

"I wanted to learn every machine so no matter what happens, if we're short on hands or something, the job will get done. So I did. I can work every machine, even the copiers. — Gary Fagan, printing press operator at Printing Services

All eyes on: Gary Fagan

Printing press operator has many outside hobbies

BY JENNIFER LEWIS
Staff Reporter

The whirl of various machines fills the air in the back room of Printing Services as printing press operator Gary Fagan leans back on his stool in front of a desk scattered with partially complete posters, his blue eyes twinkling as he recites one of his many poems. A self-proclaimed cowboy and jack-of-all-trades, Fagan is an unexpected person to find sequestered in the depths of the printing department.

Fagan has many hobbies, including poetry, gospel singing, horse training and calling bids at auctions. He and his wife moved to the Kirksville area in 1992, and they live on a quarterhorse ranch in Novelty, Mo. He said his closest neighbors are 100 head of horses, and he likes it that way.

Fagan's hobby of singing country gospel music was his full-time job for a few years. He traveled throughout Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Oklahoma performing at church concerts and revivals, but his career ended abruptly when he received a nearly fatal head injury in 1997.

"They tell me I fell off the roof of a two story house," Fagan said. "I worked for a carpenter when I wasn't traveling. I don't remember

falling. I don't remember anything until a few days after. Even today my memory is not as good as it was. My wife knows all the words to all my songs, so if I start a verse and can't remember the first two words she'll tell them to me. She takes care of me."

Fagan's son attended Truman for a while, which is how his wife noticed Printing Services was hiring. Fagan said he really enjoys working the printing press, although he sometimes wishes he got a chance to interact with people more.

"Printing services is a lot of fun," he said. "We don't often get to make deliveries because it's so busy, but when we do it's nice to talk to people. I get to meet with a lot of foreign students and talk to them about what life is like in other countries. A Japanese student came out to my farm and went horse riding one time because we were talking, and she said she'd never touched a horse in her life. Also, I got the opportunity to bring students home for the Taiwan English program. Truman has opened up lots of opportunities I never thought possible without a college degree."

Fagan said Printing Services prints whatever jobs Truman needs done as long as they require 5,000 copies or fewer. Fagan's main responsibility is to run the Heidelberg Press, which is a one-color printing press, but he can run any equipment if necessary.

"I wanted to learn every machine so no matter what



Krista Goodman/Index

Printing press operator Gary Fagan enjoys getting to know people around campus and practices his many hobbies while he isn't working at Printing Services.

happens, if we're short on hands or something, the job will get done," Fagan said. "So I did. I can work every machine, even the copiers."

Fagan said he was inspired by a friend to become a licensed auctioneer. He does two to four auctions a year and has an official Web site at www.faganauctions.com.

"My good friend was an auctioneer, and he was killed in a car wreck several years ago," Fagan said. "I had always thought about becoming an auctioneer, and he always told me that with the way I sing I'd be great, but

after he died I put it off for a couple of years. I finally decided to do it in 2004. I told myself if I'm ever going to be an auctioneer before I'm old and cranky, I had to do it now. Of course, my wife said I was already there."

Fagan said he can ride, train and shoe horses and can teach beginners to ride and rope. He also writes cowboy poetry about things he has done, people he has met and places he has seen.

Jerrin Primm, who works in Truman's Physical Plant, is an old friend of Fagan's and the subject of his first cowboy

poem. The poem was about how Fagan helped set up Primm and his wife.

"We've been friends for a number of years," Primm said. "We both enjoy riding horses. That's how we became friends. He lived up the road about a half-mile or so, and I stopped by his house and asked if he would help me with a project, and we've been friends after that. He's a good man, very family oriented, very community oriented."

Brenda Embree, health and exercise science secretary, also got to know Fagan

because of his helpfulness.

"I worked in student accounts, and I had to take statements down to printing once a month, and he would help me get them folded and stacked correctly, so I basically got to hang out with him for an hour every month," Embree said. "I just think he's really diversified. He does the printing and does a great job, he loves his farm, his horses, he loves being an auctioneer, and he can do all of them really well. I guess that's what makes him interesting to me, is that he can do all of these things and be good at them."

Nursing major presents challenge for students

Program is designed to prepare students for the real world

BY ANNE REBAR
Staff Reporter

Senior Sarah Thompson sits anxiously awaiting her test scores, wondering if she's passed. If she hasn't, she has a week to study for a retake, and another failing grade could set her entire college career off course. She thinks about what she would do: Transfer? Switch majors? It could all change with a failing grade.

