

SNO-FOO AWARD



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

SNO-FOO 2013—Benoit ‘pinkie’ Montpetit

Benoit Montpetit is a young and enthusiastic student, certainly meant for the job including fieldwork...so we thought! Ben had mentioned on several occasions he did not feel the ‘cold’ and in fact he was immune to harsh arctic conditions. Thus, on his first ‘real’ field mission, in Churchill, MB, on his first day, on his first morning, Ben was telling everyone he was fine: to quote “it’s only -36C after all”! With him were 3 well experienced snow scientists (not snofoo-ed yet!) who went about doing their snowpit business as usual...hey, it’s only -36C after all!

After finishing our first pit, Ben comes to us, showing his little finger, asking: ‘Is this normal’? It was a totally WHITE finger!! Tough to the cold, yes! Stupid: ...hmm!? The 3 experienced guys looked at each other and knew this was bad, very bad. So, we jumped on the skidoos, and headed back to Churchill Hospital ASAP.

For the next 6 consecutive days, Ben went to hospital not knowing if in the end they would need to amputate. Even the doctors did not know. So Ben’s job for 6 consecutive days in the field was to go into town, get his finger cleaned, and then at night type the data into the computer...with one hand.

Fortunately, like a Hollywood movie, where everyone lives happily ever after, Ben kept his finger. Although there was no permanent damage, Ben now uses specially-designed mitts with built-in hand warmers. So if you ever come across a young researcher wearing a pair of weirdly-designed mitts, you have met Ben ‘pinkie’ Montpetit.