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## WNY REGION AWARDS BANQUET

The 2026 Western New York Region Awards banquet was held at Kloc's Grove in West Seneca, NY on Saturday, May 16th. After a great social hour and delicious meal, the awards portion of the evening began. Below is a list of the patrollers that were recognized at this year's banquet.

## YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

### 50 YEARS

Dan Barletta - Alumni / Kissing Bridge  
Elizabeth Collen Pratt – Holiday Valley Mountain Host  
Bob Kaus - Holiday Valley  
Ron Smith - Alumni / Holimont

### 55 YEARS

Dave Monkebaan – Alumni/Holiday Valley  
Don Weaver – Alumni/Kissing Bridge

### 60 YEARS

Duncan Black – Alumni/Kissing  
John Bush – Alumni/Holimont

## INTRODUCTION OF NEW REGION PATROLLERS

The following patrols have new patrollers this season.

### HOLIDAY VALLEY

William Caswell, Brittany Knowles, Michael O'Brien, Melissa Rivers, Fatima Siddiqui

### HOLIMONT

Yardley George, Elle Olearczyk, Jack Olearczyk, Patrick Orloff, Peter Pecenco

### PEEK 'N PEAK

David Mahoney, Matt LeVerde, AJ Grassi

### KISSING BRIDGE

Kenny Kuriscak, Anna Kwaizer, Jeffrey Lombardo, Peter Wantuck, Daniel Kenny, Anthony Fox, William Flannery, Terry Bennett, Tony Cippa, Connor White, Cal Carlson

### ALLEGANY NORDIC SKI PATROL

Tom McNinch, Emily Allen

### BUFFALO SKI CENTER

Greg Urban

## NEW SENIOR PATROLLERS

The following Patrollers completed all of the requirements to become Senior Alpine Patrollers this season.

**Barb Cosgrove - Buffalo Ski Center**  
**Danielle Freeman - Denton Hill**  
**Thomas Grolemond - Holiday Valley**  
**Kyle Porter - Peek 'n Peak**



*Pictured L-R: Thomas Grolemond, Barbara Cosgrove, Kyle Porter. Not Pictured: Danielle Freeman*

## JACK MCKENNA OUTSTANDING SENIOR CANDIDATE AWARD

This award recognizes an individual who completed the final requirements for the Senior program during the current season and demonstrated favorable effort, attitude, performance on Senior evaluations, and improvement in skills. Nominations for this award may be made only by Senior OEC and Senior OET training staff.

**Kyle Porter - Peek'n Peak**



*Kyle Porter*

## AMBASSADOR OF THE SLOPES AWARD

This award recognizes a patroller or patrollers who promotes a favorable image of the ski patrol to the skiing and snowboarding public. Factors to consider may include attentiveness to safety, customer service, community service, and professionalism. This patroller's actions enhance the public's impression of the resort, the sport, and/or the ski patrol.

**Kevin Murray - Holiday Valley**  
**Dan Kruszynski - Holiday Valley**



*From L-R: Dan Kruszynski, Kevin Murray*

## DIANE AND FRANK SMITH SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

This award recognizes a patroller from any WNY patrol who constantly works behind the scenes without holding patrol office or a significant NSP position. A "doer" who performs activities such as committee work, fund-raising, maintenance, work parties, shift supervision, recordkeeping, planning, training, etc. at the patrol level and/or for the NSP.

**Melanie Goulding - Cockaigne and Peek'n Peak**



*Melanie Goulding*



## WILL WENDELL AWARD

This award recognizes a patroller who dedicates time and talent to the training of candidates and/or mentoring of inexperienced patrollers. May include training in OEC, S&T, snowmobile operations, patrol room procedures, resort practices, and other areas. The patroller may or may not be a certified instructor.

**Dana Strain - Buffalo Ski Center**



*Dana Strain*

## GEORGE “SKIP” PFISTER MEMORIAL AWARD

This award recognizes a patroller involved in the instruction of other patrollers in any of the NSP programs who displays Skip’s outstanding volunteer spirit. The candidate must have successfully completed the Senior OEC program, the Instructor Development course and be actively involved in the mentoring phase of becoming an instructor.

**Steve Rawlings - Cockaigne**



*Steve Rawlings*

## MIKE REID MEMORIAL INSTRUCTOR AWARD

This award recognizes a certified instructor in the WNY Region (open to all disciplines, including S&T, OEC, CPR, AED, instructor development, avalanche, and mountain travel & rescue) whose service extends beyond working with candidates.

