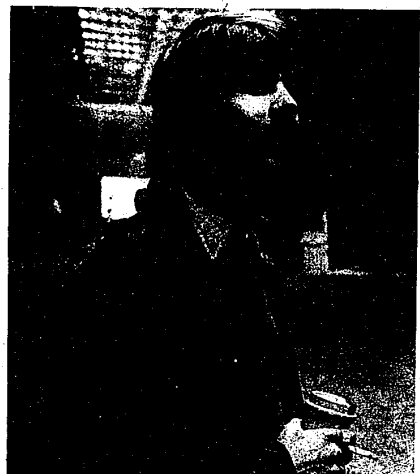


# Learning to ride — more than horsing around



Riding instructor Rex Beasaw pauses during his morning class. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

By MARY GNIEWEK

Rex Beasaw compares horseback riding to water skiing.

"You climb on, ride for awhile, fall off and climb back on again," he said.

Instead of bathing suits, skis and boots, the props include riding boots, saddles and 90 rolling acres of land at Havendill Farms in Walled Lake.

Classes in beginning and advanced horseback riding are offered there through the Farmington Community Center all summer long.

"It's good exercise and good therapy," said Beasaw, who is the instructor.

"If a rider takes a tumble or two, it's not out of the ordinary."

Wendy Laudermlch, strutting along on Mountain, an appropriately named gray mixed breed, took the reins again after he bucked four feet into the air and threw her to the ground.

"It's like riding a motorcycle. There are risks involved," she said, unflinched. "You just try

to remember to fall easily."

Mrs. Laudermlch, who was not hurt, is in the advanced riding and jumping class with ten other women.

"This is a personal challenge. The only competition is between me and the horse," she said. "He's frisky and fast."

Mrs. Laudermlch quit her job as a marketing representative for Michigan Bell two years ago and rides horses three times a week now.

"I'M A DIABETIC," she said. "This is good exercise."

Monday's classes were held indoors because of rainy weather.

"I hate it inside," Beasaw admitted as he prepared his advanced riders for fence jumps in the center of the barn.

Beasaw shouted encouragement to the riders, who performed well despite confinement of the barn.

"We attract a diverse group — school teachers, doctors and lawyers. People who are overweight and need exercise. We

have two crippled children who come here to ride. It's good therapy."

Beasaw, 31, has been riding since he was 4 years old. A 1971 Western Michigan University graduate, he intended to go to law school before being tapped permanently by the horse bug.

"I needed a summer job one year and ended up staying here," he said.

One rider testifying to Beasaw's horsemanship was Sandy Slater of West Bloomfield. Both she and daughter Patty, 16, who received a horse for Christmas, are in the advanced riding class.

"He has the patience of Job," Mrs. Slater said. "Patty didn't even ride until September." And she's jumping now.

Both mother and daughter plan to keep on riding.

"It's a nice sport. We come here anytime all year round. The horse people are friendly," she said.

Sandy Kinzel, 21, admits to being horse crazy. "I always have been — since I was a little girl," she says.

SHE RIDES AT Havendill Farms three times a week and hopes to buy a horse next spring.

Despite her success on the high jumps, competitive riding is not for her. "Competition might take the fun out of it for me," she said.

Rider Kara Corb, 16, feels differently.

"I'd love to get into it competitively, but not until I get my own horse," she said. "I love riding. I always have."

Former rider Le Bowen of Novi re-caught the bug after 35 years away from horses. She's in the beginners class sponsored by the community center with her

daughter, Marilyn Berar.

Mrs. Berar is preparing for a horseback riding trip in Wyoming next month.

"I'm just here to see that she makes it," Mrs. Bowen said.

For more information, call the Farmington Community Center at 477-8404.

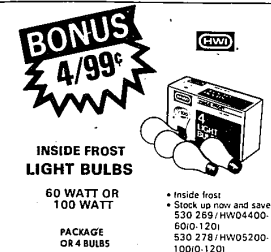


Riding tall in the saddle, Le Bowen hasn't been on a horse for 35 years. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)



Kara Corb, 16, waits her turn in an advanced riding class. The Southfield-Lathrup junior has been riding for four years.

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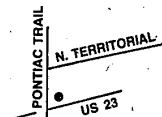
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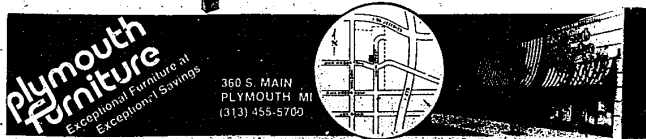


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