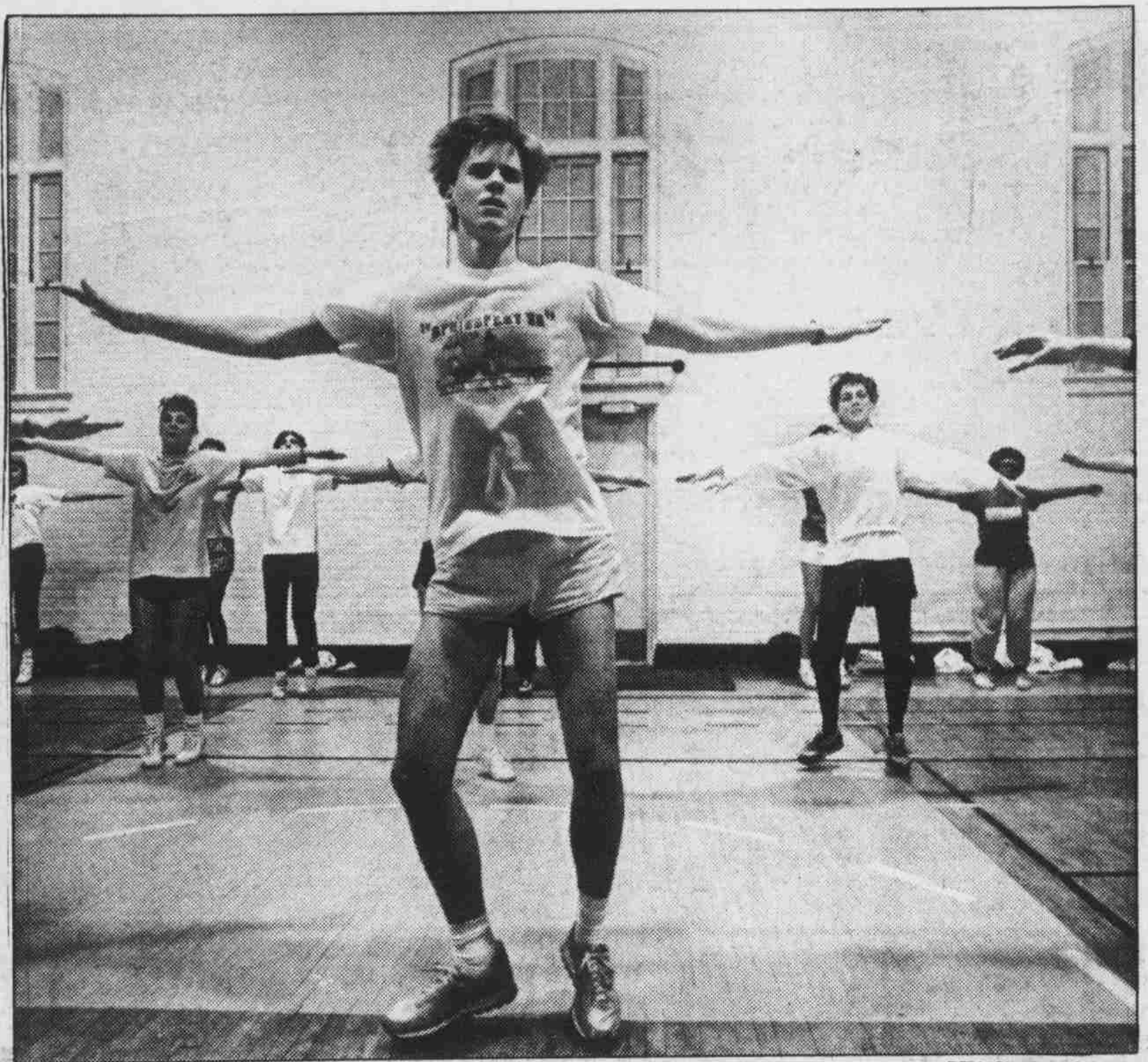




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Aerobics is a female-dominated activity, but males are beginning to get in on the action

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Hey guys, you're not catching on! Aerobics is the 'hip' exercise trend

By **BETH BUFFINGTON**
Staff Writer

The gym has gotten pretty full, so the sweats come off, the music starts, and the lumbering elephants begin their workout.

Lumbering elephants? Wait a minute now, who's being called an elephant? Well, actually one male student taking aerobics has used those words to describe how he feels when he does IM aerobics in a class of 60 or so females and only two or three males.

"A lot of the guys think it's sissy stuff, but I don't," freshman Bryan George says. "Half the guys I know couldn't do it. I think coed's fine, but you do kinda stick out, though. I feel like a big, lumbering elephant sometimes. I don't like to dance, but as far as the grunting, groaning and sweating goes, I think it would be good for guys."

Lumbering elephants or not, aerobics is quickly becoming a popular way for hundreds of college students to tone up and stay in shape, but it still doesn't seem to appeal to most guys. Out of about a dozen coed intramural aerobic classes in Woollen and Fetzer gyms, Cobb and Morrison dormitories and Granville Towers (not to mention the classes offered as undergrad physical education courses), only a few actually have males attending. In a class of about 60 to 75, only two or three males are working out.

"Only two guys have gone to my class and that was only a couple of times," says sophomore Mary Abraham, a Morrison Residence Hall aerobic teacher. "No guys go regu-

larly. A lot of guys think that it's not masculine or (it's) sissy or that the girls will know how to do it better than them, so they don't go."

Juan Flores, a third-year UNC law student who has been a dancer for 10 years, teaches aerobics at Nautilus and tries to keep men's desire to avoid dance moves in mind when he teaches coed classes.

At Nautilus, Flores is the only male teacher, and he finds that being male is a plus in getting other males to attend his classes. "I've taught a few classes (with) up to 50 percent men and 50 percent women and that's directly related to the fact that I do teach it. Men might be more apt to try it and find out that it's not as bad as they thought."

The IM department currently doesn't have any male students teaching, but that hasn't stopped the guys who show up for classes.

Sophomore John Rustin has started going to aerobic sessions regularly with his girlfriend and other friends. "I do aerobics maybe two days a week and then on the other days I jog and lift," he says. "Aerobics is a break from weight-lifting and jogging and it's fun. The endurance needed for it is better known now, and girls are starting to have more respect for the guys that have respect for aerobics."

Senior Jeff Rumley, another student who sometimes aerobicizes with his Sigma Nu brother Rustin, does aerobics because he wants to get back in shape. "Aerobics doesn't take long. You know, it's easier to do it than to try and get a basketball game up, and running is boring."

Okay, so what about the guys who go just to ogle girls in leotards and tights? None of the men interviewed admit to this practice, and to the contrary, two of the males interviewed were married graduate students who said they did aerobics just to stay in shape. Tim Ritchie, a graduate student, does aerobics with his wife Christine, and finds that many of his "couple" friends do the same.

John Russel, another graduate student, was surprised that not more male students did aerobics. "I went to one place in Raleigh this summer. I was going during lunch period when people were off for their lunch break. I'd say that 90 percent doing aerobics were businessmen. It's really for any crowd."

So aerobics is attracting other groups of men. "I think that aerobic exercise is going to continue," instructor Flores says. "The aerobic craze has peaked as far as women are considered and that's helping to get more guys to go."

"They're going to the health clubs — the new singles hangout of the time. It's easier to strike up a conversation when you're standing next to each other, both about to drop dead."

But Granville Towers aerobic teacher Robin Ennis, a freshman, says many males don't go to aerobics because they don't want the embarrassment of getting noticed. "Aerobics isn't just for girls. More guys would come if other guys would go too. You know, though, that they're not going to go until others go."

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