**Anna Jaremko - Holiday Valley**

## PATROLLER CROSS

This award is given to recognize an NSP member who suffered a serious on-duty injury involving physician care over a long period, surgery, extended rehab, and/or lost work time.

**Michele Mancini - Peek’n Peak  
Harvey “Skip” Mann – Buffalo Ski Center**



*Skip Mann. Not Pictured: Michele Mancini*

## EASTERN DIVISION 990 PATROLLER AWARD

This Eastern Division award is presented annually to one Patroller that has been significantly helpful that year by helping take a load off the Eastern Division Director’s back.

**Chuck Dunn - Kissing Bridge / WNY Region  
Director**

## YELLOW MERIT STAR

Recognizes an outstanding act or service to the NSP. Not for service to a local patrol.

**Duncan Black - Alumni/Kissing Bridge**

## PURPLE MERIT STAR

Recognizes an NSP member who was the primary individual responsible for saving a human life.

**Craig Wittmann - Holiday Valley**



## GREEN MERIT STAR

Recognizes an NSP member for an outstanding act of heroism, including hazardous rescue, where not eligible for purple merit star.

**Simon Lissner - Kissing Bridge**

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Service Award is to be given to individuals who have performed extraordinary service to the National Ski Patrol and the skiing Public over a long period of time. This is distinguished by exceptional devotion to duty and outstanding performance.

**Jeff Cole - Denton Hill**  
**Bob Cross - Denton Hill**  
**BJ Butler - Denton Hill**  
**Kim Crotty - Holimont**



From L-R: Jeff Cole, BJ Butler, Bob Cross



Kim Crotty

## EASTERN DIVISION RED MERIT STAR AWARD

Recognizes NSP members who demonstrate exceptional emergency care, critical decision-making, and compassion to situations where their intervention was instrumental in preventing a significant, negative outcome.

- **David Hawkes, Michael Bailey and Scott Potter - Holimont Bike Patrol**
- **Fran Calkins, Rick Chapman, Dana Strain - Holimont Bike Patrol**
- **Kevin Murray, Bill Martin, William Wallace, Zachary Amigone - Holiday Valley**



From L-R: Scott Potter, Michael Bailey, David Hawkes



From L-R: Dana Strain, Fran Calkins, Rick Chapman



From L-R: William Wallace, Kevin Murray. Not Pictured: Bill Martin, Zachary Amigone



## OUTSTANDING MOUNTAIN HOST UNIT

This award is presented each year to the Outstanding Mountain Host Unit selected from among nominations sent by Division Directors or designees to the National office and approved by the National Awards and Recognition Advisor.

### Holiday Valley Mountain Host Unit



From L-R: Bill Steinbroner and Bob Piede

## OUTSTANDING BIKE PATROLLER

This award is presented each year to the Outstanding Volunteer Bike Patroller selected from among nominations sent by the Division Directors or designees to the National office and approved by the National Awards and Recognition Advisor.

### David Hawke - Holimont



David Hawke

## WNY REGION PATROLLER OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes an outstanding patroller who sets an example for others. Factors to be considered include service to the local patrol, ski resort, and NSP; leadership roles held; behind-the-scenes activities; length of NSP service; attitude; effort; skills; accomplishments; and relevant training completed.

### Erin Francis - Buffalo Ski Center

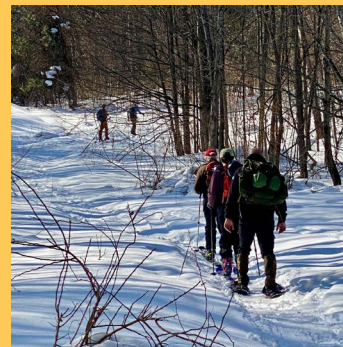


Erin Frances

## 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION TRIBUTE

by Chris Galvin

On February 16, 2026 three members of the Kissing Bridge Ski Patrol and 4 members of the public did a ruck to honor the shared history of the NSP and the 10th Mountain Division.





## HOLIMONT BIKE PATROL HOLDS OEC CLASS

by Rick Chapman

The Holimont Bike Patrol has been running our own OEC course for Bike Patrollers only since this past January. Recently at Holimont, they all passed there final OEC evaluation. They will be taking their Bike evaluation and lift evacuation on June 6th.

Newest region patrollers are : Brian Abbey, Pat Buren, Lori Buren, Jerry Conway, Kyle Renick, Joe Collins, John MacDonald, and Chris Bartolomei

Lead instructors were Fran Calkins, Bernie Calkins. Other instructors were Ellen Conrad, Don Farbotnik, Steve Rawlings, Barb Cosgrove, Beth Gillette and Davie Hawkes. Bike instructor Adam Rau and Lift instructor Rick Chapman.

