

I attended the Young Adult Patroller (YAP) training session and competition at Bromely Mountain in Vermont in March of 2012. There was a lot of preparation beforehand, a lot of skills learned and a lot of fun had. This was all made possible with the assistance of numerous patrols and other organizations. Although few patrollers get the opportunity to attend the YAP events, I hope my article will peak the interest of those who have never gotten this opportunity.

The YAPs are high school students who are between the ages of 15 and 18 and are members of the National Ski Patrol. The other YAPs and I have been training throughout the 2011/2012 season in order for our skills to be the best they possibly could be when we went to the event to represent our region. I have worked with three different patrols to ensure my skills were top notch. The Delaware Valley Ski Patrol provided me with valuable skills in Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC). These first-aid skills have given me the confidence to render first aid in emergency situations that I will probably be able to use for the rest of my life. I worked on my Ski & Toboggan (S&T) skills at both Mountain Creek and Hidden Valley ski resorts. I rigorously trained with S&T instructors every weekend and some weeknights, who taught me to safely manage a toboggan and stop it in an emergency, improved my ski skills and the look of my skiing, and also advanced my techniques to allow me to ski in any conditions in complete control. At Hidden Valley I was given the opportunity to learn the daily operations of the Ski Patrol. There I was able to watch the dedicated patrollers on shift perform all the skills I learned. All three of these patrols (Mountain Creek, Hidden Valley and Delaware Valley) made me feel very welcome, and I very much enjoyed the hospitality they provided. Due to all of the similar training that I received and the training the other adult patrollers received, most of the adult patrollers respected me as a peer instead of as a student. This entire experience with the Ski Patrol has raised my maturity level and made me a better person. Through all of my training I got to know all of the YAPs at my mountain, Hidden Valley, and also at Mountain Creek. I was invited to attend the YAP seminar to demonstrate and further advance my knowledge and to represent the New Jersey region with the YAPs I had been training with. Even though I had gone through all this training I was still a bit nervous before the event. I thought that everyone else was going to be substantially better than me. As soon as the event began, my nervousness subsided because I observed that we had comparable skill sets.

While I was at the event I had a fantastic time. I arrived at Bromely at mid-afternoon on Friday in the pouring rain and fog. My advisors suggested that I go out and ski and the skiing was some of the greatest skiing I had done all year. After finishing skiing we were assigned our rooms which were in condos alongside the slope. This is where I got to meet and become friends with YAPs from Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut, who I would never have met outside of this program. That night was the actual beginning of the event which was my first interaction with the hilarious, charismatic Craig Larson, who led an OEC practice session. Craig Larson is the Eastern Division YAP Advisor. During this practice session I had the most fun I've ever had while learning. The next morning we were split into groups, in which some of us attended a clinic, while others competed for their regions. I chose to participate in the clinic instead of the competition as this was my first year in the Ski Patrol and I thought

I would benefit more from learning rather than competing with other YAPs. That morning I was introduced to the toboggan instructors. We took toboggans down moguls, which is something I never had done before. And although I thought I might not be ready, this is something the Patrol again gave me the confidence to do. I learned a few new terms such as a “bridge”, which is a connection between two moguls, and “nosing”, which is pushing the front of the sled into the moguls. I now also understand why the tail rope is so important in the moguls. Everyone got a turn to have a free skiing session where each of us got to ski wherever we wanted to. I skied all of the trails on the mountain. Also before our final run, we took a break and looked at the spectacular breathtaking 360° view that Bromley offers. We were amazed at how many ski mountains you could see from the summit! That night the meal was delectable and there was plenty of food in the buffet. After the buffet they surprised us with a Search & Rescue (SAR) mission where we were split into teams and had to find manikins somewhere on the Mountain. They added a fun twist to the SAR mission and each manikin was part of a crime scene. We had to solve who did the crime which ended up being the witness we all interviewed. One team even zip tie handcuffed the guy without him noticing. Everyone had a really great time. That night when we got back to our rooms, I slept very well after the long day on the slopes.

Sunday morning was a bit tougher to get up and make it to breakfast but our chaperones got us there anyway for another great buffet. This prepared us to go to the rest of our sessions that day. That morning, I attended the OEC station which was a great review and practice of OEC for me. We focused on assessment, bandaging, and backboarding and I also learned how to use a K.E.D. (short board immobilization device). They had a spooky trailer full of moulage and gimmicks, including a plane that was set up on the mountain in a plane crash scenario. After that we took a break for lunch. After lunch I was in a ski skills station with some of the best instructors in the Eastern Region. They were able to tweak my skills and I was amazed that they were able to improve upon the extensive training I had already received this season. They worked on my balance while skiing. I was always a bit too forward on my skis, which they noticed and were able to fix. We spent the remainder of this session working on neatening the short, medium, and long radius turns. I felt that everyone in my clinic group improved upon their Ski Patrol skills. That night there was a delicious banquet. A group photo was taken before the banquet began. It was very gratifying that there were people as important as Burt Mitchell, the National Chairman, there to see the YAP program. There was also an awards ceremony. Two people from my region, Julia and Kyle, received awards for excelling in certain areas. Also in between awards a raffle was held where ski gear and other items were raffled off. After the banquet, the New Jersey region took a quick photo and then I left for the long drive home.

This experience was one of the best experiences I have ever had and I would definitely go to the same YAP event again. The entire ski skills session was a great aspect of the YAP seminar program. Sadly it was over too quickly but I still have great memories. I loved being able to talk about the event with my parents and even one of my teachers. I told my parents how great the event was and they were very excited to hear it. They knew that I had gained knowledge, experience and friends so they were very happy I attended. My teacher was very interested in what I did during the YAP event and told me that she could tell that I had a great time. I know this is not the place to thank everyone who has helped me to achieve my current skill levels in OEC and S&T but if there was a plaque to be handed out by the

YAPs to the adults, I would definitely nominate several people. I would nominate Dave Mooney, from the Delaware Valley Ski Patrol, for the OEC training he provided, Andy Byra, from the Mountain Creek Ski Patrol, for all the S&T training I received, Deb Cowell, from the Hidden Valley Ski Patrol, for bringing the entire thing together, and my parents for all their support. My parents put in a lot of time and worked tirelessly with me for weeks, constantly encouraging me. My parents would take me back and forth to training late at night and early in the mornings. I'm sure neither of them enjoyed getting up so early or going to sleep so late but they did it for me and I'd like to thank them for that. Winter is officially over, but I will keep my skills sharp as I wait for next year's YAP event. I will see everyone next year at Smugglers' Notch for the 2013 YAP Seminar.