

## Riding Outside the Box PART 3

By Alice Trindle, T&T Horsemanship PHOTOS BY SUSAN TRIPLETT



**Alice Trindle** is an aspiring horseman and gifted teacher from Eastern Oregon. She adheres to the principle that horsemanship is truly an art form, and is dedicated to it as a life-long pursuit.

### BEYOND THE BASICS 2008 SERIES

- **So You'll Never Take a Dressage Test?**  
Making an Investment in Studying & Training

### CURRENT SERIES

- **Riding Outside the Box**  
Fun Activities for Horse & Rider Outside the Arena

### STILL TO COME IN 2008

- **So You Want to Train Your Own Horse?**  
Flag, Lariat, Liberty – Tools for Every Discipline

Check out Alice's  
clinic schedule at  
[tinthorsemanship.com](http://tinthorsemanship.com)  
or call  
**541-845-3356**

### Working with cows!

Coming from a ranching background and growing up in eastern Oregon, I didn't always realize how lucky I was to have mountains to ride in, cows to chase and the total blessing of having a horse with which to share these adventures. For me, riding was always "outside the box," and unbelievably, I never set foot inside an arena until I was nearly 30 years old!

I had the good fortune to experience how the environment, especially working with cattle, can set things up for a great partnership with your horse. This month, let's look at some exercises that will prepare you to

read livestock, both horses and cattle. Ultimately, you will be setting things up so your horse looks forward to the maneuvers that influence the movement of the cattle and give purpose to the exercises you have been practicing. Half-pass, leg-yield and turn on the haunches become necessities to get a job done, and soon both you and your horse look forward to the work.

Learning to read cattle so you can position your horse to influence their movement is pretty basic knowledge on any working ranch. Nevertheless, it amazes me how many times I have seen people forget their horsemanship principles when it comes to working livestock. All of a sudden, time is very important and everything needs to be done NOW! The practice of *pressure and then push again until they go through the gate or down the chute* is unfortunately fairly common at a number of ranches.

There are several key components to working livestock from atop your horse that are universal in helping you get the job done with no dust while applying good horsemanship principles:

#### Slow and Right Will Triumph

No doubt you have heard the saying, "Slow and right will beat fast and wrong every time." Nothing could be more true in working with horses to influence livestock. Go slowly, set things up using your Horseman's Protocol and

have patience. I guarantee that if you follow these principles, your horse will quickly learn his job, start having fun, and pretty soon you will be going slow just so your horse can speed up!

#### Eyes and Ears Influence Feet and Mind

In laying the foundation with your horse during many articles over the past years, we have talked about how influencing the eyes and ears of the horse ultimately connects to the feet, body and mind. This again is true when working with cattle. If you want to have them change direction, move

forward, back, or sideways you must first get the cow's attention... her eyes and ears. If you want them to go through a gate, you must set it up so they see the opening, not just try to pressure them through it.

#### Dressage Patterns and Working Cows –It's Very Geometric

Here is where the *focus* portion of your Horseman's Protocol becomes so important. It is critical that you have a clear picture of what you want the cow to do and recognize that you can project that energy on geometric lines. If I want to catch the outside eye of the cow, I need to project my energy far enough ahead of the movement of the cow, and on a slight arc, so it will ultimately influence the outside of the cow. Should I project that energy short and hit the shoulder of the cow, she will turn away. Cows have a HUGE bubble and are very aware!

#### Keep It Simple and Don't Forget to Reward

There is nothing really complicated about the basic moves you and your horse will need to influence livestock, but that doesn't mean it is easy! Take your time, breathe, focus with a clear picture, and remember to reward your horse. If you get in too close and the cow gets past you, don't punish the horse for your lack of geometric skill!

*continued on page ??*

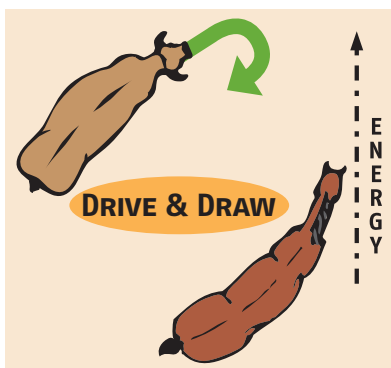
continued from page ??

