

Kat & Susan Olbrych

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John Lyons Certified Trainers

"Training a Language of Confidence"

You already have a great horse; at Fire Ridge Farm our goal is to help you enjoy your horse more. The trainers of Fire Ridge are Susan & Kat Olbrych, a unique mother-daughter team of John Lyons Certified Trainers. By combining control of the mind and body of your horse, we can safely increase performance.

What does "Training a Language of Confidence" mean?

Training is the language created between a horse and his trainer. By training languages in a positive way the horse and the trainer gain confidence in themselves and each other.

Who Are They?

Susan Olbrych has loved horses all of her life, growing up she spent her summers on a Morgan Horse farm in northern Vermont where she learned to ride, drive and train. It was there, in Glover, Vermont, that Susan's equine education began. In 1989 Susan opened a training and boarding barn in Newbury, Massachusetts. She ran the barn, taught riding and driving lessons, was the Co-District Commissioner of the Pentucket Pony Club and was an active competitor in Combined Driving.

Susan has followed the Lyons methods for many years starting with horses and then raising her two daughters, Kat & Tee, with the same principles. Susan passed on her equine-enthusiasm to both daughters.

Kat Olbrych started riding at the age of three and shortly thereafter became known at the barn and in the Pony Club as "the kid who can ride the tough ponies", this is when Kat learned she wanted to be a horse trainer. In the following years Kat participated in Pony Club with a main focus competing on Three-Day Eventing. When the Olbrych family moved from Newbury, Massachusetts to Brownsville, Vermont, Kat's main competitive focus shifted to distance riding where she successfully competed in both Competitive Trail and Endurance.

In 2002 Susan & Kat drove to Parachute, Colorado to a clinic at the Lyons' ranch to confirm their interest in attending the John Lyons Certification Program, taught by Josh Lyons. Josh invited both Kat & Susan back for the certification program because they "showed a fierce work ethic and dedication to horses and training". In 2003 Kat & Susan returned to Parachute to be certified. Seven months later; they graduated top of their class and were invited to the elite group of Select certified trainers. This was truly an honor for Kat because she was the youngest person ever to be certified. Susan & Kat are now training horses and giving clinics throughout the Northeast. They enjoy every training challenge viewing each as an opportunity to better understand horses and their relationships with people.

What Do They Do?

Using the conditioned response training methods, learned from Josh Lyons, they train horses and teach people to train their own horses.

What is the "Conditioned Response" training method?

The conditioned response training method is a gentle way of communicating your idea to the horse using a positive reward. By applying pressure, physically or mentally, we ask the horse to answer our request. When he answers correctly we reward him with a complete release of pressure. Since the horse will not choose the exact answer his first try, we build on his first step, asking for slightly more each time. With repetition, this gradual progression builds a solid cue. The horse stays calm because he knows the answer. Most undesirable behaviors come from the horse's confusion; the confusion comes from a deficiency somewhere in the line of communication. A way to think about it is getting a grocery list on a cell phone. If you have good reception you can get the entire grocery list. If you have poor reception you might only hear that you need to buy a loaf of bread. When you returned with only a loaf of bread, your spouse would be very disappointed and you would be confused. It's the same with your horse, you ask him to perform a certain maneuver and he doesn't do it; you end up disappointed and he ends up frustrated. With our method the answer is clear quickly because the release of pressure is instant gratification. Also, we do not ask the horse for more until it is clear that the horse understands. We implement this method in three ways: in the round pen, from the ground and mounted. By applying this in three ways any horse will benefit from this training.

Foundation Training

Foundation training is a series of exercises designed to control the separate parts of the horse. Each exercise is designed with a goal of the control of an individual part on cue. We teach the horse where to move the part, how far to move it, how quickly to get it there and with the lightest pressure possible. Combining the cues that are solidly built in foundation training the horse has the ability to perform movements and maneuvers that can be used on the trail or at the Olympics.

Starting Horses Under Saddle

We believe we use one of the safest, gentlest and most effective ways to teach a horse to be ridden. Our method avoids conflict almost completely, by solidly teaching foundation skills in the round pen and from the ground. By teaching this set of skills before we mount for the first time, we minimize the confusion, frustration and fear generally associated with the process. Setting the horse up to succeed, we ask him for the familiar set of skills. Since he already knows the answer we can reward him with a release. He remains calm because he understands what is being asked of him. This makes the entire experience safe for the horse and rider.

Beyond Foundation

The definition of upper level performance training is "training beyond necessity". Foundation training provides a safe, comfortable and enjoyable ride; performance level work is any training beyond foundation level.

Performance training is for the horse and rider team that is not satisfied with basic foundation work. Performance work provides the rider with the opportunity to be successful in competition or to raise the rider's expectations for their pleasure horse. Performance training includes: lead changes, elevating the withers, choosing your horse's headset, straightness and bend, advanced lateral work, shoulder-in, haunches-in, full pass, half pass, side pass, piaffe, sliding stop, passage, spin, canter pirouette and much more.

Performance training also includes trick training such as: lying down, bowing, drinking on command, smiling, nodding yes and no, hips over to a mounting block and anything else you can come up with.

2005 Schedule:

Trailer Loading and Maintenance Clinic

April 2, 2005

Highland Farm

Merrimac, MA

Come and see how we teach a horse to load safely and effectively. There is also a lecture on trailer maintenance with an expert from Riverview Trailer Sales. Later on Kat will start one of Highland Farms beautiful horses under saddle!

Dressage and Show Jumping World Cup

April 20, 2005

The Mack Arena

Las Vegas, NV

Susan and Kat are lucky owners of two VIP tickets to the World Cup for the Dressage events!

Spring Start Up Clinic

April 28, 2005

Fire Ridge Farm

Brownsville, VT 05037

802-484-1214

Amidst the flying winter fur join us for a clinic specifically designed to get you ready for the summer. Medical Reports suggest there will be an epidemic of Equestrian Spring Fever around the end of April so sign up now to reserve your spot to cure your SPRING FEVER!

Susan and Kat Start Accepting Horses

May 1, 2005

Fire Ridge Farm

Brownsville, VT 05037
802-484-1214

Please call or email to make reservations for your horses training!

Annual Spook-In-Place Clinic

October 28, 2005

Fire Ridge Farm

Brownsville, VT 05037
802-484-1214

You and your horse will be ready for the ghouls and goblins of Halloween after attending our 3-day Spook In Place Clinic! We had so much fun and such great results from last years Spook In Place that we have decided to make it an annual event! Come and watch your horse change before your eyes. We guarantee you will never look at a spook the same way again!

Equine Affaire

November 10, 2005

The Big E

West Springfield, MA

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