

Kids hoof it with science

Aggie Day teaches about veterinary school challenges

BY SABRA SPAW
Special to The Battalion

Equestrians spend numerous hours grooming and caring for their horses. However, few are able to touch the tendons and bones inside a horse's leg, or view its tissue through a microscope.

But for young horse lovers who want to become veterinarians, acceptance into veterinary school requires more than just a love for animals.

Getting accepted into veterinary school means good grades in science.

On Saturday, more than 150 members of the Rio Grande and Red River regions of the U.S. Pony Club, ranging in age from 8 to 19, met at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine to learn more about prerequisites necessary to succeed in veterinary school.

"Aggie Day," hosted every two years by the local Brazos Pony Club, the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Department of Animal Science, was an opportunity for Pony Club members to learn more about equine veterinary medicine through lectures, demonstrations and hands-on activities.

"Aggie Day answers a lot of questions the clubbers have regarding veterinary science and school," Dr. Larry Johnson, professor of veterinary anatomy and Aggie Day master of ceremonies, said. "We want to interest the kids in entering biomedical science or veterinary medicine education."

Johnson said the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, the only veterinary school in the state, takes opportunities like Aggie Day to help kids learn things they cannot learn at home.

A discussion panel consisting of veterinary students answered questions posed by Pony Club members and their parents.

Discussions included what methods to undertake to enter veterinary school and how much impact extracurricular activities and volunteering have on an application.

"Veterinary students tell the younger students how to begin thinking about vet school or attending college," he said.

"We learn a lot about things we haven't looked at so closely before," Andrea Holman, a junior at A&M Consolidated High School, said.

Gayle Linger, also an A&M Consolidated junior, said the seminar helped



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

her know how to prepare for applying to veterinary school. "I am loading up on science classes and taking an equine science class at the high school," she said.

Jan Coble, the Club's Rio Grande regional supervisor, said that its purpose is to extend horsemanship and veterinary knowledge to the appropriate levels of its members.

"We learn a lot," Stephanie McKiernan, a Hood Pony Club member said. "But it's not just about learning. It's about having fun."

Fifth-grader Laura Welsh's favorite part of Saturday's schedule was taking a horse's vital signs and measurements.

"I could feel the horse's pulse in its lower fetlock," Welsh said.

She said she is preparing for veterinary school by paying close attention and taking good notes.

Medical school student service honors cadaver

BY DAVE AMBER
The Battalion

Human anatomy cannot be learned from only a book or a CD-ROM.

That is why each fall, first-year medical students across the country experience an important rite of passage when becoming a doctor as they walk into the dissection room for a class called Gross Anatomy.

"It's quite a shock the first day when you uncover the body and you realize that it's a real person," Vinnie Choudry, a first-year medical student, said.

On Friday afternoon, more than 100 faculty, staff and students in the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center College of Medicine joined Choudry and other first-year Gross Anatomy students in lighting 17 maroon and white candles to honor the seventeen individuals who donated their bodies for the fall semester class.

This is the second year students organized a memorial service to signify that the donated bodies used for medical student education represent real human lives.

"I will never forget my first entry into Gross Anatomy, with wafts of sweet formaldehyde in the air and 40 or so cadavers," Dr. Samuel Black, professor of humanities and microbiology, said. "It was a profoundly emotional event,

and we develop a nonchalant but reverent attitude as a defense mechanism."

Black added that he still has strong feelings about the experience, his first encounter with death.

"From death you learn about life," Dr. Gary McCord, assistant dean for academic affairs and admissions for the medical school, said that most people do not realize the school obtains the volunteered bodies.

"We've met many of these people," he said. "They've come to school and signed their papers."

He said increasing numbers of U.S. medical schools organize services or other activities to commemorate the donations.

In Dallas, the University of Texas Western Medical School maintains a garden where it inters the ashes of donated bodies. In some cases, the remains are returned to the family," Phil Schock, Southwestern Medical School Director of News and Publications, said. "Otherwise, they are buried in the Memorial Garden where people often leave flowers."

Choudry, who organized the service, said the students often become close to the bodies who donated their bodies.

"You become intimate with the bodies," Choudry said. "As we rotate groups we read each person a name and treat them with as much dignity as possible."

Heart valves cancelled

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Minnesota company stopped all implants of a fairly new type of heart valve today because the silver coating intended to reduce heart infections may occasionally cause a valve to leak.

St. Jude Medical Inc. recalled inventories of St. Jude's heart valves with Silzone coating that not yet been implanted into patients. Valves already implanted and the popular St. Jude's valves do not contain the silver coating were not recalled.

About 36,000 of the silver-coated valves have been implanted into patients worldwide, but 12,000 in the United States. But St. Jude Medical said the incidence of leakage, although higher than in older heart valves that are not silver-coated, was not high enough to warrant a recall of implanted heart valves.

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