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New York Thoroughbred Breeders works with the State University of New York at Cobleskill, educating students in the animal science program about racing and breeding. NYTB's Tom Gallo (far left) and Najja Thompson (behind Gallo) take students on a tour of Saratoga's backstretch

## Racing & Breeding 101

**NEW YORK THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE  
IN INTRODUCING COBLESKILL STUDENTS TO THE INDUSTRY**

By TERESA GENARO

**L**OOKING AT HORSES on chilly, drizzly days is rarely an enticing activity, but on a Sunday morning in mid-October, a handful of college students stood near the walking ring on the Fasig-Tipton sales grounds in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., catalogs in hand, and did just that, making the rounds of the more than 200 broodmares and

weanlings that would be offered at the company's fall mixed sale Oct. 15.

They'd driven up that morning from the State University of New York at Cobleskill, along with their instructor Ray Whelihan, an associate professor of animal science, and despite the less-than-optimal conditions and the hunger they'd built up

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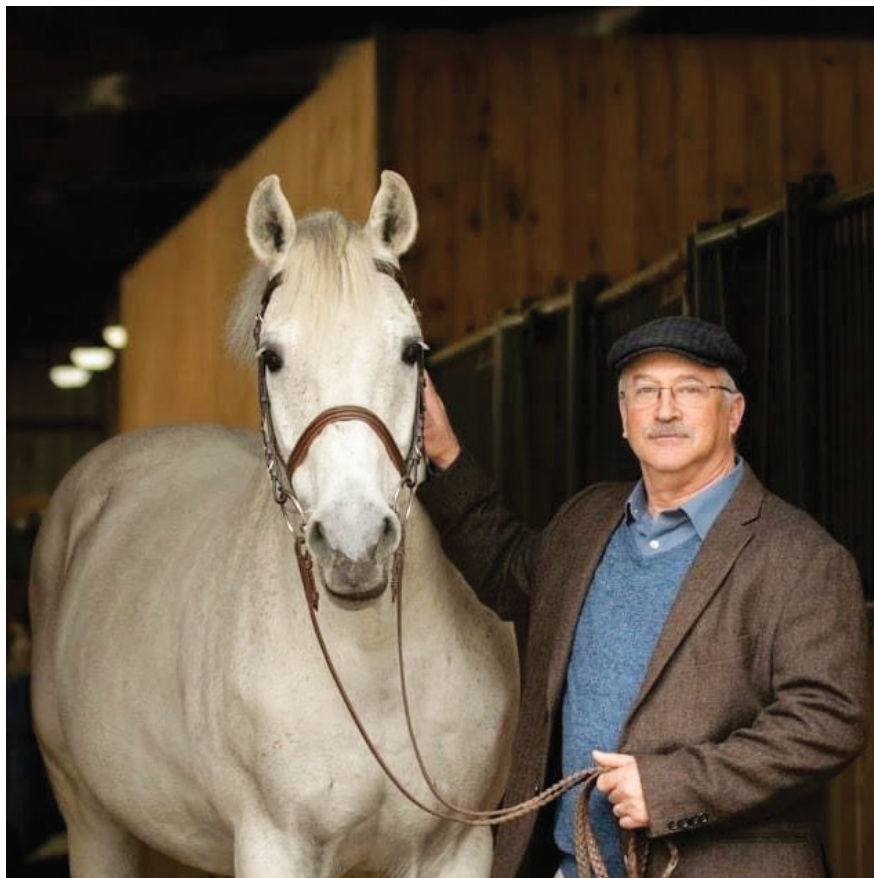


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Ray Whelihan, an associate professor of animal science at Cobleskill, collaborated with NYTB to develop the elective, three-credit course

after a morning of travel and work, they were eager to share their impressions of their first experience as “buyers” at a Thoroughbred auction.

In alternating years, Whelihan teaches an elective, three-credit course on the Thoroughbred industry, a collaborative effort between the college and New York Thoroughbred Breeders. The course wasn't slated to run this year, but this group of students asked Whelihan if he'd do an abbreviated edition of the course

for them as an independent study.

