



Joann K. Long, President
2906 Wheeler Station Rd.
Bloomfield, N.Y. 14469
585-738-7477
www.GentleDoveFarm.com

What do we do?

The Gentle Dove Farm Mounted Police Style Obstacle Clinics are a unique, educational, and FUN training opportunity. So just what do we do in our clinics?

Well, a recent participant wrote about her experience and we thought we'd share her story. The following is written by Amy Gilbert and reprinted by permission. You may read other works by Amy at her blog www.thetwintiershorse.blogspot.com.

Sunday, June 30, 2013

Obstacles Surpassed – by The Twin Tiers Blog Spot, Amy Gilbert

The Obstacle Clinic with Joann Long from Gentle Dove Farm was a lot of fun yesterday! It was held at If Only Farm in Freeville, which is a lovely facility.

I was there riding Hudson, and my friend, Pam Newton, was up on Starlight.



Working in the indoor, clinician Joann Long started the morning by demonstrating how well her big half-Percheron, half-quarter horse gelding negotiated a variety of obstacles, including traversing objects such as a pile of bubble wrap and plastic bottles, pushing his way through a stack of large, blue plastic barrels, sitting quietly while water was sprayed from a high-powered squirt gun from his back, rolling the huge ball and so on.

Joann also gave us a brief and impressive demonstration of bridleless riding. Then, we did some drill-team work, asking for precision from our horses as they rode either single file or in pairs as Joann added obstacles gradually to acclimate the horses.



The dreaded car wash



Pam shows Starlight a ball, which was dragged, later.

After a generous lunch break, we arrived back in the arena and worked in threesomes at each obstacle station. When we all made it around, Joann had us work our horses around flares and smoke, and she also fired a pistol (blanks) as our horses gradually moved closer and closer.

So, that was the format. As for my experience, personally, here were the key highlights:

- Travel/trailer/loading and your basic horse logistics all went fine. This is the key on any trip for me!



Hudson ignoring the pig and shoving me.

- The stalls were nice and cushy and gave Hudson and Starlight good breaks for eating, drinking and peeing.
 - Hudson showed me, once again, that she hates the “car wash” obstacle and LOVES the ball, the bigger the better. She wiped her face over the towering, multi-colored ball that frightened many other horses and would have pushed that thing all over the arena if she could have.
 - Starlight was a rock star for Pam, negotiating all but one obstacle like an old pro. Pam said that someone asked her how long she and Starlight had been working together. Since it was only Pam’s third ride on Starlight, this simple question was actually quite a nice compliment (and well deserved).



The 72”Horse Play Ball! Gentle Dove Farm sells them on their website!



Pam tosses a rattily hula-hoop over a cone.

- Pam makes good cookies (hey, food is on the most basic level on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, so of course it's important).
- No one hit the dirt the whole day! And with 19 horses negotiating scary obstacles in a tight area, that IS saying something
- The clinic was the right level for Hudson and Starlight, in terms of their experience and condition.
- We all arrived safely home, tired and satisfied.



Hudson sees herself in the mirror for the first time.



Starlight and Pam ride say "No problem" to the smoke.



A spontaneous game of "Toss the Pig."



"Can we go home?"

Thanks Amy for an entertaining first hand glimpse of capturing 'what we do' in our Gentle Dove Farm Mounted Police Style training. We hope this inspires more people to join in the fun at one of our upcoming clinics!

Happy and safe riding!

Joann