



The training, fundraising and anticipation for this weekend were hard to endure. As the March weekend approached, I found myself wondering how the events would be organized and how I would perform in comparison to the other YAPs. Of course this was second most important, as the thought about snow was first. Was there going to be any snow left?

Once we left from home on our trip north, my mind began to wonder if there would even be snow, since my home ski areas had just closed due to lack of snow the week before. This was a real concern, since we just went through probably the worst winter on record, with a lack of snow and pretty much record-breaking warm temperatures. My dad and I kept watching the weather reports and snow reports for Bromley Mountain Ski Area, so we had an idea of how the area was holding up through this mild winter. As we approached Bromley Mountain Friday afternoon, the fog was so thick my dad could barely see where he was driving. The warm temperatures were interacting with the remaining snow to generate a thick fog, making visibility nearly impossible. Once we arrived at the base of Bromley however, we could see that the ski area had snow, though the cover was pretty thin. It didn't matter, we were here. The long anticipated event was now here and it was time to compete and have some fun!

After dinner, we gathered for some OEC refreshers and scenarios to hopefully ease us into the competition and to allow us to start meeting some new friends. We had a lot of fun and met some YAPs from places like Killington, Pat's Peak, Blue Knob and Wachusetts. The YAP organizers were great and once we headed back to our condo for the night, we got to know our house-mates for the weekend. The advisor Jim, Joe, Jeremy and Matt, were all from Wachusetts, MA. We had a lot of fun telling each other stories from our home areas. Our stories were about skiing conditions, the training we do, and describing accidents we had been involved in treating. It was great to hear what others do and don't do.

Saturday morning came really early but I was ready for the real event to begin. My first scheduled session was OEC. After having breakfast with everyone, we headed for the T-Bar lift. I had never ridden a T-Bar, so this was really interesting. Although I did not fall, we had lots of fun watching other YAPs riding for their first time. As predicted, some YAPs found the T-Bar to be quite a challenge and a few did fall. After a try or two, everyone made it to the top where the OEC session took place. We went through seven scenarios and then broke for lunch. Some of the scenarios were really challenging, like an ultra-lite crash, and a person with a chainsaw. This was a little different than our OEC practice sessions at my home areas. We managed, worked together, and treated the injuries to the best of our ability.

After lunch it was time for Ski/Ride Skills. This was our first on-snow session and it was great to get skiing/riding. The session was all about being able to ski/ride in control and under different types of terrain and conditions. Our conditions were made worse by heavy fog that covered the mountain from about 200 feet off the top, down to about the midway point. The visibility was not very good, so the evaluators had a tough time watching each skier/rider as we descended through the fog.

Saturday night was full of fun with dinner and then a nighttime winter SAR practice, complete with a “crime scene” and suspects. This really required us to pull together and work as a single team to solve the mystery and perform the rescues.

Sunday morning was our toboggan skills session and the weather turned out to be great. The snow was soft and the moguls were fairly large, so for the Mountain Creek and Hidden Valley YAPs (and a few others), guiding toboggans through moguls was going to be new and challenging. We broke up into teams of three and guided our sleds through the moguls, first with empty sleds, then “in-the-handles”, next in the sled as a patient, and finally on the tail rope. This experience was great, mostly because handling sleds in moguls is something we at Mountain Creek do not experience very often, if at all.

Sunday afternoon was a “free ski/ride” session, so most of our group picked some fun runs to ski/ride together before we gradually dropped a few YAPs, most of whom had to get some homework done before returning home.

The YAP Seminar at Bromley Mountain Ski Area turned out to be a really great weekend despite the poor snow conditions. Meeting YAPs from all over the Northeast was a great and rewarding experience. Hopefully the new and enhanced skills and experiences I learned at this seminar will make me a better patroller. I hope I can continue to keep in touch with, and possibly get together with, some of the other YAPs in the near future. Whether we meet at Mountain Creek, Hidden Valley or at their home mountains, I look forward to continuing our new-found friendships. And, as expected, I am counting down the days to attending the YAP Seminar next year at Smuggler’s Notch Ski Resort!



YAP – Group A: Back (l to r) Ben, Jordan, Damion, Matt, Alex, Julia; Middle (crouching) Sasha; Front (l to r) Avery, Alec, Katie, Steve, Sebastian.