“Numbers-wise,” Whelihan said, “it makes sense to run the course every other year because that's how we get a full section and because we can offer a greater array of courses. But some students said, ‘I really wanted to take your class, but I'm not going to be here next year. I didn't want any of them to graduate without getting the experience they were looking for, so here we are.’”

The full course comprises two lectures

a week for 15 weeks and four weekend days in immersive “labs” like trips to Saratoga Race Course and Finger Lakes Gaming & Racetrack. Open to third- and fourth-year students, ANSC 377: Thoroughbred Industry covers the management and business aspects of Thoroughbred breeding and racing and includes visits to New York breeding farms, Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital in Saratoga Springs, and New York Thoroughbred Breeders professional seminars.

While NYTB doesn't contribute financially to the program, the organization partnered with Whelihan and Cobleskill in establishing the course and continues to work closely with Whelihan and the students.

Tom Gallo is a longtime board member of NYTB who has also served as the organization's president, and he's known Whelihan for nearly 20 years. In 2006, Whelihan purchased a Hook and Ladder weanling filly for \$4,000 at a fall mixed sale in Saratoga that was run by the New York Breeders Sales Co., then sold her for \$20,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Eastern Fall Yearling Sale. Named Hooked On Hope, she debuted for Gallo's Parting Glass Racing at Gulfstream Park March 22, 2009, winning by a head at odds of 20-1.

Gallo and Whelihan were at first race-track acquaintances, then friends, then partners of a sort when the professor asked Gallo to be a guest lecturer in his Cobleskill classes. Over the years, Gallo has educated the students about conformation, reading a sales catalog, and breeding a marketable horse, and those lectures evolved into the current course.

THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF RAY WHELIHAN; OPPOSITE PAGE: FASIG-TIPTON PHOTO

***“I WISH THAT WE HAD 100 SCHOOLS THAT WE COULD DO THIS WITH. THE NEXT GENERATION OF HORSEMEN IS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE, AND WE’VE GOT TO LEAD THE EFFORTS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE, TO PASS DOWN OUR KNOWLEDGE, AND TO SHOW THEM OUR INDUSTRY.”***

—DR. SCOTT AHLSCHEDE, NYTB'S CURRENT PRESIDENT, VETERINARIAN, AND SHAREHOLDER AT SARATOGA'S ROOD & RIDDLE EQUINE HOSPITAL

# 2024 LEADING SIRES IN NEW YORK

For daily updated sire lists visit [BloodHorse.com](https://BloodHorse.com)

