

SNO-FOO AWARD



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

SNO FOO 2004—Chris Derksen

The Eastern Snow Conference annually bestows this award on some poor hapless snow and ice researcher, who, while striving to push back the frontiers of science, is overcome by a bout of “bone-headedness,” ill planning, or just plain bad luck—in military parlance, referred to as SNAFU.

This year’s winner is a prominent member of the Canadian snow research community who has quickly gained notoriety as the “Mr. Bean” of field experiments! On his very first reconnaissance trip to northern Saskatchewan, our winner managed to start an electrical fire in a Government of Canada truck and destroy two rental snowmobiles within 30 minutes of each other! Surely enough to win the coveted trophy...nope!

A series of clinching events occurred this past winter:

1. He was snow surveying and broke all Government of Canada Occupational Health and Safety regulations by traveling without backup and without an operating radio/telephone. Of course, given our nominee’s anti-Midas touch, the snowmobile broke down, forcing him to abandon it in the middle of a trapline and hike several hours to safety.
2. Our candidate dropped the only map containing all the snow survey site locations from the helicopter door at 1000 feet! And this happened on the way TO the field!
3. In a friendly, non-contact game of “Let’s see who can jump over the electric fence,” our candidate amazingly was not electrocuted. However, he did manage to dislocate his shoulder.
4. Our nominee demonstrated javelin throwing at the Daring Lake Olympics in May 2004 with an “unbreakable” snow depth probe. The snow depth probe is now history.
5. The chaos unleashed by our winner has taken a toll not only on his body but also on management. His supervisor, a past president of the ESC and former Sno-Foo award winner, was so shaken by our candidate’s field escapades that he transferred to another job in April of this year!