

# Health and Fitness Supplement

A Guide to Different Views on Fitness

January 25, 1995



# A Tale of Duplicity

## A Historical Look Back at How Synchronized Swimming Got its Start

By Roget Snevell

It may be the middle of winter, the rains may be falling, and the winds may be howling through the eucalyptus, knocking all the koalas to the ground, but nothing short of an ice age can keep me from practicing my favorite sport — synchronized swimming.

Many regard the sport of water dancing merely as a diversion for the men and women who couldn't make the cut for land sports, but it's so much more than that.

It's an Olympic sport.

Now, it's not like curling or that gymnastic-type sport with the hoop, ball and ribbon; it's a sport that requires grace and strength, and has nothing to do with brooms.

I've been a practitioner of this sport for years now, and while I admit it is difficult to get a pickup game of synchronized swimming going, I have found that the sport is alive and well, mainly in remote Midwestern towns and farming communities with pools.

The sport of synchronized swimming dates back

to the ancient Druids, who initiated the newest members of their ranks by holding them upside down in the nearest body of water and yelling, "Swim!"

While the sport was banned in the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans because it was viewed as detrimental to the mental and physical health of the swimmer, it enjoyed a resurgence in the Middle Ages, a time when that sort of thing was widely accepted.

The sport went through few changes by medieval times. It was still a religious celebration, but was usually performed on Easter Sunday to the *Haec Dies*, instead of to the chant "Swim!" Few are aware, however, that the two are one and the same, only in different languages.

During the Age of Exploration, synchronized swimming was no longer viewed as a religious act, but instead took on a certain mythological quality. Remember the mermaids whom sailors claimed to have seen from the decks of their ships? They weren't manatees or seals, they were synchronized

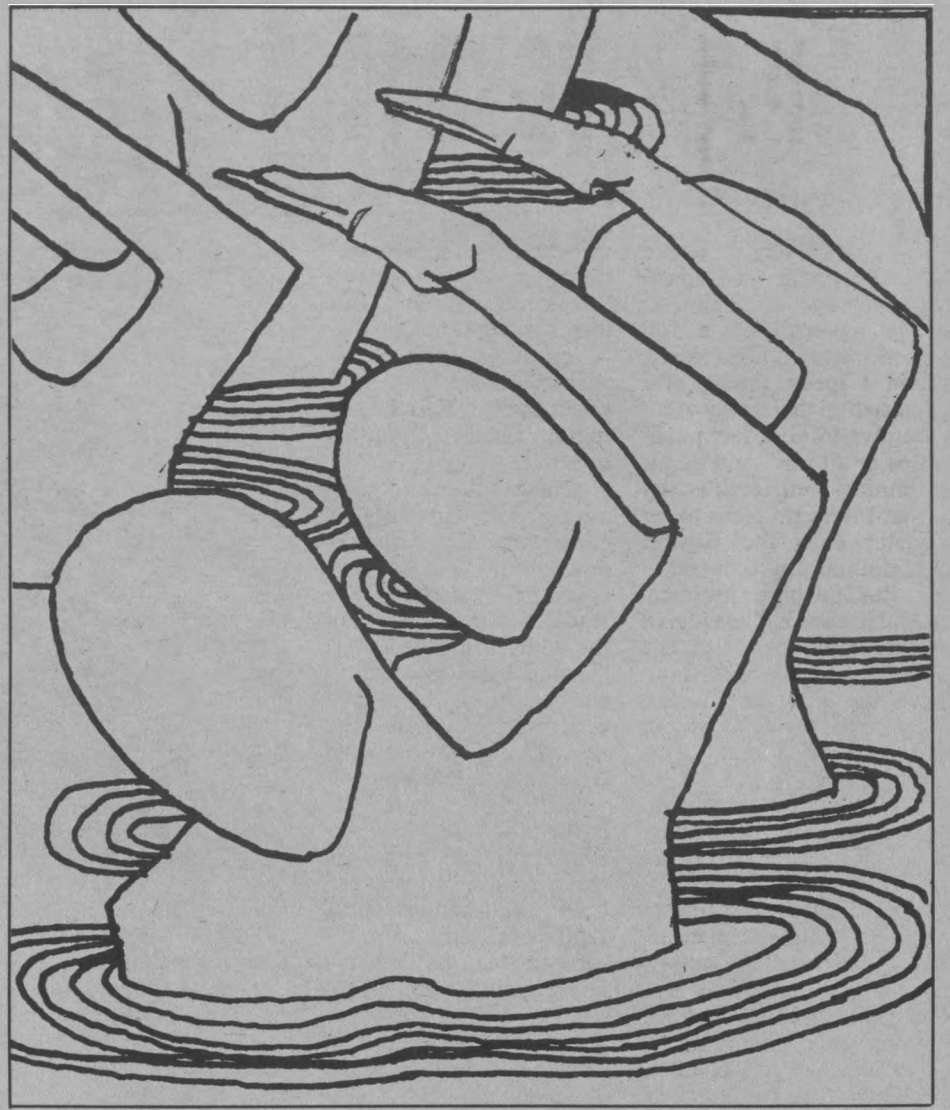
swimmers.

