



Humorous Stories

Going back and forth between being a Beverly Hills gentleman and a cowboy has its share of difficulties; one must remember not to speak with a western drawl and bore my Westside friends with rodeo tales and certainly not discuss things like private schools, housekeepers and Westside real estate prices with most of my fellow cowboys. Not that I really care, but I don't feel that I fully fit in with people in my city life or my cowboy life. The average city raised person can't possibly understand the attraction of a cowboy lifestyle and unfortunately many country people have issues with people who live a well to do life in the city and are only weekend cowboys. The interesting thing is that it is not about wealth, as many people that live and work in rural areas have become very wealthy in their own right. It's mostly a difference between country and city cultures and philosophies that can lead to misunderstandings.

The Doctor is in

My two very separate lifestyles do clash at times, sometimes with hilarious results. Like the time when my nine year old son had a doctor's appointment and the doctor came out of the examination room looking very concerned. The doctor stated that our son's physical condition was excellent but that we should immediately get him treated by a psychiatrist because he was delusional. When the doctor told us our child was in need of psychiatric treatment, my wife and I we were very disturbed and solemnly asked the doctor what had our son done to give the doctor the impression that he was delusional. The doctor replied that our son had told the doctor that I was a rodeo cowboy and this Beverly Hills doctor with a Beverly Hills patient base figured that there was no such thing as a Beverly Hills middle aged rodeo cowboy so the child must be crazy. No matter how the doctor tried to prove him wrong, my son refused to admit that his father was not a cowboy. Well, half way through the doctor's very serious explanation, my wife and I could no longer keep a straight face and we busted out laughing at which point the doctor probably thought that mental problems must run in the entire family. Once we convinced the doctor that I was indeed a cowboy the doctor offered to give me a referral to have my head examined by a psychiatrist.

What were they thinking?

What is going through a persons mind when they spend \$300 for a pair of torn and faded blue jeans at one of these high end fashion stores? Seems to me that a person would be a lot better off buying a perfectly good pair of Wrangler Brand jeans for \$30.00 and spending the remaining \$270.00 on some activities that will get their blood pumping and let them earn the holes in their jeans.

Horses in the hood

In addition to our Beverly Hills neighbors having to put up with me parking the only dually pick-up truck in the neighborhood in front of our house, they have had to tolerate other non-Beverly Hills type situations that have come up from time to time. One time a forest fire forced the evacuation of all the horses from the ranch in Chatsworth that I kept my horses at. The rodeo cowboy who owned the ranch was out of town competing at a rodeo so I helped to evacuate all the ranch's horses and set up sprinklers on top of the buildings and was the last one to leave the ranch with my four horses at 11:00pm in the evening. The animal control officers told me to take my horses to a nearby community college and that my horses would be put in a corral with a hundred or so other horses until it was safe to haul them back to the ranch. Most of the evacuated horses were normally kept in a stall by themselves and if turned out with other horses could start kicking and biting the other horses while fighting for food. My horses are too expensive and hard to come by to be taking a chance that they could get badly injured by the other horses in an overcrowded corral. I decided to load my horses up in the trailer and introduce them to life in Beverly Hills.

I got home around midnight and surprised my wife with our four new houseguests; she was quick to tell me that she would not be cleaning up after them. The horses spent the night enjoying our tennis court and making a mess. The neighborhood awoke at dawn to the sounds of four hungry horses calling for their breakfast.

People in Beverly Hills are used to trying to fall back to sleep when awakened by a barking dog, but the very loud whinnying of my four horses got our curious neighbors out of bed in a hurry that morning. Our children also woke up to the horses and could not have been happier with the situation as they showed off the horses to the quickly gathering neighbors. That morning my kids and the other neighborhood children had the company of four horses while waiting for the school bus. The look on peoples faces as they drove to work that morning and saw the children and horses playing on our Beverly Hills street was priceless. Due to some outstanding work by the Fire Department I was able to evict our houseguests and return them to the ranch later that day.

Keep your guns holstered

I'm not the kind of man that believes in spending a great deal of money on something to hang on a wall. My office is decorated with western themed objects I have come across or have retired from my own use. I have filled my office with items like old saddles, a full size antique wagon wheel, a 6' wide set of steer horns, old cowboy hats and spurs. A life-size cardboard stand-up of John Wayne serves to guard my family photos and some of the prizes I have won while competing.

