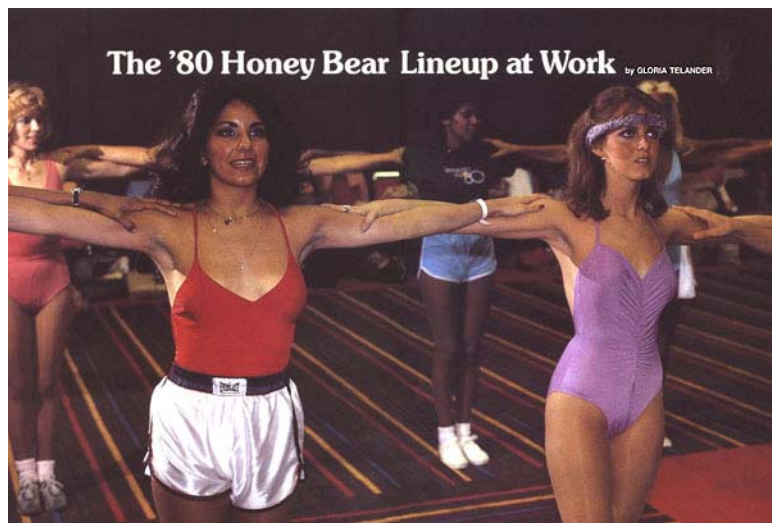


Sunday, November 05, 2006

Flashback Photo of the Week

Posted by Sasha at 3:14 PM ET

Here's another look back at the Chicago Bears Cheerleaders...



One of the nicest things about the Honey Bears is that they have an all American look - no plastic chorus line. This is more evident in a rehearsal session than may be apparent once they hit the field in their exactly tailored costumes.

By the way, the Honey Bear bunting will be different this fall. Instead of a navy blue body suit, it will be orange and the navy moves to the trim and the lacing of the outer garments. There was nothing wrong with last year's, but wait until the fans feast on this year's costumes.

The 32 girl lineup includes 15 from last year; one, Suzanne Larry, who was a Honey in '78 returned to the squad this year, and 16 new regulars. All of the eight alternates are ingénues.



The exciting four-year veteran, Patti D'Andrea.

The young women range in age from 18 to 31 years with the average age slightly over 24. But watching them work, they all look the same age - the age of effervescence.

As I sat on the floor with Sharon Cooper, president of A Plus Talent Agency which represents the Honey Bears, and Evelyn Duggan, A Plus' agent particularly assigned to the job, during the first half-hour of dance routine practice, I batted zero spotting the "average age" woman.

My first choice turned out to be the 31 year old on the squad. Next I was fascinated by a long legged, wispy waisted girl who obviously had many years of ballet training. Turning to Evelyn Duggan, I expressed the opinion that this child had to be one of the youngest. Wrong. She was just one year under the average age. After three other tries, and three more failures at guessing ages, I turned to a more productive area: absorbing the individual differences in style which have been magically blended by "Coach Corn" - as the squad lovingly calls Cathy Core, the choreographer.

The responsibility of developing this football sweetness is evenly divided between Cathy, a former cheerleading coach from Glen Ellyn, and the A Plus Talent Agency, who both are under contract to the Chicago Bears.

Ms. Core was first contacted by the Bears because of her coaching of cheerleaders, although the intent never was to have a high school rah-rah squad. A song and dance team was always the main consideration.

"The first year, 1977, there were more cheers than dances," Cathy told me. "But in response to the fans, we have continued to increase the dance routines. And we have an exceptionally good group of dancers this year."

I'll verify that. At just the fourth practice session, after the regular squad had been selected, all of the young women had the routines down pat, and the polishing had begun.



The Honey Bears have excitingly different styles. They are not a chorus line. Above the classic beauty, Patty Morgan.

Occasionally coach Core would call for a greater extension of the arms in a thrust or a request that the heads be kept exaggeratedly high during a certain movement. If after another run through and Cathy still was not satisfied, she would call on captain Crowder for a demonstration.



The campus queen, Patti Loisi, another four-year'er.

Now, captain Crowder is something special. She is Brenda Crowder and captain of the squad. She has charm, grace, and the kind of confidence that makes you notice her when she is doing nothing more than moving with the group. I wasn't surprised to find that she was the captain and a three year veteran. But I was surprised to find, talking with her during the break, that she has had no formal dance training. However, she has been cheerleading since she was 12 years old and attended Simeon Vocational School and Augustana College. Along with her busy schedule with the Honey Bears, she holds down a financial counselor's position at First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Chicago. Patti Loisi is another going into her third year, and the stream of her enthusiasm caught her 18 year old sister, Antoinette, who is now the youngest Honey Bear. Antoinette, who prefers to be called Toni, and Patti drive into the city together from their parent's home for the two evening, three hour rehearsals.

