



April/May 2001

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Bighorn

g a z e t t e

Announces Your New Board of Directors

- President:* Benjamin Avant
- Vice President:* Lize MacDonald
- Secretary:* Guy Puglisi
- Treasurer:* John Gomes
- PR Director:* Gary Mendyka
- Fundraising Director:* Don Phillips
- Trustee:* Johann Kristinsson
- Members-At-Large:* Brian Rogers
Richard Armstrong

From Your President

Benjamin Avant

Hey, everyone. This is my first letter to the membership as your new president. First, I'd like to say a big thank you for your confidence in me. While I feel very honored to have been elected, I must say that the feeling of responsibility is even greater.

It's a big job, but with your help and the help of the new board of directors, I'm sure NGRA will surpass all our expectations in the coming year.

I'd also like to congratulate the new board of directors. Some of you have been here before while others are newcomers. I want to thank you for your commitment to NGRA. You have a level of skill and professionalism that will have a big impact on our organization,

and I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with you all.

Before the election, I gave some

Board of Directors

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specifics as to what I would like to see happen within NGRA. It's now time for action. I want to update the membership on which the board of directors and I will be working. Our biggest priority is Big Horn Rodeo 2002. I'm amazed at the enthusiasm in the community for our rodeo. Everyone wants to see this happen. Our recent fund raisers have raised more than ever. I know Laura, Lize, and Brian are working diligently on setting the ground work and will have a confirmed date for us very soon. That's the key point that everything else revolves around. Once the

date is set, the rest will fall into place more easily.

My next priority is membership. I've heard many people say they don't have their badges, danglers, and membership cards. I know it's frustrating. I've asked our secretary Guy Puglisi to begin immediately to organize our membership records, gather the information for the new member packet, and make sure every board and royalty member has membership applications. If you have a problem with your membership, please let us know. We need to make sure we have everyone's correct address, phone, and e-mail.

Another top priority is corporate sponsorships. I am currently working on a package to be approved by the board of directors that we can present to potential sponsors. In addition to Coors and some of the businesses we have already been working with, I have several contacts that may be interested in sponsoring NGRA, but they need something in writing. Sponsorships frequently take weeks to months to negotiate, so we must begin right away if we're hoping to have much of the rodeo paid for.

The board will be appointing several important positions within the first couple of months. Here's a list of some of them. The first is property manager. NGRA has assets located in various places around town. We need to have everything located in one place and have an inventory of all the items. The property manager will be responsible for coordinating this process. He or she will also be responsible for keeping the inventory updated in the future and will work with the board or other members when they need to use NGRA property.

The next position is parliamentarian. This is not really a demanding job, but it does require a knowledge of (or a willingness to learn) parliamentary procedure. This individual will work closely with the president to help assure meetings are conducted expediently and properly.

We also need an historian. This position has fallen through the cracks in the past. We have a lot of memorabilia — photos, publications, ribbons, etc. that represent the history of NGRA. This position will require someone with a passion for the history of our organization as well as organizational skills to assure everything is in order.

One final position that needs to be filled quickly is the NGRA state convention coordinator. We are required to have our state convention within three months of April 1. The board will be discussing the details at the first board meeting, but we will need someone to handle the logistics of the convention, such as location, notice to our membership, and proposal packages. The new board is excited about the coming year and about having more of our members in key positions. If any of these positions sound like something you'd be interested in, please let me or any board member know.

OK, I guess I better let you go for now before we all go into overload. I look forward to seeing you at the general membership meeting on April 28 at 7:15 pm.

From Your Vice-President

Lize MacDonald

Hi from your new exhausted Vice-president...My new crop of gray hair testifies to the fact that this is a hectic time of the year. I am very excited to be a part of the new board, and I look forward to great times over the next year, under the presidency of Benjamin. I have just arrived home from the latest Gay Pride NGRA Dance Tent meeting, and it looks like it is all coming together, but..... you know we really could do with some help from the folks out there with any artistic talent for the creation of our float in the parade, and any spare energy could be put to very good use on the tent and jailhouse.... Please contact either Don Phillips or me, if anyone would like to help. Apart from the Pride event, we are well on the way to getting Bighorn 2002 going. Again we are always looking for folks to participate.. remember the Rodeo Planning Committee the 2nd Monday of every month at 7.30p, generally at the Backstreet. The Pride event itself is also looking for volunteers, and if you are interested in helping out, please let me know. Although you will still have to pay the entry fee, for 2 hours of volunteering, you get \$8.00 worth of drink tickets. They have some wonderful entertainment lined up and it looks to be one of the better Prides this city has seen.... come along and support, both it and us. You will also receive your ballot in this month's newsletter, for member of the year... please fill in one vote and then either post it to NGRA, give it to a board member, or, bring it to the May General membership meeting. Enough from me... C'mon down to the Backstreet, support the new Board, support your organization. Till then Happy Trails.

