

A WEB

Continued from page 13

BEST DOWNHILL SITE

Skii Vermont! — <http://mole.uvm.edu/skivr-1/>

Look at pictures of people skiing. Read real skiers' reports about slope conditions. Find information about restaurants and hotels. Request an application to UVM. (For more info on this site, see our Outdoor page this issue.)

BEST BASEBALL SITE

Vermont Expos Homepage — <http://homepages.together.net/~mdobson/vtexpos.htm>

'Ninety-six stats to help you remember, '97 schedule to help you plan, and plenty of merchandise so you can show your support for the home team.

MOST DOWNSTREET SITE

Burlington Home Page — <http://www.burlingtonvt.together.com/homepage.htm>

It ain't pretty, but it's got what you need: on-ramps to maps, weather, news, politics, arts, events, businesses and the whole Vermont Web. They even threw in a color photo of the mayor to print out and hang on your wall.

MOST DOWNHOME SITE

Jericho Home Page — <http://enhanced-designs.com/jericho/>

How can you resist a site that so proudly presents Snowflake Bentley's photos of the white stuff, a guide to Underhill's historic buildings, the local 4-H Club's recipe for doggy treats and a three-year-old interview with Phish's Mike Gordon?

BEST BEACHED WHALE

Charlotte, the Vermont Whale — <http://www.uvm.edu/whale/>

In 1849, railroad workers unearthed the remains of a whale in Charlotte. Visit this "electronic museum" to find out how a sea creature turned up so far from the ocean.

BEST K-12

Marion Cross School Homepage — <http://picard.dartmouth.edu/~cam/MCS.html>

They get an A for combining community sites with school issues and at-home activities. We'll raise their grade to an A+ when they update their six-month-old calendar of events.

BEST VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

Vermont State Parks — <http://www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/parks/>

Take your mouse on a hike down Burton Isle State Park's nature trail, or plan a real outing with the aid of maps, weather forecasts, pretty pictures and useful text.

<http://www.pbpub.com/vermont/ticks.htm>

Anyone can appreciate fall foliage. But it takes a real connoisseur to rhapsodize over the splendors of stick season. Follow the link to Mud.

BEST TV SITE

WCAX — <http://www.wcax.com/>

Hot buttons take you directly to the AP wire ser-

vice as well as the latest news, sports, weather and programming information.

BEST RADIO SITE

WIZN — <http://www.wizn.com/>

With links to your favorite bands' homepages, listings of local clubs, a Corm and the Coach scrapbook, you'd almost think you were actually listening to the radio.

EASIEST ACCESS TO THE STATEHOUSE

Vermont Legislative Home Page — <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>

We've got to hand it to whomever put together these Vermont State government Web pages. They're smart and useful models of cyber-citizenry. Use this one to read the text of a pending bill, track its legislative progress, find out who's on the relevant committee and send e-mail directly to those members.

CRANKIEST POLITICS

The Watchman — <http://plainfield.bypass.com/~watchman/>

Settle down beside the woodstove and vent your frustrations about Vermont's lost status as an independent Republic. Jeezum crow!

THE BEST PERSONAL DIRECTORY

Paul's Frickin' Vermont Page — <http://www.well.com/user/pb/vt/>

Paul Bissex helps you pull in loads of fun sites from Vermont and all over.

THE BEST ARTS AND CULTURE DIRECTORY

Big Heavy World — <http://www.bigheavyworld.com/>

Yes, this is the home of *Seven Days* site, so maybe we are a little biased. But you really ought to check us out — not to mention designer Jim Lockridge's compilation of everything you'd want to know about the Burlington music scene — you can even listen to CDs!

Continued on page 22

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*What's a laid-up skier to do
but hit the cyberslopes?*

VIRTUALLY DOWNHILL

By David Healy

What do you do if you're an active skier and you take a tree limb right between the legs? Well, after stitches in the emergency room and quality time with a urologist, a secondary type of panic sets in: You're out of commis-

(<http://mole.uvm.edu/ski-vt-l/>), the self-described "only one, true non-commercial underground alternative Vermont Skiing Sourcebook on the Web." Like a little kid the night before hitting the slopes, my excitement about exploring these possibilities made it hard to sleep.

Created by Wesley Wright,

seeming anachronistic, I moved from the SkiVt-L home page to the "Vermont Day Lodge" — a place where "you can pass through many doors into myriad virtual Vermont skiing experiences." The lodge includes a link to "Vermont's Weather Information" — courtesy of those weather mavens at Lyndonville State College —

cupcakes at the Daily Bread Bakery," I thought to myself. "If I could ever get an Amazon through the Net, that would be progress!"

Though disallowing favorite ski trip pit-stops, the power of the Internet and SkiVt-L does allow you to go anywhere in the state — fast. In the time it takes to make a pole plant, I found myself in the north country ready to begin "a guided tour of Jay Peak," led by Marc Guido. I was all dressed up and ready to go, but... no Guido.

