

THE JOLLY RANCHER

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION

EDITION 4



APRIL 12TH, 2024



QUARTER 2



Photo by Greg Endries • Instagram @cowboysandcattlequeens

SHOW ME DA MONEY!

Have you ever wondered what IGRA as an organization or charity does, or what it does for your Association? How about where does the money go? In recent months, I've heard chatter regarding these subjects and it became apparent that maybe a lot of us have lost focus on what this organization is, does, and who we are.

With any organization, it takes fuel to push the ship forward. This 'fuel' relates to money and people. And it takes a lot of both!!! For the purpose of this article, we are specifically talking about IGRA, the mothership.

There are countless numbers of volunteers for IGRA's World Gay Rodeo Finals. There are countless hours put in by IGRA Royalty working and raising money. And just where does it all go or what is it used for? The International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA) is not just an umbrella name over the local Associations. I've spoken with several that manage the administration of IGRA and here's a list of how this all works:

- IGRA pays for and manages the Online Registration System
- IGRA administers the Certification Program which provides Certified Officials for the rodeos
- IGRA pays for the Auditor travel to each rodeo
- IGRA administers the insurance (local Associations pay their part into the premium)

- IGRA pays for and produces WGRF
- IGRA hosts Convention and covers cost of conference rooms
- IGRA hosts University and covers cost of conference rooms
- IGRA pays for the D&O Insurance – this is insurance to cover the Board of Directors in the event of a lawsuit
- IGRA subsidizes rodeo schools - \$500 per
- IGRA maintains and covers the cost to print the rule book

All of the above are factors that filter down to all of the local Associations, which enables them to produce their own rodeos and raise money for their charities. When it comes to our Mission Statement, IGRA does more than promote the country/western lifestyle and/or provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ community. Along with that, IGRA provides the education with the above factors to do what we all love. This rodeo organization is not about one group specifically. It takes Royalty to raise funds and be the ambassadors in the public. It takes arena crew, Certified Officials, Contestants, Volunteers. Basically, it takes all of us to run the ship and keep it moving forward. Take out one aspect and the ship stops. Please don't ever think what you are doing does not go unrecognized or unrewarded. You are needed. We all do this together.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Those who joined us in Phoenix, AZ to kick off the 2024 Rodeo season, know we are off to a great start for 2024.

Congratulations AGRA on a fun and successful event. Let's try to keep the momentum going for the

2024 season which will culminate at the 2024 WGRF in El Reno, OK in October 2024. IGRA Annual Convention 2024 in Grand Rapids, Michigan in the fall. I am looking forward to the unique location.

As you know, one of the initiatives we are working on is the celebratory "Road to 2025: Fifty Years of Gay Rodeo." There is lots of work and planning going on behind the scenes for our Golden Anniversary in 2025, by committee chairs, planning committees, board members, and others who are looking to create a very special year of activities for IGRA members. Here are some things for you to consider as we go down the road to WGRF 2025.

- IGRA at the World Gay Pride 50th Anniversary Washington, DC: June 5-9, 2025.
- A Special Gay Rodeo and Archives Reception, also June 5-9, 2025 in Washington, DC
- A 50-year IGRA Reunion Party in Reno, NV in conjunction with WGRF 2025
- A Commemorative Program at the site of the blocked 1988 Finals in Fallon, NV
- 2025 WGRF and Royalty Competition : The first Rodeo of the 50th year of gay rodeo
- Collaboration events with the Silver Dollar Court System, Sundance Stompede Dance Organization, and The Gay Days event, which is occurring the same weekend in Reno, NV.

While there are lots of initial details to work out, **there will be lots of opportunity for you to participate in the planning and execution of these "once in a lifetime" celebrations.**

Please contact Lisa Smith (DSRA) to indicate which event interests you the most. Once the events are confirmed by the chairs and the BOD, Lisa will help the chairs reach out to you.

Of course, I am not as naïve as I understand many may think I am: we have some huge challenges ahead, but I know that by working together, supporting each association, and focusing on our mission we can deal with anything; our history tells us this.

An overriding personal and professional theme for my term as President has been reconciliation. To that end, I asked Ron Trusley to take on an IGRA "Recognition Reconciliation Project": reaching out to members and fixing IGRA awards, certificates, and recognitions that may have been overlooked, or incorrect over the last few years, and correct them. I am happy to report that this project has been completed and I give a HUGE thank you to Ron for sorting it all out.

Since becoming a 501c3, I set a goal to achieve GuideStar GOLD status as a foundation to our fundraising activities. Michael Lentz, who I asked to lead this project, will have an announcement at the upcoming board meeting in Denton, TX.

