

# day in the life: ben rusholme

**Astronomer** Ben Rusholme from Stanford University spent four months out of the last two years working on the QUAD telescope at the South Pole. The project is one of many particle physics and astrophysics experiments being conducted in Antarctica, his being supported by the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs.

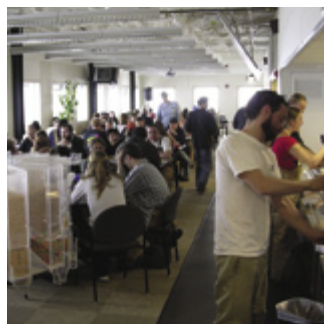
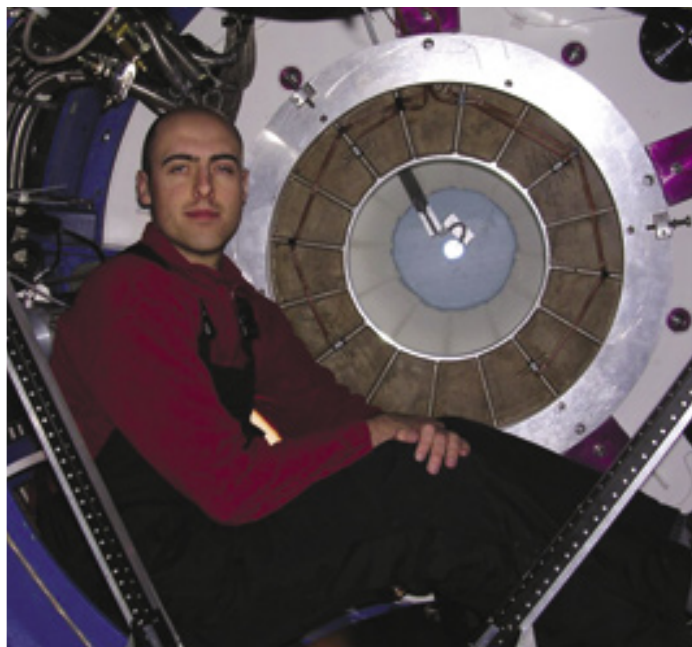
Waking up in the dorms at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, Rusholme rushes to check his email and make phone calls before communication satellites float out of range. After pulling on thermal underwear, a hefty parka, ski trousers, thick socks, fleece cap, goggles, and mammoth gloves, he heads outside to the bathroom block, to the cafeteria for breakfast, and then off to work.

Rusholme spends up to 18 hours each day in the observatory looking at leftover heat from the big bang, called cosmic microwave background radiation. Because the South Pole sits high on two miles of ice and has an exceptionally dry atmosphere, Rusholme can accurately measure the faint glow of radiation in outer space.

Every day, Rusholme wears the same clothes, skipping his shave and shower. He hordes the four minutes of rationed hot water. Once a week, he splurges on fresh clothes and a shower, ignoring his beard until he returns to civilization.

Text: Juhi Yajnik

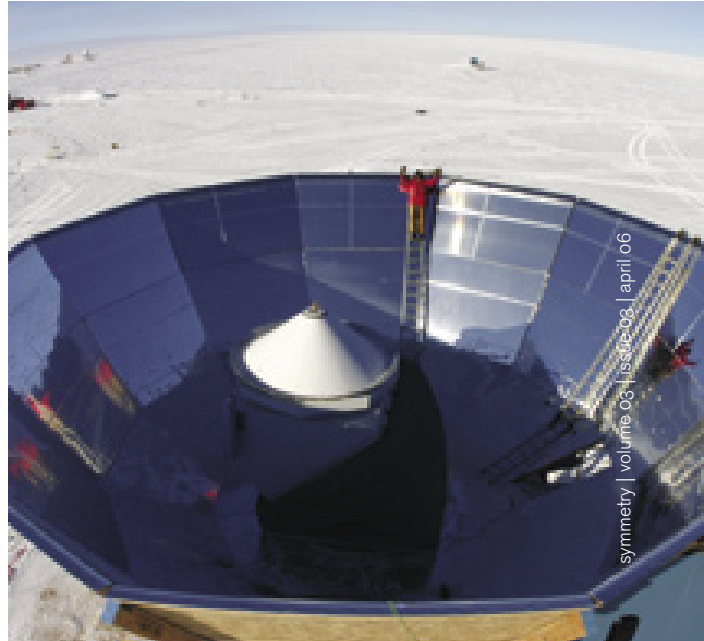
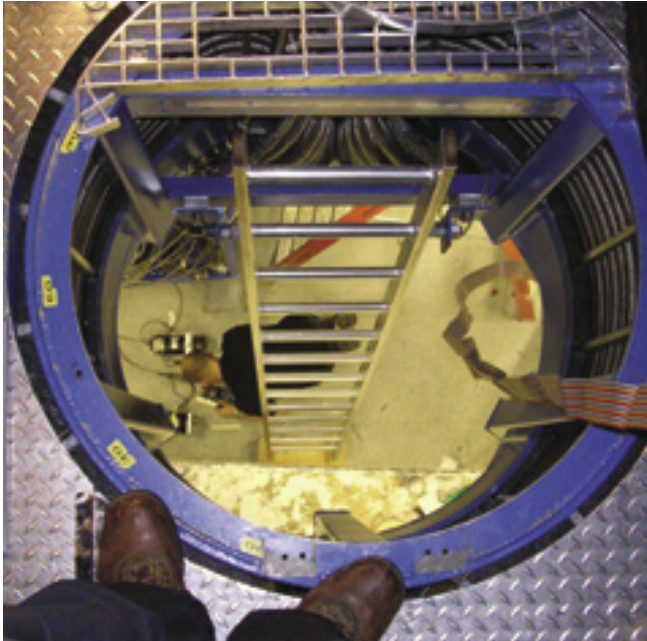
Photos courtesy of Ben Rusholme



*"Food is the highlight of the day. It is the only time we get to take a break and socialize."*



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*"I've been there three times but I've never seen a penguin."*