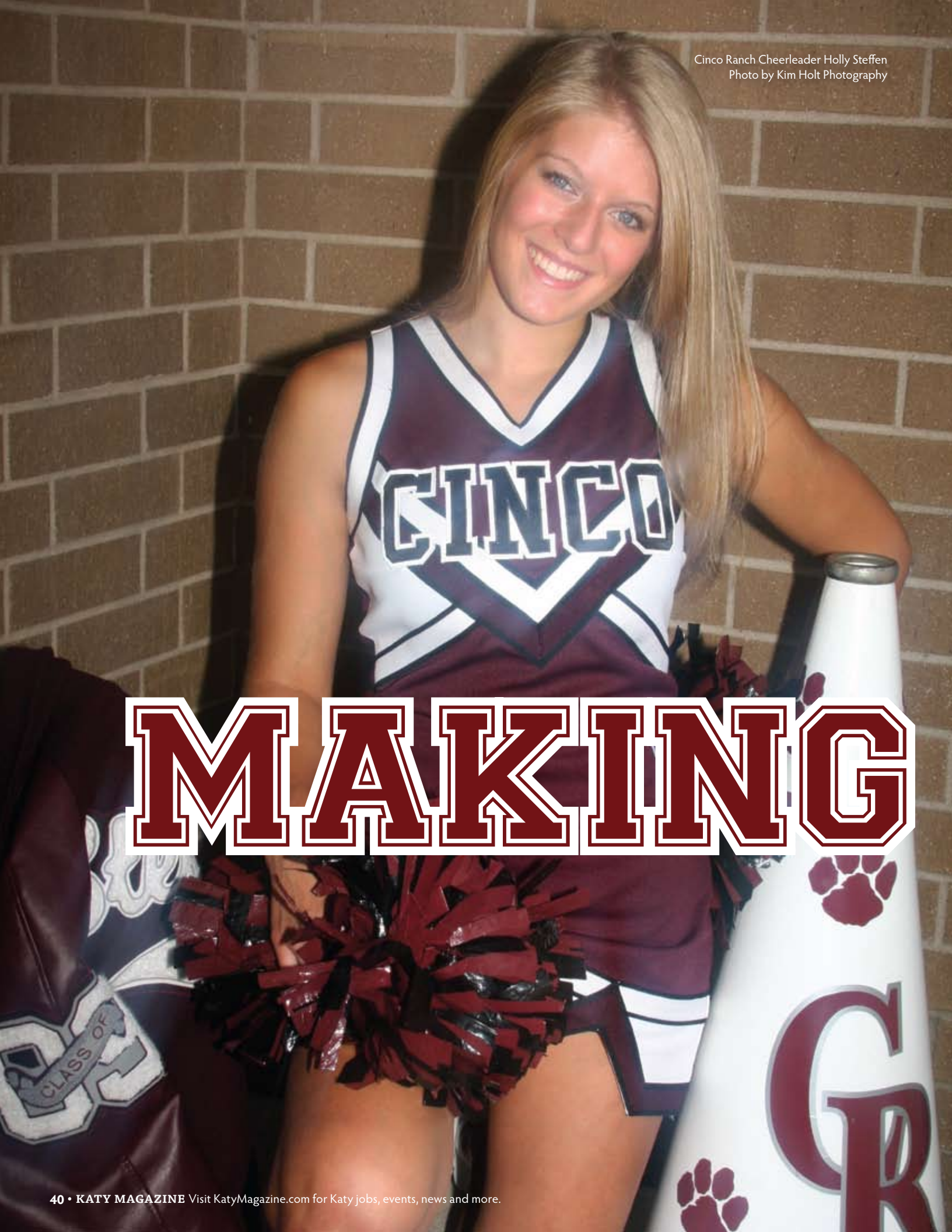


Cinco Ranch Cheerleader Holly Steffen
Photo by Kim Holt Photography

A young woman with long blonde hair, identified as Cinco Ranch Cheerleader Holly Steffen, is smiling and posing against a brick wall. She is wearing a maroon and white V-neck jersey with 'CINCO' printed across the chest. She holds maroon and black pom-poms in her right hand and a white megaphone with maroon paw prints and the letters 'C' and 'R' in her left. A maroon jacket with a 'CLASS OF' patch is visible on the left.

MAKING

*She's done everything
she could . . . rehearsed every
move, practiced every chant.
After the rigorous tryout, her
nerves were wracked as she
approached the list of new
cheerleaders. Is she on it?
Could she be on it? She is.*

the SQUAD

What it Takes to Cheer in Katy!

by Shetye Cypher

"Tryouts were very intimidating and stressful; however, when I went in there, everything just fell into place," says Meagan Montgomery, co-head varsity cheerleader at Katy High School. "It was a lot of hard work and preparation the few days before, but it all paid off."

