

# Students own unusual pets

BY BETHANY COURY  
Assistant Features Editor

At first, sophomore Crystal Duey's house seems like any other college student's. The entrance leads to a living room. Continuing straight leads to the kitchen. Take a left, however, and you find yourself in a stable-esque sunroom — a hay-filled, wooden-encased, half window room that smells like... horse.

Duey has been riding horses since she was three years old and has owned horses since she was 13. But it wasn't until last spring that Duey bought Knight, her very own American Miniature Horse.

Knight is big for his species — approximately 33 inches tall at the withers (the horse's shoulder blades) — whereas the average is about 30 inches, Duey said. He looks like a huge, shaggy dog from a distance and like an incredibly small pony up close.

"Originally, it was just almost a stupid idea, kind of," Duey said. "I wanted to have a miniature horse to keep in the house, but I wanted a tiny one. And I went with my [roommate] to look at horses at her trainer family's house — her family shows miniature horses — and I ended up with this one, and he's huge, but he's well-behaved."

After buying Knight, Duey then had to find roommates and a house with a big yard, doing the process backwards, she said. Her backyard has two parts: A small yard behind the house is connected by a gate leading to a side lot, big enough to fit another house and yard.

"It's perfect for a miniature horse," Duey said. "At the University Farm, the students' horses don't even have this much room in their turnout pen, and they have to share."

Horses have to be fed at the same time each day, or they'll get colic (a horse stomachache), she said. But otherwise, they're pretty low-maintenance: Like dogs, they generally just need water, food and exercise.

However, Duey and one of her roommates are looking forward to one perk from Knight, which the normal pet dog couldn't live up to.

"We wanna train him to drive [sleds]," Duey said. "That way we can go sledding in the winter."

Pets purchased by other students were a bit more spontaneous.

Senior Ryan Rose and his friends were looking around at Walmart the spring of last year, when they saw a dinosaur eel, the coolest thing there, he said.

"We just saw him at Walmart, and we fell in love," Rose said.

He then did research on the eels and found some interesting facts.

"The Pentagon used his scale style to make bomb-proof armor," Rose said. "Like the way his scales are together... it's pretty strong. [They] used that design to make bomb-proof armor for soldiers."

Dinosaur eels are also one of the few fish that have lungs, so they can survive out of water as long as they stay wet, he said.

"There's all kinds of horror stories online," Rose said. "That was kind of the appeal to buying it, too, 'cause it's like, 'Aw, this is awesome. It could jump out of my tank and kill me in my sleep.'"

With that in mind, he bought what was to be named Joseph Cornelius Rose-Hartman-Campbell the First, also known as Neil.

"Joseph Cornelius sounded cool," Rose said. "And then Rose-Hartman-Campbell are the last names of me, my



Bethany Coury/Index

Sophomore Crystal Duey kneels next to her miniature horse, Knight. Duey has owned horses since her early childhood. Caring for them has inspired her to study to become a horse veterinarian.

girlfriend and [my friend] Michael."

Neil only lived one year, probably due to frequent traveling and a small tank.

Although the tank was small, it didn't lack character.

"All I had was rocks, we didn't have scenery or anything for him," Rose said. "So we took some Legos, we put boiling water over them to sterilize them and built giant buildings. Michael built a coliseum thing."

He said Neil liked to burrow under the palaces rather than hang out in them, but nonetheless it spiced up the tank.

Rose said Neil's death has brought dark times.

"Most people liked him," Rose said. "He was surprisingly friendly and attentive for a fish. He — like, most other fish are kind of just there — but he would like, come up to the glass, and if you put your finger there, he would follow [it] around. He was actually kind [of] fun. He was my homework buddy."

Duey and Rose aren't the only students to have owned interesting pets.

Senior Hillary Betzen's dad was a veterinarian, so she's been around animals her whole life, from farm animals such as goats to random pets such as chinchillas.

She said she moved off campus her senior year specifically to have a pet, preferably a cat. However, one of her roommates was allergic to cats, and all of her roommates were opposed to her getting a snake. Her last option, the hedgehog, was a winner with her roommates.

"I had remembered that I always wanted a hedgehog when I was really little," Betzen said. "I always thought they were cool in the pet stores."

Her multi-colored hedgehog is named after a "Lord of the Rings" hobbit, Bilbo.

"He has like this little house that he stays in, and like, a lot of times, especially during the day, he doesn't like to come out of the house," Betzen said. "I have to take the house off of him, and

he's like the hobbit, Bilbo, that doesn't want to leave."

Betzen was lucky to be able to get Bilbo — hedgehogs are currently hard to come by and are getting expensive, she said. She called a local pet store, Jungle of Joys, and they didn't have any. A week later, the store called to tell her that someone was trying to get rid of theirs, so they met up.

Betzen said it took Bilbo a while to get used to being handled, but one of her favorite things about him is his spines.

"That's actually, I think, the fun thing about him — texture and stuff," Betzen said. "I'm a very tactile person. It's fun to pet him."

Her other favorite part about Bilbo is his diet. Along with normal hedgehog food and cat food, he eats worms.

"They're still alive, and that's just one of my favorite things," Betzen said. "Because you can pick it up and feed it to him, and he grabs it and you can hear it crunch and stuff, most friends are grossed out by it."

