

The CGRA Round-Up

CGRA

1/6/2014

Volume 1, Number 4

President's Letter

Another One Bites the Dust

Yeah it was a good song, but I'm really referring to the year 2013. I hope this letter finds everyone well, perhaps a few pounds heavier with their holiday feasts. It seems like it's been a month of celebrating and enjoying time with friends and family. I had thought about maybe this letter would be a good time to reflect on accomplishments for CGRA for the 2013 year but I have chosen not to do so.

What?? You say. No reflecting? Yep, for three and

who are active members, who are involved and know what the hell is going on. I feel like it's so unfair to you for me to bring them up to speed on a month to month basis. So I don't. Does that sound like some kind of an elite group? I for one say NO. I think if your heart is really into CGRA and all the things WE do, you would be involved. So I am going to spend this time with you, (well hopefully you sit and read this) talking about the

If you're not having fun or you're not getting from this organization the things you would like to receive, you're simply not playing.

a half years now I have had the pleasure as serving you and CGRA as your President and I have spent my time looking forward and not backwards and I'm gonna just stick with that. You see, there are some who sit idly by and wonder what CGRA is up to. Then there are those of you

upcoming year and where we are going. So grab a drink, your partner, or whoever you wish to share this with and let's take a look at 2014...

I would like, (LOL I had to change that cause I had first typed I WANT. Well

Vice President



I just wanted to extend a huge thank you to the membership of CGRA. It was great to have such a large number of our family out to celebrate with us at the Past Royalty Show and also for the CGRA Night of Sharing and Royalty Competition! We had a fantastic time both evenings, even though the weather outside was not so terrific!

Congratulations and thank you to our 2013 CGRA Royalty Team for an excellent job – Mr. Karl Wesley, Ms. Pauline Chavez, and Miss Katrina St. Andrews! You are all amazing people and I look forward to working with you going forward. I know you will still be active in CGRA! Also to Pauline and Katrina, congratulations on your new IGRA titles, I know you will do an excellent job on the 2014 IGRA Royalty Team!

And welcome to our new 2014 CGRA Royalty Team – Mr. Andrew Johnson and Miss Stephanie Paul. You did an amazing job during the competition. Welcome to the CGRA Royalty family!! Looking forward to working with each of you through the coming year!

Well, that's about it from your Vice President. Hope you all had a fantastic Christmas and looking forward to an amazing New Year!

Rich Valdez
CGRA Vice President

there's that ole saying that comes back to haunt me at times while typing, something about Shit in one hand and ...something in the other. So I changed it). Let's get back to it... I would like for each of you to continue to think outside the box. It's working. But at the same time, I ask you to think inside the circle. Sounds a whole lot like square pegs in round holes I know. But with a little padding on your walls you can fit right in. The whole outside the box concept is taking ideas that have worked and tweaking them, bringing them to the 21st century. Being creative, with the objectives of CGRA in mind, means coming up with chains of thought that continue to lead us forward. Some of us call that forward thinking, while others call that trend setting. Don't be afraid to lead, it's much easier in the front to see where you are going than to be following others and have that vision blocked. It's working and I'll share with you some stats to prove that a bit later. But this Inside the Circle...here's where we can really capitalize. What I mean by that is each of us has friends or even family members who we need to share who and what CGRA is. Our own little circles. Get them to join. Get them involved. Bring 'em along to have the same fun experiences that you are

having. Now realize that the more people you get involved in the circle the bigger the outside the box becomes. Seems crazy I know and NO I'm not drinking, right now. But just think about it.

I have thought a lot as of late about the whole 'Gay' tag. Yeah damn right we are the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association, but what if we were operating as a business with a dba such as the Rocky Mountain Regional Cowboys & Cowgirls Association, (RMRCCA). Oh and don't you dare get me wrong and think for a minute that I don't want to continue supporting the LGBTQ community or the mission statement of CGRA. On the contrary, it's just a picture in my mind of the accomplishments the Gay community has made and how do WE encompass others to join with the teachings of the Western Lifestyle and the sport of Gay Rodeo.