The sport continued to evolve in different directions, with many forms developing, including the little-known faction of rebel water dancers, the Synchronized Freedom Fighters, who were instrumental in aiding the colonists defeat the British in the American Revolution.

The period between the Revolution and the Civil War was a low point for synchronized swimming. The sport even got a slightly tarnished reputation when ex-synchronized swimmer John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln and botched his getaway, demonstrating a clumsiness which the world took as representative of all synchronized swimmers.

During the Civil War, synchronized swimmers once again banded together to help the North do its part, and a large portion of them were present at Appomattox.

Synchronized swimmers remained somewhat inactive throughout the Industrial Age, although they had to fight bitterly to keep their fast-disappearing places to



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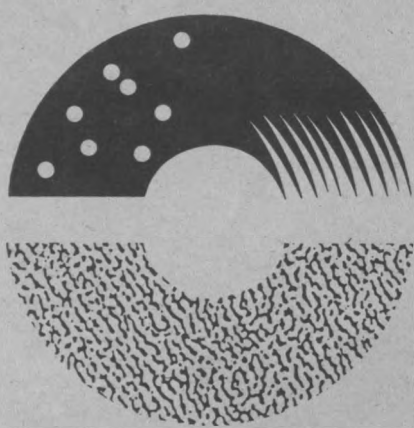
practice.

At this point in history, synchronized swimming was no longer religious or mythological, but instead had become a way for some to hide from their past. Those who became synchronized swimmers were the best at their trade; many had left the Foreign Legion to join. These were the truly desperate.

In the period of relative peace between WWI and WWII, synchronized swimmers lost their reputation as grizzly, seasoned warriors, and once again became the genteel, graceful sports people they once were. Yet they still played a part in WWII as guides to the shore for the soldiers who stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.

After that final moment of glory, the sport of synchronized swimming relinquished its colorful, active role in worldwide events and became what it was best designed to be — though it has seen a decline in popularity over the years, synchronized swimming will never die as long as there are remote Midwestern towns,

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# A Single Voyage

By Gringolet Rafalo

I guess it could be said that I'm not much of an expert on health or fitness. I've never done a full workout in my life. I rarely, and I mean rarely, ever muster up the energy or incentive to do a few push-ups or sit-ups. And as for running, well, let's just say that I have no plans to register with the Boston Marathon any time soon.

But I did take a jog once. And it was a helluva jog. In fact, it was here, in Isla Vista, where I trekked out on my mission of fitness, just last quarter. It was an experience I will never forget.

It all started when I was sitting around my house doing nothing at about 12:25 a.m., and the phone rang. Though it wasn't for me, I overheard my roommate talking to the caller. I paid no attention at first, but then I heard something quite disturbing.

"What are you up to tonight?" I heard my roommate say. "Oh, really? Yeah, I've been studying tonight too. Uh huh. What's your midterm in? Oh, that's not bad. I took Music 15 last year, and it was pretty easy..."

That's when I did a mental double-take, for though I hadn't gone to Music 15 for three weeks, I was still officially enrolled, and suddenly I had one night to try to study 450 years of audio progress.

I considered dropping

the class then and there. But that would have left me with eight units. I considered paying someone to take the test for me. But then I thought better of it — cheating, after all, is against university policy. I knew there was only one option. I had to cram this one out.

And so I brewed myself a cup of potent instant Folger's Crystals, and sat down with my books and tapes. And I studied. And studied. And studied. All the while, I listened. And listened. And listened. It got to the point that I couldn't stand hearing *Haec Dies* anymore, or I'd suffer a breakdown.

Before I knew it, the sun had risen, and I had finished my 158 pages of reading. But I was dead tired. I still had six hours until class started, and if I tried to sleep until then I knew I wouldn't be able to rise again until the afternoon cartoons had begun. I needed something to get my blood flowing, to re-energize myself. And since no drugs were readily available, I decided to take an invigorating jog.

I laced up my Vans and stepped out the door of my humble Del Playa abode. And what I saw was astounding. It was easily one of the most breathtaking sunrises I had ever laid my eyes upon. True, it was about the fourth sunrise I had ever laid my eyes upon, but it was a good one nonetheless.