Thompson, a Truman nursing major, said this scenario has played out multiple times during her career in the Truman nursing program.

"If you fail a test, you can retake it, and if you fail the retake, you are out of the class," Thompson said. "At least once a semester there's usually a retake you have to do, if not more. Your sophomore and junior year you do a lot of retakes, and there's a lot of pressure."

Thompson said the program has been tough, but she's gotten used to the program's rigorous schedule and the different testing methods. She said her professors try to get their students used to taking these kinds of tests.

"They are trying to prepare us for our boards, or [National Council License Examinations], that we take when we graduate, and so there is a method to their madness, but at

the same time it's really hard, because you aren't used to those kinds of test questions, so it's really hard to prepare," Thompson said. "Your sophomore year when you start, our teacher, Pam Gardner, is really good at incorporating a few here and a few there and kind of slowly getting you used to them because your junior year that's all you have."

Thompson said her nursing class dwindled from about 50 her freshman year to now having fewer than 30 students. She said this is mainly because some students aren't able to pass some of the tests or retakes. Many students opt to change majors or transfer schools, rather than waiting a year to retake a class, so they can still graduate in about four years. However, Thompson said there have been some who have stuck around, finishing the program in five or six years, instead of four.

"There's been about 20 that have failed out since freshmen year, and it's sad because those are your friends who you take classes with and then all of a sudden the next day you go to class, and they're not there because they failed the retake, and they either have to wait a whole year to take the class

again, or they change their major," Thompson said.

All the time spent together in the nursing program creates a close-knit group, Thompson said. They help each other with studying and give tips to younger nursing majors when they need them. She said the close relationships with her fellow nursing majors was a big factor in keeping her at Truman during those times she thought about transferring.

"One thing that always kept me here is I know people ... will help me if I get behind on this or that," Thompson said.

Sophomore Kayla Aydelott just recently started taking her NCLEX-style tests. She said the program's high demands can be stressful at times, especially because the failing grade is below a 75 percent, rather than the normal 60 percent cutoff. However, Aydelott said Gardner, assistant professor of nursing, really put things in perspective for her.

"Before our first test we were all really nervous, but Professor Gardner told us that really, if we can't come up with the right answer, or perform the practicals correctly three out of four times on a test, why

should we be allowed to perform them in a real-life situation when a person's life might be in our hands," Aydelott said.

Aydelott said she thinks her professors are a big help when it comes to handling the stress and the rigorous course-work in her major. She said they are all available to help or answer any questions she might have.

"The professors really understand that the program is demanding, and they really don't try to fail anyone, and they obviously don't want to have to kick anyone out of a class, but at the same time they want us to be the best we can be," she said.

Aydelott said she enjoys the nursing major and its challenges. She said that although it's stressful, when she graduates, she knows she will be well prepared.

Gardner said the top priority is to prepare students for the NCLEX they will have to take after graduation to become a professional nurse. She said it can be difficult to prepare students across the board for the exam because the test consists strictly of analysis and application questions, which are difficult to study for. By having these kinds of questions incorporated into tests, the students are better prepared for the real thing.

"In sophomore year they begin to get tests, my [Nursing] 280 sophomore group just took their first real application and analysis test, and it

just kind of knocked them sideways, so they begin to get those questions all the way through," Gardner said. "With most faculty, when you do a test it's, 'This is the right answer because it's here in the book.' With these kinds of questions they have to be able to extrapolate the answer, so they were real mad at me this morning because they were asking, 'Well, where is this in the book?' It's not in the book. You have to be able to take what you know and find the best answer out of what I've given you."

Gardner said that for analysis and application tests like the NCLEX exam, students have to develop a different mindset because the questions on the tests aren't something you can just memorize from studying the texts. She said the best advice is simply to practice.

A group of junior students take a directed study with Gardner every week in which they review test questions as a group and students can ask questions and have her walk them through the process. She said it's things like this that will help students be the most successful.

"It's practice and prep," Gardner said. "Whatever class you're in there's always a book out there with these kinds of questions to help you begin to think that way. That, and I think asking and making somebody explain it to you because it doesn't come naturally. ... You have to work at it in order to get there."

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Sarah Thompson
Senior Nursing Major

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