

COWBOY LAWYERS

ASSOCIATION ©

NEWSLETTER

Vol 8 , No. 1, November 1999

Editor: Sunny Miller

Tenth Anniversary President's Dinner Dance

By Sunny Miller

Who would have believed we'd have kept having fun for so long, but there it was, our tenth anniversary. On February 6, 1999 we decked out the old Equestrian Center with saddles older than most of us and chaps and chinks and the like and settled down to some serious eating, drinking and dancing. Being of advanced age and having had a few agave cocktails, we can't recall too clearly what happened all them months ago. We do recall clearly that we thanked our outgoing president Wilkie Cheong, toasted our first cowgirl president, Mary Bennett, and reminisced a lot about old times.

There was some sappy stuff about the way we got started . . . Jim Nichols, Manuel Hidalgo, Judge Victor Chavez and Judge Al Margolis cooked the whole thing up in 1989, rounded up a group of 20 or so lawyers, approved some by-laws and set out to promote "a love, appreciation and understanding of the American West, its history, people, places, events, art, music and culture." But it seems to be horses and open range that bring it all together. As past president Scott Haith is fond of saying: "People don't quit riding horses because they get old: People get old because they quit riding horses."

We even showed half of the official Cowboy Lawyer Ten Year Commemorative Video, coming soon to



A Presidential Moment: Jim Nichols, Manuel Hidalgo, Bill Thon, Tom Borsari, Walter Leighton and Wilkie Cheong

your mailboxes for a not-so-small price, considering the experience level of the producer, director, screenwriter, musical consultant, voiceover, foley operator, etc. The video traces the history of the Cowboy Lawyers from the first meeting at Jim Nichols' office, through the more gala organizing event at the Gene Autry Museum, to Totem Pole, Lou Bell's Ranch, Squint's Ranch, Cuyamaca, V-6 and

others. If you want to see embarrassing pictures of people looking really young or doing funny dances with things on their heads, be sure to order the full video when we get around to finishing it.

Here's hoping that we'll have another decade and another decade and that we all wear out instead of rusting out.



*The Changing of the Guard
Out with Wilkie...
In with Mary*

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First Annual Mad Hatter Edition

That's right. We're late, we're late for a very important date: our first newsletter of 1999. No we wasn't intoxicated out back of the shed. The plain truth is that we've been forgettin' that we're cowboys and rememberin' that we're lawyers. And what lawyer did you ever know who was on time for anything? And what lawyer did you ever know that didn't reckon to have an excuse for every little thing? So we don't aim to trot out our sorry, lame excuses (no disrespect to those Denove horses intended). Suffice it to say we've been rid hard and put away wet, so pipe down and quit your whinin', our bein' late comes with the territory.

Cowboy Words of Wisdom

Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their boots. That way, when you criticize them, you are a mile away and have their boots.

Lakota word for white people: "You can't get rid of them." (This is supposed to be true: no joke.)

Editor's Note

We sure fancy receiving the odd story (the odder the better) from our compadres and members. Please send us what you think is fit to print, as we cain't be relied upon to make such decisions for ourselves.

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Mike Martindill telling tales from his attic at the President's Dinner

Riding in Costa Rica

By The Honorable Victor Chavez

Marlene and I spent 10 days riding up and down the sides of volcanoes, the beaches, and plains observing the lush flora and fauna of Costa Rica. It was a wonderful trip. Each night we moved to a different location and each morning we would be given new horses to ride. Our mounts were what the Costa Ricans refer to as Criollos. They are a mixed breed which is exceptionally rugged, well-mannered, and responsive on the trails of their country. Legend has it that they are descendants of the Andalusian horses brought to the new world centuries ago by the Spaniards. We were provided Central American saddles, quite similar to McClellan military saddles, with no bits and only rope hackamores. While we were there in the dry season, it rained almost every day. However, that did not deter us from four,



five and sometimes eight-hour treks into beautiful areas. At one location, we rode into a heavy forest with orchids and epiphyllums growing from the tops of the trees. Then we descended into a valley in which there is a gorgeous waterfall with a natural pool at the base in which we could swim.

At another location, we rode through abundant herds of cattle, which appeared to be a mix between the Brahma cattle from India and some exotic African cattle, probably Lobola.

Due to the weather, almost everywhere we rode we encountered deep and actually perilous mud. The horses were incredibly strong, in very good condition and carried us up and down the hills with apparent ease.

