

Colby woman looking for a cheerful team

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

For years, Colby High cheerleaders have cheered the Eagle teams to victory, but one Colby woman wants cheerleaders to have their own victories.

Colby resident Kelly Gates is interested in starting a competitive cheerleading team. Gates, 42, coached such teams in southern California with success, before moving to Colby earlier this year.

"I have never not qualified a team for regionals or nationals," she said. She was involved with eight national title teams.

Success in competitive cheerleading is based on the team's ability to combine dance routines, gymnastics, cheers and enthusiasm all into one.

Gates said there is experience for a northwest Kansas team, based on her recent assistance with high school cheerleaders.

Gates was a cheerleader in high school. She has helped other cheerleaders advance their interest.

"I have been very fortunate to have been blessed with some very talented and dedicated cheerleaders in my years.

Many of my past students have gone on to cheer in college. Palomar College, Orange Coast College, San Diego State University, Hawaii Pacific University, Louisville University, and one was even featured in Time magazine when they did an article on cheerleading a few years back," she said.

Gates' work has also made the big screen.

"I often do my own choreography, however, I have hired some from time to time, one of which was Ray Jasper the choreographer for the first 'Bring it On' movie."

Gates said much needs to be done to establish a team.

"I want to start, I just don't know where yet to begin," she said. "I am still working on the name of my cheer program. Probably Cheer Bandits.

"I'm not sure as to when I will start my cheer program, it will probably depend on the number of inquiries I get and as soon as I have found a facility."

Gates is looking for 20 to 30 youth to form a team. In California, she worked with as many as 100 youth. It helps if those youth have some experience of cheerleading, gymnastics or dance. Age level varies, but Gates prefers youth in middle school and high school. Although cheerleaders are typically female, Gates welcomes males. Male cheerleaders are not new to Kansas as some of the schools Colby Community Col-

lege plays have male cheerleaders.

Gates said competitive cheerleading offers a choice to students who want to compete in something but do not feel comfortable with sports like volleyball, basketball and others.

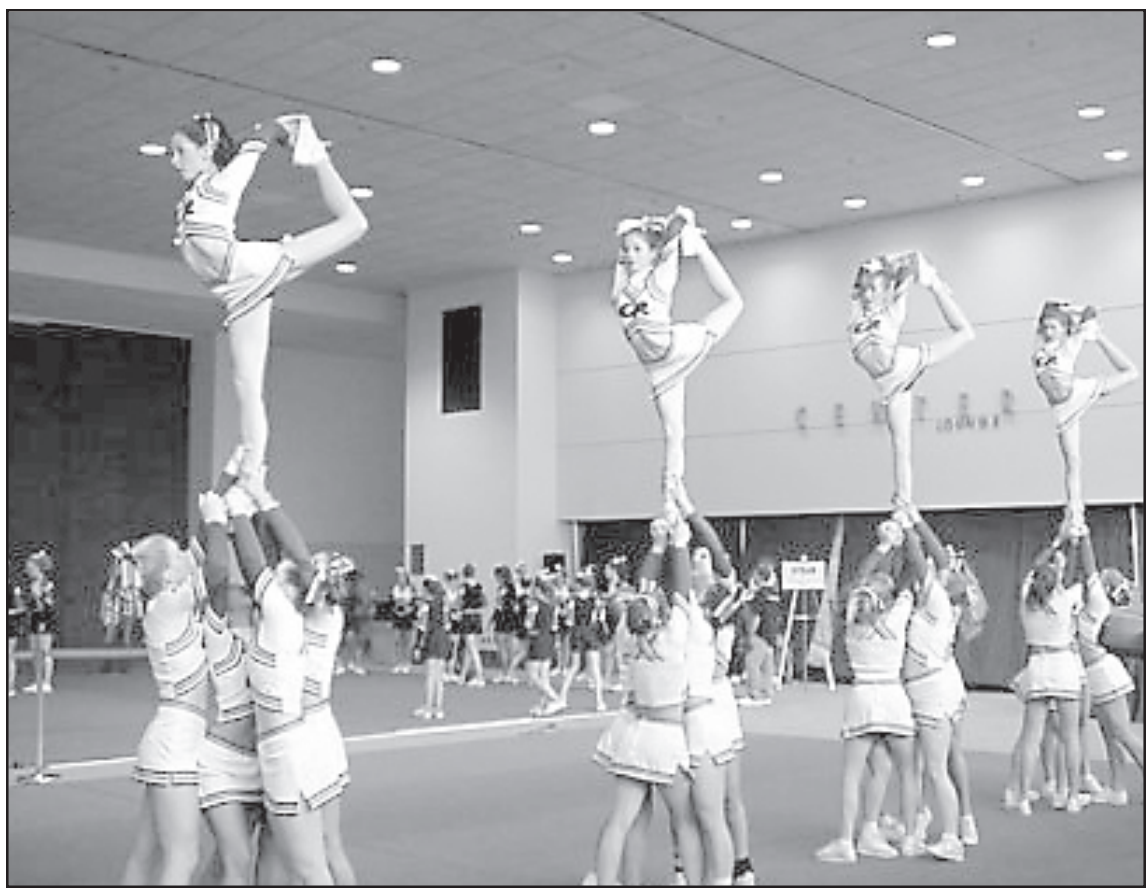
Another issue Gates is working on is a schedule and finding competitive meets.

"There are competitive teams in Kansas," she said.

But getting to meets is a challenge.

"We will have to travel," she said. Gates said the team will probably have to go to places like Denver, Fort Collins, Colo., Colorado Springs, Colo., and metro Kansas City.

Those interested can contact Gates at 462-2212.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A cheer team in southern California practiced one of its routines during a competition. A Colby woman, who has worked with competitive cheerleading teams in California, is interested in starting a team in northwest Kansas.

Bowl series confuses Texas coach

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas coach Mack Brown is puzzled by the Bowl Championship Series computer rankings.

The Longhorns (9-1, 6-0 Big 12) are ranked fourth in this week's Associated Press Top 25, third in the coaches poll, but fifth in the Bowl Championship Series.

Texas' only loss came to top-ranked Ohio State and the Longhorns have beaten Oklahoma, Nebraska and Texas Tech, all ranked teams at some point this season.

But the Longhorns also played North Texas, Rice and Division I-AA Sam Houston State, games that hurt the schedule strength component of their computer ranking.

Brown said all Texas can do now is win out and hope the teams ahead of his team falter.

"Looking back doesn't do any good," Brown said, "and I still can't figure out the computers. I'm proud the humans are voting us third and fourth in the country.

"And we are a really good football team."

Brown wants more consistent parameters about how teams should schedule without getting hurt in the BCS rankings.

"If all the coaches and athletic directors could understand exactly who the computers want you to play and where they want you to play them, and then if you could know how many games they were going to win, it would probably help all of us," Brown said.

The AP poll is no longer part of the BCS formula. Brown wishes it was.

"Everybody says there's flaws with the different polls that we have," Brown said.

"But at least we've got eyes looking at it and people who are basing it on what they feel and the strength of schedule and the way the team is playing at this time.

"But the system we've got is what we've got."

Texas can clinch a share of the South Division title and a berth in the league championship game with a victory Saturday night at Kansas State (6-4, 3-3).

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