

THE JOLLY RANCHER

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION

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Photo by Greg Endries • Instagram @cowboysandcattlequeens

From The Editors

In this last quarter of the year, so much has happened within IGRA. First, there was WGRF 2023 and the lead-up to it. That also brought us new Royalty. Then, Convention in Reno, NV. New VP and Secretary elected to the Executive Board. Planning for IGRA University, and of course, 2024 Finals and rodeo year 50 in 2025. There are so many moving parts in this organization and all seem to be working together. The next couple of years are going to be exciting!!!! This quarter's *The Jolly Rancher* captures some of the highlights of this past quarter. Enjoy!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone enjoyed their break over the Holidays and recovered from the stresses of rodeo participation at all levels. Heal, stretch and relax.

You can see that our marketing team, Chuck and Scott, are off to a great 2024 start with an IGRA rodeo calendar that you can share with groups and friends. Please share broadly and encourage your network to attend and support the member associations.

Plans continue on our Road to 50 years of Gay Rodeo in 2025. If you want to be involved as a volunteer please let Lisa Smith DSRA know and she will get you connected to the right chair people. Thank you Lisa for coordinating the IGRA volunteer list.

Here are some Highlights for my 2023 Convention report. Thanks to the committee: Patrick Terry, Frank Harrel, Jeffrey Neal, Kami Boles and many others, including the IGRA 2023 committee chairs that made convention 2023 so productive.

Looking back:

2023: A relatively productive and positive year.

Several fun and successful sanctioned rodeos and new things.

Younger cowboys and cowgirls engaging with IGRA (the under 50 crowd).

Partnering with the community of LGBTQ athletic associations.

WGRF 2023: Well Done!

Here and Now:

Technology challenges: Websites, RMS infrastructure and Convention Technologies.

Gender self-determination challenges: Stay a leader on this equity issue.

2024 WGRF going back to El Reno for a number of good reasons.

Address equity, inclusion and diversity issues in our operations.

Focus on the mission of IGRA.

The Future:

Become the organization that outsiders see when they look in.

The Road to 50 years of Gay Rodeo Initiative.

A Trio of History Making Opportunities for us ALL:

- IGRA at World Gay Pride, 2025
- IGRA Smithsonian Induction, 2025
- WGRF 2025

Thank You all for your support, hard work, and commitment to our organization

Brian Helander
IGRA President, 2023-2024

IGRA Welcomes New VP & Secretary



Two new officers were elected to the IGRA Executive Board at Convention.

Vice President – Michael Vrooman
and **Secretary – Gene Fraikes.**

A huge thank you to the outgoing officers,



Vice President Michael Butts (aka Mipsy Mikels) and Secretary Michael Norman,
thank you for your dedication and service to IGRA.

2023 Hall of Fame Inductees

Andrew Goodman • Benjamin Avant • Desiree Gronwald • Glen Gore

IGRA SCHEDULE - 2023

IGRA University	January 12-14	Las Vegas, NV
Arizona Gay Rodeo	November 16-19	Phoenix, AZ
Texas Tradition Rodeo	April 12-14	Denton, TX
Rodeo In The Rock	April 26-28	Little Rock, AR
Show-Me State Rodeo	May 10-12	Kansas City, MO
Crossroads of the West Regional Rodeo	June 21-23	Salt Lake City, UT
Rocky Mountain Regional Rodeo	July 12-14	Denver, CO
North Star Regional Rodeo	July 26-28	Hugo, MN
Canadian Rockies Rodeo North	August 9-11	Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Great Plains Rodeo	August 16-18	Oklahoma City, OK
Zia Regional Rodeo	August 23-25	Santa Fe, NM
Best Buck In The Bay	September 13-15	San Francisco, CA
BigHorn Rodeo	September 20-22	El Reno, OK
IGRA Convention	November 14-17	Grand Rapids, MI

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In the Spotlight, we try to focus on folks from all over the IGRA organization, and there are plenty arenas to pull from. With a renewed excitement in IGRA, this quarter we highlight 2 new competitors and the excitement they bring. Please welcome Clay Jesse Moore-Steele and Katie Shaw.

Clay Jesse Moore-Steele



Say hello to Clay Jesse Moore-Steele! Clay started working with a horse given to him by his father-in-law in April of '23. As he continued to work with this horse, he

discovered that the horse

had some knowledge of the barrel pattern. A short time later, he had heard of the International Gay Rodeo Association. Clay reached out to his dear friend Chris Sherman, a long time IGRA competitor. Chris gave him the in's and out's of gay rodeo, which apparently got Clay hooked. That's where it all began.

Clay currently competes in Calf Roping on Foot, Barrels, Poles, Chute Dogging and all Camp events. His goal is to add Break-Away Roping to his events.

Outside of rodeo, Clay and his husband Colton play in the LGBTQ Softball League in Arcadio, OK. They also run a small cow/calf operation at their home

Best of luck to you Clay in the 2024 season!

Katie Shaw



Introducing Katie Shaw!