The vistas in Costa Rica are wonderful. It is a country in which you can quickly travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific and everywhere the scenery is gorgeous. The people were extremely friendly and at no time did we feel in peril or in danger from anything other than our adventure or an occasional monkey with a strong throwing arm.

We certainly recommend a trip of this sort to anyone interested in rugged trail riding. It is not easy, but it is certainly challenging. For those of you with the skill and courage to white water river raft, a combination of riding and rafting can easily be arranged.



More Bull

(An antique case report dug out of Mike Martindill's dusty old attic)

A big city lawyer was representing the railroad in a lawsuit filed by a local rancher, Tom Borsari, in pro per. Rancher Tom's prize bull had gone missing from the pasture through which the railroad passed. Rancher Tom, being a polite and soft-spoken kind of fella, only wanted to be paid the fair value of the bull.

The case was scheduled to be tried before the Hon. Alfred L. Margolis (Ret.), sitting by special assignment from Superior Court Presiding Judge Victor E. Chavez (who commented that, personally, he would not get within 100 miles of this cow-pie case, but thought it was just the thing for Al) in the back room of the Onyx General Store.

The city-slicker attorney for the railroad immediately cornered Rancher Tom and tried to get him to settle out of court. He did his best selling job, and finally, Tom agreed to take half of what he was asking.

After Tom had signed the release and pocketed the check, the young lawyer couldn't resist gloating a little over his success, telling Tom, "You really are a country hick, and I put one over on you in there. I couldn't have won the case. The engineer was asleep and the fireman was in the caboose when the train went through your ranch that morning. I didn't have one witness to put on the stand. I bluffed you!"

Tom replied, "Well, I'll tell you the truth young feller, I was a little worried about winning the case myself. . . . That durned bull came home this morning."

Rollin N Ranch 10th Anniversary Memorial Day Weekend Ride

By Sunny Miller

The fire god is obviously peeved with the Cowboy Lawyers. While we've been paying tribute to earthly enterprises like the State Bar and the Gene Autry Museum, in our ten year history we haven't sacrificed a single virgin to the fire god. The closest thing to a burnt offering we've ever made was that salmon we had to eat one year at Calamigos Ranch.

We had our warning last year at Santa Ynez. But did we get the message when hundreds of fire fighters commandeered our campground? Apparently not.

As we drove into camp Friday afternoon, a cloudless blue sky framed the snow-streaked peaks above Wrightwood and the Rollin N. It looked totally innocent, except for a subtle warning sign, just like in Dante's Peak, before the volcano blows everything to smithereens. In this case, it was a thin column of gray smoke, rising lazily from the pines just above Jackson Lake.

The smoke cleared pretty quickly, and a bunch of folks mounted up and mosied over to get some mile high burgers at the Mile High Cafe. Even Lee Graham climbed on a cayuse in the interest of getting to the chow. Of course, he carried an extra saddle under his arm just for something to do.

Back at the Rollin N, our host, Rollin Rauschl, helped the less experienced tent builders construct our tent-o-miniums, complete with cots, queen-sized mattresses and comforters, among Joshua Trees living side-by-side with big shady pines. (The trailer trash were consigned to the parking lot, which lacked some of the arboreal splendor that the true campers enjoyed in their tents.)

Main Street Catering cooked up a bountiful feast of prime rib and shrimp scampi with all the trimmings, and we thereafter commenced to drinking and massaging, as usual. The

full moon was so bright that we cast long shadows by the time we trudged off to our tents and trailers.

Saturday morning dawned warm and clear, contrary to dire predictions of June gloom and thunderstorms (which had materialized a day earlier, culminating in a lightning strike and the aforementioned plume of smoke). We set out on an elegant collection of quarter horses, morgans, arabs, palominos, a paso fino, a Tennessee Walker, a "spotted horse" and a bunch of stamping, snorting critters of unknown provenance. The Tennessee Walker and spotted horse were ridden by Carol Perrin, on her qualifying ride, and her friend Scarlet Davenport from Tennessee. Those of us with nothing else to do couldn't quit musing about a woman named Scarlet on a horse named Scarlet, with the woman being from Tennessee and all and riding with a friend who had a Tennessee Walker. Some of us lead boring lives and have to amuse ourselves somehow.