OBI KAUFMANN/Daily Nexus

As I started my jog, I noticed that Isla Vista in the morning is a magical thing. The ocean breezes fluttered by as the crashing waves broke on the shore. Grassy knolls were laden with dew. Seagulls glided by overhead.

My feet carried me off the pavement of D.P. and onto the trail toward Sands Beach. Now that there were no mass-produced houses obstructing my view of the Pacific, I could see the grandeur of the panoramic view. The sky took on a tint of orangeish-red, providing a glorious backdrop for the oil-rig-studded sea.

And though my legs were tired, I ran on — on

to the beaches that lay beyond. I knew my quest was completed, and that my heart was pumping hard enough to keep me awake for the long academic haul. Nonetheless, I kept moving, entranced with the spirit of health and fitness.

But then a bunch of sand fleas started to flock around my legs, and that was pretty gross, so I turned back.

Later that day, I took my Music 15 midterm, and, as might be expected, I bombed it. But my interlude with health and fitness is something I shall always remember, and, one day, I may take an early morning jog again.

# Green Beret

By Moses Stevens

Most of my seventh grade memories involve bullies, toadies, hall monitors, cheerleaders, custodians, substitutes and administrators beating me up at lunch. Pretty much my one true friend was Mr. Hackett.

Mr. Hackett was my fourth period P.E. teacher. Each day, I would wander lackadaisically from the oppressive confines of third period world history/geography, with a weird instructor who organized every class assignment and test around her odd fixation with cartoon character Garfield the cat, and enter the locker room.

After getting one of the P.E. teachers to show me how to open my locker, I would jog out each morning to the field (i.e., the concrete yard similar to that of a prison) and sit down behind the blond kid we all called Redneck. (Funny how in seventh grade, all our nicknames involved something we did — I was Hanging Out in Math Class at Lunch Guy — and yet I remember that in Redneck's case it was something he received. I think of him now, and he seems like a Peanuts character in a distant world ...)

Mr. Hackett would be there, wearing a stupid neon green hat we were all too intimidated to look at

directly. He would take roll and begin the day's hyperbolic lie.

"Are we ready to run six miles?" he would begin, grinning sickeningly. Kids would clutch their knees close to their chests and whine.

Only I was still, and only I was silent. For I had a special rapport with Mr. Hackett. I knew that he was playing with our heads as part of the secret plan he had worked out with The Dark One, and he knew I would gratefully accept any assignment that did not involve strapping giant Garfields to my shoulders.

The real run would begin when the protests subsided. While runs would never exceed a mile and a half, they were a great difficulty at times (read: hell, hell, hell). The distance, while challenging, was not so great a problem as was understanding Mr. Hackett's intricately plotted courses.

"Go past those cones," he would begin. "Come back to where you started. Go outside the gate."

"Do you see the truck outside the gate? Run around it. If any of you mess around and get run over by the truck, I am going to be very, very angry. Stay a safe distance from the truck."

"Run up around the high school. Run down

See RUN, p.4A

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# Fitness Fiction: Night of the Rat

By Spunky Puckett

"OK, kids, gather around, Grandpa Spunky's going to tell you a story about the 20th century!"

"Aw, c'mon, Grandpa! We're watching the holographic video of *Terminator XII*, and it's a good part!"

"Never mind that, you young whippersnappers! You with your teleporting beams and your cyberspace schools and your robot dogs—you never even have to go outside! You little rugrats even take pills to stay healthy—it's time you learned what health and fitness were like back when I was a boy."

"First of all, we had an actual schoolhouse, none of this on-line crap, and every day I journeyed on my shiny red bicycle to reach it. Now you young 'uns don't know what a bike was, but it was a little two-wheeled vehicle with pedals that you had to push. Now let me tell you, I pushed that damned thing through rain, through sleet, through snow, a mile and a half each way, every inch of it uphill. Rivers would flood, the pavement would buckle under the summer

heat, the heavens would groan, and I would ride on, bathed in the crimson light of righteousness.

"Now, I considered myself pretty physically fit in my bike-riding days. I had 0 percent body fat, my legs were like tree trunks and I could shrug off the worst the elements could throw at me. I thought I was real hot stuff. But I was wrong. I'll never forget that fall day when I learned just how important physical fitness really is.

"I was riding home as usual that day, just my typical happy-go-lucky self, humming along with *Haec Dies* on my Walkman, when I saw them. The rats. Now, you little nosewipers don't know what a rat is because of all these new-fangled extermination methods, but a rat was a large rodent with teeth and claws, and in my hometown, they were nasty. Rats from across the country migrated to my little section of the world in hopes of better hunting. The rats where I lived could tear a newborn baby to shreds in 14 seconds, and the bloodthirsty varmints hunted in packs.