| Rank | Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands                   | 2024 Stud Fee | Rnrs/ Wnrs | BT SWnrs/ Wns | Rstrct SW/ BT SW | (Chief Earner, Earnings)        | 2024 Earnings | Foals | Cumulative |           |            |  |
|------|--|---------------|------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|------------|-----------|------------|--|
|      |  |               |            |               |                  |                                 |               |       | BT SWs     | A-E Index | Comp Index |  |
| 1    | Bucchero (12, Kantharos), Ironhorse Stallions                          | \$7,500       | 129/71     | 4/7           | 0/4              | (Book'em Danno, \$787,500)      | \$4,667,681   | 200   | 5          | 1.11      | 1.05       |  |
| 2    | Central Banker (10, Speightstown), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds   | \$7,500       | 145/73     | 6/7           | 6/6              | (Light Man, \$267,050)          | \$4,634,442   | 430   | 17         | 1.28      | 1.12       |  |
| 3    | Solomini (15, Curlin), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds               | \$7,500       | 84/41      | 4/4           | 3/4              | (Doc Sullivan, \$320,150)       | \$2,790,433   | 132   | 4          | 1.18      | 1.07       |  |
| 4    | War Dancer (10, War Front), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions      | \$7,500       | 78/36      | 1/1           | 0/1              | (Twenty Six Black, \$213,500)   | \$2,327,269   | 212   | 4          | 0.98      | 1.06       |  |
| 5    | Tourist (11, Tiznow), Rockridge Stud                                   | \$3,500       | 95/41      | 2/2           | 2/2              | (Factually Correct, \$164,900)  | \$2,138,428   | *329  | 8          | 0.88      | 1.18       |  |
| 6    | Bustin Stones (04, City Zip), Waldorf Farm                             | \$2,500       | 59/38      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Bustin Bay, \$177,330)         | \$1,654,787   | 313   | 13         | 1.25      | 1.17       |  |
| 7    | Big Brown (05, Boundary), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions        | Pnsd          | 51/13      | 1/2           | 1/1              | (The Big Torpedo, \$246,900)    | \$1,075,108   | *908  | 30         | 1.01      | 1.34       |  |
| 8    | Freud (98, Storm Cat), Sequel Stallions New York                       | Private       | 48/21      | 1/1           | 1/1              | (Dakota Gold, \$180,000)        | \$1,058,912   | *1445 | 60         | 1.42      | 1.18       |  |
| 9    | Mission Impazible (07, Unbridled's Song), Sequel Stallions New York    | Pnsd          | 50/21      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (My Last Mission, \$88,700)     | \$1,047,386   | 333   | 8          | 0.99      | 1.14       |  |
| 10   | Union Jackson (12, Curlin)   | Pnsd          | 39/18      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Jackson Heights, \$152,819)    | \$1,039,673   | 93    | 2          | 0.90      | 1.00       |  |
| 11   | Redesdale (13, Speightstown), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds        | \$2,500       | 38/17      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Midtown Lights, \$179,845)     | \$818,106     | 75    | 1          | 0.82      | 0.89       |  |
| 12   | ¶ Honest Mischief (16, Into Mischief), Sequel Stallions New York       | \$6,500       | 23/6       | 2/3           | 2/2              | (Sacrosanct, \$228,250)         | \$677,808     | 64    | 2          | 1.01      | 1.23       |  |
| 13   | Micromanage (10, Medaglia d'Oro)                                       | Pnsd          | 21/12      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Mason Mania, \$83,068)         | \$616,789     | 94    | 0          | 0.77      | 1.15       |  |
| 14   | Frost Giant (03, Giant's Causeway)                                     | Died, 2022    | 24/10      | 1/2           | 0/1              | (Smithwick's Spice, \$238,325)  | \$616,449     | *477  | 16         | 1.08      | 1.07       |  |
| 15   | Majestic City (09, City Zip)   | Died, 2022    | 37/19      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Pascal Moon, \$123,315)        | \$549,587     | 130   | 1          | 0.60      | 0.98       |  |
| 16   | Bellamy Road (02, Concerto)  | Pnsd          | 29/11      | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Fortune's Nephew, \$64,000)    | \$512,222     | *756  | 32         | 1.07      | 1.19       |  |
| 17   | Slumber (GB) (08, Cacique), Rockridge Stud                             | \$7,500       | 11/3       | 1/1           | 0/1              | (Fluffy Socks, \$226,985)       | \$448,999     | 37    | 3          | 1.95      | 0.94       |  |
| 18   | Weekend Hideaway (10, Speightstown)                                    | Pnsd          | 9/6        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Itsallcomintogetha, \$132,390) | \$408,271     | 19    | 1          | 1.12      | 0.93       |  |
| 19   | Honorable Dillon (10, Tapit)   | N/A           | 15/5       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Little Linzee, \$89,950)       | \$341,613     | *158  | 1          | 0.68      | 1.07       |  |
| 20   | ¶ King for a Day (16, Uncle Mo), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions | \$5,000       | 13/3       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Soontobeking, \$155,878)       | \$340,169     | 36    | 0          | 0.90      | 1.05       |  |
| 21   | Courageous Cat (06, Storm Cat), Questroyal North                       | \$2,500       | 18/9       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Ifihadachance, \$55,100)       | \$322,138     | 243   | 8          | 0.84      | 1.02       |  |
| 22   | Bank Heist (07, Maria's Mon), Kaz Hill Farm                            | \$1,000       | 11/4       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Athena Beach, \$142,550)       | \$297,841     | 108   | 2          | 0.77      | 1.18       |  |
| 23   | The Lieutenant (13, Street Sense)                                      | Died, 2019    | 9/5        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Dr. Kraft, \$140,640)          | \$286,679     | *67   | 2          | 1.40      | 1.07       |  |
| 24   | Giant Surprise (09, Giant's Causeway)                                  | Pnsd          | 13/3       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Giant James, \$61,519)         | \$161,560     | 146   | 4          | 1.07      | 1.17       |  |
| 25   | Teuffesberg (04, Johannesburg)   | Died, 2022    | 8/5        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Writer's Regret, \$48,300)     | \$157,977     | 183   | 4          | 1.09      | 1.03       |  |
| 26   | ¶ Fog of War (16, War Front), Hidden Lake Farm                         | \$3,500       | 19/3       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (George Briggs, \$41,250)       | \$144,373     | 39    | 0          | 0.26      | 0.80       |  |
| 27   | Disco Partner (12, Disco Rico), Rockridge Stud                         | Private       | 9/4        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Disco Star, \$74,250)          | \$142,086     | 25    | 0          | 0.37      | 1.06       |  |
| 28   | A Shin Forward (05, Forest Wildcat), Rockridge Stud                    | Pnsd          | 11/5       | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Lord Ace, \$20,734)            | \$100,102     | 52    | 0          | 0.55      | 0.83       |  |
| 29   | Encaustic (04, Broad Brush)  | Died, 2022    | 7/3        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Impermanence, \$24,385)        | \$94,686      | 63    | 0          | 0.50      | 0.75       |  |
| 30   | Superestrella (08, Storm Cat)  | N/A           | 5/1        | 0/0           | 0/0              | (Willintoriskitall, \$36,190)   | \$83,865      | 17    | 0          | 0.62      | 0.65       |  |

