TRAVEL LOG of Iris Jones

Tipping can be easy — if you employ system

A woman who travels alone has asked me to talk about the rules of tipping in airports and hotels when you travel. Like many women, I learned this skill later in life than most men do because men still tend to be the tippers when families travel.

One thing I have learned is that every traveler, man or woman, is a little nervous about tipping. We are never quite sure whether we are doing it right. Most of us decide on a system; knowing that we'll do it wrong sometimes.

I personally use the One Dollar Bill System, especially to get me through airports and hotels. I carry eight-10 $1 bills in a handy jacket pocket when I head for the plane at home or abroad. Dollar bills are recognized worldwide so you can use them if you don't have local currency.

In the United States, I assume I will need $2 to get my bags on the plane; up to $2, probably less, to get them off; and up to $4 to get my bags from the airport into my hotel room.

I travel with a medium bag and a small bag, so I don't hesitate to carry them in airports myself if it is practical or a porter is not handy.

The rule of thumb, if such exists, is a minimum of 50 cents a bag, but that is only for short distances.

I avoid parking at airports, if possible, because I hate paying high parking fees, finding my car alone at night or dragging suitcases to a shuttlebus for a faraway lot. If I do park in a distant lot, and the shuttle is free, the driver gets my first dollar bill when he unloads my bags onto the curb.

If I have my ticket in hand, I check in at the curb. Here, I tip $2 on the assumption that the porter must get my bags to wherever they board the plane. A little extra tip will get them there faster if I'm late (as I often am) and perhaps some small needed service, like a piece of tape over an unreliable suitcase lock.

If I don't check my bags at the curb, I give $1 to the porter who carries my bags to the airline counter or I carry them myself.

That gets me aboard. You never tip airline employees on a plane or at counters. When I get off the plane, I use a trolley at airports where they are available. Otherwise, I tip $1 to get my bags to the curb, or $2 to get them either to the parking lot or into a taxi.

If I am staying at a motel, the rest is all do-it-yourself. At city hotels, or any first-class hotel with service personnel, the first hotel tip is given at the curb.

If I pay comercial rates on an airport limousine, I usually don't tip the driver. If it is a free shuttle, I do so when the driver takes my bag out. Otherwise, it's a $1 tip to the porter who carries them to the check-in counter and $2 to the bell boy who takes them to the room.

Can you do it all yourself? Yes. If it is practical or a porter is not handy. I don't hesitate except in the lobby of a good hotel, where the entire bellboy system comes unglued if you carry your own bags.

This tipping system is entirely personal. I would like to hear your system. Write and share it with me.

Resort once only for the rich, Montebello hosts a retreat for all

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

Le Chateau Montebello shows a facade conducive to contemplative feats like horseback riding or roaming on foot its 100-square-mile property.

Le Chateau Montebello may be the biggest log cabin in the world.

The lobby is a great hexagonal room, 100 feet across, of peeled and polished logs, with a 66-foot hexagonal fieldstone fireplace rising from the red carpet past two levels of surrounding balconies to the cedar-log crossbars that support the roof.

Sometimes the great room is busy, with swimmers or cross-country skiers moving in and out of the islands of stuffed chairs and up the balcony stairs to the outreaching hallways of rooms.

Sometimes there are only a few off-season visitors, making lonely, moving shapes among the balcony lamps, leaving the building to dominate the night.

The Seigneury Club built the chateau as a private retreat for the wealthy. It still dominates the now-public hotel, leaving ghosts in the high-backed chairs around the great fireplace and the newcomers to walk among the lighted chess tables of the balcony seeking visible signs of the legend of Montebello.

Guests have been startled in the dining room, where the young maitre d' has just the right touch of snobbery for those who come to dinner without a reservation. Diners are left in silence at the foot of the stairs when they come early for the 8:30 p.m. sitting.

THIS PIECE OF land, 80 miles from Ottawa, Canada's capital city, and 40 miles from Montreal first came into the history books as a seigneury.

A seigneury was a plot of land, and a trust, given by the king of France to a citizen of the new world, who used the king's authority to develop and colonize the area.

The seigneury of La Petite Nation, named after the Algonkin tribe which lived there, was given to Bishop Lavall of Quebec and later sold to the Papineau family. It was the home of the famous Canadian rebel Louis Joseph Papineau, who once championed the French Canadian cause.

During the 1920s, the land and manor house were bought from the Papineau family by a promoter who planned a gigantic, exclusive private club built of logs. He had 10,000 western red cedar logs hauled by railway from western Canada, before he was bankrupted by the Wall Street crash.

The Canadian Pacific Railway accepted the property in payment for the freight bill and completed the three huge buildings, four million cubic feet, in a record four months.

The legend is that first-night guests saw a sea of mud around them when they went to bed and woke the next morning to acres of landscaped grass.

The club remained one of the world's most exclusive hideaways, catering to politicians and businessmen from Canada and northwestern United States, until the Canadian Pacific converted the buildings to a public hotel in 1971.

Before then, you could not get past the gateman without a special pass. Nowadays you need advance reservations to take advantage of the special weekend packages which attract both couples and families from Ottawa and Montreal.

Sports there include golf, skeet and trap shooting, riding, swimming, tennis, archery, boating, curling, hunting and fishing in remote cabins on the 100 square mile property, and cross country skiing.

When the Canadian Pacific Hotels opened the chateau to the public they discovered a nice surprise among the cobwebs and the empty rooms. A famous skier called Jack Rabbit Johannsen, almost 100 years-old and still skiing, had created cross-country ski trails on the property years before. The trails were overgrown, but they found them easily with a plane and an infra-scanner that detects clearings in the bush.

Cross-country skiing is one of the world's oldest means of transportation, and one of the sport rages of North America.