From Your Secretary

Guy Puglisi

Greetings members. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for electing me to the new board of directors as your secretary. One of my major goals as the secretary is to improve communication within our organization and with other associations within the Int'l Gay Rodeo Assn. (IGRA).

One of the areas I want to focus on is our membership. The secretary is ultimately responsible for all membership for NGRA. In the past, we have not always gotten our new member packets and name badges out as soon as I would like to have seen it happen. Please help me out by letting me know if you are a newer member who did not receive a new membership packet and/or name badge. You can e-mail this information to me at LVGUYP@aol.com or leave a message on the NGRA hotline at 615-6261. It may take some time before this area gets one hundred percent up to par, but it will happen I assure you.

Another issue relating to membership and communication improvements is our membership listing. When the membership list was converted to Excel, I noticed that some information was also either missing, or inaccurate. We have e-mail addresses for ninety percent of our membership, which is great; but my goal is to have membership information as up to date as possible. If you have recently changed your e-mail or know that you may have left it out on your membership application or renewal, please send me an e-mail or mail it to the NGRA address in the newsletter. If you do send an e-mail, please put **NGRA Member Update** in the subject line. This goes for any other changes as well,

as we are receiving returned newsletters from our members (i.e. address, phone, etc.)

I want to personally thank everyone that helped with the Wild & Wooly Wodeo held on Saturday, March 10, 2001. The organization made quite a profit and the response by those that attended was very positive. There were people that thought we should do this type of thing more often during the year. It was a nice change to do something a bit different from our usual show and beer bust. NGRA especially thanks **Kelly MacFarland-Smith**, the publisher of **Out Las Vegas** for the coverage for our event and her continued support of the gay and lesbian community, to **Thomas Bogle**, owner of **Hands on Therapeutic Massage**, for sponsoring one of the all-around buckles. We also would like to express our gratitude to the **AGRA Royalty Team** for coming to town to help with the entertainment and to **Barry Hamm** from **The IGRA Country Store** for sending us the official IGRA merchandise to sell at the event.

From Your Treasurer

John Gomes

Greetings to all NGRA members. I just want to offer thanks to all of you who voted for me. I have been a member since February 1999. In that time I have witnessed a great deal of energy put out by many different members in order to make all of the events fun and successful. I will do my very best to uphold the board position that I have graciously been appointed. There have been many changes since the beginning of my membership. I would like to think that the changes have been for the better to promote growth for NGRA.



**From Your PR
Director**

Gary Mendyka

What a busy time I've had since becoming the new PR Director, Okay, Alan you can have your job back now. Alan, thanks so much for all the time and hard work you put into this position. I hope it gets a little easier for me as time marches on.

The Miss Closet Ball 2001 show was a big success. Our very own Secretary /Scorekeeper Guy Puglisi was our winner - just fabulous. First runner-up was Jerry Griffin, very interesting and cute. It was a fun evening. We had four contestants and many entertaining guests.

The Hip-Hop Bunny Hop Easter show was are next show on April 14th. Great entertainment from all around the community, mostly from the FreeZone, (Divas of Las Vegas). What a special show this was, and I hear we will have them back to perform for us again. We also had some new entertainers. This was our first show with Don Phillips (Mr. NGRA) and Frankie Feliz (Miss NGRA) co-hosting the evening.

Don't forget to vote for the **Member of the Year** and return the ballot to NGRA.

If you have any suggestions, ideas or even an article for the new newsletter, please let me know. NGRAGARY@aol.com

**From Your Fund
Raising Director**

Don Phillips

I would like to thank everyone that voted for me and gave me the opportunity to represent the organization on the board of directors of NGRA. I will do my best to provide support in all areas possible. I am told these are big shoes to walk in and I'll do my best to keep up with the past fundraising directors.

As you know, the new board has just been elected and recently put into place, so many of us have not had our first meeting. What I'd like to do is inform you of my ideas and where I'm at, going into my first fundraising meeting.

My first step as fundraising coordinator is to list NGRA with 20 different national fundraising groups. These groups put out fliers and generate ideas for non-profit organizations to help hold new and exiting activities. I'm talking with a variety of organizations across the country to solicit new ideas for shows that we might not have tried or other ideas that have worked well for them. The response is strong and I'm very excited to build partnerships with these organizations. Not only have I searched the country for new talent but also contacting our sister organizations for fresh ideas within IGRA. There are lots of great ideas and I'm looking forward to the coming year.

For our first meeting, my plans are to come up with shows and themes for the next several months. In the past we have had production numbers that were a big success and I have had lots of requests to have Grease as a production.

My main focus is how do we raise money. This is a question not always easily answered. I would like to generate new ideas for raffles, auctions, or 50/50. Any idea is a good idea as long as it makes us money.

The May meeting of the fund raising committee will be on Tuesday, May 8 at 8:00 pm at my house. The royalty team members are automatically members of the committee, but I welcome any of you who want to attend. If you need directions to my house, please call me at 871-9364 or send an e-mail.