We climbed gently through sandy chaparral, weaving between thick clumps of manzanita and cholla. Higher up, the desert yielded to a forest of evergreens, as we reached Jackson Lake. This pretty blue lake is fringed with tall grass and home to a friendly and hungry flock of mallards, floating around in search of handouts donated by the plentiful picnickers. Above the lake, the forest thickened so that it began to look like Lake Tahoe, with expanses of yellow wild flowers filling every sunlit patch between the trees. We could glimpse the lake below and the brown, flat expanse of desert beyond. We hardly paid attention to a thick white hose, hundreds of feet long, stretched out on the trail like an enormous albino reptile sleeping in the sun. Apparently, it had been left behind after the previous day's fire. A handful of firefighters standing around assured us that it was ok for our horses to walk on the hose. In fact, given the narrowness of the trail and the impossibility of making a u-turn, or even a y-turn, we didn't have much say in the matter.

After almost four hours, we reached a high plateau where Mike and his truck were waiting with a bar-

becue grill and lots of ice cold drinks. After the long ride, we fell upon the food like Lakota on the Seventh Cavalry. Mike's burgers, dogs, potato salad, slaw, fruit and chocolate chip cookies disappeared like Bison from the plains.

The disgruntled fire god struck on our way back down, when we were good and tired and dusty, symbolically selecting our Ride Chair, Bud Katzman, as the appropriate sacrifice. (Apparently, Bud was the closest thing to a virgin available.) A sharp hoof nicked the fire hose, sending an Old-Faithful-style geyser shooting up into Bud's palomino's face. Travis zipped, the saddle zapped and Bud's groin muscle (no, that's not a euphemism for something else) took quite a licking but apparently kept on ticking. In the process, Bud leaped from his mount (he denies nasty rumors that the dismount was involuntary). This, of course, caught the attention of our trusty medical corps, composed entirely of female sawbones. Becky Cheong and Judith Laub pronounced Bud's credentials impressive and we were all back on our horses in short order.

Back at camp, Bud claimed to need five or so nurses to help him in the shower, but when Jack Denove showed up instead with his massage chair, Bud stopped limping and started drinking.

Saturday night was roast pig and barbequa night. The pig was prepared by Rollin and Sarah and their friend Sal prepared the barbequa, along with chimichanga appetizers and Mexican trimmings of rice, beans, tortillas and salsa.

We'd barely finished stuffing ourselves when present and past presidents commenced to speechifying over our grand 10 years of cowboy lawyering. This ride was billed as a Past Presidents' Ride and it drew an impressive crowd of present and past Presidents including Jim Nichols, Bill Thon, Bob Luty, Scott Haith, Wilkie Cheong and Mary Bennett. Our special guest, Ron Nybakken, recited the poem about the cowboy who meets the devil on the road up in the Siree Peets.

Those guys talked so long we thought we'd never get to hear Doc Wagner play us some tunes on his guitar. But, as the full moon lit up the camp like a spotlight, Doc got to singing "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys" and the like, and we mostly got to singing along. This was interrupted for a spell when we passed out shiny silver ride pins to commemorate the 10th anniversary of our first ride - Memorial Day 1989 at Totem Pole.

When Doc's mouth got a mite dry and he turned aside for a minute to grab a sip of something, up popped Sal with a boom box and some alternative music. It would be going too far to say we would have preferred Bud Katzman's tape about murdering horses at sea - but not way too far! Ole Doc could not compete with that boom box on that clear and quiet night, but nor could the aspiring sleepers in the group, who took loud exception to the volume of the music.

Sunday offered choices. Short rides in the hills, gathering cattle for team sorting, or sitting in the sun. Eventually, we gathered in the arena for some cowboy games. We had stiff competition in the barrel race, which eventually was won by Patty Friedland on Sara (from the Nelson stable). Wilkie Cheong and Ann Rubenstein were a close second and third. Patty and Sara also won the keyhole, making those Arab-doubters sit up and take notice. Jim Nichols and Jack Denove were second and third. In Pole Bending, Jack won on General, with Wilkie second and Patty and Sara third. For an old guy, that General can really hustle. Luckily, Patty finished out of the money in team sorting, which was

