By: Blayne Marion

Raquette Lake is located in the Adirondacks, just over two and a half hours from Albany, New York. Over the 99 miles of shoreline that the lake has there are a multitude of camps and residences, some of which you can only get to by boat. One of two properties on the lake owned by SUNY Cortland, Antlers, is where my family and our family friends spend a week of our summer every year.



The main building at Antlers- cortlandasc.com

There are a couple of stories (for some reason most of them have to do with water…) that come to mind when I think of Raquette Lake. The first happened to my sister, Brynn. It was 2006 and there were a lot of kids the week that we went. Enough that we could fill up almost two tables at meals (there were 6-8 people per table). That may not seem like a lot, but some years there were only a couple children under 18, and some of them were only a few years old. But this year we were all about the same ages (about 8-13 years old). We were a group of kids that contained mostly soccer players and so after dinner almost every night we would go up to the field and play until it became too dark to see the ball. Anyone who knows my sister knows that she doesn’t exactly like being told what to do, or team sports, so it wasn’t really a surprise that she wanted to go fishing in the lake with Michael (family friend) instead of playing soccer with the rest of us. It was just starting to get too dark to play so we all decided to go down and gather some adults to help us make the night’s fire when we met Brynn on the stairs, soaking wet and shivering. She had fallen asleep standing up where they had been fishing and fell right into the water. Thankfully it was only a couple feet deep, and the fall woke her up, but it was definitely something we made fun of her about for a while.

The next story from Raquette Lake involves me, Erika (family friend), and a canoe.



The general store in town- myride-2010.blogspot.com

In town, there is a general store that sells ice cream (kinda like Stewart’s, but a lot smaller). Obviously being children, as soon as we learned this we decided that we needed to have some ice cream. And of course, our parents, being responsible, decided that we should have to earn it. So, since town wasn’t that far away from Antlers, they declared that we would canoe to town and then we could get ice cream and then canoe home. We had had this tradition for a while, always with at least one adult per canoe (to make sure we actually got to town), until one year Erika and I decided that we were old enough and capable enough to be in a canoe by ourselves. This was somewhat of a huge mistake on our part. From the get-go we were pretty far behind everyone else and were having trouble even staying in a straight line. We didn’t make it very far (just around the corner from Antlers) before we were so far behind everyone that my dad decided it would be easier to just tow us behind his kayak the rest of the way to town. Needless to say, we were separated on the way back to Antlers and every year since we’ve just taken kayaks instead.

The third story also involves a canoe, but this time it also involves my parents. In 2010, on our annual ice cream expedition, we were about to turn the corner right before town, (there are a lot of “corners” that are actually more like bends, meanders, if you want to get technical) when all of a sudden my parents- the only people of our group of eight in a canoe- capsized. It was kinda my mom’s fault (kinda really her fault). She, for some reason, doesn’t listen to my dad sometimes when she really should, like at this moment. The canoe was a little unbalanced, and instead of listening to my dad and having him move, she decided to move-a little too far, I might add-and sent the both of them into the water. They were soaking wet, but we still went to town to get our ice cream (they stayed outside). It was pretty funny to everyone else- once we were sure they were okay- but my dad was a little bit upset because when they flipped, he lost his sunglasses in the lake.

While the last three stories have gone in order, the fourth story actually goes back to the second year we went to Antlers. As I mentioned in the first story, we had fires-controlled ones, of course- any night we possibly could. Everyone that was staying at Antlers that particular week was welcome to come (no surprise that it was mostly the kids that showed up). We always had s’mores because almost every family with children brought the supplies, just in case no one else had them. One night, Kevin-another guest that happened to be there the same weeks as us many summers- brought out the Jiffy Pop. Jiffy Pop is popcorn that is specifically made for heating and cooking on a campfire or stove. It has a metal handle and tin foil over the popcorn. 

Jiffy Pop- tastyislandhawaii.com

Well, none of us had ever actually attempted to make Jiffy pop over a fire before. So we just followed the instructions, but that didn’t exactly work. It caught on fire. The next one instead of burning (we learned that lesson) the handle got too hot for anyone to hold. We still had a few more to try so we put our brain power together (about five kids and even more adults). We bent a hanger into an extension for the ridiculously short handle the Jiffy Pop comes with. After two more failed attempts (Kevin had a lot of Jiffy Pop) we finnally succeded-kind of- and got some burnt Jiffy Pop. Every year after that when someone new brought Jiffy Pop those that had been there on 2002 laughed, but we knew what to do to actually be able to eat the Jiffy Pop.

Raquette Lake is as much a part of my childhood as my family camp is. There are so many great memories that come from spending time with your family, old friends and meeting great new people.