The candidates did their training at Holimont, Buffalo Ski Club and Mt Pleasant ski areas.

We had instructors from Holimont ski and bike, Holiday Valley, BSC, Allegheny Nordic, Mount Pleasant ( PA ) Powder Mountain Utah

Holimont Bike patrol is in it third year as an organized patrol and we now have 63 active members.



From L-R: Steve Rawlings, Kyle Renick, Joe Collins, Jerry Conway, Pat Buren, Rick Chapman, Lori Buren, Fran Calkins, Brian Abbey, John MacDonald, Bernie Calkins

## 2026 WNY NSP REGION ALUMNI DAY

by Ralph Estep

The Western New York Region of the National Ski Patrol held an Alumni Day celebration on March 6th at the Holiday Valley Ski Resort in Ellicottville, New York. Over 30 alumni, friends and family participated in a day of skiing, visiting with old friends, making new ones, and being treated to a buffet style cookout meal.

Services awards were presented to 4 of the participants in attendance:

- **Leo Bierfeldt - 70 years (Lifetime NSP member and active for 65 of these, now Alumni)**
- **Michael Blomfield-Brown - 65 years (Lifetime NSP member and active for 61 of these, now Alumni)**
- **Russ Fogle - 45 years (Lifetime NSP member and active for 39 of these, now Holiday Valley Patroller Emeritus and Alumni)**
- **Linda Fogle - 45 years (active for 33 of these, now Alumni)**

A big "Thank You" to Holiday Valley Management, Ben Graham, Roland Lunser, Dan Meess, and the Holiday Valley Ski Patrol for hosting the event. Management provided discounted lift tickets, and the patrol gave up the use of their family room for the day.



2026 WNY Region Alumni Day Participants

## THE BUFFALO SKI CENTER LANDSLIDE

Submitted by Lowell Sylwester

As patrollers, we are trained on rescue from avalanches but not from landslides. We had one. Around 1990 Sitzmarker Ski Club installed their chairlift and to make the slope more accessible, they filled in about 100 feet of a ravine that was between the chalet and the lift. They used whatever they had to fill it in and did not plan for complete drainage. Fast forward 30 years and Buffalo, Sitzmarker, and Tamarack were all joined in Buffalo Ski Center. On a comfortable February afternoon snowmelt

water saturated the fill and made it unstable. Riding near the top of the chairlift, we watched as suddenly trees, signs, fences, and the fill collapsed into the ravine. Over the course of the afternoon, the collapse repeated several times until there was a new ravine where our crossing area used to be. During the landslides material moved all the way to the bottom where it covered and closed our lower crossover. It made for an exciting day as we closed more and more until it finally stabilized.



## 2025-2026 SENIOR OEC FINAL EXAM PHOTOS



2025-2026 Successful Senior OEC Candidates from L-R: Kim Downey, Russ Lauber, Tom McNinch, Kyle Porter, Danielle Freeman & Tom Grolemond





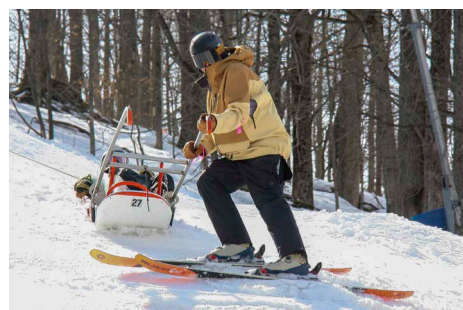
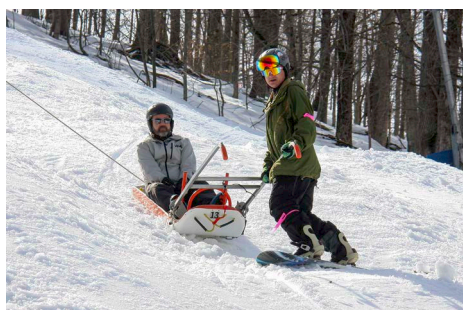




## 2025-2026 SENIOR OET FINAL EXAM PHOTOS



*2025-2026 Successful Senior OET Candidates from L to R:  
Kyle Porter, Barb Cosgrove, Cal Carlson, Bryan Daniels*









## 2025-2026 WOMEN'S CLINIC AT KISSING BRIDGE

