



ROLLER DERBY AT YONKERS RINK, SKATERS HAVE EDGY FUN

Athletes with an attitude

Femininity, ferocity mix in Westchester's new amateur league

Candice Ferrette
The Journal News

YONKERS
Megan "Slim Fast" Freeman doesn't throw her body onto the floor, slide about 50 feet and crash into a Plexiglass wall for just any sport.

Unless she's allowed to wear her fishnet tights and black eyeliner, that is.

The tattooed 32-year-old Port Chester resident recently founded Suburbia Roller Derby, Westchester's first amateur roller derby league.

"You get to be tough, bad ... aggressive. You get to be really athletic and then there's the part of you that likes to get all dressed up — you get to be a girly girl — all at the same time," Freeman said after she spit out a black rubber mouth guard. "It's incredibly empowering."

If you go

Suburbia Roller Derby is preparing for its first "Punk and Roll Fundraiser" Saturday at the E.J. Murray Memorial Skating Center in Yonkers from 8:30 p.m. to midnight.

The public event will feature DJs Stella and Rat Boy, games and prizes.



On the Web

See a special photo gallery at lohud.com

With the help of a few friends, a posting on MySpace and another on Craigslist, the group, which began only months ago with three women now boasts more than 15 "roller girls" in its ranks.

Call it the third (or fourth) coming of roller derby.

First started in 1935, roller derby was far from the raucous sport it is today. Featuring teams of one man and one woman, the Transcontinental Roller Derby in Chicago was a test of endurance, with both teams skating thousands of laps around a rink at a time.

With the advent of TV in the 1950s, the sport became a national sensation that turned female players like Midge "Toughie" Brauhm into minor celebrities.

Of all its incarnations, however, roller derby is most famous for the campy, wrestling-type extravagan-



Kim O'Leary, left, of Yonkers, and Lexie Zimmerman, of Greenwich, Conn., put on their gear as they head back for another skate during practice for the Suburbia Roller Derby at E.J. Murray Memorial Skating Center in Yonkers. Dave Kennedy/The Journal News



Megan Freeman, aka "Slim Fast," straps on wrist braces before hitting the rink during practice for the Suburbia Roller Derby. Dave Kennedy/The Journal News

2 from region on N.J. teams

Jessica Seminelli
Special to The Journal News

By day, Martha Ward works in a New York City office for Tishman Speyer, a worldwide real estate company.

By night, however, she leaves the business world behind and dons roller skates, a fierce attitude and the name "Pinstripe Punisher."

Ward, a 32-year-old from New City, is a member of the Garden State Rollergirls, a three-team roller derby league with members from Rockland and northern New Jersey.

Please see ROLLERGIRLS, 2B



Courtesy of Martha Ward
Martha Ward, the "Pinstripe Punisher," of New City plays for the Ironbound Maidens of the Garden State Rollergirls League.

Feds OK \$354M for NYC toll plan

D.C. to reclaim funds if project fails to get approval by March 31

Jay Gallagher
Albany Bureau

ALBANY — The imposition of fees on drivers traveling into the Manhattan business district took a step closer to reality yesterday when the federal Department of Transportation awarded \$354 million to help the project along.

The plan as envisioned by Mayor Michael Bloomberg calls for charging cars \$8 and trucks \$21 to travel south of 86th Street in the congested borough between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays. It could be in effect as early as 2009.

The state Legislature would have to approve a plan by March 31, however, or the money goes back to Washington.

All the major state and city political leaders yesterday enthusiastically endorsed the decision by the Transportation Department to award the money to the project, except Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, who was far more cautious.

"While there has been support for the mayor's plan, there has also been strong opposition," said Silver, D-Manhattan. "I have heard concerns from my own constituents. My Assembly colleagues in and near New York City have heard concerns from their constituents as well. I believe it is essential to consider these con-

Please see TRAFFIC, 2B

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Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver

DMC gives hope to kids in foster care

Darryl McDaniels was 35 years old when he learned he was adopted. The DMC of Run-DMC was working on his autobiography and the hip-hop star had asked his mother for some information. That's when she told him.

McDaniels has since found his birth mother, taped a documentary about his search and, with the casting director of "The Sopranos," Sheila Jaffe, who also was adopted, created a camp for children in foster care.

"We are the fortunate children ... we got taken home," they write on a Web site devoted to the camp. "There are many children who did not. There are many children growing up without parents, in the foster care 'system' or with parents who aren't really equipped. These children do not have the opportunities we had, or parental hands to guide and support them as we did."

If you think his is a hands-off relationship with Camp Felix in Putnam Valley, here's an image for you: Seventy-five campers dancing and rapping and dressed in white T-shirts seemingly every one of which had been autographed. Or this one: Seventy-five campers nearly silent as they listened to McDaniels tell them they could do anything. Don't imitate Jay-Z or Beyoncé or

Please see O'DONNELL, 2B



Noreen O'Donnell

For more info

For more information about children in Westchester County who are available for adoption: www.westchestergov.com/adoption

Spitzer calls for hearings to look into forming universal health care

Panel to help insurance, health commissioners

Cara Matthews
Albany Bureau

ALBANY — Gov. Eliot Spitzer's administration announced yesterday that it would hold five public hearings in the fall on providing universal health-insurance coverage in New York, which has about 2.5 million residents without it

and spends more per person on medical care than any other state.

Spitzer announced in January that his administration would develop a plan for affordable health insurance for everyone. The hearings, which are being conducted by the state Insurance and Health departments, will be held between September and December. At the same time, the state is seeking a consultant to analyze proposals.

A panel of experts will help the insurance and health commissioners,

who are required to submit recommendations to the governor by May 31.

"We must ensure that we spend our health-care dollars efficiently and effectively so that every New Yorker can afford health insurance and access the quality of care they need to live longer and healthier lives," Dr. Richard Daines, health commissioner, said in a statement.

But the key question will be how New York pays for it.

"Really the trick is going to be, as we

all understand, is how we finance it," said William Van Slyke, a spokesman for the Healthcare Association of New York State, which supports the concept of universal coverage.

"Everybody that's got a hand in this has got to be part of the solution," said Van Slyke, whose organization represents hospitals and health systems.

According to census data from 2006, 16.5 million New Yorkers have health-insurance coverage and 9.3 million of

Please see HEALTH, 2B

If you go

- Schedule of public hearings, all of which run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will be webcast:
 - Sept. 5, Glens Falls (Warren County) Civic Center.
 - Oct. 3, Erie County Community College, Buffalo.
 - Oct. 30, Fordham University, New York City.
 - Nov. 13, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse.
 - Dec. 5, State University of New York at Old Westbury, Nassau County.

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