\* includes Southern Hemisphere foals

A lifelong horseman and native of western Massachusetts, Whelihan started riding horses when he was young, continuing through and after college, and his first jobs after graduating were in the equine industry.

Gallo gave students an introduction to Thoroughbred sales in a 90-minute Zoom class a few days before the students' trip to Fasig-Tipton.

"I went through some of the databases that I use as an appraiser," he said. "We got into TrueNicks and things like that, essentially trying to give them a checklist of how to do the research, what to look at initially, and then how to do the research to dig deeper."

Standing in the pouring rain that Saturday morning, Gallo took them through the catalog pages, teaching them about black type and female families. The students then explored the consignments, picking out horses that they thought looked promising.

Third-year student Makenzie Driscoll had her eye on Hip 304, a

Vino Rosso chestnut weanling filly out of the Dixie Union mare Dixie Victory, who is a half sister to the five-time stakes winner, graded stakes-placed Bonita Bianca (by Curlin). Unfortunately, Driscoll didn't get a chance to see how her eye measured up to the market's as the filly was withdrawn

before going through the ring.

"I saw a lot of horses that I'd like to buy and I can't afford," said Driscoll with a rueful grin. "I loved seeing them without being in the auction ring, where you can just kind of walk around and look at them and not have to worry about accidentally



Cobleskill students attended this year's Fasig-Tipton's Saratoga Fall Mixed Sale as part of an outing with Whelihan to hone their skills as "buyers"

putting your hand up.

“I’ve always had horses that are older,” she continued. “I’ve never owned a weanling or had any experiences with babies, so it was cool to see the differences between what people look for when they’re buying a weanling and you can’t really see anything other than their structure. Whereas when I look for adult horses, I’m more looking at how they move and how they’ve done in the show world.”

Driscoll grew up barrel racing Quarter Horses before moving on to English riding. She knows that she wants to work in the equine industry, though she hasn’t narrowed down her ambitions at this point.

“There are so many ways to work with horses, and I took this class to broaden my horizons,” she said.

Lillian Lighthall has already decided on her career: becoming a state trooper and working with a canine unit. She took the full class last year and joined the independent study both to make up some work and because she enjoyed the program last year.

“I love riding, but before I took the course, I didn’t know much about horse racing,” she said. “Taking the class definitely piqued my interest. I have a trooper family that just started their own business called Thin Blue Line Stables, and they started breeding and selling racehorses. They just sold their first foals in Kentucky, so I’m definitely getting involved in that industry a little more and getting some experience to help them out.”

Joshua Brown brought some inside intel to his selection: Hip 150, a Violence weanling filly from the Vinery Sales consignment for Rockridge Stud, Matt Nester, and Animals In Motion. The filly is out of the More Than Ready mare Rockin Ready, who is a half sister to millionaire multiple graded stakes winner Newgrange (by Violence).

