Cameron A. Olson

Dear Mayor Strazdas,

I'm riding my bike throughout the neighborhood, and I hear some dogs barking in the distance. I can feel the wind in my hair, pedaling to gain speed. It's so peaceful and just great. Where am I? Portage! To be honest, I don't even like Portage; I love it. I love Portage for many reasons, but I decided to pick three; the four seasons, places to go to and see, and all of my family memories and traditions.

Like I said, one reason why I love Portage is because there are four seasons. First, the winter. Ah, walking through the frozen wonderland, snow crunch-a-crunching beneath your feet. How I adore winter. I really don't even know why, and it isn't just because Christmas and my birthday are in winter; I guess it's just a happy time. In the winter, me and my family often play in the snow, having snowball fights, making snowmen, and sometimes sledding. When we are inside, we snuggle up together on the couch, maybe play games or drink hot cocoa. In the spring... well, I guess nothing really happens in the spring, except for new life, flowers blooming, etc. I actually don't even like spring, because it's still a little cold, and everything's wet. Anyways, summer. Hurray for summer! Playing outside, sitting on the porch with ice cream dipping down your chin, and then watching the sunset. In the summer, we go out to our back yard, maybe toss around the frisbee for a while, and play with our dog Leo. And finally, fall. Such a great little time of the year to be in, I would say. Everything is so beautiful, from the brightly colored orange trees, to the nice fall breeze. I find it the more peaceful time of the year, and I especially love it for it's weather. In the winter, you have to spend five minutes bundling up to even go to your front porch, and in the summer you're dying from heat stroke within the hour. In the fall, however, the weather is good to the point of wearing pants and short sleeves, and you can practically sit outside forever.

Another reason I mentioned about why I love portage so much is because of all the things to do and see here. I don't want to brag or anything, but we have the Stryker World Headquarters. I know that's not really that relevant to stuff you can see (unless you work there, but of course there are pesky child labor laws), but it's still cool, no? Anyways, there are tons of other cool places here in Portage. We have lots of parks; Lakeview, Milham, and Ramona parks are all places me and my family go to from time to time. Unfortunately, almost all of these times were to get family pictures taken, but I still fooled around on the trails and the playground and stuff. We also have Great Skate, the Air Zoo, Airway Lanes, and Sky Zone, which are all pretty cool. I mean, who doesn't like competitive mini golfing? Another couple places here (I know, this paper is a mouthful, but stay with me) are the Crossroads mall, which always makes for a fun endeavor, and the Portage District Library, which is a great place for me, because reading is among one of my many hobbies. Which of these is your favorite? Mine are probably the library, Airway Lanes, and the Air Zoo.

Finally, I have lots of memories from living here, and my family has some traditions. I guess our traditions are pretty...traditional. For the winter, we always watch a movie on Christmas Eve, have a New Year's party, where we basically snack, play board games, and wait for the ball to drop. I remember one year, my uncle wished to have good health for the following year, and then literally ten minutes later, my cousin barfed. Also, I remember one New Year that my grandparents, my sister, Emma, and me all played bid euchre. I was on my sister's team, and my Grandpa got a loner hand; but he didn't think it was good enough. It turned out that it was, then he lost the game because he didn't go for it. Man, he was mad. in the Spring, we have always waited for summer, and pinch people who don't wear green on Saint Patrick's day. In the summer, we always go to the lake and watch the fireworks on the 4th of July. I remember last year, laying on a towel in the sand, sucking on a cherry tootsie roll pop (because the lollipop is very important, of course). I remember this one time a couple of years ago when I took my best friend up to Lake Michigan, and we spent a whole day at the beach. I also remember going to celebrate my parent's 40th birthdays this year, literally one week into the new school year. Man, if you weren't there, you were most certainly square. We ordered a Mexican feast, got a big cake, and I probably wasted about 2 hours of my life shaking maracas. Well, I wouldn't call annoying people by constantly shaking a pair of maracas in their faces a waste of time, but you know, whatever. That was probably the best party in the history of all parties. In the fall, me and my family always go trick-or-treating on Halloween, and we always get together with our other family members for Thanksgiving. I never eat any traditional Thanksgiving food, just usually chicken nuggets and biscuits, because I just love to party.

Don't you simply love Portage? It's the greatest place ever. Riding down the street, feeling the wind in your hair... simply stuptacular (That's a new word I invented- it's stupendous and spectacular combined). I love it for the 4 seasons, the places to go and see, and the great family memories here. Well, I've think I've said my piece, and now (well, I sure hope) that you know why I love Portage. Why do you love Portage?

Sincerely,

Cameron Olson