Some people call it an old folks' sport, because you can go slowly and as short a distance as you wish. This hardly describes the 2,000 cross-country skiers who take part in the annual cross-country ski marathon held late every February along the 160-mile route between Ottawa and Montreal. The half-way point for the two day marathon is the Chateau Montebello.

During the marathon, roads and trails to the log chateau are crowded with people, but most of the year you could drive past the gate without knowing it was there. It is on the road running north of the Ottawa River, most traffic driven on the south side.

The Canadian Pacific Railway takes you by a single, commuter type rail car from either Montreal or Ottawa to the log station at the nearby town of Montebello, where most of the chateau's employees live.

Passers-by can stop for lunch or dinner in what is a true gourmet dining room. The nighttime dinner menu, which has no prices because it is included in your room price, offers several courses of international and French-Canadian cuisine, from pate and quiche through rack of lamb and coq au vin to petit fours and sugar pie Canadienne.

The true atmosphere of the place is only really found by loitering a while, climbing the hill to the manor house, visiting the old Papineau chapel, having tea or drinks by the lake, exploring trails, or going to a far corner of the property where the fish don't see many men.

Always, like a line pulling you back, you return to the room with the great fireplace where nighttime finds restless souls looking for the action.

There are guests who roam, stare at the flames, walk in pairs down the stairs to load music and dancing. A few play cards or laugh together, but all come back again and again to face the great chimney, until eventually they are stilled by the true allure of Montebello — privacy and rest.

Find your own place around the great fire, or on a private balcony above, put your head back on a high backed chair, and — relax.

From the mailbag...

THE TRAVERSE CITY area still should be a concentration of color with the blossoming of the sweet cherry and the red tart cherry trees, giving residents and tourists ample reason to celebrate the rites of spring. The cherry capital of the world produces more than 100 million pounds of the fruit annually.

Also, morel-mushroom hunters are reporting outstanding finds in the area's backwoods, with the peak still about a few weeks away.

FORT MICHILIMACKINAC at Mackinac City and Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island both opened their gates recently. Their seasons run through mid-October. Some of the highlights at the forts include the completely restored French fur trader's house, French Trader's House, and Mackinac Bank, where reconstruction of the shop Webster is being completed. There is an aquarium in the park stocked with lake trout, bass, perch, brown and rainbow trout and lamprey eels, all found in Michigan waters. For information, write to Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Mackinac Island 49757.

CHARLEVOIX CENTENNIAL Celebration will run May 26-28, with a parade, re-enactment of the Battle of Pine River, horseshoe pitching contest, tug-of-war, water hose fight, raft race, and jail for men who fail to grow beards or mustaches for the festivity. For information, write Charlevoix Chamber of Commerce, Charlevoix 49720, or call 1-616-547-2101.

MATINEE MIDLAND returns to the land of Dow this summer and with it two special events — June 1, a UFO summit at 8:15 p.m. in the Midland Center for the Arts Auditorium, $7 or $15, and Aug. 16, music and laser music with the Hollywood Symphonette with William Hobson and Joan Harris, and Peg Th Jeeper conducting, $5 or $7 for the concert. Dress up at 4 p.m. concert at 7 p.m. in the Midland Center for the Arts parlor lounge. For tickets and information in advance, write Midland, Box 4008, Midland 48640.

THE WHALE TAIL provides a tropical summer, round the clock, of what's on in the way of Detroit area entertainment. The number is 962-8100.

Control . . .

. . . is something one should have plenty of, given this situation. Sivia, a snake charmer at the Dark Continent-Busch Gardens in Tampa, Fla., makes starting an act in her act in Marrakesh, a walled Moroccan-inspired village at the park's entrance. For travel information, write 3000 Busch Boulevard, Tampa, Fla. 33612.

Carnival time in St. Maarten

Carnival time soon returns to St. Maarten June 16 through July 2.

In a specially constructed Carnival Village, there will be hot, spicy West Indian food, steel orchestra competitions and a beauty contest.

Jouvert jump up, meaning break of day, describes the spontaneous participation of all assembled in whatever is going on in the Carnival village or on Front Street in the tiny capital of Philipsburg. Jouvert jump up takes place around 4 a.m. the last morning of Carnival.

The idea is literally to jump up from whatever and take part in a renewed early morning round of merriment.

This final parade moves up Front Street with everyone taking part. Aside from the brightly colored floats, there are rolling stages on wheels for the many steel bands.

The culmination of Carnival is an event known as the burning of the Moses. Accompanied by a steel band, a dummy King of Carnival is carried on a flat bed truck through the streets of Philipsburg to Carnival Village. There, amid pomp and ceremony, the Moses is burned to ashes. Carnival's over.

THE BEST OF THE [illegible] is not to be [illegible] but there's still a lot left.

Philipsburg's [illegible] the main [illegible] Front St., Middle Rd. and the Pond all have [illegible] Dutch, French, English, Italian, Jewish and Creole [illegible]. For the less adventurous there are old [illegible].

The Pond and Chile Bin cafe have [illegible] and Indian dishes. Front St. and Little Bit Kitchen feature local foods for the [illegible]. Of course, [illegible] a lot of fish.

There's piano music at the [illegible] bar at the Pond, special on Mahoe Bay, and for jazz enthusiasts, there's the Windmill Cafe in Philipsburg. Sweet tooth at the Mullet Bay Beach Hotel provides ice cream and piano music nightly.

Upe Chalin carries on until the sun rises, as does the Last Lange Place, an underground hangout. Below L'Escargot on Front Street. Further up Front Street, there's dancing at the Seaview Hotel.

Some St. Maarten hotels offer entertainment the same night as a barbeque or buffet, with steel bands, calypso groups, limbo dancers and the eats.

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