CGRA currently has between 35-40% of our members attending meetings. NO other organization within IGRA can say that. Women 27%, Men 73%. Younger to mid-forties 43%, late forties to older 57%. Straight 18.5%, Gay 81.5% and no that's not one of those look around the room kinda stats that you're wondering who's on the fence. It's just the way the numbers worked out. But

numbers and percentages change. Here's what we have going on. It's working. Of the last 38 members who have joined, 76% are mid-forties and younger and only 24% late forties to older. Of those 39% are Straight while 61% are gay. Looking at retention, which is something we have struggled with for years, five years ago our retention was running at 19% and 20% the year after that. We are now operating with 45% retention. Numbers don't lie.

If you're not having fun or you're not getting from this organization the things you would like to receive, you're simply not playing. Now I know there's the old adage that you're not going to please everyone all the time and YES I understand that. But there is also the saying you only get out of something what you put into it. So I guess to sum it all up I want to say keep looking forward. Keep changing with the times. Don't be afraid to be better or to even fall flat on your face. Yes, we may all stand around you and laugh at you, cause that's what friends do, but we will be the first to help pick you up to do it again. Best of Luck to Everyone in 2014 and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Let's Ride
Robert Thurtell
CGRA President

Rodeo Events

Would You Like a Gymkhana?

Now that it is 2014, it is time to start thinking about this year's rodeos. With that in mind, here are the dates for CGRA's Gymkhanas at Jefferson County Fairgrounds:



Saturday, May 17 - Main Rodeo Arena at 10:00am

Saturday, July 5 - Main Rodeo Arena at 10:00am

Sunday, August 3 - Table View Arena at 10:00am

Sunday, September 7 - Table View Arena at 10:00am

Sunday, October 5 - Event Center at 10:00am

In addition, there will be three gymkhanas with Jeffco Mounted Search and Rescue at the Indoor Arena:

February 9, 2014

March 9, 2014

April 27, 2014

More details will be forthcoming. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help out, please contact Rodeo Events chair Mary Tabay at RodeoEvents@cgra.us.

Recipe Box (courtesy of CGRA member Tom Lott)

Chocolate Bundt Cake

Ingredients

4 Eggs beaten until thick and lemony	1 cup sour cream
1 box Duncan Hines Devil's Food cake	3/4 cup cold water
1 box instant chocolate pudding (or vanilla)	1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 pkg chocolate chips (or about 1 cup to your liking)	

Instructions

1. Combine dry cake and pudding mixes.
2. Add beaten eggs, water and oil.
3. Beat for 3 minutes.
4. Stir in sour cream and chips.
5. Put in greased/floured Bundt pan.
6. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes.
7. Cover cake in an icing of your choosing.

Membership

Happy New Year, all!

Here are your important tidbits when it comes to membership info:

- Membership name tags can be had by both new and renewing members. I will happily order these for you if you wish; but, they are no longer a FREE item with your membership (the membership CARDS are FREE).
- The cost is \$10 for a name badge. You may specify either magnet or pin back. Please contact me if you would like to place an order. Prepayment is REQUIRED and orders may take 2-4 weeks.

REMEMBER:

1.) All memberships are based on calendar year quarters instead of months. This translates to just four (4) renewal dates per year- March

31, June 30, September 30, and December 31.

2.) Membership cards (for those who wish them) and reminder emails should make it easier for everyone to renew their membership when due. Members will be DEACTIVATED in the database 10 days after your expiration date if you have not renewed. ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS!

3.) CGRA offers limited JR. memberships at a reduced annual fee of \$12. This is ONLY for those under the age of 18 – with parental approval, of course.

Please do take a moment and make sure your membership information is up-to-date. Prompt renewals are always

greatly appreciated and be sure to let me know if you have any name, address, phone or email changes. Do check your emails closely for those renewal reminders.

Feel free to email me:

Membership@cgra.us if you have any questions or updates.

And, as always, Membership Application/Renewal forms are available on the website. Those can be snail mailed DIRECTLY to me if you prefer to handle your renewal that way. Please contact me for my mailing address. You can also renew on line @ www.cgra.us

CD Slusser
Membership Chair, CGRA

Community Outreach

Thanks for the Support

Howdy rodeo family. Now that Christmas is over, it's time to get ready for the New Year. At the Center's Christmas dinner I do believe everyone had a great time. I have to put out a HUGE THANK YOU to all who came and helped me out.