With these thoughts in mind, let's look at two patterns you will use to influence livestock from atop your horse: the Drive & Draw (or Going Long) and the Draw & Drive (or Rollback).

## Exercises

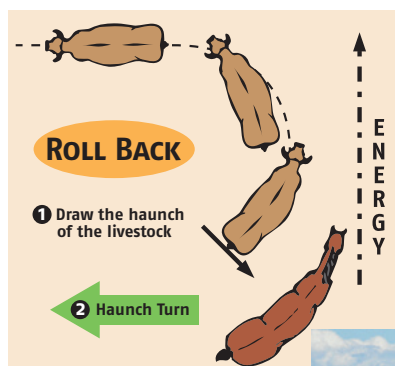
**Drive & Draw** You have most likely been using this geometry for years in the round pen. The idea is to put a little drive or "bump" on the livestock, and then move to a position where you can draw on the eyes and eventually change the direction of travel of the cow.

Picture a round pen with the livestock traveling to the right. I will see in my mind's eye a change of direction through the middle of the pen. Somehow, I have to get a little flow in the movement of the livestock – this is the drive or bump portion. Next, I have to focus ahead of that movement to a place that bisects their line of travel, while also creating an open space for them to flow into the middle of the pen – that's the draw!



Here is where you get to use many of the skills you have been practicing with your horse. As you drive the livestock around the pen to the right, your horse will be shaped around your right leg. As you envision the draw, you need to change the bend to the left and leg-yield forward and away from the livestock, creating a hole for the cow to come into the middle of the pen. Your energy is projecting far ahead to create a wall that will catch the cow's outside/left eye and influence her to see the hole to run through. As the cow passes through the middle of the pen, you are in perfect shape for a turn on the haunch to the left, and ready to start the drive portion all over again!

**Draw & Drive** This is another maneuver that you have been practicing, and now you have the opportunity to apply the movement to livestock. The simple picture is to influence the cow to turn away from you and



change direction by rolling back toward the fence. However, when performed slowly and with finesse, there are a number of critical positioning components to this exercise.

Below: Rosalie is leg-yielding to the right to draw the cow's hip toward her.

Start again with a little bump of energy behind the cow to get her traveling to the right around the pen. Next, change the bend in your horse and leg-yield forward toward the center of the pen. Picture



continued on page ??

*continued from page ??*

having a string on the hindquarters of the cow—you are trying to draw it to you, into the center of the pen. As soon as those hindquarters break loose, you should be in perfect position to close the energy door on the cow's right eye, causing her to look to her left, toward the fence. As she rolls back, take a half-halt or little pause; then you are set to drive her off in the opposite direction—in this case to the left. The keys to finesse in the rollback are positioning, slow timing, and not blocking the eye, but rather drawing the hip.



Rosalie has the cow's hip, with its eyes looking back and to the left.

### **Games to Play to Prepare for Cattle Work**

There are a number of games to play that will prepare both you and your horse for working with live cattle:

- Ride your two-leg horse
- Round pen work at liberty
- Horse / human play
- Two horses – mirror game

For details on these exercises, visit [www.tnthorsemanship.com](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com).

Working with cows is a great way to put the fun back into your riding! It will help give very practical applications to the exercises you have been practicing in the arena, and definitely get both you and your horse to thinking and working...outside the box!

**NWHS**

## **COME RIDE *with Alice***

**Colt to Horsemanship Development Clinic**  
June 2-10 • Haines, OR

**Horsemanship Clinic**  
*Continuing Ed.*  
June 21-25 • Hamilton, MT

**Horsemanship Clinic**  
*Group Riding*  
June 28-30 • Puyallup, WA

**Horsemanship Clinic**  
June 28-30 • TBA, WA

**Private Lessons Available**  
July 1-3 • Olympia Area

**Celebrate the Horse**  
July 5 & 6 • Puyallup, WA

*For details visit*  
**[www.tnthorsemanship.com](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com)**