

WESTCHESTER family™

June 2010

FREE

Happy Father's Day!

- CRAFTY GIFTS
- PRESENTS
TO PURCHASE
- TIPS FOR
STAY-AT-HOME
DADS

75 Camps & Summer Programs

ENROLL NOW!



NAPPA Parenting Resources Awards

PLUS: Visit Vermont! • Childhood Burns • Your Child's Final Report Card

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FEATURES

22 NAPPA Gold Winners Make Parenting Fun and Easier

From great baby shower gifts to parenting books that reveal the mysteries of touchy teens, there's something for everyone in the 2010 National Parenting Publications Awards (NAPPA) for Parenting Resources. Find out which products wowed our judges and will make your life easier, no matter what stage of parenting you're at!

46 Stay At Home Dad: A Mother's Perspective

What does it take to be the best stay-at-home dad? A mom reveals what it takes to make this lifestyle work for the entire family. Find tips and resources on what's important for you to know.

50 Crafty Gifts For Dad

Homemade gifts are the best! Get the children together and have fun making these classic gifts that dad will cherish.

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NEXT MONTH

Visit Lasdon Park in Somers

Celebrate July 4th at this fabulous park and learn something about history. Did you know there is a small museum on site and a wonderful collection of historical statues?

The Best Bargains! If you think you know all the local bargains check out our feature to make sure you're not missing what could be a great deal!

• **Plus ... Westchester Family's** award-winning searchable **Calendar** for families and much more!

Look for it starting June 21!



ON THE COVER

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COVER PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

By Traci L. Suppa

Vermont

IN THE SUMMER

Have Some No-Snow Family Fun!

If you're like me, you believe skiing is a sport best left to Olympic athletes and the Swiss. However, you risk overlooking some great summer vacation destinations in New England, thinking they don't have much to offer when it's not snowing. Vermont, as my family found out, has a lot going for it when the mountains of the "Green Mountain State" are still actually green.

Snug at "Smuggs"

We spent a week in the northwest corner of Vermont, which includes Burlington, Jeffersonville, Shelburne and Waterbury. Base camp was the **Smuggler's Notch Resort**, or "Smuggs," a sprawling family-friendly property set on Mt. Morse in Jeffersonville. It's a challenge choosing from the multitude of family activities, events and entertainment. Nearly all the programs, for both children and adults, are included in your lodging fees. Accommodations are condominiums with a variety of configurations and full kitchens.

One of the highlights of our stay was a morning spent geocaching, a growing phenomenon and hiking sport using a portable GPS device to find hidden boxes filled with trinkets. Our guide kept track of us, but gave us independence to cast our trail through the sun-dappled woods. Our kids could have spent every waking moment in the pools and on the water slides; and there are several from which to choose. I was able to spend some "me" time enjoying a chocolate-tasting workshop, but didn't have time for a yoga session or painting lesson.

In addition to the group sports and activities for kids



Families can enjoy the pool at Smuggler's Notch and have fun visiting the Vermont Teddy Bear Company.

VISIT VERMONT

● **Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory**
1281 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury
802-882-1240
Benandjerrys.com

● **Cabot Annex Store**
2657 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury
802-244-6334
Cabotcheese.coop

● **ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center**
One College St., Burlington
802-864-1848
Echovermont.org

● **Green Mountain Coffee Visitor Center & Café**
One Rotarian Place, Waterbury
877-TRY-BEAN
WaterburyStation.com

● **Lake Champlain Chocolates Factory Store**
750 Pine St., Burlington
802-864-1807
Lakechamplainchocolates.com

● **North Beach**
52 Institute Road, Burlington
Enjoyburlington.com/northbeach.cfm

● **Shelburne Museum**
5555 Shelburne Road, Shelburne
802-985-3346
Shelburnemuseum.org

● **Smugglers' Notch Resort**
4323 Vermont Rte. 108 South,
Smugglers' Notch
800-419-4615
Smuggs.com

● **Spirit of Ethan Allen**
348 Flynn Ave., Burlington
802-862-8300
Soea.com

● **Vermont Teddy Bear Company**
6655 Shelburne Road, Shelburne
800-829-BEAR
VermontTeddyBear.com



Take a 30-minute tour of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory and enjoy the free taste afterwards.

ages 3 to 14, the “Summer Fun University” provides a day of supervised non-stop activity. Treasures, the state-of-the-art childcare center, welcomes infants from 6 weeks old, allowing adults some down time.

Every evening, there is a show or program, including magic shows, bingo and bonfire sing-alongs. During the “FunMeister’s Summer Showcase,” a festival on the Village Green, our 2-year-old daughter Emilia took her first pony ride. While chatting with the mom behind us on line to get balloon animals from a stiltwalker, we shared a knowing laugh about how our vacations have changed since having kids.