I managed to acquire an 18th century antique shotgun and a collectors edition of a Winchester Repeating Rifle modeled after the one John Wayne always carried in his movies. Classic weapons like these should be displayed and so I looked into the cost of buying a display frame. After getting some very expensive bids on the cost of purchasing a display frame I decided to do things the cowboy way and make one myself. I had a really neat looking steer hide that I thought would make a great background to display the two firearms and all I needed to do was to make a wood frame that I could mount the steer hide to.

My home's garage is very close to the street and because there is usually a car or two in the garage it is not uncommon for me to be working with tools on the driveway very close to the sidewalk. One Saturday morning a new family was moving into the house across the street from us as I was working on the gun display I was building for my office. Being the friendly neighbor that I am, when I saw what I assumed to be the wife/mother and her two children, I waived and said hello. Her and her two children came over to introduce themselves just as I was placing the two guns on the display to check for the proper placement of the horseshoes that would act as supports for the guns. At first the lady was concentrating so hard on making a good impression and finding out if I had children near her children's age that she did not notice the two guns sitting on the work bench. It didn't take her eyes long to wander to my tools and she asked what I was building. Just as I was going to explain what I was building, one of her kids noticed the guns and being a typical boy, wanted to touch them. Well the lady saw the guns and tried unsuccessfully to hide her shock and horror as she realized that she had just bought a house right across the street from the neighborhood gun nut. I tried to explain that the guns were for display and not for personal use but I'm not sure how much she heard as she was trying to make a quick and graceful exit while not wanting to piss off her gun toting neighbor who she probably suspected was a serial killer.

It took a few months for the new neighbors to get to know us well enough to let their children come over to our house to play with our kids without sending their nanny over to supervise. A while later they moved to another house a few blocks away, I hope I didn't do anything to influence their departure.

The long and short of it all

If someone tells a person from Beverly Hills that their husband plays golf, the topic is closed, and no further explanation is needed. If, on the other hand you tell someone from Beverly Hills that your husband is a rodeo cowboy, after they realize you are not joking they want the whole story. My wife and kids spend far too much time explaining my unusual past time.

Dismount that horse and freeze!

I was working as a wrangler at a Malibu summer camp in 1975 and the camp was located near enough to the Cities of Westlake and Thousand Oaks that we sometimes took the kids to the local McDonalds on horseback. Moving kids on horseback down a city street is not that difficult because the horses we use have learned to follow the horse in front of them and to stay in a single file line, however, things can get out of shape in a hurry if the horses are not kept moving. When I would lead a ride on city streets I would keep an eye on any traffic signals and either walk our horses faster to catch a green light or slower while waiting for the light to turn green so that at no time would I have to stop our forward progress.

One time while I was guiding a trail ride of 20 or so nine year old children down traffic congested Westlake Boulevard, a lady police officer comes racing up with her lights flashing and her siren wailing. Now, I greatly respect people that serve in law enforcement but I'll never understand what was going through that lady police officers head when she decided to flash her lights and sound her siren next to twenty horses with nine year old children on their backs. I figured it was her way of saying hello and waited for her to make her way up to my position at the front of the line. I never stopped my horse in order to keep our horses in a straight line headed down the street. As she passed my horse I gave her a friendly wave but she just passed right by me and using her car as a roadblock proceeded to cut off my horse as she angled her car to the curb blocking the entire right most lane of the four lane street and almost hitting my horse in the process.

At this point, using the overly loud public address system in her car, she ordered me to stop all the horses and dismount my horse. She jumps out of her car with her hand next to her gun holster, looking like she is going to draw her gun if I tried to ride around her car. I tried to explain that if we don't keep moving, these horses were going to get impatient and start milling around in four lanes of traffic and that was not going to be a good thing. She reacted by reaching her hand a little closer to her gun and ordering me off my horse again. At this point I figured that this lady was having a bad day because no one wearing a badge could be this stupid. Not wanting to panic any of the children or horses by waiting to see if the crazy lady was going pull her gun or try and pull me off my horse, I slowly dismounted making sure to move very slowly and keep my hands where she could see them at all times.

She walked up to me in a huff and asked for my drivers license, I wanted to ask her what she needed my license for since I was not operating a motor vehicle but I thought better of it and handed my license over to her. I calmly asked her why she had pulled us over and once again told her that I needed to keep the ride moving or I was not going to be responsible for anything that happened. She replied that I was to wait right there while she ran my license number. Just as she got back into her car to run my license, two other police cars drive up with lights flashing. Evidently twenty kids on horseback made her nervous enough that she had called for back-up support.

