



Contact: Troy Hawks, NASJA VP of Awards,
email: troyhawks@nasja.org
(303) 681-7311

North American Snowsports Journalists Association Announces Annual Awards for Writing, Photography, Video and Blogging

March 27, 2014 - KILLINGTON, VT - The North American Snowsports Journalists Association (NASJA) honored four member journalists with Harold S. Hirsch Awards for Excellence in Snowsports Journalism. Awards were also presented to four outstanding snowsports and media professionals and the North American snowsports competitor of the year.

The awards were presented at Killington Resort in Vermont during NASJA's annual meeting on March 27, 2014.

Created to promote professionalism in winter sports coverage, the Harold S. Hirsch Awards recognize creativity and excellence in editorial and artistic content in both traditional and web based journalism.

Open to NASJA press members only, Hirsch award categories include columns, feature writing, blogs, photography, and video. Judging was done by a panel of judges with the highest credentials in the fields of journalism, writing, education, snowsports and photography.

In the category of Columns, Marty Basch, a New Hampshire based outdoor adventure columnist won the Hirsch award.

A syndicated columnist, author and multiple Hirsch Award winner Marty Basch entertains adventure junkies and travelers through his books, writings and appearances. Winner of several national writing awards, including the Lowell Thomas gold award from the Society of American Travel Writers, Basch is an avid skier and snowboarder who has also hiked and biked the 48-highest New Hampshire peaks and the Great Divide route from Canada to Mexico.

He lives with his wife Jan in New Hampshire's White Mountains.

Judges liked the way ‘he enjoys spinning a yarn and revealing personalities and myths, but keeping his writing non-technical friendly. Truly a joy to read.’”

Tom Winter, of Vail, Colorado took home two Hirsch Awards, one for Feature Writing and one for Photography.

Winter was the founding editor of the influential skiing title *Freeze Magazine*, has been a judge for the Freeride World Tour, an Editor at Large for *Freeskier Magazine* and a Senior Contributor to *Powder Magazine*. His writing and photography have also been featured in ESPN, *Skiing*, *The Ski Journal* and others. Currently Tom is the editor and founder of the Independent Skier Magazine, an innovative mixed media project currently available for free and designed exclusively for mobile devices.

In addition to his work as a journalist, Tom has created, designed and organized some of the most important freeski events in North America, including the New Mexico Extremes, a 4* Freeride World Tour Qualifying event. This event is overseen and organized by Tom in conjunction with the staff of Taos Ski Area and is held every year in March.

Winter's writing elicited this response from judge Marcia Biggs, a former features editor and travel writer at the Tampa Tribune. "Winter wins top honors not only for his easy conversational and beautifully descriptive narrative, but also for his off-the-beaten track story topics."

As for his photography, it was described as being "anchored by excellent action captured expertly. This is a great series of images that makes me hungry for winter."

This is Winter's first Hirsch award for writing and his fourth award for photography.

Honorable Mention for feature writing was awarded to Cindy Hirschfeld of Basalt, Colorado, currently the editor-in-chief of Aspen Magazine. She has previously won three Hirsch awards.

Dino Vournas of Hayward, California received Honorable Mention in photography. The veteran journalist's résumé includes periods of time at the Oakland Tribune, Hayward Review, San Francisco Examiner and Associated Press. He has also won the Hirsch Award three times.

In the Video Category Gerald Pallor of New York State was the winner. A three-time Hirsch Video award winner, Pallor was described by the judges as a great storyteller with "Good shooting of action shots and on-mountain ski footage."

Owner of Insight Media, based in New Paltz, New York, Pallor started in the business working with people like Martin Scorsese and Brian De Palma, as well as fetching coffee for stars like Robert De Niro. Living in New York during the "video revolution," Pallor has worked in marketing communications for clients ranging from JP Morgan Chase, Proctor and Gamble, Ford Motor Company and Ed's Tropical Fish (a long time favorite client).

Judges described this winning videographer as a great storyteller with "terrific footage, great editing and utilizing and trusting his subjects."

Honorable mention in this category went to Dan Egan a 3-time Emmy-nominated film maker, TV and radio host and extreme-ski pioneer, who has been in front of Warren Miller's camera for some 12 films.

