

Happy Trails

by Jack Swenson

Hank and Marvin were tired from punchin' cows in the hot Texas sun all day. They looped the reins of their horses around the hitching post in front of the saloon and pushed their way through the swinging doors. It was cool and dark inside. They perched on stools at the bar and ordered Budweiser. They drained those and ordered two more. "Ahh, that tastes good!" said Hank, wiping the foam from his parched lips. "Sure does," Marvin agreed. Those were the only words the two men exchanged for better than an hour. This pair was not much for conversation.

After three or four beers, Marvin got down from his stool, hitched up his pants, and announced that he was going to go across the street to Lucille's house of ill repute and hump one of her girls. "Whoa, there," his friend said. "No, you ain't." "Why not?" asked Marvin. "It ain't politically correct," Hank said. "It ain't?" Hank shook his head. "Why not?" asked Marvin. Hank said he didn't know. It didn't make sense to him either. It's just the way it was.

The two men sat in silence for a time mulling the oddities of life in the twenty-first century. At last Marvin broke the silence. "Well," he said, "Who are we going to hump then? What are we supposed to do for sex?" Hank shrugged. "Well, I suppose we could hump each other," he said. Marvin's jaw dropped; then he grinned. "Haw, haw," he said, "That's a goodun'!" He slapped the side of his dusty jeans. Hank licked his lips, then looked away. "I dunno," he said. "Out on the trail there.... Well, think about it. There were times there when you looked pretty good." Marvin blushed.

Once again the two men were silent, and once again it was Marvin who spoke first. "But is it politically correct?" he asked. "Oh, yes," said Hank. "It's all the rage."

So the two cowpokes went out outside and dropped their pants; Marvin leaned over the hitch rack. When Hank finished pleasuring himself, the two men changed places.

At that moment a well dressed man and woman walked by on the wooden sidewalk in front of the saloon. They were headed towards their hotel, having just exited the train. They were well-dressed and pale skinned; it was obvious that they were not local people. In fact they were from a suburb of Chicago. They were visiting relatives in Dallas. The woman was shocked by the spectacle of what appeared to be Gary Cooper having sex with the Marlborough Man, but her husband took it in stride. He took his wife's arm and led her past the fornicating cowboys. "Relax," he said. "They're probably just making a movie."

