

Our First Rodeo...

I have admitted before that I'm a bit of a rhinestone cowboy. I grew up part country and part city with not a horse to be found. The closest I got to cowboy was when I'd put on tight blue jeans and a hat to go two-step in the Bluebonnet Palace teen hall.

It's not that I never had an interest in horses or rodeo, just that a young man can only have so many hobbies. My energy was directed otherwise.

Fast forward thirty years and I find myself loading one of our horses into a trailer for my kids' first night of rodeo. For many who grew up with horses, this is no big deal. For me, I just don't want to make a fool of myself. My horsemanship skills are improving, but still lacking. With some helpful pointers from a good neighbor, we're on our way.

After signing up for every event the kid's are eligible for, it quickly becomes apparent that our two year old girl might be a bit intimidated. She says she'll watch from the stands until she can find a pink pony to ride. Her brother is also a bit timid, but quickly puffs out his chest when he sees an older five-year-old from his school riding his horse alone. As a matter of fact, Parker is suddenly ready to ditch Dad and the lead line altogether to impress the older boy.

And then he started to grow up even faster.

The first event was barrels and things went rather well. After the run, only Dad was winded and sweaty. Parker held on tight and smiled through clenched teeth and obvious fear. I could see the wheels turning as to whether his rodeo career might end this very night. We regrouped, had a Big Red, started making friends, and waited.

By the third event, things had changed drastically. Parker jumped into the saddle enthusiastically. I couldn't figure out what was going on. As we walked our old roping horse, Tank, toward the arena for the goat slap (the intro to goat roping,) I heard an unfamiliar voice..."Good Luck, Parker."

I kid you not. It was a she and she was an older woman...nine years old, at that. And she could ride. Suddenly, Parker had a new found love of the rodeo, horses, and everything else associated with this night. I swear I could hear background music.

As we pulled away from the grounds, Parker said he definitely wanted to rodeo again. Especially if, "that girl will come play with me."

Thinking this was a key moment in the future of my son's love life and a chance to witness pure first love, I had to ask the question," What was your favorite part of the rodeo?"

After a short silence, he said, "Aw Dad, you know..." the pause just killed me," my favorite part was when I slapped the goat on the butt."

So much for young love. Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please send comments through www.ParrishDental.com.