Winner of the Harold Hirsch Award for Blogs is Grand Junction, Colorado's Kristen Lummis. Writing about her blog, The Brave Ski Mom (braveskimom.com), judges highlighted the “engaging topics with compelling personal viewpoints supported by research and interviews.” This is her first Hirsch Award.

Lummis has been blogging about family snowsports for three years. In addition to producing braveskimom.com, Lummis also blogs for liftopia.com, Colorado Ski Country USA, Women's Adventure Magazine and Vail Resort's Epic Moms. She is a regular contributor to Women's Adventure Magazine, MTN Town Magazine and other regional Colorado publications. While she has a passion for all things snow, her real love is her family — her husband James and sons, Ian and Asher.

Honorable Mention in this category was awarded to Tony Crocker of Glendale, California a Princeton-educated actuary who also monitors snow history for over 100 ski areas and several publications and blogs at bestsnow.net.

The 2013 Harold S. Hirsch Awards were generously sponsored by K2 Skis and Smith Optics.

In addition to these journalism awards, NASJA honored the following people:

Michael Berry, President, National Ski Areas Association won the Carson White Golden Quill Award for an individual who has made a significant contribution to snowsports in America.

NSAA represents the 325 alpine resorts and 472 equipment, goods and services suppliers that account for over 90% of skier visits. As president, Berry spends much of his time in Washington D.C. overseeing regulatory and safety issues, concentrating on public policy and working closely with the U.S. Forest Service on behalf of the industry. He also provides leadership and oversees the association's operations, including issues related to industry trends, regulation, and educational and market research programs.

Under Berry's stewardship, skier visits to USAA resorts increased by 13 million to a peak of 60.5 million in 2011. He lives with his wife Jennifer and they have two kids, Annika and Tate.

Raelene Davis, Vice-President of Marketing for Ski Utah won the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award honors a lifetime of snow sports related innovation, competition, design and other endeavor.

Davis has a reputation of seizing on issues of importance to North American skiing, tangling with the 'king-pins' of the ski industry and getting things done.

In 1985, Davis took a "stepping-stone job" with Ski Utah and turned it into an almost 3-decade career. Today under Davis' watch, skier visits to Utah are up to 4.2 million and member resorts have fully embraced changes in technology and communications. Campaigns such as “The Greatest Snow on Earth” continue to give Ski Utah media exposure and the state's international visitor numbers have risen from 0% to 8% of total visits.

In addition to her responsibilities with Ski Utah, Davis is a co-founder and chair of “Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month,” a program involving resorts in 33 states that offers learn to ski and snowboard discounts each January.

Jon Lundin, the Communications Director for the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) won this year’s Bob Gillen Memorial Award.

Described as “the consummate professional,” Lundin juggles responsibilities at multiple snow sports venues in New York State including Whiteface, Gore, and Belleayre Mountains; as well as the Olympic Center, the Olympic Jumping Complex and Olympic Sports Complex in all of which are in Lake Placid.

The Gillen Award is named in honor of a former Ski Magazine editor and resort marketing professional, honors an individual who exemplifies the highest standards of professionalism in public relations and media communications.

The US Ski Team’s Mikaela Shiffrin won the Paul Robbins Competitor of the Year Award for her gold medal in Slalom at the Sochi Olympics and for capturing this year’s overall World Cup trophy in spalom.

This award is named for Paul Robbins, who for 30 years, was the primary journalist for the US Ski Team.

The winners of the above awards determined by the NASJA membership, comprised of journalists, media, and public relations professionals from the snowsports industry.

Finally, Ted Heck, editor and publisher of the Blue Book of European Ski Resorts, won the Mitch Kaplan Award which is chosen by a vote of the NASJA Board of Directors and bonors an individual who has contributed significantly to media coverage of snowsports.

Heck has been a sports and travel writer for 68 years. Originally a freelance writer after hours, he had a lengthy business career with executive positions in marketing for major corporations.

Since his retirement he has been a ski columnist for major newspapers and websites and a contributor to magazines. He is editor/publisher of "The Blue Book of European Ski Resorts," online at BlueBookSki.com.

His passion for skiing began after World War II, in which he was a highly-decorated combat infantry company commander. He fought in frigid France and hated snow. Ted is a member of North American Ski Journalists Association and the Society of American Travel Writers.

###