Club caters to equine lovers

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The average person in the 21st century may see the horse as nothing more than a four-legged relic of the past — an anachronism in modern times of affordable motorcars and jet-propelled transportation.

But for the Cook College Equine Science Club, horses are the focal point of an organization weighted very much with science of the present day.

“The main goal of our club is to provide anyone who is interested in horses with job opportunities, volunteer opportunities, learning opportunities and pretty much any information they might want or need about horses,” said club president Tiffany Trotter, a Cook College senior.

In biweekly meetings, the club explores the various aspects of present day equine interest, from the intricacies of craniosacral procedures to volunteer opportunities with aging racehorses.

Recent meetings have included a neonatal veterinarian who spoke about her experiences in working with mares and foals and a demonstration with a research horse running on a treadmill.

“Horses are an extremely complex and interesting creature,” said Tiffany G. Morey, a club member and Cook College first-year student. “If one looks hard enough, they can certainly find a job that relates their own personal interests to some aspect of the equine industry.”

According to the Equine Science Center of Cook College there are approximately 49,000 horses in New Jersey that result in a contribution of some $698 million to the state gross national product.

The Garden State is also home to the United States Equestrian Team headquarters and four horseracing tracks — including Monmouth Park, host to the annual million dollar Haskell Invitational.

It’s a vibrant locality that isn’t lost on the club. To complement meetings, a variety of related trips are offered, such as trail rides, a visit to the Meadowlands racetrack and a trip to Medieval Times.

While most members of the club have had some experience with horses, the only requirement for joining is an interest.

“It is vital to the future of the equine industry to raise awareness and interest, so the more people interested, the better,” Trotter said.

Prior to joining the club, acting secretary and Cook College senior Erin Rockhill said she did not have much experience with horses, but her experience with the club has been amazing.

“We plan awesome trips, and we have really great speakers come and talk at our meetings,” Rockhill said.

Despite common fallacies about horses and the people who love them, a general heir of optimism about the future of the equine industry emanates from the club.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about horse people — most notably that we are a bunch of ditzy, horse-crazy people that can’t think or talk of anything but horses,” Morey said. “In reality, the equine industry is one of the more rapidly expanding and advancing industries in our country.”

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, employment of animal care and service workers is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2012.