What it Takes to Cheer

A good cheerleader must have a collection of skills. Everything requires coordination, timing, flexibility, and strength, along with a happy smile. A cheerleader since the age of five, Madye Creek High School junior varsity cheerleader Brooke Hilbrich feels that cheerleading has a lot to do with competing against all cheerleaders. "To be a cheerleader today you must keep in shape so that you can stay ahead of all the other girls on the team who may try to take your spot," says Hilbrich. "Cheerleading has evolved into a sport, as the kids must be very athletic and agile to perform the elite stunts and routines that are now commonplace in the cheer world," says Madye Creek High School Varsity Cheer Sponsor Shauna Baker. Locally, it has two veins: competitive cheerleading and school cheerleading. Most school cheerleaders have been involved with competitive cheerleading as well.

Cheerleading Prep Work

Many cheerleaders prepare by taking gymnastics or cheer classes at a competitive cheer gym. Bethany Dykes, varsity co-captain at Cinco Ranch High School, has attended tumbling classes and has taken lessons in cheer dance. She also works on conditioning and endurance at a local gym. "Total body strength and endurance is needed for stunting and tumbling. Also, much flexibility is required for jumps and stunting. Coordination and dancing skills are a must for the dances, cheers, and chants," says Dykes.

Not Popularity but Dedication

Even though people assume cheerleaders must have the best social lives, their commitment takes up roughly 10 months out of the year. According to Baker, cheerleaders cheer at football, volleyball, basketball, track meets, weightlifting

MCHS Varsity cheerleaders



CRHS Junior Varsity Cheerleaders



McMeans JH
Cheerleader
Alexis Priddy



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matches, as well as working concession stands. That, balanced with maintaining their grades, keeps them pretty busy. "It's really difficult because cheerleading takes up so much of your time," says Hilbrich. "I have to stay up really late to finish all of my homework, sometimes I'm up until 2 a.m."

Katy ISD Cheerleader Selection Process

The selection of high school cheerleaders is done by knowledgeable, impartial judges observing the candidates in a series of activities performed on a single afternoon in March, April, or May.

Pre-tryout Clinic

Each campus schedules a pre-tryout clinic to acquaint candidates with skills and techniques on which they will be judged. Attendance at the clinic is strongly encouraged.

Tryout Format and Judging

The tryout process is organized and facilitated by the cheerleading instructor. At least three impartial judges are used for tryouts. Candidates perform before the judges individually or in randomly assigned small groups. Tryouts often include group cheer, individual cheer, new cheer, jumps, dance routine, and chants. Each judge scores the candidate's performance using a numeric scale. The twelve candidates eligible for varsity with the highest rankings are the new varsity cheerleaders. The twelve candidates eligible for junior varsity with the highest rankings are the new junior varsity cheerleaders. Cheerleading is not a popularity contest anymore, but a test of athleticism and skill. **KM**

S. SHETYE CYPHER is a freelance writer who lives with her husband and son. She has lived in Katy intermittently since 1976. She has written for several Houston based publications and is also the Journalism teacher and Publications Advisor at Mayde Creek High School.

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Westwood Gymnastics

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281-599-7030

23333 Taswell Dr.
281-347-2000
westwoodgym.com

Houston Youth Football League Cheerleaders

1539 S. Mason Rd.
281-693-2550
hyfl.net

Grand Cheer

25440 Beckendorf Rd.
281-371-3775
grandcheerallstars.com

Katy Youth Football League Cheerleaders

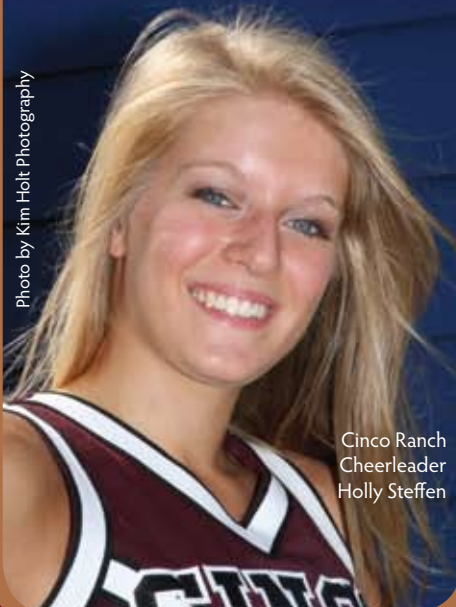
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katyouthfootball.com

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Cinco Ranch
Cheerleader
Holly Steffen

Photo by Kim Holt Photography

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