Surgery went well and I'm feeling much better. It's time to put our heads together for RMRR32. I pray for our family that all is well.

Paula Scougal
CGRA Community Outreach

Rodeo Pride

Museum to Open Photography Exhibit Featuring Gay Rodeo Circuit



Eiteljorg Museum
of American Indians and Western Art

On Saturday, Feb. 1, 2014, Blake Little: Photographs from the Gay Rodeo will open at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art. The opening marks the first time this exhibition, which tells the story of an often ignored part of American Western culture, has been displayed anywhere.

Blake Little will feature 41 black-and-white images of cowboys and cowgirls from the gay rodeo circuit, taken by award-winning, Los Angeles-based photographer, Blake Little. The Seattle native became captivated by the gay rodeo scene in 1988 and began documenting the lives of its contenders, victors and their devoted fans. "The whole scene watching it – imagining that these guys were really doing this, and that they were gay!" Little said when asked what first sparked his interest in gay rodeos.

Blake Little became more than an observer. After getting hooked to going to rodeos, he wanted to become a part of the action. He learned to ride a steer, then a bull and slowly began to master the technique. In 1990 he was named Bull Riding Champion of the Year at the International Gay Rodeo Association. "These photographs represent an amazing, magical time in my life. Back then, I questioned if I was a 'real' cowboy because in the back of my mind I always felt like an observer – and photography was my first passion. But my unique situation allowed me to document the growing sport of gay rodeo from the inside along with the thrills and personal challenges of fulfilling my cowboy dreams," said Little.

Curated by Eiteljorg assistant curator, Johanna Blume, Blake Little, serves as a stunning example of black-and-white portraiture and of rodeo photography. But that's not all, said Blume. "This exhibit also explores the diverse and complex natures of individual and community identity in the West. Many of the people in these photos were LGBT men and women from rural backgrounds and the gay rodeo circuit gave them a place where they could embrace and celebrate their full identities."

Little has a storied career as a professional photographer. One of his first assignments, in the 1980s, was to shoot Tom Cruise for the cover of *Moviegoer* magazine. That project launched his career as a portrait photographer. He has worked with Jeff Bridges, Julianne Moore, Steve Carell, Samuel L. Jackson, Gwyneth Paltrow, Aaron Eckhart, Marcia Cross, Colin Powell, Kevin Spacey, k.d. lang, 50 Cent, Iggy Pop, Glenn Close, Jane Fonda, Jack Black, Adrien Brody, and Jane Lynch among many others. He has photographed for publications such as *London Times Magazine*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *People*, *Time*, *Los Angeles Magazine* and *ESPN the Magazine*. Little has also made a name for himself by examining concepts and definitions of masculinity through his portrait series *Manifest* and *The Company of Men*.

The Eiteljorg plans to travel Blake Little nationally after the exhibit closes on July 13, 2014. The timeline and venues for the traveling exhibit are to be determined. Details can be found at

<http://www.eiteljorg.org/explore/exhibitions/blake-little-photographs-from-the-gay-rodeo>.

Public Relations

Calling all Volunteers

As we continue to get the word out about CGRA to the greater community, we can always use help with the website, with press releases, with ad design, and other tasks that help get the word out. If you've been looking for a way to volunteer with CGRA but would rather be behind the scenes, Public Relations is a great way to get your feet wet. If you want to help out or have any ideas, feel free to drop me a note at PublicRelations@cgra.us.

John Hill
PR Chair, CGRA

The History of Rodeo

Part 1: The Early Years (submitted by CD Slusser, courtesy of Wikipedia)

The rodeo was not originally a sporting event, but an integral part of cattle-ranching in areas of Spanish influence. The working rodeo was retained in parts of the US Southwest even after the US-Mexico War. In fact, it was important enough to merit legal status in California:

"An Act to Regulate Rodeos (April 3, 1851)...Every owner of a stock farm shall be obliged to give, yearly, one general Rodeo, within the limits of his farm, from the first day of April until the thirty-first day of July, in the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and San Diego; and in the remaining counties, from the first day of March until the thirty-first day of August...in order that parties interested may meet, for the purpose of separating their respective cattle."

