**Skiing Adventures**

When I was 23 years old, my friend, Carl, said lets go skiing. He had just come back from the University of Rochester in New York and had taken up skiing, both the snow kind and the water kind. We went up to the local large mountain, Mount Baldy, since it was only a 45 minutes away. We rode up the terrifying access lift by a few snow patches with ski tracks in them. I could not believe that anyone would ski down that steep rock strewn slope. Fortunately, the beginner rental and ski area was at the top of the access lift. We got skis which were quite long at the time, and I put them on and headed out the door. How hard could this be? They were just like long ice skates. ICE! My body started sliding down the hill and hit an embankment, then, I stood up and slid across the slope into another embankment. At the bottom, I looked up at the lift up Thunder Mountain, said “no way”, and took the lift back to the rental place, turned in my equipment, and swore off that sport. Carl then bought a water ski boat, and off to Lake Castaic we went. I was able to stand up on the two skis until the boat driver made an “S” turn, then the wake came up to me and I flew up and over the skis and into the icy cold water. What is this? Another form of water torture? I was never able to stand up on just one ski.

A few years later, Chris said we should try skiing of the snow kind again. There was a learner package with a bus trip to Badger Pass in Yosemite. Ah, that was better, the slopes were reasonable, there were some trees protecting the trails, and if you fell, the snow was soft and forgiving. We even got to stay at a nice hotel in Yosemite Valley and see some waterfalls due to the warmer spring weather. The next year, I joined the ski club at TRW where I was working. They had a bus trip to Mammoth Mountain every three weeks and stayed at the Chateau de Montagne. Everything was well organized. I purchased some Sarner skis and other equipment to save rental cost/time and went on several weekend bus trips to Mammoth. At that time, the lift ticket was $9 for an all day pass. There were 14 chair lifts going all over the mountain. I did not try to ski fast or even with good form; I just survived my way down the mountain, avoided any falls, and looked for nice trails off in the woods where I could see the views of the mountains. the wildlife tracks, and the snow dripping off the trees.

There was then a winter ski trip where we took the 1971 Hornet to the mountains. We stopped at Mt. Bachelor in Oregon. The snow was rather slushy and then a white cloud enveloped the mountain. I barely made it down the hill and suffered from really bad vertigo. I got temporarily sick and decided never to ski without good visibility again. The trip was supposed to go to Sun Valley in Idaho, but the snow conditions at the time said “GO TO UTAH”. We did! Snow Basin, Alta, Snowbird, and Park City were all wonderful with powder conditions and great views. Other ski trips went to Aspen, Vail and other areas just west of Denver and Boulder when I had business trips in the area. As the children were growing up, they liked to go to the Los Angeles area hills. When Katy was 12 years old, she was faster than I was. The children had fun spending a weekend at Big Bear, throwing snowballs at me, sledding, and playing in the snow. I did not mind being all wet and frozen sometimes.

The nice thing about Southern California is that winter is optional. Snow and ice are only there if you really want to visit the white stuff. After several years of avoiding the snow, I decided to go back to Mammoth for my 65th birthday, since I thought the lift ticket would be free. My thoughts were out of date. The free age was now 80 years old, and the lift ticket was $90 while rentals were $35. The bus trip now cost $245 per person. There were now 28 lifts; many of them were high-speed quads. That meant there was more skiing and less time to rest on the lift. Oh well, for one day I can do this, and I survived skiing all day without falling. So every year since, when there is snow, I try to take one trip to Mammoth just to enjoy wandering about the mountain, the camaraderie of fellow sufferers, and the nice hot tub to soothe the very aching body. Now, it only takes about a week to recover.

What am I doing in 2016 on May 1? I am taking a bus trip to Mammoth for skiing. There was snow there this year (and it was snowing on that day). The main lodge area was open with good conditions. I suppose I am doing this just to show myself that I can still do this. I barely survived the $900 day.