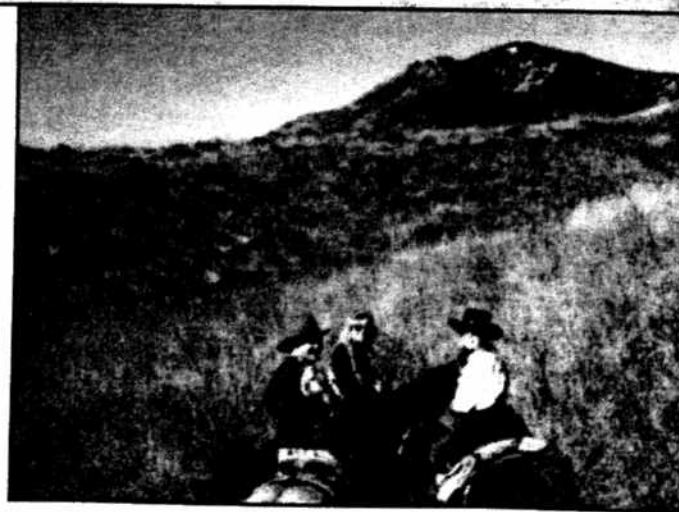
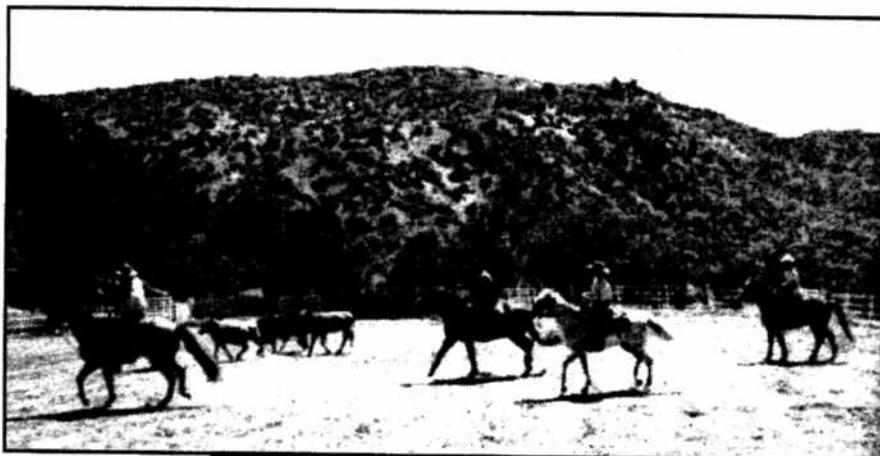
won by a team of Jim Nichols, Scott Haith and Carol Perrin. It was pretty interesting to see a Tennessee Walker work calves. There were no ribbons for second and third because the rest of this useless bunch couldn't get any calves sorted.

Eventually, we got back to eat-

ing again, and feasted on barbecue ribs, chicken, corn on the cob, fruit, cole slaw, potato salad, and leftover margaritas. We were very grateful to Rollin and Sarah Jo, and in case we didn't to tell you so - Thanks Rauschls, we had a great time!



Camera watching at Wrightwood



Chino Hills

By Gretchen Nelson

I'm beginning to think that I'm developin' a reputation. Last year I wrote about the ride in Palos Verdes and it rained. This year I got drafted to write about Chino Hills and darned if it didn't rain, only this time instead of drying up and turning into a beautiful day it was "a disaster" as FEMA would say. Ready for the story – here it is. It'll be placed into the Rain Archives along with every other article I write.

Fifteen trailers filled with horses not including Lee's two trailers really filled with horses hit the road at least by 6:00 a.m. on Saturday morning April 29, 1999. The skies weren't real pretty at that time but they sure weren't ominous or anything like that . . . just gray. Anyway who the heck was looking at the sky at that hour. We all knew one thing, it wasn't raining – at least not in Los Angeles. But in Corona on the other hand . . .

By the time that Sara and I arrived, there was a line up at the Chino Hills State Park entrance that looked like a line up for the Rose Bowl Parade. Bud Katzman was looking a bit distressed as he wandered up and down the road yelling "hello" and "it'll be all right" to each arriving truck and trailer. Figurin' that food and juice might be a welcome addition to "it'll be all right" I unloaded the breakfast and started passing out coffee cake and strudel - Van de Kamp's finest. People began to dismount from their trucks and form small groups primarily to warm up cuz it sure was cold out there in Corona. Grabbin' pieces of coffee cake and stuffin' their mouths seemed to make everyone a little happier as we tried to sort out what to do. Someone grabbed their cell phone and tried to make contact with the rangers – no luck, just a recording letting us know the park was closed because 1/8" of rain fell the night before. Now really,

those rangers need to take a cue from the U.S. Postal Service - haven't they heard the adage about rain, sleet and hail. Hell, 1/8" of rain isn't enough to flush a lowflush toilet. Despite curses and complaints, we had no choice - that iron gate was just too big to crash through and criminal conduct just ain't they way you want to start off a passable Saturday morning, even though we did have a few judges and criminal defense lawyers in the crowd.

