

# Reunion in Montreal August 2011

By Lawrence Tân JJR 69



*A life time of memory fragments. Born in the North of Vietnam, growing up in the South through the warring years and not in my wildest dream, I raised my family in North America. During the last thirty years, I have a chance to re-evaluate some of the values from where I came and pick up fresh ones from my newly adopted country. Knowing where one came from is essential for the sense of direction in one's life. Looking back helps me tremendously to remind myself of who I am as a person...*

## August 11th 2011

The flight home is pretty short and smooth. The official flying time from Montreal to Dulles Airport, Virginia is only one hour and twenty minutes. At least this flight home is not delayed as the one going up to Montreal. I have not taken any vacation trip, I meant just for me, for a long time. Those trips to visit my mom in California, to take the family to places when the kids were younger don't count. This trip is really for me. The expectations are wonderful, the excitements built up and accelerated as the trip approached. Gees, I get to see my schoolmates, some of whom I was with in the same classes just about forty years ago or I only heard of their names and saw their dissertations on the forum. It goes without saying that I had a lot of mixed emotions. I don't really know what to expect because I realize people change over time.

Although at times we shared a few controversial debates on the forum where we seem to be on opposite sides of the arguments, I have decided long ago that I have to put all that away and see all the friends as I knew them in the classrooms or the playground of our dear and beloved high school. The place where we first met, with short hesitations, and then we became bonded for life. It is an occasion for me as well as for some others to put faces to the names on the forum. I feel emotional when I see my friends growing old as I think we have to think about one another because we will never know if all of us would be still here in the next few reunions.



Regardless of backgrounds, regardless of different levels of achievements in life, regardless of how we manage to be still around and congregate in that one spot, for those short moments where we all

celebrate our love and friendship. In all the gatherings that I had the privilege to be part of, at Fung Pe Suan's residence, LVNam's restaurant and of course the Gala, I saw a bunch of bobbing heads of grey hair but I also saw all these kids that I knew for over half of my life. I have to admit, I don't know any of the girls there. I was thinking that if I had a little twist of faith, my path would be a little bit different, I could have known one of these special girls, fell in love like so many of you, and maybe bring her with me to this occasion.



I must thank the Montreal Committee for organizing such a smooth and superb program. It is indeed so wonderful to have this gradual build up of excitements from the intimate get-togethers of the smaller groups, to mainly the class of '69 and then culminated in the Gala. There is no doubt that this is the product of many months of efforts and planning of the Montreal Committee and of course with the full participations of the Montrealais who personally took care of the arrangements of logistics for those who come from as far away as I am to those who come from Europe and Australia. I just regret that the get together did not last long enough; it seems like they went by so fast. On the other hand, I think the girls may think that's just about enough! Because they had to do all the cooking(well, except Pe Suan and Tuan who did do a little bit of barbecue here and there). It seems like I had a little too much to drink every night in Montreal! But I did not have to drive thanks to LNKhanh.

LNKhanh is a wonderful friend in all senses of the word. He really took good care of me and Phap. We were all MBA (Married But Available), at least for our stay in Montreal. I have the feeling that I will never forget the little girl that stole my cookie. Please do not ask or wonder no more. I believe it had happened to all of you, there are certain events however trivial they were, like a scent, a color or a sight, which is only significant to you because it happened in one of those special moments in your lives. Anything that happens in Montreal will stay in Montreal, period.

At this juncture in our lives, I think we can occasionally meet new acquaintances but it is no longer easy to make new friends. Therefore I gladly resort to reconnect with my new old friends or old new friends if you will.

**Lawrence Tân**