One of these business-like rodeos held in 1858, in old Los Angeles County is described by Harris Newmark:

: The third week in February witnessed one of the most interesting gatherings of rancheros characteristic of Southern California life I have ever seen. It was a typical rodeo, lasting two or three days, for the separating and regrouping of cattle and horses, and took place at the residence of William Workman at La Puente rancho. Strictly speaking, the rodeo continued but two days, or less; for, inasmuch as the cattle to be

sorted and branded had to be deprived for the time being of their customary nourishment, the work was necessarily one of dispatch. Under the direction of a Judge of the Plains--on this occasion, the polished cavalier, Don Felipe Lugo--they were examined, parted and branded, or re-branded, with hot irons impressing a mark (generally a letter or odd monogram) duly registered at the Court House and protected by the County Recorder's certificate. Never have I seen finer horsemanship than was there displayed by those whose task it was to pursue the animal and throw the lasso around the head or leg; and as often as most of those present had probably seen the feat performed, great was their enthusiasm when each vaquero brought down his victim. Among the guests were most of the rancheros of wealth and note, together with their attendants, all of whom made up a company ready to enjoy the unlimited hospitality for which the Workmans were so renowned.



:Aside from the business in hand of disposing of such an enormous number of mixed-up cattle in so short a time, what made the occasion one of keen delight was the remarkable, almost astounding ability of the horseman in controlling his animal; for lassoing cattle was not his only forte. The vaquero of early days was a clever rider and handler of horses, particularly the bronco--so often erroneously spelled broncho--sometimes a mustang, sometimes an Indian pony. Out of a drove that had never been saddled, he would lasso one, attach a halter to his neck and blindfold him by means of a strap some two or three inches in width fastened to the halter; after which he would suddenly mount the bronco and remove the blind, when the horse, unaccustomed to discipline or restraint, would buck and kick for over a quarter of a mile, and then stop only because of exhaustion. With seldom a mishap, however, the vaquero almost invariably broke the mustang to the saddle within three or four days. This little Mexican horse, while perhaps not so graceful as his American brother, was noted for endurance; and he could lope from morning till night, if necessary, without evidence of serious fatigue.

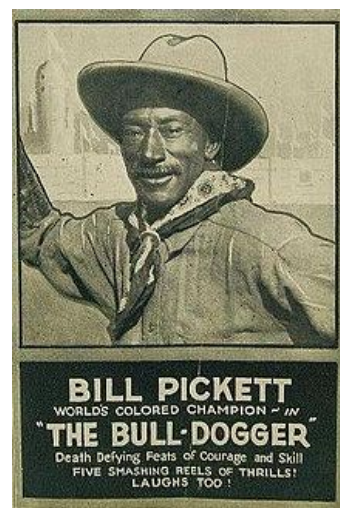


: Speaking of this dexterity, I may add that now and then the early Californian vaquero gave a good exhibition of his prowess in the town itself. Runaways, due in part to the absence of hitching posts but frequently to carelessness, occurred daily; and sometimes a clever horseman who happened to be near would pursue, overtake and lasso the frightened steed before serious harm had been done.

Rodeo stresses its western folk hero image and its being a genuinely American creation. But in fact it grew out of the practices of Spanish ranchers and their Mexican ranch hands (*vaqueros*), a mixture of cattle wrangling and bull fighting that dates back to the sixteenth-century conquistadors.

One of the activities introduced by the Spanish and incorporated into the sporting version of rodeo was bull riding. Another was steer wrestling, involved wrestling the steer to the ground by riding up behind it, grabbing its tail, and twisting it to the ground. Bull wrestling had been part of an ancient tradition throughout the ancient Mediterranean world including Spain. The ancient Minoans of Crete practiced bull jumping, bull riding, and bull wrestling. Bull wrestling may have been one of the Olympic sports events of the ancient Greeks.

