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UNDER 21

Rock, hip-hop, CPR: get to class, people

By Erin Meister, Globe Correspondent, 03/20/2003

It's easy for life to begin to seem like it's made entirely of algebra lessons and MCAS preparations, especially when summer vacation feels so close, yet so far. Well, not all forms of education have to be a bore. In fact, there are plenty of things out there that are more fun to learn than biology and Colonial American history.

Speaking of school, why not try mingling with a different kind all together after completing a round of scuba classes with the Boston Scuba Academy's Open-Water courses? The session is composed of six 3-hour lessons, equally divided between lecture and water time. Although \$195 may sound a little steep for the classes, the fee can be paid off in installments as negotiated with the YMCA instructors. Scuba gear can also be rented when you're ready to hit the high seas. Forget just wading through endless pages of "Moby Dick," forge your way through the endless salty blue, instead (with a certified guide, of course).

Who knew it could be so easy to learn how to be a rock star? At ADrums in Allston, \$99 a month will put you on your way to pounding out percussion like a regular Alex Van Halen. Face to face lessons allow student and drum coach to play simultaneously, and they have play-along and recording sessions available when you get the itch to pound out the rock tunes. ADrums' website even includes two Real Audio recordings of simple drum beats for students to memorize and practice to.

After you master the art of rock 'n' roll, why not try your hand (or feet) at hip-hop dancing? Show stopping, dance-floor hogging moves are taught by David Liberge, an accomplished dancer and teacher with Hop to the Beat Dance Studio. With just a few short weeks of classes under the elastic belt of your sweatpants, you'll be on your way to a video set for MTV. OK, maybe not, but you'll have a lot of fun, and you'll probably upstage everyone else at the next school dance. Lessons are held at Cambridge's Green Street Studio and are only \$35 for a three week stint. The March/April session starts next week, so hip-hop to it and call to register.

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If you're thinking about baby-sitting or lifeguarding this summer, it's a good idea to invest in some CPR or first aid classes like those offered at Bettina Small Group.

"People are afraid of [CPR] but it's really easy to learn," said Bettina Small, a CPR coach who offers one-on-one lessons and certification training. "It's more about recognizing emergency situations and knowing what to do." The Heimlich maneuver, rescue breathing, chest compressions, and circulatory assistance training are provided in the lessons.

Small, who offers night and weekend classes and often comes to clients' homes for their instruction, says learning child and infant CPR is also an asset when applying for camp counseling jobs; a popular summertime retreat both into the worlds of responsibility and mentorship.

She does, however, recommend the classes only for the 14-plus set, since "people under 14 aren't usually strong enough for some of the techniques." An electronic information request form is available on her website, and she said she often reduces the price from the \$40 per person fee when larger groups organize classes together.

Don't ditch the math book yet, but remember that not all classes require number two pencils and well-organized binders. And heck, you might even learn something fun for a change.



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