"Anyway, I had always thought I was safe. I had would be well into lunch before we even rounded the truck. This was fine with me, of course.

We would finally set off. Up the hill, past the high school's P.E. classes and their cooler uniforms, through the traffic. We would make our way back, except for the kids whose older brothers would pick

them up and take them to the beach.  
 "Nice run, wasn't it, Stevens?" he would grin without looking up, coming as close as he ever came to acknowledging the rapport.  
 By the end of seventh grade the kids still made fun of me. In fact, toward the last day of school my

been riding for 12 years and had avoided the carnivores, so I believed they would leave me alone. But I was wrong. Twelve years in power had made me soft. They struck when I least expected, three of the biggest rats I had ever seen. They watched me from an alleyway as I passed by on my bike, and then slipped in behind me and broke into top speed.  
 "Those three rats had blood on their minds, and I started racing. There was a giant Georgian rat with white fur, a Kansas rat which had lost the use of its right paw, and a little power-hungry Texas/California crossbreed. I could feel their hot breath behind me as I rode, hear their nails scramble on the concrete as I turned, see their long, yellow teeth, their beady little eyes burning red with the thrill of the hunt.

"My legs were pumping, my lungs were on fire and my breath was almost gone. Several times I nearly gave in, surrendered my principles, and made a deal with the rodents. But I held on against all odds, and soon they began laying into each other. The Kansas rat

Jell-O got toppled as I left the lunch line and made my way toward math class. But I never got beat up again.

Because thanks to Mr. Hackett, my soulmate, tormentor and Jaime "Kimo" Escalante without the silly nickname all at once, I could run.

started sniping at the Georgia creature, and the Texas/California rodent saw his chance. He chomped into the Kansas rat, and soon a three-way ratfight was on.

"I was nearly dead from exhaustion, but I had escaped the three rats. I dropped off my bike into the dust and sucked in several deep breaths. I was interrupted by a low growling coming from down the road, and as I sat up, I saw the biggest, the ugliest, the most obnoxious rat in the land.

"The rat just stared at me for a long time, and I slowly reached for my bike lock and chain. Then the rat moved. It didn't really run, exactly. It *rushed*. It rushed and rushed and rushed, and there I was, trapped and frozen. It leaped, aiming for my jugular, and it would have easily ripped my head off, but it never got the chance.

"So I'll never forget my adventure with the rats, and I'll never forget the importance of physical fitness. What do you think about that, kids?"

"Grandpa, you're weird."

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## RUN

Continued from p.3A the hill. Come back."

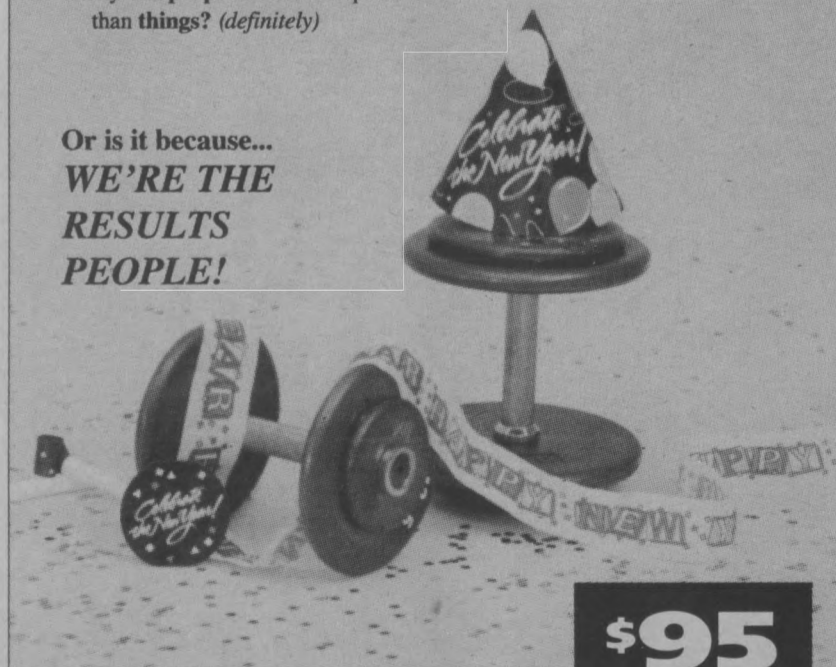
At this point someone would interject, "Come back where?" and Mr. Hackett would yell at them for several minutes, delaying the run so that it

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