Brown works at Rockridge Stud; he describes himself as a “general farm-hand,” feeding horses, cleaning stalls, and working with mares and foals. He’d



**Hall of Famer Bill Mott, who could teach a master class on training racehorses, spoke to students at his Saratoga barn earlier this year**



**Some of the students noted their perception of racing favorably shifted after spending time at farms, sales grounds, and racetracks**

grown up riding horses and after a hiatus from the equine world, he realized he missed it. He knows that he wants to make a living managing a breeding farm.

“He came to us and said that he wanted to go to Cobleskill,” said Lere Visagie, the owner and manager of Rockridge Stud. “I told him that he needed to work on a farm before he went into equine management, so that he’d understand what equine management means. I think a lot of people go into the business because they like working with horses, but there’s more to it than that.”

“Lere’s a really good teacher,” added Whelihan. “Josh has got a lot out of working for Lere, and I know that Lere loves Josh, too. Josh is so reliable, and he keeps an eye on everything, and he does that in our barn at the college, too.”

The filly that Brown had selected, Hip 150, failed to meet her reserve, bringing a final bid of \$97,000.

Towards the end of this year’s race meeting, the group toured the backstretch at Saratoga Race Course, highlighted by a visit with Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott, with whom Gallo’s Dream Maker Racing has horses. Last year’s class also spent time with Mott during training hours.

“I try to tell them a little bit about the process of what we’re doing on a day-to-day basis,” said Mott on a chilly October morning at his Saratoga barn. “This is what the grooms are doing. This is what the hotwalkers are doing. I try to go through what our mindset is, and I talked about getting the horse ready, step by step, and how long it takes. You don’t just get on horses and ride them.”

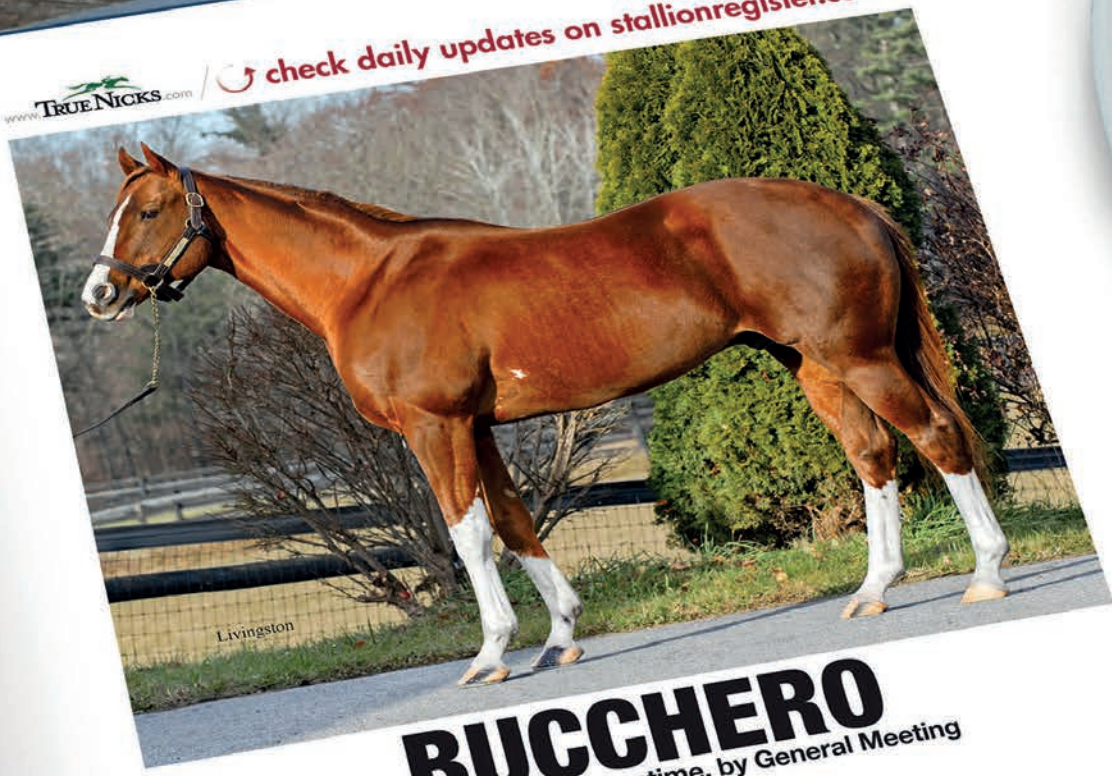
“I remember he said that ‘slow progress is good progress,’” said Joseph Barone, who started out at Cobleskill without any experience with horses.

