



Photo by Blake Willis - Photography Editor

Synchronized swimmers practice and learn in the rec center pool.

## Laura Istvan brings synchronized swimming to SRC pool

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Students attended UNC Asheville's first synchronized

swimming class in the Student Recreation Center pool Wednesday evening.

Laura Istvan, informal recreation coordinator, and Roxy Snider, water safety instructor, led the class.

"Synchronized swimming is a great cardiovascular activity that blends the benefits of swimming and dance with-

out as much impact on the joints," Istvan said.

She said synchronized swimming is a great way of toning muscles, increasing breath control and increasing flexibility in a fun activity.

After swimming competitively for 12 years, Istvan said she was so burned out that she wanted to try something different when she went to college.

A co-worker encouraged her to try the synchronized swimming club at her

school.

She said she became addicted almost immediately because it was challenging and fun, and the people were friendly.

Istvan went on to compete for three years in college, then coached a club team for two years, where she became a USA Synchro judge at club and collegiate meets.

"I loved every moment of it and would have competed for four years, but I graduated early," she said.

For a brief period, Istvan said she did masters synchro in the District of Columbia, but injuries made her stop for a couple years.

Recently her health has improved, she said, allowing her to do a synchro workout every now and then.

"It's still my favorite way of swimming," she said. "Laps just don't compare anymore for me. One participant came to our clinic because they wanted to learn more

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### COMMENTARY

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I have never been a sporty person.

I grew up in a family that emphasized music and the arts over athletic pursuits. In my rural Vermont K-12 school, there was a pre-set division between the jocks and the hippies. Even though I detested the Grateful Dead, my love for theater and chorus sent me right into the hippie category. I did some yoga as a theater warm-up and practiced abs-yoga with Rodney Yee via VHS tape.

I did enjoy skiing (cross-country and

downhill), snowshoeing, kayaking, and other activities, as long as there was no competition involved. After moving to Asheville in 2008, I briefly dabbled in jogging and soon gave it up.

This year, I am determined to make the most of my college experience. As a 32-year-old senior who transferred here with an associate's degree from A-B Tech, I am considered a non-traditional student. My anxiety kept me from participating in the past, but I decided to get involved and make every penny of my tuition work for me.

I followed Campus Recreation on Instagram and Facebook. For the weeks of welcome, I decided to try Stand-up Paddleboard Yoga. I like longboarding and thought I might have the balance needed to stay on a floating board.

After asking for help finding the way to the pool from the women's locker room, we signed waivers and hung up

our towels. Mine was a small scratchy rental towel, for which I had surrendered my OneCard.

Clad in a bathing suit bottom, shorts and a sports bra, I ungracefully pulled myself onto the large floating board in the UNCA pool. We began with child's pose, breathing and centering.

Our instructor, Page, was friendly and accommodating. She didn't push us into impossible poses. I knew I would probably fall, but the splash landing didn't seem too scary. I was surrounded by other women, most of them younger and more traditionally fit, but I have found that as I get older I care less and less what those around me think. In fact, I have realized that those who seemed judgmental are just as insecure as I was.

During the half-hour class, I felt

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# Teaching an old student new tricks