The Honey Bear squad also has three girls who have been members for the full four years of existence: Debbie Perkins, Patty Morgan, and Mary Kay Kriese.

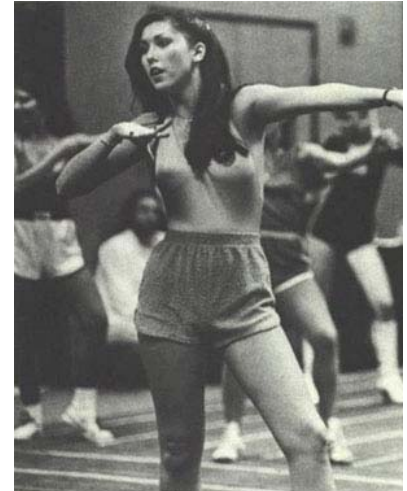
And Mary Kay is more than pretty and a sparkling dancer - she's a good athlete. She, along with the second year Jackie Nicholson, Represented the Chicago Bears in the *Battle of the NFL Cheerleaders* at Atlantic City, June 22-29.

Jackie is from Woodridge and Mary Kay from Half Day. To gain the honored position, the competed with other

members of the Honey Bears in roller skating, tandem bike riding, kayak paddling, a 2-wheel motorcycle obstacle race, and a 100 yard relay (each girl running 50 yards) race carrying their team's football.

The same events were repeated in Atlantic City where the Twentieth Century Fox assembled two contestants from each of the NFL teams to produce the made for television program.

Approximately two-thirds of the girls on the squad are from the suburbs with the rest living in Chicago. The percentage would be higher, if the girls who originally came from the suburbs but who now have apartments in the city were counted. Teri Serletic falls into that category. Last year, when she first became a Honey Bear, she was living in Calumet City with her parents. She has since moved to Chicago and is sharing an apartment with Renee Halverson, another Honey Bear vet. She is a classic lovely, tall with long pale hair, and her days are spent studying speech, acting, singing, and doing a bit of modeling - which is part of the lives of many of the Honeys. Teri sang with a group a while back on the strength of the training her father provided, and this is her primary interest. However, she says, "I want to be well rounded to be a good entertainer." She has a start. She is a stunning young woman.

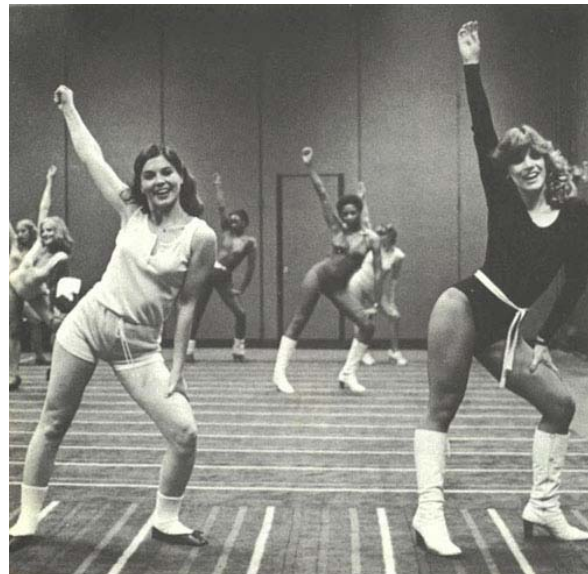


The exotic dream, Debbie Anthony, new this year.

Nina White, a three year'er, with black closely cropped hair, has a magnificently chiseled face. Veronica George looks as if she belongs in beautiful Hawaii and is temporarily gracing us with her charm. Anne Kane is "the girl next door" who enchants everyone, and on and on. Never in one group of young women have I seen so many so distinctive and so individually lovely. The totally unique follow in alphabetical order: the regulars; Debbie Anthony, Karen Berta, Brenda Crowder, Patti D'Andrea, Janet Del Rio, Sharon Darence, Veronica George, Carolyn Gunn, Ginamarie Guzzaldo, Renee Halverson, Anne Kane, Mary Kay Kriese, Suzanne Larry, Antoinette Loisi, Patti Loisi, Lee Ann Marie Bednarski, Glendora Marshall, Gail Materko, Vicki Miller, Patty Morgan, Jackie Nicholson, Debbie Perkins, Patti Ross, Linda Sekerka, Teri Serletic, Joey Sheehan, Susan Siegel, Kim Sutter, Susan Thompson, Nina White, Dawn Worthy, and Susan Yacobea. The alternates; Cathy Abelson, Patricia Crawford, Teresa Plister, Marilyn Rosenfeld, Lynn Salafatinos, Sallie Sellergran, Jacqueline Simmons, and Shirley Szezecinski.



The warmup continues at a faster pace as Susan Siegel and Kimberly Sutter swing around the practice room, in single file, to a disco beat



Mary Kay Kriese and Jackie Nicholson battled for the Chicago Bears in Atlantic City.