Lastly, I believe we can overcome our challenges when we all focus on our shared pride in the organization that we all have built over the last 50 years. Let's be big as we travel this "Road to 50 years of Gay Rodeo." I believe in IGRA and our worthy mission and hope you do too.

Brian Helander
IGRA President, 2023 - 2024

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Leave the umbrellas at home, it's Reining Royalty!

Aurora Gayheart, Miss IGRA 2024



Aurora's involvement with IGRA began as contestant/buckle sponsor in 2019 with her late husband's pop up western wear store, Not My First Rodeo.

Before that she was a long time spectator and performed with the Phoenix Phollies in the early 2000's at the Road Runner Regional Rodeo in Scottsdale. At the time, unable to run for royalty, because of work commitments, it wasn't until 2022 when Aurora became Miss New Mexico Gay Rodeo Association 2023.

Aurora lives a simple life by the sea in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mexico where she lives full time. When not raising money, she is a flight attendant and do loves to travel and go on cruises. Philanthropy has always been a passion and she enjoys raising money for a plethora of nonprofit organizations.

According to Aurora, 'I love seeing smiling crowds during grand entry and getting to make an impact on the communities, especially the smaller ones, where the state and regional rodeos are held. I've been amazed seeing the time and dedication it takes to put on these rodeos and really appreciate knowing all those involved and adore those I've become friends with over the years.' I think many share this same sentiment.

Christopher Aguilar, Mr. IGRA 2024



Say hello to Christopher Aguilar, Mr. IGRA 2024. Christopher began his journey with IGRA 5 years ago when his friend Tony Schwartz got him involved.

Christopher is currently a member of NSGRA. Similar to many, he feels he has found his home with IGRA and is excited to be a part of this organization.

Outside of IGRA, Christopher enjoys the outdoors whether it be camping, traveling to Mexico or a good match of volleyball or kickball. Relaxing and hanging out with friends and having a beer is also very special.

As for what Christopher loves about IGRA, in his words, 'Rodeos are so fun to be out with friends enjoying ourselves together. Making and having my chosen family and friends. Smaller and more intimate events is where I make a lot of memories and really get to know others better.' Well said!!

Recognition Reconciliation Project



Miss Aurora Gayheart receives her 2024 Miss IGRA name tag.



Ryan and Nick Villanueva receive their Trustee's Awards.
Thank you Ron Truslee for your diligence.

2024 IGRA SCHEDULE

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
BigHorn Rodeo	May 24-26	Las Vegas, NV
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
Great Plains Rodeo	August 9-11	Oklahoma City, OK
ASGRA	August 17	Washington DC
Zia Regional Rodeo	August 23-25	Santa Fe, NM
Best Buck In The Bay	September 13-15	San Francisco, CA
World Gay Rodeo Finals	October 25-27	El Reno, TX
IGRA Convention	November 14-17	Grand Rapids, MI

THIS JUST IN!

In the President's message above, Brian explained our goal for GuideStar was to achieve Gold status. Just prior to this newsletter going to press, I was informed by Brian Helander that with Michael Lentz's diligence IGRA has been awarded Platinum status.

7:11 PM Tue Mar 19 www.guidestar.org 70%

GuideStar

Look up nonprofits and identify prospects with Candid's GuideStar

International Gay Rodeo Association

23,114 results found. [Clear search](#) SORT BY **Relevance**


Geography Organization Financials

STATE

ZIP CODE

METRO STATISTICAL AREA (MSA)

CITY

 **International Gay Rodeo Assoc Inc**
Platinum

Aurora, CO | EIN: 84-1017597

The *International Gay Rodeo Association* is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization comprised of (18) *Regional Gay Rodeo Associations* from across the United States and Canada. *Gay Rodeo* had its beginnings in 1976 in Reno Nevada. Over the next few years local *rodeo associations* were formed in several states. In 1985, those *Gay Rodeo Associations* founded the *International Gay Rodeo Association* Through ... Convention of its Member *Associations*. We have evolved a code of fellowship and sportsmanship including the provision of standardized rules and resources to produce IGRA-sanctioned *Rodeo* and *Royalty* events that are hosted by local *associations* and culminate in the top contestants competing for the title of Champion at World *Gay Rodeo* Finals. We host the annual IGRA University. ...

GROSS RECEIPTS
\$134,004

ASSETS
\$90,561

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Published and Edited by Charlie Colella and Brandon Volf

If you would like to contribute to the Jolly Rancher, please contact Charlie or Brandon. We want your ideas!