The decision was made to cancel the ride and reschedule for the next weekend. Lee headed back to Victorville and those who were renting horses drove back home. Those of us with horses hung around to see if there was a way to salvage what had started out as a perfectly fine Saturday. A mild panic set in briefly when we couldn't find the telephone number to call the caterer and tell him not to start his trek to Corona but subsided when Mary through heroic efforts located the caterer's secret number. (Those of you who can't find a witness - get Mary working on finding the person - she's better than peoplefinder.com.)

We eventually decided to drive over to Frank G. Bonelli Regional County Park and ride. And so by 9:00 a.m. we were on the road again. By 10:00 a.m. we were parked, saddled and almost ready to ride. Mary walked over to the stables located in the park to see if she could round up a horse for Jack's nephew, Liam. After successfully hiring a horse, she returned to discover that Sara was available for riding since I decided to drive over to Huntington Hospital to get my face sewed up. Those trailer windows sure are heavy when they crash down on your face. But it sure is good to ride with a bunch of plaintiff's lawyers cuz they always know where to find a good doc. Turns out that Ken Powell's good friend Dick Cole is a plastic surgeon at Huntington and with one quick cell phone call I was all set. And, Jack got the pleasure of riding Sara in an English saddle - a pleasure

he will not revisit again soon.

I'm told that the ride was beautiful – the fields were green as Ireland and the weather the same. A little mist fell throughout the morning as they rode off into the Pomona Hills. Everyone had a grand ol' time – except Jack when Sara reminded him that she's a jumpin' horse. At the appointed time when they approached a log in the trail she apparently took the cue and jumped it beautiful. I'm told that Jack looked like he was aiming for the Gold Medal in the 2000 Olympics Stadium Jumping Competition – until the saddle slipped and so did Jack. With the exception of that one small mishap, the rain, the trailer window, the lack of coffee, the pitiful cries of one rider who was convinced that the group was lost throughout the ride and the absence of the caterer - it was a great ride. It was even greater when we all converged on a restaurant in San Dimas afterwards that served the best hamburgers and beer.

At some point during the meal someone expressed concern about Bob Luty since Bob had planned on arriving late for the ride. There was a little worry that Bob was still driving around Corona looking for a bunch of Cowboy Lawyers - but everyone agreed that couldn't have happened. . . Bob would have figured out we didn't get in and headed home . . . or so we convinced ourselves over our beers.

Chino Hills Redux

By Gretchen Nelson

Segue to the next Saturday, May 5, 1999. Start the morning exactly the same as the prior Saturday - except, and this is a big except, we had coffee this time. We arrived at the park entrance and celestial music should have been playing on the radio as we turned up the road and in through an open gate. After a two-mile drive down a very dry road, we pulled up a hill onto an immense field. Bud Katzman was

greeting everyone with a grin a mile long. He'd arrived at 7:00 a.m. and was nervous as a groom at his first wedding worried that no one would show up. He'd staked out a huge portion of the field for the Cowboy Lawyers and the other half of the field was fast filling up with a large white wedding tent that was not for the Cowboy Lawyers. What a day - 25 Riders and a Wedding . . . there's got to be a movie in there somewhere.

And it was a beautiful day — the sky was blue as blue can be, the fields were drop dead gorgeous green and there was just a hint of a breeze. Jayne Oldman, Mike Lyden, Bob Palty, Martin Perlberger, Mike Petry, Marshal Oldman, Bill and Susan Graysen, Bill Thon, Tamia Hope and Margie Oldendorf were just a few of the gang that arrived for the ride. This was Steve Stevens' qualifying ride and it sure qualified as a great ride.

