

THE BRANDING IRON

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



ARIZONA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION

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March 2012 Edition
Next Newsletter Deadline:
March 25th 2012

Send submissions to:
Justin@TheCreativeArcade.com

Hello AGRA members,

With the 2011 year coming to a close I stand here extremely proud to serve as your president. We started our year off with a well-planned rodeo with over 100 contestants, a plethora of vendors and an extremely amount of hopeful rodeo fans. MOTHER NATURE showed her beautiful head and showered all day Saturday which left AGRA in a \$14000.00 deficit.

I had the pleasure of working with an amazing team, your board of directors this year worked overtime to handle obstacles and any challenges that came our way. Kevin McSweeney, your vice president came on late as she was elected after Cary Liebowitz resigned as vice president. Kevin worked with Trixie Delux our only royalty member and ensured that AGRA was represented at most functions that were going in our community. Bob Shukis our secretary, kept our information flow running smooth and ensured all details of the corporation are properly documented. Jai Crystal, our treasurer has been keeping our finances in order and keeping the 2011 bill collectors at bay as we had monies coming in constantly due to the rodeo deficit. Jai also took on the task of being our 2011 rodeo treasurer. I would like to give a round of applause to Jai Crystal for an outstanding job as treasurer. Ron Trusley our trustee is probably our longest serving member on the board. Working with Ron is always exciting as he comes with a plethora of knowledge in every area of rodeo. Ron is our voice to the IGRA board and consistently makes AGRA shine at the IGRA level. Greg Gillum, our public relations director has served as our PR director for several years. Greg is our contact to the outside world. Greg is responsible for all interactions with all media personnel. This will be Greg's last year as PR director. I would like to wish Greg the best of luck in his ministry program! Last but not least Joshua Sipe, our fundraising director. Joshua has raised thousands of dollars for AGRA.



We started 2011 off with our biggest fundraiser the Road Runner Regional Rodeo and all of our fundraisers following have been huge successes. I would like to give a special thanks to Walt Hutter for his infamous baked goods. I want everyone to give a special thanks to Kevin McSweeney and Joshua Sipe for spearheading ALL of the fundraisers responsible for getting us out of a \$14000.00 hole. Most organizations would have folded after a loss like that, but the members of AGRA said NO WAY! I want to express my deepest gratitude to these two wonderful men for their relentless effort to help others in need! Richard Merritt and Jai LoveJoy our AGRA booth coordinators. Thank you to Patrick Nichols and team sports for always supporting AGRA. Keith Carson it's always great to see you at the AGRA booth working so hard.

With the weather events over shadowing a great rodeo that was well run and covered by more media since the Broke Back Mountain craze the entire membership should be extremely proud of this year's rodeo and the rodeo team that worked all year to put this on.

The 2012 Road Runner Regional Rodeo has been a success George, Ron and Laura I commend you for a job well done! You have secured long time relations with all of our vendors which are irreplaceable. After a loss like last year most rodeo Directors would turn the other way, but you all approached and tackled one of the biggest obstacles in AGRA's history. Thank you again you should be very proud of yourselves!!

2012 has started with a new excitement and young new members getting involved, lets teach our new members the great things AGRA has offered those in need over 27 years of Rodeo. Let's SHOW them how much FUN rodeo can be and not all the politics involved with rodeo. These NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS ARE CRUCIAL for AGRA. I expect everyone that has a voice that wants to use their voice, or voice their opinion to do so! We have monthly meetings, committee positions, fundraising events, BOD positions that are open. I do not agree with those who will sit on the sidelines and critique everything that we as an organization are trying to accomplish. I will not sit and allow those to bad mouth us or individuals in this organization that are working endless hours to give to others. I strongly encourage ALL MEMBERS to get involved!! If you are not willing to get involved then quietly enjoy the SHOW that we have worked on for an entire year for. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve all of you and this organization.

Respectfully,

**Michael Weidmann
AGRA President 2011**



THANKS BOB!

Howdy Folks!

The Ides of March are approaching, and the 2012 Rodeo is behind us now. And the weather gods looked down on AGRA favorably this year, and provided an outstanding week-end for the Rodeo. Hats off to all who took part in the success of the 2012 RRRR!! And hats off to the following members who share the Month of March as their birth month

03/01	Gregory Begay
03/01	Craig Eikleberry
03/03	Anthony Ward
03/06	John King
03/11	Justin Gonzalez
03/12	Michael Chavez
03/14	Bob Shukis
03/17	Patrick Lose
03/22	Jacob Tenney
03/29	Michael Mejia

I would also like to remind everyone that now is the time to renew your membership to AGRA. And this year, it is easier than ever! You can go on line to our website and renew and pay your dues in one easy step! We are getting a good response to the online membership and I hope that it continues!