# Citizens volunteer time to extinguish fires

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN  
Staff Reporter

When Barry Mitchell is not working his day job at Hy-Vee, there's a good chance he's putting in time as chief of Adair County's no. 1 Rural Fire District.

But as a volunteer, he's not making any money.

In the rural areas surrounding Kirksville, paid firefighters are scarce. Mitchell runs a fire district of 28 volunteers at "Novinger North," as it is known. In Kirksville's surrounding areas, volunteer firehouses respond to calls of medical emergencies and potential fires.

Other volunteer-run Adair County rural departments include the Novinger Fire Department, Southwest Rural Fire Department, Eastern Rural Fire District, La Plata Fire Department and the Green Top Fire Department.

"A lot of them do it to help out people, to protect the area," Mitchell said. "If your home — or if mine — was on fire, I would hope somebody would be there to put it out."

Jerry Thomas, captain of La Plata Community Fire Protection District, has a similar sentiment — he wants to do what he can to help the community. But

that's not to say he doesn't enjoy the adrenaline rush that comes each time he gets a call that somebody is in need.

Thomas has spent the past 43 years serving as a volunteer firefighter, and he has the stories to show for it. Six years ago, when a plane crashed in a field outside of Kirksville and 13 of its 15 passengers were killed, Thomas was part of the search crew.

As a lifetime La Plata resident, he said it's rare to go on a call involving complete strangers. In a small town, the firefighters nearly always know the people they are helping.

"We've had a couple of fire deaths in the time I've been with the fire department, and that's a pretty traumatic situation," he said. "You just have to suck it up. Worry about the feelings later."

Similar to Thomas, Ed Dunlap, building director of Centennial Hall Food Services, didn't originally envision himself as a volunteer firefighter.

Dunlap was looking to gather enough medical training to, if necessary, be able to assist his employees who had medical conditions. But

the more he learned from first responder training with the Adair County Ambulance District, the more interested he became.

"There's a lot to learn," Dunlap said. "It's not just 'put the water on the fire and the fire goes out.' You have to learn fire behavior. You have to learn stuff like that so you keep yourself safe and everyone else safe."

Dunlap now lives his life on call. At any time, he could be paged to an emergency.

"When the Novinger downtown buildings caught on fire, I had just crawled into bed for the night when the tones went off," Dunlap said. "And you go, 'You've got to be kidding me.' But you get up because you can't let your fellow firefighters down."

It's the friendship aspect that is a key reason Dunlap continues to serve. If you're heading into a fire, he said, it's crucial to know you're surrounded by the support of your fellow firefighters.

But the nerves never completely go away.

"If you're not afraid when you go in, then you're not respecting what's actually happening," Dunlap said. "If you go in, saying, 'Oh this is easy, you're going to get hurt or somebody else will get hurt.'"

# Home-schooled students adapt to college living

BY ALEX CARLSON  
Staff Reporter

Students at Truman come from many different backgrounds — local towns and big cities, some from across the ocean and some directly from Kirksville. And while many come from either a private or public high school before arriving at Truman, some students follow a different path that literally is closer to home.

"The home-schooled student population is growing," said Dawn Howd, assistant director of admissions. "It's becoming common at Truman."

One academic challenge for home-schooled students involves not having a professional counselor to guide them as students at public and private high schools do.

"Many home-schooled students do dual-credit programs," Howd said. "They have to ask, 'How do you make a home-school transcript?' With no high school counselor, the parents help the students with that."

Aside from undergoing a different type of academic lifestyle, home-schooled students also must adjust to a different type of social environment, but even that hasn't been the struggle that many expect.

"There's a misnomer there that students who are home-schooled don't have the socialization of public school students," Howd said. "I don't think they should be treated differently."

As the home-schooled student population continues to grow, the common misconception of home-schooled students is that they might have disadvantages in college. These students might have a different educational environment than students with a public or private school experience, but that doesn't mean they miss out on any of the academic or social benefits that public or private-schooled students have.

Sophomore Tim Weeks was home-schooled from kindergarten through his senior year of high school, but he doesn't let his home-schooled background affect his college experience at Truman. In fact, he said he found home-schooling was good preparation for college life.

"It's a little different, but that'd be the same for any new college student," Weeks said. "I haven't had any issues adjusting. Home-schooling is similar to the college atmosphere. How you get your work done is up to you, so there's a lot of freedom."

From an academic standpoint, Weeks said he was prepared for college.

"I knew from day one — when I read the syllabus — I knew that I wasn't behind academically," Weeks said. "In fact, I felt a bit over-prepared."

Although Weeks didn't participate in the same social situations as other Truman students during high school, he still feels comfortable interacting with other students.

"I know that you're around friends more in college," Weeks said. "So it's similar to high school with the social aspect."

Nicol Corcoran, Centennial Hall director, is familiar with home-schooled students, both from her undergraduate years and through her work at Centennial Hall. She has supported students from all kinds of academic and social backgrounds.

"From my experience, I'd say that they transition similarly to other students," Corcoran said. "Those [students] who I've worked with generally are looking forward to change, both academically and socially. But still, there is discussion between staff when approaching new situations and students with different backgrounds, so we speak to students casually."

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