



Photo by Maria Corvallis

Indulging the Urge To Ride

People have a special fascination for horses that is hard to explain. Everywhere, people can be found who pursue this love of horses.

At the University, classes are held at the Pruitt Stable in Lorane. The stable has a large, covered arena and a permanent jump course, as well as 35 school horses for various levels of rider ability and 75 acres for trail riding.

"We have all levels and I would have to say that the base is fairly broad toward beginners," Pruitt says. At least half

the students are beginners, some of whom have never been on a horse before.

Even in the beginning classes, there are different levels. "How we match that challenge is that we have different levels of horses, which keeps people interested," she says.

Very rarely has anyone ever come off a horse, even when jumping. Riders are safe on the horses during lessons, she says.

"That's something you have to think about a lot when you're teaching, is whether you're putting someone in jeopardy."

Pruitt won't move someone up to another level unless she's sure they're ready.

Some students take lessons term after term. Some go on to become long-term riders. "Once a person is addicted to horses, they don't want to be away from them. I suppose it's like getting addicted to running. It becomes a part of you."

A part of the addiction may come from the confidence gained in working with horses. Ann Bancroft, a senior humanities major, says, "It's a definite achievement to go out and work

with an animal that's three times bigger than you are, and to get it to do what you want."

A feeling of control may be why women are more attracted to riding than men. Out of a class of ten students, only one or two are usually men, Pruitt says.

"A horse is always something that a young girl is enamored with, and I don't know why. Whether it's the feeling of control or whether they think the animal is really special, I don't know, but some of the guys are attracted too."

Equestrian riding is also a

change from academics. Bancroft recommends classes to her friends. "For a lot of students, the University is their world."

Bancroft has been taking classes at the Pruitt stables for the last two years. Riding helps break up the monotony of the week so she can get back on track. "I'm not a real scholastic type person, so I've really enjoyed getting outdoors and working," she says.

"When I take friends out there, they're just amazed at how pretty it is."

Pruitt agrees. "A lot of kids say that they really need this because it's a way to really get away from the books and relax, then they can go back and study better," she says.

Equestrian classes involve a time commitment of three or four hours a week. There is a half-hour drive each way between Eugene and the stable in Lorane.

"Sometimes if students don't have anything afterwards,



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