“A lot of people who watch racing on television or go to the Kentucky Derby, they don’t think about all of the work that goes into getting a horse there,” said Mott. “It takes years of preparation, and a lot of jobs, and it’s a big part of the economy. So it’s a lot more than just the greatest two minutes in sports.”

“I think it’s really important for younger people to understand that,” he went on. “If they get the opportunity to be introduced to the sport and feel like they have something in common with the horse, maybe they’ll feel like it’s something that they want to be involved in.”

And that, says NYTB executive director Najja Thompson, is precisely what everyone involved with the Cobleskill program hopes will happen.

“We want to expose the sport to students and college administrators, to open doors to the next



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generation participating in breeding and racing,” he said. “We’ve talked to representatives from some of the other SUNY (State University of New York) colleges, and they’ve expressed interest in starting a similar program.”

Already, students from New York’s Boards of Cooperative Educational Services programs have joined some of Whelihan’s Zoom lectures. Among BOCES’ offerings are career and technical education for high school students, services for students with disabilities, and literacy programs and employment for adults.

“We may create a one-credit course for them,” said Whelihan. “It’s hard for some of the BOCES students to do the field trips, but they can attend the lectures, and they’ll be sitting in a class with college students, which is kind of cool.”

“I wish that we had 100 schools that we could do this with,” said Dr. Scott Ahlschwede, a veterinarian and shareholder at Saratoga’s Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital; he also serves as president of the NYTB board. “The next generation of horsemen is critical to our success in the future, and we’ve got to lead the efforts to educate people, to pass down our knowledge, and to show them our industry.”

Even among this year’s small cohort of students, the class and Whelihan’s curriculum in the animal science department have found purchase.

Barone got hooked in one of Whelihan’s riding classes, inspiring him to take the Thoroughbred course. As a result, he’s shifting the focus of his planned veterinary studies.

“Two years ago, I didn’t have any experience with horses,” he said. “Then Ray’s riding class slingshot me into the world of horses, and I’ve been wanting to build up more knowledge about them. This course is a really good experience to get that.”

“I started out working with cats and dogs, and then I got the exposure with horses, so now I’m leaning more towards working with horses.”



**Gallo with Thompson, who says, “We want to expose the sport to students and college administrators, to open doors to the next generation participating in breeding and racing.”**

Unlike Barone, Kaila Gifford grew up with horses, literally in her backyard. She, too, wants to be a large-animal vet.

“I took this course because I like seeing how different things affect horses’ bodies,” she said.

Like Driscoll, Lighthall grew up barrel racing and riding Western. A canine major, she’s spent many of her elective credits in equine-related courses.

“Once I started learning about all of this,” she said, “I started wondering what else I’d be able to do with horses.”

Though open to a number of career paths, Driscoll said that she’s learning towards therapeutic horsemanship.

“I like the idea of working with people and horses at the same time,” she said.

Though not necessarily a goal of the course, the students have also been impressed by the care that they see the

racehorses getting, at the farms, at the sales grounds, and at the racetracks.

“People think that there’s a lot of abuse, but once you actually get to see everything, you can see that the horses are nicely taken care of,” said Driscoll.

“After the first year of being able to do this class, learning from everybody, it changes your perspective about what you maybe thought horse racing was,” agreed Lighthall. “They do very well taking care of the horses, and that should be noted.”

She went on, “I encourage students to get involved and take the opportunity to take this course when it’s offered. It definitely opens your perspective and I learned a lot that I didn’t know before meeting Naj and Tom. It’s definitely a good area to work in if someone wants the opportunity to.” **BH**