Gary Haley, CC Childs, Doug Broussard, Miriam Glover and I rode the famous Toboggan located next to our hotel. What a delight to play like children!

Early afternoon we were heading to cosmopolitan Montreal, but this time by train. It was time to party again! We had a first class car all to ourselves. We were served "apéritifs" before a three course dinner, wine, and after-dinner drinks. This was a great place for our group picture. For entertainment, there was a magician doing some tricks, but our own **Jim McLaughlin** started making balloon animals and soon we had a menagerie on board. Even though our travel was in the evening, the beautiful countryside was highlighted by the glistening snow. Arriving in Montreal, we simply rode the escalators to the lobby of the well known Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

That evening, **Gloria Lopez, Nancy Mitchell, Erika Vick, and Barb Penkala** followed **Carmen Mikhail** to Benjie - a jazz place with live entertainment where they ran into **CC Childs, Gary Haley, Guillermo Uribe, Jr., Doug Broussard** and me. After Benjie, **Gary Haley, CC Childs** and **Guillermo Uribe, Jr.** decided to go to the Casino.



SATURDAY - The group was treated to a two hour guided tour of Montreal. It included the Notre Dame Basilica, the 1990 Olympic Stadium, the University of Montreal, and othersights. We had a very entertaining tour guide.

The rest of the afternoon, the SCSC gang roamed Montreal including the Underground City that covers one-third of the downtown area. That evening, **Carl and Mary Favre, Rena and Wayne Vitale, Dave Doucette, Erika Vick, Maureen Irwin, Greg Roberts, Russell Benham** and **Tess Ong** went to Gibby's, originally a stable that was converted to a warm and relaxing restaurant. **Barb Penkala, Gary Haley, CC Childs, Rosa Caffarena, Angelica Pinochet, Evangeline Ressler, Doug Broussard,** and I went to Les Caves, a house with a different decor in every room. The food was marvelous! That evening, many headed to the piano bar area in our hotel to party for the last time.

SUNDAY - We headed to the airport early morning and returned to Houston mid- afternoon.

Many thanks to the guys on our trip for helping with the luggage!!

This unique trip was truly "LA CRÈME DE LA CRÈME."