

It Is Never Too Late To Get In The Game



It's never too late to pursue your passion even if it means getting aboard a trotter that races full speed. At the age of 48, Cathy Gearwar is proof age is just a number when you have a goal and set your mind to it.

Fitness is a requirement to race under saddle because the unique sport takes a lot of balance and stamina to stay on a trotter racing a full mile. However, there is no age limit and Gearwar is proving she is up for the task as she has thus far had a successful season. The Benson Vermont resident has been able to win a qualifier

and her first race; both held at Goshen Historical Track. She is also competing in the RUS New York 2018 Fair Series where she took a second at Afton Fair.

Her journey with horses all began 30 years ago when she was 18 when she had a job cleaning stalls at a combination standardbred and dairy farm in New Hampshire. She had ridden in several different disciplines growing up. Gearwar participated in events such as hunt seat, dressage, jumping and trail, but the farm was where she was first introduced to harness racing. It is also where she met her future husband, Pete.

Twenty some years later Gearwar saw her first racing under saddle race.

"I thought, I could do that," she said.

However, the decision to pursue the sport did not come until the fall of 2016, after her children were grown and college loans were paid.

That fall she took the written test and had an uncle offer his horse to test the on the following year.

"Famous Oscar was 16 and really wasn't sure he liked racing with a rider, but he was a trooper and we got the job done," she said. "He wasn't available to race under saddle after the testing was finished, so I didn't ride a race horse again in 2017."

During the winter of 2018 Gearwar said she started her journey into the sport by getting several sponsors for RUS NY. Then she began her hunt for a horse.

"I had a couple of people helping me search, and I finally found a 5-year-old gelding named Armbro Hall in the beginning of May. He hadn't been ridden as far as we knew, but I had faith and took a chance that he would take to RUS," she said.

According to Gearwar, the goal was to find a horse, get it qualified and race it in the fair series.

"We have a 3-year-old pacing filly we race in the Sire Stakes fair series, so it would be perfect to take the two, one for Pete to race and one for me," she said. "Armbo exceeded my expectations by easily qualifying in RUS by himself and then going on to win our first qualifying matinee and then our first money race. We entered him once at Saratoga in harness during all this and he looks like he will do just fine switching back and forth between the two types of racing."

The Gearwars almost passed up Armbro Hall.

“We were told maybe his leg had some issues and therefore he may not be fit to ride,” Gearwar explained.

The decision to purchase the horse was made after a respected trainer that had a little experience with the horse said, “Nonsense, there is nothing wrong with his legs.,” she added.

Armbro’s leg was given some TLC it needed and according to Gearwar, they have not had any problems with it.

“I thank God regularly for the horse he sent me and that I am fit and strong enough to take on such a physically demanding sport at my age,” said Gearwar. “Going behind the gate is exhilarating and racing is invigorating and exhausting at the same time. I am only three races into my new hobby, but hope to get in at least a couple of years and, God willing, a few more after that.”

RUS New York a small organization trying to get a lot accomplished. The group needs every person who has passion for the sport to succeed to be involved for it to continue to grow. No matter how little one can contribute involvement is encouraged. Members do not have to live in New York and can be anybody who wants to see the sport flourish. Anybody interested in membership should email rusnewyorkseries@gmail.com.

For more information on racing under saddle and RUS New York visit, rus-newyork.com.

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