



Sledding under the winter sun

By CARL STODDARD

Alvin charges down the hill and launches himself into the frozen air. His body and sled come crashing down onto the snow and he's on his way. Rocketing along at 10,000 miles an hour, Alvin is skimming over the snow, careening off the bumps and slicing through the wind. He clenches the steering bars and recklessly aims for another bump. CRASH. ROOM. Alvin hits it and shoots through the air. But all of a sudden he is at the bottom of the hill and his sled just lies there. The sudden stillness makes him uneasy, and he quickly decides to make another assault on the hill. At the top of the hill, the winter sun is waiting. And Alvin, exhaling clouds

of frozen breath, takes the rope of his sled and begins his climb. Alvin is not alone on the hill. Friends of his, liberated from school for the holiday season, are yoyoing up and down the hill like Alvin. There are a number of adults and almost adults there, too. Everybody is bundled up. Some are wearing wool caps and others have their hair filled with snow. But they are all on vacation and all are making advantage of the hill. For Alvin, the snow is perfect, the hill is the steepest he has ever tackled, the weather great, the sun warm and the thrill incomparable. And Alvin takes it all for granted. Because he thinks everything is the way it is supposed to be. And maybe he's right.