Thanks to all of you for being part of the AGRA family!

Bob Shukis
2011 Secretary



TRUSTEE

Trustee's Article

Well, the 2012 Road Runner Regional Rodeo has come and gone, and I won't write about it as I am sure others will submit their comments.

On Friday, February 17, 2012, AGRA hosted a Rodeo School in conjunction with the Road Runner Regional Rodeo. The school was advertised only a couple of weeks in advance. Yet, there were 22 participants in the school! Participant entry fees totaled \$1,000.00 with the total amount going to the rodeo. I am confident if we plan a 2013 school more in advance and promote it that we would have a much larger number of participants.

The 2011 AGRA Annual Corporation Meeting & Banquet were held on Saturday, February 25, at the T-Bone Restaurant on South Mountain. Twenty-three members attended these events along with 5 guests. Congratulations to Jai Crystal for being selected as 2011 AGRA Member of the Year! This is an honor well-deserved.

I am waiting for confirmation and specific details, but it is possible that AGRA might secure a partnership/sponsorship for a media campaign for Visit Berlin. If successful, banner advertising would be on the AGRA website with AGRA being monetarily compensated.

The 2012 IGRA Finals Rodeo Director has asked associations to give serious thought as to whom they feel is deserving of the title of Grand Marshal. Nominations for this title opened February 15 and will close on May 15, 2012. Anyone can submit a nomination! The nomination form is available on the IGRA website under Rodeo Fans/World Gay Rodeo Finals.

As we begin our 2012 Rodeo Year, I would like to encourage all members to attend the Membership Meeting on Sunday, March 11. The meeting is held on the dance floor at Charlie's at 4:00 pm. Come and let your voice and opinion be heard!

Respectfully,

Ron Trusley
AGRA Trustee
Phone: (602) 510-9671 E-Mail: rtrusley@cox.net



From the perspective of Public Relations, 2011 was an excellent year for the Arizona Gay Rodeo Association. We continued our venture into the social media of Facebook and Twitter in order to promote the 2011 RRRR. By the end of the year, we had over 800 Facebook friends and hundreds more followers on Twitter. We found them to be a great way to reach a target audience of people who express an interest in AGRA the RRRR and gay rodeo – and allow that audience to share our information directly with their friends and families.

The other electronic portion of our Public Relations work for the year was the maintenance and improvement of our website. As the most public “face” of our organization, during 2011 the AGRA website received an amazing 42,000 unique visitors. And during January and February of 2012, it received an astounding 12,000 unique visitors. In addition, when judged by IGRA for quality, design, & ease of use and then compared to the other association websites, in 2011 our agra-phx.com website moved up in ranking from #5 to #2 among the nearly 20 websites.

For all of his help in facilitating our social media and website work – and donating countless hours of reviews, updates, and improvements, I wish to thank Gino Meriano for his dedication and professional talent. Thank you Gino!

Although our 2011 RRRR was challenged by a freakish storm system that drove our attendance way down and made even the competition more difficult, your Public Relations director continued to team up with our Fundraising Director and Charlie’s Phoenix in order to promote additional events to bring us “into the black.” I wish to thank Joshua Sipe, Charlie’s Phoenix, and the many talented entertainers and supporters for their generosity and support of raising funds for our rodeo.

I want to thank the 2011 Rodeo Director, George Immerso, for the opportunity to promote the 2011 and the 2012 RRRR. I also thank Michael Weidmann for promoting the rodeo sponsorships and organizing their ads and logos. His teamwork made the design of both rodeo programs much easier.

As my term as your Public Relations director expires, I will be pursuing my call to public ministry and the requirement to take classes in residence at Luther Seminary in Minnesota. Although I will be moving away from Phoenix after having lived here 21 years, I will maintain my membership with AGRA – and remain connected with this strong group of people who serve the Arizona LGBT community through their teamwork, kindness, and generosity. Be sure to know that I have and continue to list the title of “Public Relations Director” for the Arizona GAY Rodeo Association on my Lutheran Church resume.

Thank you for the opportunity. I am proud to have served you.

Greg Gillum
Public Relations



A WORD FROM RICHARD

Hello members,

Every so often there are individuals that work behind the scenes that go above and beyond anyone's expectations to help AGRA, and one such individual is Dan Iversen.


1. He picked up Patrick Terry at the airport.
2. He took Patrick to the RV rental to pick up his rental RV.
3. He loan his car (full of gas!) to Patrick and the secretary (David Hill) for the weekend.
4. He sponsored the Greg Olsen buckle when no other sponsor could be found.
5. He helped the AGRA booth team load up the WHEEL, supplies, and T-shirts in his Yukon, and he delivered it all to Charlie's office and the AGRA shed.
6. He pulled the AGRA trailer back from the rodeo grounds when all other's had abandon it.
7. He backed that AGRA trailer back into it's storage parking spot-----an extremely difficult job---but Dan's trailer backing skills are 2nd to none.