Just before we started riding the rangers arrived - along with Bob Luty. Bob and the rangers eyed each other and Bob flashed that beautiful smile of his. The rangers looked a little sheepish, said "mornin'" and that was it. But two minutes after they left, Bob regaled us with his tale of the Saturday past. Turns out he did arrive late and the gate was locked but Bob just figured we'd locked it behind us. So Bob parked his trailer by the curb, unloaded his horse, saddled her up and road around the gate into the park . . . and kept on riding looking for the Cowboy Lawyers. About two hours into his ride, the rangers drove up behind Bob and were pretty close to pullin' their guns and tellin' him to raise his hands high in the air. Good thing Bob's a great lawyer cuz he had a bunch a talkin' to do to get himself out of the mess of trouble he was in for violatin' the park rule against riding in the rain. You can probably sing in that darn park in the rain, but you sure can't ride. Well, Bob explained he was searching for the Cowboy Lawyers and with promises to never violate park rules again he was allowed to go

free. Funniest thing though, Bob said he didn't see any evidence of rain on the road or in the park the whole time.

We all got a big chuckle out of Bob's run in with the law and the ride redux was beautiful.

Lunch was very yummy — Dearmore cooked up the best ribs and chicken you could ever imagine and we all stuffed ourselves with impunity.

Hidden Creek Ranch Starts Our Ride Season on the Right Hoof

By Mary Bennett

We are gratefully indebted to Bob Luty for discovering Hidden Creek Ranch: 2000 acres of spectacularly lush and gently rolling hills tucked away behind Moorpark College.

The weather could not have been better, the grass greener, or the company better, than it was on April 24. The ride started promptly, our ride committee finally having discovered the secret: when you tell people you are locking the gate at 8:45 a.m., they will get there on time!

John Harvey, our host, and the manager of the premises, escorted 60 or so Cowboy Lawyers plus assorted friends through a green, green valley and then up and down into a picturesque canyon populated by low hanging oak trees and a lovely creek. Unfortunately, at this point Claudia Leighton ceased enjoying the view, as her horse sidestepped up a creek bank and her brand new saddle suddenly slipped around to her horse's belly, leaving Claudia face down in the dirt. Our sympathies to Claudia and her poor shoulder.

While Walter, with the assistance of Tom Borsari, escorted Claudia back

There was some debate over whether we should invite the rangers to eat but they seemed more interested in the wedding food so we left them to their own devices. We've decided it's a definite redo - we just have to make sure that I'm not supposed to write the newsletter article. Otherwise, it'll be Chino Hills Redux Redo.



The Chow Line at Hidden Creek

to camp, the rest of us continued on our grand tour of the ranch, returning to feast on tri-tip and chicken, cooked on site by Dearmore Bar-b-ques of Moorpark, an excellent caterer suggested to us by John Harvey. The eating took longer than usual, with everyone going back for second and third servings of the excellent tri-tip, and then wishing they hadn't, when they discovered that the desert was apple pie a la mode.

This was the final qualifying ride for two of our newest members, Larry Forbes and Paul Kiesel. It was also a chance for several new lawyers to check us out, including Jill McDonnell, Marilyn Stolpman, and Tracy Sullivan, as well as a chance for everyone to enjoy sunshine and horseback comradery for the first time since last November. Our thanks to Scott Haith and Jack Denove who spent a lot of time scouting locations and otherwise organizing this ride, as well as to John Harvey, for letting us use his property, and acting as our gracious host throughout the day.

No Riding While Intoxicated

Following a brief hearing on July 7, 1999, Magistrate Scott Myren held that a Pierre, S.D. cowboy accused of riding his horse while drunk must stand trial. Paul Wilson was arrested on June 2, 1999 after leaving a downtown Pierre café shortly after midnight. Police Officer Mark Broer spotted a horse tethered outside the D&E Café and waited for the rider to come out. When Mr. Wilson left the café, mounted his horse and began riding off into the dark, the officer stopped him because it was dark, his horse was a dark color and the rider was wearing dark clothing. "I felt he was a traffic hazard," Officer Broer testified. Broer also testified that "it was uncharacteristic to find a horse rider in downtown Pierre at that time of night." When ordered to get down off his horse, Mr. Wilson dismounted but refused to take a sobriety test and identified himself as Flip Wilson. "The horse rider's breath smelled of alcohol, his speech was slurred I felt Mr. Wilson was under the influence of alcoholic beverages," testified a very observant Officer Broer.

If found guilty, Mr. Wilson could be jailed for one year and fined \$1,000. It's a good thing that the horse hadn't been drinkin' otherwise he'd be in even bigger trouble.

Moral of the story – if you're going to ride while intoxicated, wear light clothing, ride a white horse and don't be flip with the police.



In this Edition

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Presidents Convene
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Chino Hills and
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COWBOY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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