The two male officers got out of their cars with big smiles on their faces and asked me what I did wrong. I replied that the lady officer had still not enlightened me as to what law I had broken but that I needed to get this ride moving as soon as possible because the horses were getting antsy and bad things happen when horses lose their patience.

Sure enough, the horses had come to the conclusion that since they were just standing around they might as well start eating the grass and flowers planted along the street. The children who had been taught not to let their horses eat while being ridden proceeded to pulling on their horses reins in an attempt to get the horses back in line. Some of the horses ignored their rider's commands and others started to mill around in the first two lanes of traffic forcing traffic on the street to a standstill.

At this point the lady officer comes out of her car and tells me to dismount all the children. I told her I was not going to comply with her request because the children were much safer on top of the horse then standing on the ground in the middle of a bunch of milling horses. She asked me again to remove the children from on top of the horses and I told her if I was to comply with her request I was going to put the children on the sidewalk and turn the horses loose and if I turned the horses loose they would start running back to camp. At this point one of the male officers's intervened and told the female officer that twenty horses stampeding down the streets of Westlake might not improve the situation. The female officer relented and quickly wrote me a ticket for riding horses on a city street. I told her we had been riding horses in the city of Westlake for years and no one had ever made an issue of it before. She gave me back my license and told me to get back on my horse and get back into the hills were I belonged. The two male officers were getting a kick out of the whole situation and when the female officer turned her back to walk back to her car they shook my hand and laughed as they told me she was a pain in the ass and I had handled the situation very well. The lady cop followed us all the way back to where the street ends and the dirt trail begins. The children all waived goodbye to her as she turned her car around to head back towards the city. I wanted to join the children's goodbye gesture by waiving a particular finger at her but did not want to add any negative details to the story these children were going to be sharing with their parents when they got home.

We rode back into camp and after relinquishing the supervision of the children to their councilors and unsaddling the horses I proceeded to the office to show the camp's owner my shiny new ticket and let him know that the fine was not coming out of my salary. Well, it would be putting it mildly to say that the camp owner was upset that the police had put the horses and children at risk. He grabbed the ticket and immediately got on the phone with the police department and asked for the highest ranking officer available and

proceeded to give him a piece of his mind. He kept challenging the officer to quote him the code number of the violation from the city's traffic code and the officer got rather flustered as he was unable to find any code prohibiting the riding of horses on city streets. He did find a code section that stated it was a violation to ride a horse on public property while intoxicated but he admitted that that section did not apply to this situation. My boss also told the officer that we were going to show up in court with our campers and their parents to speak to the judge about the police department's harassment and endangerment of the children.

Finally the officer told my boss that it appears that there had been no violation of city code and that he would notify all of his officers that horseback riding on public streets was a permissible activity in the city of Westlake. He also told my boss that we would not have to go to court to have the ticket rescinded but that he should just throw the ticket in the trash and the matter would be considered to be closed. I sure would have liked to have had the opportunity to go before a judge on the issue and watched as the judge admonished the overzealous lady cop's handling of the situation.

Don't drink and Ride

One night I was guiding an evening dinner trail ride for a stable that rented horses. I had a little too much to drink at dinner and after we had left the restaurant and mounted our horse's one of our guests dared me to ride my horse into the restaurant. Being that I subscribe to the theory that the customer is always right, I rode my horse into the reception area of the Sagebrush Cantina restaurant.

Our trail riders were very entertained by my quick spin in the restaurant and one of them offered me a big tip if I would ride my horse into the fancy Italian restaurant down the street. Not being one to displease a paying client, I rode my horse into the restaurant and right past the stunned hostess who I may add did not even offer me and my horse a table. I rode past the bar and so far into the restaurant that there was not enough room to turn my horse around so I had to back him up the whole way out. Try backing a horse around a crowded restaurant; needless to say I bumped a few tables in the process of getting back to the exit. The restaurants patrons seemed to enjoy my little floorshow and many applauded as my horse and I left the building. The manager yelled he was calling the police as we made our getaway into the dark brush covered hills. Good thing horses don't have license plates; I would have liked to have heard the restaurant manager explaining to the Police that a cowboy had just ridden a horse through his restaurant.
