

TechExtra

Find the final frontier

It could be space, the North Pole or China

Entertaining

► Momentous changes in China in the social and economic realms have their counterparts in Chinese arts. "An explosion of diverse work that is simultaneously exhilarating and bewildering," says the Asia Society. Includes adult-oriented themes.) www.asiasociety.org/arts/insideout

The Net:

New and Notable
By Sam Vincent Medfils

► One of the things missing at online museums is the ability to get closer to an artwork. Not anymore, thanks to a "zoom" feature from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. www.famsf.org/imagebase/index.html

► NASA's user-friendly **SpaceLink** posts the latest extraterrestrial happenings, from reports on the international space station to the Stardust comet-exploration craft's status. spacelink.nasa.gov/Spacelink

Hot Topics
► It still may be three weeks until Christmas, but Santa is already quite busy at the **North Pole**. And we're invited to drop in — virtually, at least — to his way-cool village. (For believers only, of course.) nortpole.com

► **Christian Pirate Radio** boasts that it's not "your average organ-music, hymn-singing, Iain'i-going-to-Church radio station." On 24 hours a day via RealAudio and NetShow, plus artist hyperlinks. www.mycpr.com

Oddities

► You may not have the money that **Bill Gates** has. But you can share in his awesome power. A Shockwave game that lets you blast that competitive little Apple thingie. PeopleSpace.com/products/gamelets/megalomania

► Quick question: Do you know that the word "pretzel" stems from the Latin word "brachiatus"? If you do, you are probably one of the very few people who have no need to visit **UselessKnowledge**. Packed with



Hi! I'm Ben, the head elf. We're really busy here in the workshop. Each week we make two different holiday-themed Board Games and Sporting Stuff. Do you want to read a story about them? Click the top on the workshop, or click a picture below. You can even color a picture in a story by clicking on the caption below. X

useless facts, quotes and words. www.uselessknowledge.com

► Need a reason to smile? Here's a whole bunch. (And you even get the time of day thrown in free.) callisto.worldonline.nl/~mjkales/smile.htm

► Just about anywhere you look in cyberspace, you can find Web pages with great art. Here's somebody who spent the past couple of years seeking the "most appalling bad art I could find." You be the judge. (But it sure gets our vote.) www.badart.com

Public affairs

► For the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, **World AIDS Day** is a time for personal healing, hope and compassion. At its site, learn how to participate. gbgim-umc.org/programs/wad198

► Learn about the U.S. president who made "impeachment" a household word. (Hint: It's not Clinton.) Photos, time line and backgrounders on the man we knew as **Tricky Dick**. www.tamun-commerce.edu/coas/history/sarantakes/nixon.html

► More evidence of how the Web has the power to draw people of diverse cultures closer together: the **Latin American Network Informa-**

Virtual variety: Santa's workshop, left, is open to visitors at nortpole.com; Christian Pirate Radio's site, above, offers 'not your average' religious music.

check off the ones you want to include in your query. www.cyber411.com

► Got a geographical question and don't know whom to ask? Ask the **Globe Server**, an artificial intelligence project of the brainiacs at MIT. It's smarter than you think. www.ai.mit.edu/projects/intolab/globe.html

► The movies have the Oscars, and now the Net has the **International Web Page Awards** to reward significant creative achievement online. www.webpageawards.com

► Chase away those start-of-the-week blues with a refreshing mechanized battle on a distant planet. The download of **Heavy Gear II** is drawing rave reviews, and it's free; but at nearly 47 megabytes, it requires a very fast connection or a lot of time. www.activision.com/games/demos.asp?productId=hg2w95

Useful resources

► Shopping on the Web can be rewarding, but time-consuming. Let **Roboshopper** scout the cybermall to compare prices on a wide range of products, including books, music, toys and software. www.roboshopper.com

► What's Thanksgiving without leftovers? Here's a site dedicated to recipes you may need now. www.honeysucklewhite.com/holiday_ideas/leftovers.html

► Get some on-line tips on how to avoid road rage, courtesy of Nissan. You can also take a quiz to see how road-enraged you are. www.nissan-na.com/1.0/

tion Center. Brought to us from the University of Texas, its current focus shows us how Hurricane Mitch has devastated Central America. lanic.utexas.edu/info/newsroom/mitch.html

Technology

► The number of the so-called metasearch engines keeps increasing. Latest: **Cyber411**, which not only lets you query multiple search engines at the same time, but also



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