In, On and By The Lake

We drove west to Burlington in under an hour, dedicating three days to squeeze in several activities. The first afternoon, we visited **North Beach** for a swim in Lake Champlain. We were on a mission to spot “Champ.” Since the time of the Iroquois, local folklore has regaled the existence of a serpent creature living in the lake. You’ll see Champ’s friendly likeness everywhere on souvenirs, and we also found a granite monument honoring “Beula Aquatica Champlainiensis.”

There’s an entire exhibit devoted to Champ at the **ECHO Lake Aquarium Science Center**, which sits on the waterfront. ECHO, which stands for Ecology, Culture, History and Opportunity, features more than 70 live species of marine life, more than 100 interactive experiences, seasonal exhibits and participatory events.

Our 9-year-old son Leo thought the hurricane simulator booth, which replicated wind speeds of nearly 80 mph, was a highlight. He also enjoyed making and launching paper rockets with pressurized air and motorized launchers at the “Pump it Up” and “Wing Zingers” displays. Emilia preferred the Discovery Place upstairs, an activity room dedicated to toddlers and preschoolers. They both liked using a brush and chisel in the “Beluga Whale Dig,” and



Take a 90-minute cruise on the *Ethan Allen* and see some amazing views.

observing the daily feeding of lake trout and Atlantic salmon in a ceiling-high tank.

The largest group sighting of Champ supposedly occurred in 1984 during a lake cruise aboard the *Ethan Allen*, so we brought our binoculars along when we took a scenic ride. We had no luck spotting him/her/it, but we appreciated the views from the top deck, and the air-conditioned comfort of the dining room below, where we enjoyed a buffet lunch. The 90-minute narrated tour brought us to the center and deepest point of the lake, past shale outcroppings, scuba dive sites, several of the 70 small islands, and along Burlington's waterfront.

Flavorful Factory Tours

There are a lot of factory tours in this region of Vermont, so we stayed within our comfort zone: food. In Burlington, **Lake Champlain Chocolates** began in 1983, producing handmade artisanal truffles. The delectable offerings have expanded to include traditional chocolates, bars, dipped fruit, ice cream and hot drinks. You can learn about the process and watch production on their weekday tours at the factory store and café. We left with bags of factory seconds, because broken chocolate-covered pretzels taste just as good.

Timing is important when planning your visit to **Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory**. Go when you've just eaten a full meal, and you won't have room for the ample free taste you get at the end of the 30-minute tour. Go when you're hungry, and you might also order a 20-scoop "Vermonster" at the scoop shop. Walk it off with a stroll up to the Flavor Graveyard, where mock headstones honor discontinued flavors. A chocoholic like his mom, Leo paused to recognize the passing of "Devil's Food Chocolate." We also spent time at the playground and in the gift shop, where I got my niece a colorful tie-dye onesie.

We made two other stops in Waterbury. The **Cabot Annex** is a factory store for the name brand cheese company, which, like Ben & Jerry's, takes advantage of the abundance of nearby dairy farms. At the sampling table, I tried several flavors not available in my local supermarket, like Garlic & Herb Cheddar and Tuscan-Rubbed Cheddar. Downtown, the **Green Mountain Coffee** visitor center and café is inside the historic train station. This quick stop provides a multisensory exhibit showing the bean-to-cup coffee-making process, as well as a shop to stock up on a variety of blends.

Spend Time in Shelburne

An enthusiastic "bear ambassador" greets you with an "unbearably" corny joke at the start of your tour of the **Vermont Teddy Bear Company's** factory in Shelburne, just south of Burlington. Along the way, you'll learn about "Buddy," the first bear born there in 1981, and all the "flavors" they come in, from honey to vanilla, buttercream and dark chocolate. Along the way, the guide describes the progressive stages of production, from cutting fur, sewing, stuffing, to dressing.

You'll get a memento at the end; a five-inch "button bear" cut from scrap fur. The tour ends in a gift shop with a station to make your own bear, which will be presented with a birth certificate, bow tie and travel box. Emilia chose a pink bear from the new collection of "Flatties," and Leo chose a dinosaur. Tours run seven days a week, but on weekdays you can watch the production line. There's a café onsite, as well as a photo op area with life-size bears with cut outs for your face.

Another popular stop in the area is the **Shelburne Museum**, which showcases a diverse and eclectic collection of art and Americana. There are 20 historic structures on site, including a one-room schoolhouse, a light-house, a jail, a general store, a covered bridge and the 220-foot steamboat *Ticonderoga*, a no-fail kid-pleaser. The Owl Cottage Family Activity Center and the Circus Building, with its miniature circus displays and an operating vintage carousel, are also highlights. ♦

Traci L. Suppa is a local family travel writer who likes Ben & Jerry's "Cherry Garcia" flavor the best.