

SNO-FOO AWARD



TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGET IT WOULD BE DIVINE.

The Sno-Foo Award is presented each conference to an individual or group of individuals for having committed an outstanding “blooper” worthy of repeated telling. The recipient earns the award often unwittingly but always deservedly. To be considered for this award a member must be in good standing (but sometimes wavering) of the Eastern Snow Conference. The award is to be presented and accepted in a manner considered to be in “good taste.” No one person or organization will be eligible to qualify for this awarded more than once. Nominations arise through the Executive and the decision is final.

SNO FOO 2001 –Brenda Toth

Brenda Toth works for Don Gray as a Research Engineer with the Division of Hydrology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. When interviewed for this position Brenda assured us that she was a 'farm girl' who could operate anything with a motor and had been driving tractors and such since she was 12. Her skill in repeatedly operating a skidoo with exceptional finesse far outside of the guidelines for such vehicles (not normally suited for air travel) has garnered her the Sno-Foo Award. She has learned from her mistakes and can repeat them exactly.

Brenda was working on a snow hydrology study in the remote Yukon Territory, land of mystery and legends in snow. Her exceptional performance one day left her co-workers mystified, apprehensive and hysterical, in that sequence. The Wolf Creek trail leads to the mountains above Whitehorse and is neither straight nor straightforward to negotiate. This day some rather interesting, partially toothed, local characters had decided to ATV on fourtracks on our path making the wet snow particularly difficult to negotiate. In doing so they excavated a steep face whilst freeing their unsuitable vehicles. The first person to cross the face made it through on the usual one ski down and a prayer and awaited Brenda. Instead the third person crossed over. In crossing, this third person thought it strange that some 'hotdog' had skidooed 'up' the very steep hillside as evident from a track joining their trail from the edge of a cornice - it being inconceivable that anyone would be mad enough to skidoo down over that cornice. The lack of Brenda however made the 1st and 3rd travelers reconsider the evidence. The 3rd person, now rather concerned, ran back to the track on the hillside. Now instead of one there were two tracks that must have led down over the cornice! But how? Further investigation revealed at the bottom of the hill a pile of snow and bushes containing Brenda and machine, both relatively undamaged, but very stuck. The partially toothed characters watched all this from a hilltop as they strummed their banjos....

What transpired was that in attempting to cross the hill face with sufficient speed not to roll sideways, Brenda hit the hole and angled sharply towards the cornice. Having few options but a sound understanding of momentum, she gracefully achieved correct takeoff velocity and angle from the edge and landed with Space Shuttle precision safely in the valley bottom snow well below the cornice, bravely circled back up onto the trail, returned to the hole-filled hill face

crossing and somehow managed to repeat her actions exactly. The second landing was not quite as smooth as the first, a bush rudely interrupting her landing strip...

What continues to perplex her coworkers is that despite the double landing and substantial airborne distance involved, Brenda never acknowledged that anything out of the ordinary had happened that day. We know now that they learn to fly skidoos on Saskatchewan farms at an early age, but they don't know much about bushes."

John Pomeroy
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