Fortunately, he left a trail — "First Tracks" — his online skiing guide. Catching up to Guido in his "virtual world," I received a friendly introduction and the low-down on Jay Peak. We found some fresh tracks on JFK and Ullr's Dream, even skied the old Poma Line.

Funny thing, Marc gave me the goods on Jay, but I can't for the life of me remember how he skis or what he looks like. "Who was that masked man?" I nearly said aloud. No matter, the quads still felt good. Time to glide from the glades at Jay to some of my favorite runs at Stowe.

Like the area itself, Stowe has an expansive and polished Web site. I checked out the "Inside Line" for an "On the Hill" report as well as "News & Notes." As if riding the gondola, I was protected and warm, the quiet interrupted only by the hum of the computer, er, lift cable.

At the bottom of the Gondolier trail I saw a ski bum I recognized. Kim Brown. He had snow in his glasses, a smile on his face, and as he licked his fingers he muttered something about Angel Food — a section of Stowe trees he's known to frequent.

With a quick swish of my keyboard, I was linked to Brown's weekly "Ski Bum's Corner" and found it hadn't been updated since December

We've heard about "surfing the Net," but, hey, you ought to be able to ski the damn thing.



sion for at least a week. No skiing.

But the doctor never said anything about that blurry line between reality and the Internet. And for this intrepid skier — normally pretty deft on the slopes but a rank beginner on the Web — this presented a new challenge: to negotiate the bumps and moguls of cyberspace. We've heard about "surfing the Net," but, hey, you ought to be able to ski the damn thing. It turns out, of course, that you can.

A late-night foray turned up 127,803 sites associated with skiing, including SkiVt-L

with support from Computing and Information Technology at UVM, SkiVt-L is a free electronic mail-based listserv discussion list. An award-winning Web site dealing with all aspects of Vermont skiing, SkiVt-L is a virtual powder stash.

So at 7:00 a.m. the alarm broke through my consciousness, revealing the clear blue light of a Macintosh morning. The day looked fine, but I was going skiing, and it was no time to break routines: I needed a mountain weather and ski conditions report.

With my telephone now

and a host of other links.

I decided to bypass the weather service in favor of the Mad River Glen Web site, complete with general weather and trail conditions. "No worry, no hurry," is how I translated the report. It was minus four at the base. Time for some cyber-coffee.

Since I was in the "virtual lodge" picking up my java anyway, I browsed the "Vermont Picture Book." As if on a drive from downtown Burlington to ski country, I took in views of UVM, picturesque valleys and Camel's Hump. "Camel's Hump, Richmond, Amazon

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DOWNHILL

Continued from page 23

22. Angel Food and other treats were surely available, but just to make sure, I returned to the home page and traversed the "Summit Snow Depth on top of mighty Mount Mansfield" link. Over 50 inches at the stake, the woods were probably safe, but they'd have to wait until after lunch.

Over a bowl of ski-area chili from the all-new "State Facts Dining Room," I linked up with "SkiNet," a *Time-Mirror* Magazines venture, to search for a November 1995 *Ski Magazine* feature on SkiVt-L. Although I could watch a cybercast of a World Cup aerial competition, I couldn't find old issues of the real magazine. Oh, well, hard copy is down the street in the library; it was time to make the mid-day switch to tele gear.

Pins in place, I hurried to "Vermont's back country" and found a mountain of information, including a guide to the alpine ski areas and suggestions and maps for backcountry trips in the Mt. Mansfield/Camel's

Hump region. Great stuff, but, able to earn my turns, I made off instead to the woods of Mad River via the "Vermont Skiing Photo Gallery."

Everyone knows that the powder lasts longer in the trees, but in cyberspace it's unbeliev-

*As if riding the
gondola, I was
protected and
warm, the quiet
interrupted only
by the hum of the
computer, er, lift
cable.*

able - "freshies" from 1994 are still floating around. Wanting a part of that action, I plunged into my first turn so hard that I bounced back to a "disclaimer" page from "Vermont's back country" link. "Backcountry,

telemark, cross-country skiing and winter travel in remote regions, by their nature, are dangerous," the screen told me. "Such travel should only be attempted by experienced individuals in groups of three or more." Alone at my computer, I flashed back to that tree I hit two weeks earlier, then decided to head down a marked trail to the lodge.

In the basement of the SkiVt-L lodge, I found the headquarters of the "Broken Rib Missing Tooth World Tour," with furnishings provided by "Powder Hound" and "Wunderski" — places where you can make online and real-world connections with other skiers. But, I know too well that the last run of the day is the most dangerous, so I packed my bags, shouldered my skis and headed outside SkiVt-L.

Browsing the horizon, I spotted iSKI, another Web site. Their home-page quotes an unnamed skier, saying, "It doesn't matter where you ski, only that you ski." True enough, I reflected — even if it's on cyberslopes. □

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