The events spread throughout the Viceroyalty of New Spain and was found at fairgrounds, racetracks, fiestas, and festivals in nineteenth century southwestern areas that now comprise the United States. However, unlike the roping, riding, and racing, this contest never attracted a following among Anglo cowboys or audiences. It is however a favorite event included in the *charreada*, the style of rodeo which originated in the Mexican state of Jalisco.



There would probably be no steer wrestling at all in American rodeo were it not for a black cowboy

from Texas named Bill Pickett who devised his own unique method of bulldogging steers. He jumped from his horse to a steer's back, bit its upper lip, and threw it to the ground by grabbing its horns. He performed at local central Texas fairs and rodeos and was discovered by an agent, who signed him on a tour of the West with his brothers. He received sensational national publicity with his bulldogging exhibition at the 1904 Cheyenne Frontier Days. This brought him a contract with the famous 101 Ranch in Oklahoma and its traveling Wild West exhibitions, where he spent many years performing in the United States and abroad.

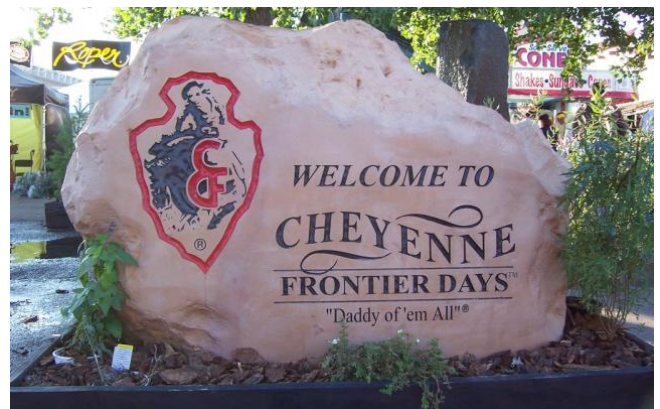
Pickett attracted many imitators who appeared at rodeos and Wild West shows, and soon there were enough practitioners for promoters to stage contests. Photographers such as Walter S. Bowman and Ralph R. Doubleday captured images of rodeos and published postcards of the events.



The first woman bulldogger appeared in 1913, when the great champion trick and bronc rider and racer Tillie Baldwin exhibited the feat. However, women's bulldogging contests never materialized. But cowboys did take up the sport with enthusiasm but without the lip-biting, and when rodeo rules were codified, steer wrestling was among the standard contests. Two halls of

fame recognize Bill Pickett as the sole inventor of bulldogging, the only rodeo event which can be attributed to a single individual.

Rodeo itself evolved after the Texas Revolution and the U.S.-Mexican War when Anglo cowboys learned the skills, attire, vocabulary, and sports of the *vaqueros*. Ranch-versus-ranch contests gradually sprang up, as bronc riding, bull riding, and roping contests appeared at race tracks, fairgrounds, and festivals of all kinds. William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) created the first major rodeo and the first Wild West show in North Platte, Nebraska in 1882. Following this successful endeavor, Cody organized his touring Wild West show, leaving other entrepreneurs to create what became professional rodeo. Rodeos and Wild West shows enjoyed a parallel existence, employing many of the same stars, while capitalizing on the continuing allure of the mythic West. Women joined the Wild West and contest rodeo circuits in the 1890s and their participation grew as the activities spread geographically. Animal welfare groups began targeting rodeo from the earliest times, and have continued their efforts with varying degrees of success ever since.



The word rodeo was only occasionally used for American cowboy sports until the 1920s, and professional cowboys themselves did not officially adopt the term until 1945. Similarly, there was no attempt to standardize the events needed to make up such sporting contests until 1929. From the 1880s through the 1920s, frontier days, stampedes, and cowboy contests were the most popular names. Cheyenne Frontier Days,

