

The Art of Swimming

Synchronize Your Summer/ by Ami Zensius
(From the Walnut Creek Magazine)

Summer means splashing around in the water. But this summer, head to pools around Walnut Creek and you might see a different kind of splashing—one set to music, involving complicated spins and lifts. For many girls in Walnut Creek, from pre-teens to young adults, the sport for summer fun is Synchronized Swimming. The sport, which has less in common with speed swimming and is more like gymnastics without breathing, has a long and well-decorated history in Walnut Creek.

The sport was first introduced at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair, but the Walnut Creek Aquanuts began their legacy in 1968. More than 50 girls train and compete for the Aquanuts; and in its relatively brief history, they've made a big splash with over 200 national titles and eight Olympic Gold Medalists.

Suying Rothrock, an incoming sixth grader at Foothill, is passionate about Synchro. During the competitive season, she trains ten to twelve hours a week but her favorite thing is performing—"People who watch think it's amazing, and I do, too."

Northgate high school senior, Deborah Shim, who's been competing for the last nine years, agrees it's a sport that awes audiences. Additionally, Synchro has created a legacy of friendships. "For me, it's the teammates. I actually look forward to practice because of them." Aiming high for the 2008 Summer Olympics, Shim, along with teammates Diana LaScala-Gruenewald and Olivia Morgan, were selected for the Junior National Synchro Team and will compete in the Junior World Championships in China this fall.

While most of us only float around after summer barbecues, imagine lifting teammates out of the water using only the strength of your legs "eggbeatering" and you'll have some idea of the athletes who perform complicated routines, highly technical figures and beautiful lifts with a noseclip and a smile.

No doubt about it, Walnut Creek is the place to Synch *and* swim.

Sidebar:

Ready to dive in? In addition to summer camp for girls familiar with the sport, the Aquanuts run "*Team in Training*" for those interested in getting their feet wet. Two summer sessions offered, culminating in a swim show.

Just want to watch? Look for the Aquanuts to perform their annual Summer Swim Show August 24th- 26th at Clarke Memorial Swim Center, Heather Farm Park.

The themed show includes costumes, sequins and swimmers from the training camps through international competitors in a gala event.

Visit www.aquanuts.org for more details.