

**RELEASE
THE RABID
MARMOTS
ON...**

...the punks who stole two new rails from Whistler's recently expanded kiddie terrain playground, known as the Chipmunk Park. The rails, valued at \$800, will be replaced with funds previously allocated for the park's "big wall ride." As terrain park manager Stu Osborne puts it: "The culprits have stolen from the whole jib community."

(FLASH TO IMAGE OF TODDLERS CRYING.)

YES, YOUR VOTE MATTERS

WHAT'D YOU THINK OF OUR PICKS FOR THE 25 TOP RESORTS (NOVEMBER, 2003)? WERE WE ON THE MARK? WAY OFF BASE? DID WE LEAVE SOMEPLACE OUT?

LET US KNOW AT WWW.SKIINGMAG.COM YOUR VOTE COUNTS TOWARD WHICH SKI AREAS MAKE THE CUT IN NEXT YEAR'S RANKING.



"IT'S ALMOST AS FAST GOING DOWN."
Scraping (ice) for turns near U.S. McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

DESPERATION

Bipolar Disorder

MAINE TOO ICY? WINDS AT VAIL TOO HIGH? OH, QUIT YOUR WHINING. THESE GUYS REALLY HAVE IT BAD.

THIS SPRING, AS MOST OF US SHED OUR SHELLS FOR T-SHIRTS, A FEW HUNDRED SUN-light-deficient skiers at the top and bottom of the world are scratching for whatever skiing they can get. Researchers at McMurdo Station, a U.S. research base in Antarctica, make their final turns of the season on the nearby Scott Base Ski Field as they prepare for six months of 24-7 darkness. Meanwhile, enlistees at the U.S. Air Force base in Thule, Greenland, are emerging from constant night to carve slopes that most of us wouldn't explore in a Sno-Cat. Below, a look at the ski scene in the farthest reaches of the globe, as compared to that of Vail—which you should never again take for granted. —**BRIAN SCHOTT**

	Vail, Colorado 100 miles west of Denver	Thule Air Force Base, Thule, Greenland 700 miles north of Arctic Circle	Scott Base Ski Field, Antarctica 600 miles from the South Pole
DARKNESS	At night	September to April	February to September
AVERAGE TEMPS/SNOW FALL	35 degrees/346 inches	17 degrees below zero/A dusting from the ice cap.	13 degrees/Less precipitation than the Sahara Desert (you ski ice, not snow).
SKIABLE TERRAIN/VERT. DROP	5,289 acres/3,450 feet	247 acres/A few inches (but who's counting?).	5.5 acres/492 feet
LODGING	A suite at Game Creek Chalet includes catered breakfast and hot tub with view of Rockies.	Choice between high-rise dorm or low-rise dorm with one-dimensional tundra views.	A tiny dorm room in which only one person can stand up at a time.
COST	\$73 per lift ticket	Enlistment in the U.S. Air Force	An invitation from the New Zealand government—but it's easy to come by. Seriously.
LOCAL'S TAKE	"Last Saturday was an epic day," says resident Kurt Krieg. "We had 30 new inches!"	"It's bulletproof," says 2nd Lt. James Somerville. "You have to be choosy about where you turn."	Says Julie Raine, a McMurdo-based accounting clerk: "The snow here sucks."

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