which began in 1897, remains the most significant annual community celebration even today. Until 1922, cowboys and cowgirls who won at Cheyenne were considered the world's champions. Until 1912, organization of these community celebrations fell to local citizen committees who selected the events, made the rules, chose officials, arranged for the stock, and handled all other aspects of the festival. Many of these early contests bore more resemblance to Buffalo Bill's Wild West than to contemporary rodeo. While today's PRCA-sanctioned rodeos must include five events: calf roping, bareback and saddle bronc riding, bull riding, and steer wrestling, with the option to also hold steer roping and team roping, their Pre-World War I counterparts often offered only two of these contests. The day-long programs included diverse activities including Pony Express races, nightshirt races, and drunken rides. One even featured a football game. Almost all contests were billed as world's championships, causing confusion that endures to this day. Cowboys and cowgirls often did not know the exact events on offer until they arrived on site, and did not learn the rules of competition until they had paid their entry fees.



Before World War II, the most popular rodeo events included trick and fancy roping, trick and fancy riding, and racing. Trick and fancy roping contestants had to make figures and shapes with their lassos before releasing them to capture one or several persons or animals. These skills had to be exhibited on foot and on horseback. Fancy

roping was the event most closely identified with the vaqueros, who invented it. In trick and fancy riding, athletes performed gymnastic feats on horseback while circling the arena at top speed. Athletes in these events were judged, much like those in contemporary gymnastics. The most popular races included Roman standing races wherein riders stood with one foot on the back of each of a pair of horses, and relays in which riders changed horses after each lap of the arena. Both were extremely dangerous, and sometimes fatal.

Another great difference between these colorful contests and their modern counterparts was that there were no chutes or gates, and no time limits. Rough stock were blindfolded and snubbed in the center of the arenas where the riders mounted. The animals were then set free. In the vast arenas, which usually included a racetrack, rides often lasted more than 10 minutes, and sometimes the contestants vanished from view of the audience.

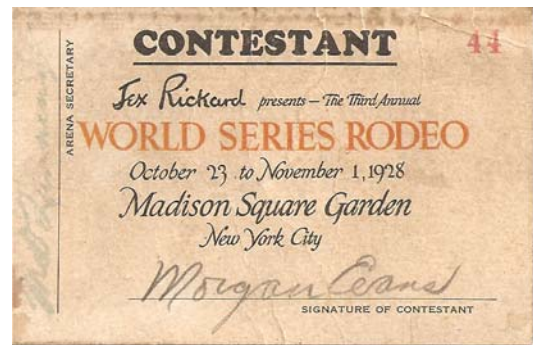


During this era, women rode broncs and bulls and roped steers. They also competed in a variety of races, as well as trick and fancy roping and riding. In all of these contests, they often competed against men and won. Hispanics, blacks and Native Americans also participated in significant numbers. In some places, Native Americans were invited to set up camp on the grounds, perform dances and other activities for the audience, and participate in contests designated solely for them. Some rodeos did discriminate against one or more of these groups, but most were open to anyone who could pay the entry fee.



All this began to change in 1912, when a group of Calgary businessmen hired American roper Guy Weadick to manage, promote, and produce his first Stampede. Weadick selected the events, determined rules and eligibility, chose the officials, and invited well-known cowboys and cowgirls to take part. He hoped to pit the best Canadian hands against those of the US and Mexico, but Mexican participation was severely limited by the civil unrest in that country. Nonetheless, the Stampede was a huge success, and Weadick followed with the Winnipeg Stampede of 1913, and much less successful New York Stampede of 1916. Although Weadick's last production, the 1919 Calgary Stampede, was only a minor success, he led the way for a new era in

which powerful producers, not local committees, would dominate rodeo and greatly expand its audience.



Rodeo enjoyed enormous popularity in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, as well as in London, Europe, Cuba, South America, and the Far East in the 1920s and 1930s. Today, none of those venues is viable. Despite numerous tours abroad before World War II, rodeo is really significant only in North America. While it does exist in Australia and New Zealand, top athletes from those countries come to America to seek their fortunes. Some Latin American countries have contests called rodeos but these have none of the events found in the North American version.

The CGRA Round-Up is a newsletter designed to keep the members of the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association informed about news and events important to those participants and supporters of gay rodeo in Colorado and around North America. Submissions for inclusion can be sent to PublicRelations@cgra.us.

John Hill
CGRA
PublicRelations@cgra.us