

USA tour med mera Livsstil

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Texten motsvarar helt den engelska texten i den aktuella delen av programmet.*

Cowboys

Shelley and Ronnie Milliorn are a deaf couple living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. They own a horse ranch.

I've always loved horses. Well, maybe not since I was born... It's because I was the only deaf person in my family. I had nothing to do. Hearing people just talked and talked all the time, so I said I wanted a horse. When I was 3 and lived in Seattle, I got a horse and started riding. It was the only thing I enjoyed back then. I was with it all the time, and when I moved here, I had horses. I still do. I love horses!

My parents have always had a farm and a ranch.

We have a ranch. It's no farm. We don't have lots of animals like rabbits and chickens and so on. We only breed and train dogs and horses. We either sell them or keep them for the rodeo. So we have a ranch.

I met Ronnie when I was in junior high school in Seattle. He was often at the school. He was taking welding courses. When I met him with my sister, I wasn't very interested in him. When I graduated from Gallaudet, I moved here. He offered me a job where he was a basketball coach. Then I started to fall in love with him. I liked his horses!

Sure, she married me because of my horses! No, I had another girlfriend and she had grown up with horses. I knew she had a deaf sister –Shelley. I didn't meet Shelley very often even though I dated her sister. Then Shelley started working here.



One day I read some information about new employees and saw her name there. Then I met and talked with her now and then. When I needed an assistant for the basketball team, I asked her. She was interested. Then we started dating, but not seriously at first. We were just good friends. But later we got serious. We got married and now we have kids. My wife is a teacher and loves life in New Mexico.



The rodeo's been a part of my life since I was little, but I didn't learn much until I met Henry, who works here. He taught me about rodeo safety. Many people lost their hands in accidents. He taught me how to ride and train horses. He taught me what to do with a slow calf and what to do with a fast one. He taught me everything about rodeos. When it was time to compete, people said that calves were fast or slow so I knew exactly what to do. Rodeos are like that, everyone is open and very friendly. Well, that's why I like cowboys. They're nice to be around.

Some calves have big horns while others have small, brittle ones. Then you have to protect them with metal pipes so they don't get bent or damaged. Calves with big horns don't need the pipes for protection.

Rodeos are both profitable and fun. I only do it because it's fun, but Ronnie has done it for the money. Rodeos are a real challenge. It's harder for the deaf. We can see but we can't hear anything. But we can get good at it anyway. Rodeos started out as riding contests. People gathered and tried to catch a calf against the clock. It's the same principle now. My husband and I love to ride, but he does it to compete. I do it to relax. If I've had a bad day at work, I come here and go riding.

Of course you're nervous just before you enter the arena. You feel the pressure and have to be quick with the calf. You think of the time and the money, and then you ride in and do your best.

I was a member of a professional rodeo team before we moved here. I still have the team's emblem on my back. I thought the local rodeos were enough. Plus, it's close to home. If you compete professionally, you travel a lot. There are long trips and you're often gone two weeks at a time. But I have a family now. My sons are interested in peewee rodeos, so I want to get involved with that.

Rodeos are ... well, it's a lifestyle. You live with the horses. It's great if you like Western traditions. There are fewer horses these days. Now it's mainly cars and computers. But that's not living a real life. A real life includes rodeos, or at least some horses!

