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HOME

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SPORTS

ENTERTAINMENT

BIZ/MONEY

BOROUGHES

August 25, 2006

Hot List

Parental guidance and family fun

Indoors

SHOP AND HELP SCHOOLS

Who knew spending money could feel so good? NYC & Company and the Fund for Public Schools invite you to buy what you need to help kids read. Through Sept. 8, 50 stores will donate a percentage of sales to buy books for city schools. The "Shop 4 Class" program has raised more than \$160,000 for public school libraries. Call 311 or visit www.nycvisit.com/ShopClassSearch/ for a list of retailers.

SNOW WAY!

Snowmen in August? The clowns of Slava's Snowshow will celebrate the show's two-year anniversary by sculpting 100 snowmen from ice in the Spiegel Garden at the Fulton Fish Market. Carrots, buckets and scarves are provided for families to decorate a snowman. Today, 9 a.m.-noon; free. Spiegel Tent, Pier 17, South Street Seaport. (212) 245-1009, ext. 207.

Outdoors

MUSIC, MAGICS & OTHER HIGH JINKS

The J&R Downtown MusicFest 2006 will throw a Children's Fest in City Hall Park. Family band Laughing Pizza (a mom, dad and daughter trio) will get folks groovin', while MAGICFRANK will wow all ages with magic tricks. Meet Scratch from "Ice Age" and Boog and Elliot from "Open Season." Today, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; free. Between Park Row and Broadway. (212) 238-9000, or see www.jr.com.

A DAY FOR THE KIDDOS AT U.S. OPEN

The U.S. Open kicks off with Arthur Ashe Kids' Day, presented by Hess, at the USTA National Tennis Center. SpongeBob SquarePants and Dora the Explorer will greet kids, and singers Cheyenne Kimball and Teddy Geiger will entertain parents. Rub elbows with tennis pros Andre Agassi and Serena Williams! Today, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; games and clinics on the grounds free, \$10 for promenade tickets, \$20 for loge tickets. Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens. (1-866-OPEN-TIX).

BABY WE WERE BORN TO RUN

The first New York City Half-Marathon, presented by Nike, will showcase the city from Central Park to Battery Park. Cheering zones will play live music and raise money for charities, and the finish line festival - from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at West Side Highway and Canal St. - will present street performers and more. Tomorrow, race starts 7 a.m.; free. Central Park's East Drive, at 80th St. Visit www.nyrr.org for schedule and cheering zones.

Educational

FREE FUN TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

Teach your kids to reach for the stars, no matter what their gender. The first New York City Festival for Gender Equality encourages boys to double-dutch, girls to play basketball, and everyone to respect one another, through live entertainment, speakers, workshops and free food and other giveaways. Tomorrow, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; free. Von King Park, Tompkins Ave. and Lafayette St., Brooklyn. (718) 857-1393.

LISTEN TO THE CLASSICS WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

Classical pianist Roy Eaton will perform at the Cross-Generation Chess Program in Goldwater Memorial Hospital. Grandparents, bring your grandkids - or vice versa - and learn about another generation while enjoying live classical music. Tomorrow, 2-5 p.m.; free. 1 Main St., Roosevelt Island. (917) 822-3141.

Nicole Lyn Pesce