

# Equestrian Team raises, trains horses

BY PAUL BISCHOFF  
Staff Reporter

Every year, the Equestrian Team at the University Farm inducts two- and four-legged members into its riding team.

"Most of the University horses are born here," said graduate student Emily Costello, Equestrian Team coach. "Each year, we have somewhere between two and four babies. As those babies grow up, they're trained by the students with the hope that someday they can join our riding herd and be used as part of our Equestrian Team practices and for our horsemanship classes."

"The first week before shows, the practices are closed. ... In between shows, we just come out and ride and have fun."

Whitney Mahsman  
Senior

The farm owns 36 horses, 25 of which belong to the riding herd. The herd has about five brood mares and two stallions for breeding quarter horses. Quarter horses typically are best used for Western-style riding and make up most of the herd. The University also owns Arabians, paints and thoroughbreds.

"Some of the horses also come from donations from private people," Costello said. "Someone who's had a horse for a while and doesn't necessarily want to sell it — they want to send it to a good home."

The herd is kept on a 75-acre pasture and daily care, including stall cleaning and feeding, is done by the farm crew. The Equestrian Team grooms the horses and performs minor veterinary care. The herd is maintained through a budget set by the University. "When they are all healthy,



Krista Goodman/Index

Sophomore Nicole Reindal rides her horse, Fury, western style at the University farm. Most of the horses on the farm are born and trained there.

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there's not all that much maintenance we have to do," Costello said. "It's when they start getting sick or when we're preparing for a show we do a lot of maintenance: clipping them — making sure they look nice and pretty and not like old goats."

As soon as a foal is born, it must become acquaint-

ed with everything around it. When it is four to five months old, it's weaned from its mother. Then it begins training.

"When it's born, you start right away with just everyday things that we take for granted, like people," sophomore hunt historian Kate Heisler said. "Then they go

into our training class, which is held every spring semester. ... When they are two, we start working them under saddle. They go into training class a few more years to get more experience, then they graduate to the riding herd and we use them in practice every day."

When the horse is ready, it can be used in shows and events. Horses do not travel to competitions. Instead, the Equestrian Team uses the horses available wherever they go. This forces them to learn to control an unfamiliar animal. Truman hosts one show every year, in which other teams must use the horses at the University Farm.

"The first full week before show, the practices are closed to those riders who are going to the show," senior team president Whitney Mahsman said. "In between shows, we just come out and ride and have fun."

The team can be found at the farm every day after classes. Many have been riding since they were small children, but they accept people of all proficiencies. They participate in about 10 competitions per year, as well as local events such as Truman's homecoming parade.

"The Equestrian Team is a great team," Mahsman said. "We have beginner to advanced levels."

# Theatre class creates characters with voice

BY CASSANDRA MCCARTY  
Staff Reporter

Beauty and talent might be a dime a dozen in the theatre world, but the addition of the Staged Reading course to the University's catalog introduces a helpful option for aspiring thespians.

Professor of theatre Dana Smith is used to molding characters and scenes. Now she is the creator of a new theatre course, which demonstrates the actor's ability to use his or her body and voice rather than flashy costumes and a set to create a personality. The Staged Reading course was introduced this fall and offers the opportunity for students to perform in classrooms as well as on stage. Full productions of the readings will be performed throughout the year, and the actors also give three- to five-minute performances in classrooms.

"I have always loved the idea of bringing theatre into the curriculum and taking them into the classes," Smith said. "It's a win-win situation, a way for our actors to learn a new acting method and the students in class have a visual aid — everybody learns."

The Staged Reading course offers a

unique way to bring theatre into the department as well as the classrooms.

The reading course involves the actors either sitting or standing with music stands holding the work on the stage and relies on the actor's voice to portray the character while reading the play. Despite the lack of traditional techniques used in plays, the actors of staged reading programs employ their own ways to portray characters.

"We read the play first several times, then we do a character analysis for objectives and after the actors and I divide the play into beats," Smith said. "Later the actors make very specific character choices, physical as well. Personality, emotion and attitudes are also decided."

Smith said the most important feature that make up the performance of staged reading is the use of sound and light or visibility. Although the actor's voice and limited body movements present the theme of the work,

the lighting and sound also are critical because they help set the mood of the play. Still, the actors must have confidence in their own vocals because loud, clear voices present strong communication between the actors and the audience, Smith said.

"The vocal quality can help create the mood but cannot be realistic — they have to be fraught with emotion," she said.

Senior Marissa LaRose, assistant director and stage manager for Smith, plays a large role in the creation of the staged reading productions. LaRose, who handles the schedules of the 22 actors, is directing her own staged production called "No Exit" and is assisting Smith with classroom interactions and full productions that the course is pulling together. Despite the scheduling conflicts with the actors and the late-night rehearsals, LaRose said she is excited to be a part of the new course.

"Seeing the exposure in the classrooms,

seeing theatre come to life, helps bridge the gap between the students and the theatre department because oftentimes I feel people see theatre as just entertainment, but it's more than that," LaRose said.

LaRose said staged reading productions help get new plays on their feet. Staged readings are a way for the play to be heard and give the playwright and director a chance to hear and become involved with the work.

Bertha Thomas, assistant dean for multicultural affairs, said she is interested in employing the troupe of actors to present a written work by Martin Luther King Jr.

"I thought, wow, you know, to think about the possibilities of having some appropriate speech or historical record with Martin Luther King Jr. done exclusively by Truman, and Smith's platform seemed the perfect idea," Thomas said.

LaRose said she thinks the Stage Reading course isn't just a beneficial tool for the University community but also teaches the actors to bear themselves on stage without the comfort of costumes or a setting.

"I see it as an ode to the actor's process — there is no makeup, no costumes — you just see their performance," LaRose said.

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Marissa LaRose  
Senior

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