Thank You Dan Iversen for all you do for AGRA

Respectfully,

Richard Merritt

MORE >



Another successful year with the AGRA booth at Rodeo!

I'd like to take this time to thank all those that helped pull it off-----

Friday:

Thank you Garry Hattermann and Chad Weber (from Minneapolis) for loading up, hauling out to the rodeo grounds, and unloading all the T-shirts, supplies, and "The Wheel" -----it was a full pick up truck load!

Also, Thanks to Gary, Chad, and Justin for pushing all the fake store fronts in place and setting up the tables. Also thanks to Justin for getting the booth license submitted and getting the booth bank from Jai.

Saturday:

Thanks goes out to Justin, Patrick Nicoles, Keith Carlson, Marshall, and Jay Lovejoy for putting all the merchandise out to sell on the tables. A special thanks to Patrick for hand writing all the signs for the prize boxes.

Also, thanks to the super sales team of the west ---Delia and her gang of girls (not to be confused with the Gang of 4)----that worked the booth Saturday--they are super ! And not to be left out, the triple threat selling team of Patrick and Keith and Marshall for working the booth all day.

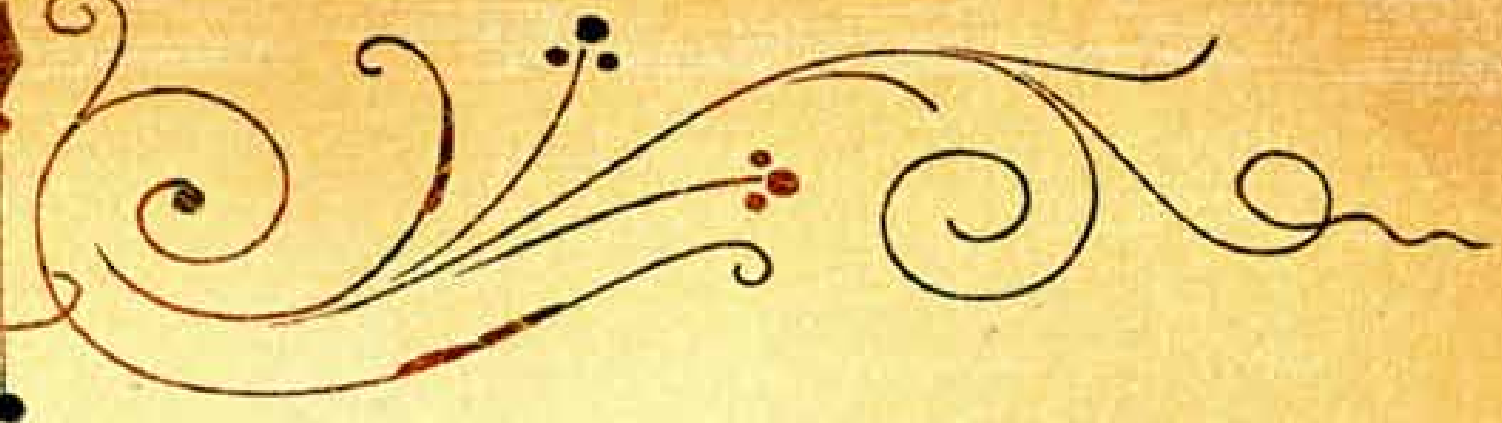
Sunday:

Justin got the booth open, as usual I was not quite ready.

Thanks go to Jay, Patrick, and Keith for running the booth all day Sunday !

Sunday Night:

Thanks to Jay, Patrick, Keith, and Dan Iversen for packing up the booth and loading all into Dan's Yukon



Monday:

Thanks to Dan for hauling all the T-shirts and “The Wheel” back to Charlie’s, and for Gary and Jay for helping unload the Yukon.

I also need to give a special thanks to Michael Weidmann for all the prizes he got for the prize wheel----there would have been no prize wheel without all those prizes that you got for us Michael !

Thanks to you all,

Richard Merritt





MEETING SCHEDULE

AGRA Board Meeting
Schedule 2011 - 2012
(Charlie's Office)

~~May 11~~
~~June 8~~
~~July 13~~
~~August 3~~
~~September 14~~
~~October 12~~
~~November 16~~
~~December 7~~
~~January 4~~
~~February 8~~

AGRA Membership Meeting
Schedule 2011 - 2012
(Charlie's Dance Floor)

~~May 15~~
~~June 12~~
~~July 17~~
~~August 7~~
~~September 18~~
~~October 16~~
~~November 20~~
~~December 11~~
~~January 8~~
~~February 12~~



TBA NEXT ISSUE



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