Katie began with AGRA in 2022 as a sponsor for the rodeo (Wheat Farrier Works). She was asked by Ron Truslee to be the farrier for the weekend.

She joined AGRA and knew she needed to be more involved immediately. As a college athlete, she decided to compete the next year at the Arizona rodeo as she found IGRA the perfect place to get into the swing of things. Katie competes in Break-Away Roping, Calf Roping on Foot, Barrels, and Flags and is planning to enter the Camp events in 2024.

Outside of IGRA, Katie is a full-time farrier, owner of Wheat Farrier Works, serving much of northern AZ and parts of Central AZ. Katie takes pride in building the perfect little oasis for her family, which consists of her wife, two dogs and two horses, in Flagstaff, AZ.

In Katie's words, 'I love the camaraderie and being able to be the truest version of myself at these events. There is something for everyone. Rodeo is not typically the most accessible sport for many reasons, but IGRA does an amazing job to ensure that anyone who is curious about rodeo has the opportunity to participate.

Welcome Katie and good luck in 2024!

2024 Royalty



By IGRA Vice President Michael Vrooman

Halloween Weekend was upon us and once again, Oklahoma City was the backdrop for the IGRA Royalty Competition as we saw 13 Contestants compete representing 7 Member Associations. All hopefuls brought their best presentation packages to the District's Showroom, desiring to capture a 2024 International Title. Two days and three nights of competition and farewells filled the spookily decorated dance hall including an unplanned moment of a live waterfall pouring from the ceiling onto the Entertainment Competition dance floor on Night Two. As we said farewell to our 2023 IGRA Royalty Team, we thanked **Weston, Rocket, Selena, Madam** and **Tessie** for their service and ushered in 10 new IGRA Titleholders for the 2024 Rodeo Year.

Congratulations to:

Mr. IGRA Christopher Aguilar (NGRA)
Miss IGRA Aurora Gayheart (NMGRA)
Ms. IGRA Christina Miner (CGRA)
MsTer IGRA Ryder Gently (AGRA)

First Runners Up include:

Mr. Andy Siekkinen (GSGRA)
Miss Southyrn St. John Comfort (GPRA)
Ms. Janelle King Neptune (GPRA)

Second Runners Up joining the Team are:

Mr. Sebastian Black Starr (AGRA)
Ms. Luna Starr Black (AGRA)
Miss Miranda Rites Ticey (AGRA)

Due to an uptick in participation in member association royalty programs, this is one of the largest IGRA Royalty Teams the organization has seen in years.

The 2025 IGRA Royalty Competition to be held in El Reno, Oklahoma in 2025 is trending to be larger with more participants as local competitions are already yielding more participants. It has never been more important to be sure we are providing our member association titleholders everything they need to do the stellar job of fundraising and representation expected.

As we charge forward into the 2024 Rodeo Year, say hello to this new, hard working IGRA Royalty Team as they come to your rodeos, represent the sport and volunteer at events.



**Mr. IGRA Christopher Aguilar
(NGRA)**



**Miss IGRA Aurora Gayheart
(NMGRA)**



**Ms. IGRA Christina Miner
(CGRA)**



**MsTer IGRA Ryder Gently
(AGRA)**



**Mr. Andy Siekkinen
(GSGRA)**



**Miss Southyrn St. John Comfort
(GPRA)**



**Ms. Janelle King Neptune
(GPRA)**



**Mr. Sebastian Black Starr
(AGRA)**



**Ms. Luna Starr Black
(AGRA)**



**Miss Miranda Rites Ticey
(AGRA)**



For those of you that missed WGRF 2023, well, you missed it. Word on the street is 'best Finals I've seen in a long time.' It truly does take a village. Two months out there was 1 corporate sponsor, banners to be made, dinner to organize, and much more. The group reorganized with new committee members who banded together and got the job done.

WGRF was held at the Canadian County Expo Center in El Reno, OK. Luckily, this is an indoor venue. The weather was bleak, cold and rainy. However, that didn't stop the spectators from showing up, nor the cowboys and cowgirls from bringing their A-game. Even the horses were on fire. Kudos to Laura Lee who caught both days in Calf Roping on Foot and buckled. According to Laura, first time in 20 years she caught both days. Then there was Tricia Duncan who blew everyone away with a 15.84 in Barrel Racing. WOW!

The bleachers starting filling up as soon as the gates opened. Spectators continued to stream in all day, filling up the stands both Saturday and Sunday. Upon entering the arena, sponsors and



Alumni were greeted at the VIP tent, organized by Mark Arnold. Continuing down the aisle, there was a silent auction and 17 vendors. How in the world Jorge did that from Minnesota is a wonder! And of course, the bar . . . thank you GPRC.

What rodeo wouldn't be complete with a phenomenal announcer? What a job David Smith had, and he did it well. A well-organized parade of Associations started off the day, followed by beautiful renditions of Oh Canada sung by Michael Vrooman and The Star Bangled Banner sung by Janelle King Neptune.

This one is in the books. Now on to 2024!

