

Revolution calls for respectful exchanges with horses

By Kathleen Winfield

There has been a revolution that began in the last decades of the 20th century and has proceeded without a shot being fired!

According to Robert M. Miller and Rick Lamb in their book *The Revolution of Horsemanship*, the revolution has "dramatically improved the relations between millions of people and their horses."

The basic theme of the revolution states that horses can be controlled more effectively without the use of force. This was not a brand new idea. Many times throughout history horsemen have shown effective, humane, psychological methods of handling horses, but the majority of humans often resorted to muscle and violence to achieve their desired goals faster.

The term most recognized for the results of this revolution is "natural horsemanship" although it has gone by a variety of other names including "resistance-free horsemanship", "renaissance horsemanship", "progressive horsemanship" and "down-under horsemanship". This style is meant to be more natural to the horse but is achieved by humans learning the appropriate skills and techniques.

I recently spent four interesting days in a natural horsemanship clinic conducted by Nettie Barr of Beaverlodge. Emphasis was placed on how to use the nature of the horse to help get our message across to the horse. Skills and techniques used incorporated using methods of communicating with the horse that coincided with how the horse itself communicates with other horses.

Goals of the four days including gaining the respect and trust of the horse, using the appropriate degrees of firm-

Happy Trails



KATHLEEN WINFIELD

ness and assertiveness to achieve the desired behaviour in a respectful manner, and learning how to use the appropriate tools.

We spent some of the time working in a round pen, a round corral 50 feet in diameter with the perimeter fence five or six feet high. You and the horse go in there and pro-

ceed with the exercises. Initially we did all our work at liberty — nothing on the horse at all. The tool in the person's hand is a short stick (about four feet long) with a long string attached (about six feet). The stick and string is not a whip but rather a tool to be used as an extension of the arm to help in communicating with the horse.

We learned techniques for sending the horse in the desired direction at the desired speed, turns, stops and a technique where the horse "joins up" or "hooks on" to us and stays with us at any pace we chose in any direction.

There are a variety of terms used to identify this process by trainers but the objectives are all the same. As Robert Millar puts it: "All are based on the principle that controlling movement in the horse, either by causing it or by inhibiting it, and controlling the direction and the velocity of such movement, results in dominance."

In our relationship with the horse, we are trying to establish a partnership with us holding 51 per cent of the responsibility and the horse holding 49 per cent. In the round pen, this translates to things such as when we ask the horse to trot at the perimeter of the pen and travel around us, his job is to keep that pace in that direction until we ask for something different. It is to be done with complete respect and not out of fear.

It was a good feeling to have a 1,600

lb. horse doing what I asked for confidently and respectfully, to change directions when I asked and to come in to me at the centre quietly and stand there all by simply using my body language.

Nettie is coming back in April to do another round penning and ground work clinic. Auditors are welcome so if

you are interested then contact myself at kjwinfield@netkaster.ca or Birgitta at 851-8140. If you would like more information, go to www.canadiannaturalhorsemanship.com.

Kathleen Winfield is an Equine Canada certified driving coach who teaches clinics.

	<p>Best 10 acres Hobby Ranch in the area! 2 paddocks, 3 metal mil holding pens, metal rail training ring. Two sheds (one can be a barn) with 220 wiring. Lots of trees with very private and sheltered backyard with tree house, large raspberry patch and large two-level deck with firepit. Well cared for older home developed on all levels, wood burning fireplace, remodeled kitchen, oak hardwood floors in family room. Attached heated, double garage. Fabulous view of the Rockies from this special property. Close to Cochrane. \$875,000</p>		
	<p>142 acres 15 minutes north of Cochrane. Fabulous view of the Rockies. 13 fenced pastures, corrals, paddocks, small barn with one standing stall and 2 box stalls, two outside waterers, good water. Ideal for your horses. For the horse rider a truly distinctive, modern country home with 8' wide wrap around deck, 5 bedrooms plus office, 3 1/2 bathrooms, fireplace, lots of windows. Pipeline revenue. \$2,695,000</p>		
<p>RAW QUARTER 156 acres in the Lochand Road area between Calgary and Cochrane. Tremendous views of the Rockies. Natural water on NW corner. \$3,000,000</p>		<p>Developers 156 acres of prime development land in the town of Brooks, Alberta. Paved road along east side. Zoned DC with residential and light commercial guidelines. \$1,600,000</p>	
<p>c/s 20.5 acres located in the newly annexed area south side of Cochrane. Paved road, services close by. Mountain View development land for commercial or single family homes. Modern 1100 sq.ft. walkout bungalow with attached large garage and large shop. \$4,000,000</p>	<p>8.4 acres located in the newly annexed area south side of Cochrane. Paved road, services close by Mountain View. Ideal development property for residential. Older ranch style bungalow with attached garage plus barn. \$4,000,000</p>	<p>Are You Looking To Live In A Special Location? View, On The River? Call Me!</p>	
<p>Full Quarter Excellent grazing and water located north of Sundre. \$339,000</p>			<p>GORDON LACKEY email: lackeyg@telus.net 932-5419 RE/MAX WEST REAL ESTATE</p>
<p>www.gordonlackey.com</p>			