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English 100 #2

9/22/20 Hobbies Essay

Skiing

Sometimes it is fun to relive your childhood. I often try to do this because of the nostalgia and feelings it brings back. It's fun to remember the good parts. When I was younger I would spend my winters at a small skiing mountain called Oak Mountain located in the middle of the Adirondack park. It is about ten minutes away from my house. I have been skiing since I was probably five years old. My school offered free lessons on the weekends. I decided to go back and visit to relive these memories because lately I have been missing home.

As I start to ride up the squeaky old chairlift at Oak Mountain I look to my left and see the bunny hill that I first learned how to ski on. Sometimes I still go on it just for fun. It is the place that I went up to ski for the first time many years ago. I think that is the reason I still enjoy skiing now, besides the thrill of actually skiing. I remember the science teacher at the time, Judee Lauria, taking me down the hill when I was about three or four years old. I was attached to this rope and bar contraption that holds you back from falling, so it felt like I was skiing when in reality she was just controlling my movements. I remember this moment. She was an amazing teacher. I wish she got to teach my siblings, but sadly she passed away a few years later.

As I go up the mountain and look on both sides of the chairlift I can see all the people I have ever ridden up with and the shenanigans we would take part in. For example Sarah and I would try to touch the trees to our right with our ski poles, Anna and I would try to hit people below us with snow left on the top of our skis from the trail before. The lift ride took about eight and a half minutes to go up the mountain, so we had to make it fun. It was about half of the

actual skiing experience. As it slugs along I remember yelling down to my friends that were skiing below me and making them look up before I would try and dump snow on them. Sometimes I would even drop a glove down below that I would have to go back and get before my fingers got frostbite.

This mountain is the reason I have all these memories. It is one of the smallest ski mountains in New York, but my favorite by far. It has the same fifteen trails every year, they never change, but that is why it is perfect. They create a sense of security because they are the exact same every time. Some of my family friends own the mountain. That is what is so special about my town—it is so small we all are there for each other in times of need no matter what. It has always been the same, the same people work there every year and the mountain never changes. As I ride up I remember riding up the day of my sister's wedding. She decided that Oak Mountain was the best place for the occasion, and she was right. It couldn't have been more perfect, the leaves were turning a beautiful array of yellows and reds as she said "I do." A fox visited us during the ceremony too. It was almost like it was from a fairy tale. Maybe someday I will get married there too.

As I arrive at the top of the mountain I can't help but stare at the beauty of the view. You can see Lake Pleasant and the entirety of my small town around it. I see the picnic table at the top where me and my friends would take our lunch and have a mountain top meal in the middle of winter. It was freezing, but worth every minute. I remember meeting at the top of the mountain for my ski lessons, and yelling to my friends before they went down the mountain without me, knowing that I would lose them in the trails if I was alone.

The steepest trail is where the chairlift rides up, and it is where one of my most vivid memories takes place. It was "Ryan's Run," and it was a black diamond. A black diamond is the

hardest trail at that mountain. I remember when I was about ten I had started on the trail for the first time with my best friend, Anna. Looking down I changed my mind, but it was too late to go back. There was only one way to go. After some discussion and trying to encourage one another that we could do it, we decided to take off our skis and slide down the mountain on our butts. I remember my aunt overhead on the chairlift laughing at us. I decided years later to try this trail again and made it down successfully, feeling very accomplished.

Maybe I love skiing because of the way it makes me feel. There are many emotions that come with skiing down the mountain, including nostalgia, freedom, control, fun and more. Many of these feelings come with feeling like a kid again. It reminds me of being young and being able to go to the mountain by myself or with my friends. I was rarely away from my parents, but at the mountain was one of those times. It can also be a stress reliever. After a long week at school it was fun to glide down the mountain and enjoy the view.

I decided to take the main trail on the mountain, Sacandaga, named after one of the lakes in my town. I remember lining up here for ski lessons once a week as someone from my town would show us a demo of what to do for that day and we would practice it down the mountain. One time in particular I remember we tried to learn how to balance on one foot by skiing on one ski, but this was not for me. I remember putting my ski-less ski boot down to balance and falling down over and over again. I guess I am not very balanced, especially at high speeds. I told myself that when I became a ski instructor I would never teach that to kids.

When I was around 13 I became a junior ski instructor and helped out during the lessons. I was super excited to be a part of this, but I did not go as far as I could have. You had to take a test given to us by the boss of Oak Mountain ski instructing, and I was afraid to. I missed out on some opportunities because of this fear of failure. I try not to let anything like this happen today.

As I go down Sacandaga I look to the sides and see the woods that I used to play in. I remember taking off my skis and going in the woods to throw snowballs at my friends. In the exact same place we would do photoshoots that would go on way longer than they needed to in the freezing cold. I am sure that I was close to getting frostbite many times, but it was worth it.

I can see a trail that branches off of Sacandaga that is slightly uphill, I recall having to pull my friends that would snowboard up this hill. This would happen relatively often, most of my friends snowboard and they would lose speed before I would on skis. That's what poles are for, I guess. I would always try to flick my skis up in the air and hit them with a cloud of snow as I went to show my appreciation. Although it was tough, it was worth it. I remember one of them pulling me to the ground on the trail and we would end up throwing snow at each other. That is a perk of growing up in a small town, we wouldn't bother anyone on the trail. If anything people would ski past us and join. These are some of the times I miss most.

These are just some of the examples of what it was like to grow up skiing in a small town. I met people this way too, some of my friends that I still have today. I helped teach some of my sister's friends and got closer to people that I wouldn't normally talk to. A large population of my hometown are homeschooled, so I wouldn't normally talk to them, but this was a good way for me to branch out from my usual friend group.

Skiing is an excuse to go out with friends in the winter, so often during the summer I will sit and complain about having nothing to do. In the winter, I would always just ask to go to Oak. There is so much to do and see there all winter long. I miss these moments and will try to relive them during the winters now. It was such a repetitive experience, I would go down the same over and over with little difference, it was the people I went with that made it fun. I believe this is the reason that we ski. It's expensive and repetitive, but fun all at the same time. I wouldn't trade my

experiences there for the world. Going to the mountain helps me remember the best parts of my childhood. I really love to remember everything that happened at the mountain and how it made me who I am today.

As I finish going down the hill I see the bottom of the chairlift, and I loop around and get in line to do the same thing over again.