This is all I have for now. If anyone has suggestions on show ideas or would like to provide feedback please e-mail me at MrNGRA2001@aol.com. And remember our shows are the second and fourth Saturday of each month at Backstreet. Hope to see you all there!

Laurie's Corner

Laurie Banks

THE FOLLOWING COLUMN IS INFORMATIONAL ONLY - IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OPINION OF NGRA!!!! Assemblyman David Parks has introduced AB496. This bill concerns reciprocal benefits, or is better known as the Family Fairness bill. It would extend certain basic legal rights, such as hospital visitation, medical and health care decision, inheritance, crime victim, organ donation decision, and family leave to unmarried couples (gay, lesbian, or heterosexual) who have entered into a legal "declaration of reciprocal beneficiary relationship."

This legislation is a priority issue of Equal Rights Nevada, National Association of Social Workers-Nevada, the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, and other organizations.

It is reported that it will take a huge effort to pass this legislation, but it is felt it can be accomplished. If interested, there are ways you can help pass the legislation or voice



your opinion it's on not passing. You can log onto the Nevada legislature's website opinion page by using their e-mail address www.leg.state.us/71st/opinions/. Enter AB496 and address the questions asked there. If you are "For" the legislation enter there and complete the requested constituent information then "Submit" and then "Confirm."

Assemblyman Parks was NASW's Legislator of the Year in 1999 for his work on ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act). He has taken a courageous position by sponsoring his legislation. You can express your views to him by e-mail at dparks@asm.state.nv.us.

Rodeo Directors Corner

Laura Scott

RPC meeting number 2 is now history. Ben C. set up a deal with

Vacation Village to get us a two for one buffet dinner and meet with their representative Judy. She was a delightful character. She sat and talked with us all as we had dinner, and then joined in our meeting and answered some questions the committee had for her. After the meeting, Judy took us for a tour of the properties and a couple of the rooms. As far as I am concerned, the "Bidet" did it for me — I was sold the first time I saw it. After the tour, we voted as a group to choose Vacation Village as our host hotel upon completion of a contract. We agreed to give Vacation Village a earnest check for \$350.00 to hold the date. I now have a much clearer idea of what red tape is — seem to be running into every obstacle one could run into as far as the county is concerned, but will have a date within the next two week, whether it be Horsemen's Park or some other venue. Richard took me to the arena he competed in when he first started doing rodeo. Won't

tell ya how long ago that was, don't want to give away his age. But needless to say we ran into the Vice President of the Association who runs the arena and Richard went to high school with him. This place is not Horsemen's Park, and our first priority is getting that facility; but at least for the first time since we have had rodeo we have another option. Don't forget about our Poster Contest May 14th. We are giving away for first place \$200.00 and \$100.00 for second place. For more details go to our web site www.ngra.com.

See you all at our next RPC meeting the 14th of May at Backstreet at 7:30pm.

Yippy ki yaaa
 Laura - Rodeodir2002@aol.com

Rodeo Planning Committee

BigHorn Rodeo 2002

Bighorn Rodeo 2002 will be here sooner than you think. Below is a list of the coordinators that make up RPC. Look at the list and think about what you would like to do to help us make this year a success:

Finance Manager	Vendors/Concessions
Secretary	Awards/Buckles
Arena Equipment	Barn Manager
Volunteers	Grand Entry
Security	Merchandise
Entertainment	Media
Bar Manager	Host Hotel
Contestant Registration	Decorating
Sales	Program/Advertising

Some of the positions may have been filled already; also we are not appointing some of the positions until later on. We want to get the

Member News

April/May Birthdays

- ◆ Winsor C. ◆ Amanda H. ◆ Dale J. ◆ Ben K.
- ◆ John K. ◆ Johann K. ◆ Randy P. ◆ Guy P.
- ◆ Robert S.

We would like to congratulate our March
 Member of the Month

Alan Huss

Alan has been a member since 1995. He has been so helpful through the years as our PR Director, and as our master printer of the newsletter, Alan is always there to help us. You will be missed as our PR Director. Thanks so much.

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best possible person for the job. Also, if you know of anyone who would be interested in becoming a coordinator, tell him/her about it and let us know.

Message From Miss Closet Ball 2001

Guy Puglisi

On March 31, 2001, we held our annual Closet Ball Pageant. I want to thank all of you that attended and those who participated in the actual contest. I personally want to extend a special thank you to **Miss Dita B** and **Miss Truly La Femme** for all of their help in preparing me for the pageant; I couldn't have done it without them. All of the contestants and sponsors worked really hard to provide a fun evening for all. I had a lot of fun competing in the contest and giving people quite a shock after my transformation.

You may have seen **Miss Closet Ball** at the **Gay and Lesbian Community Center** on Saturday, April 7, 2001 helping with the landscape renovation. We spent about nine hours digging up trees, hauling out rocks, and planting new foliage. I couldn't believe that I was out there in my tiara digging holes in the rain! When all the work was done, we felt a tremendous sense of PRIDE in helping our community. If you are interested in volunteering at "**The Center**" please call 733-9800.

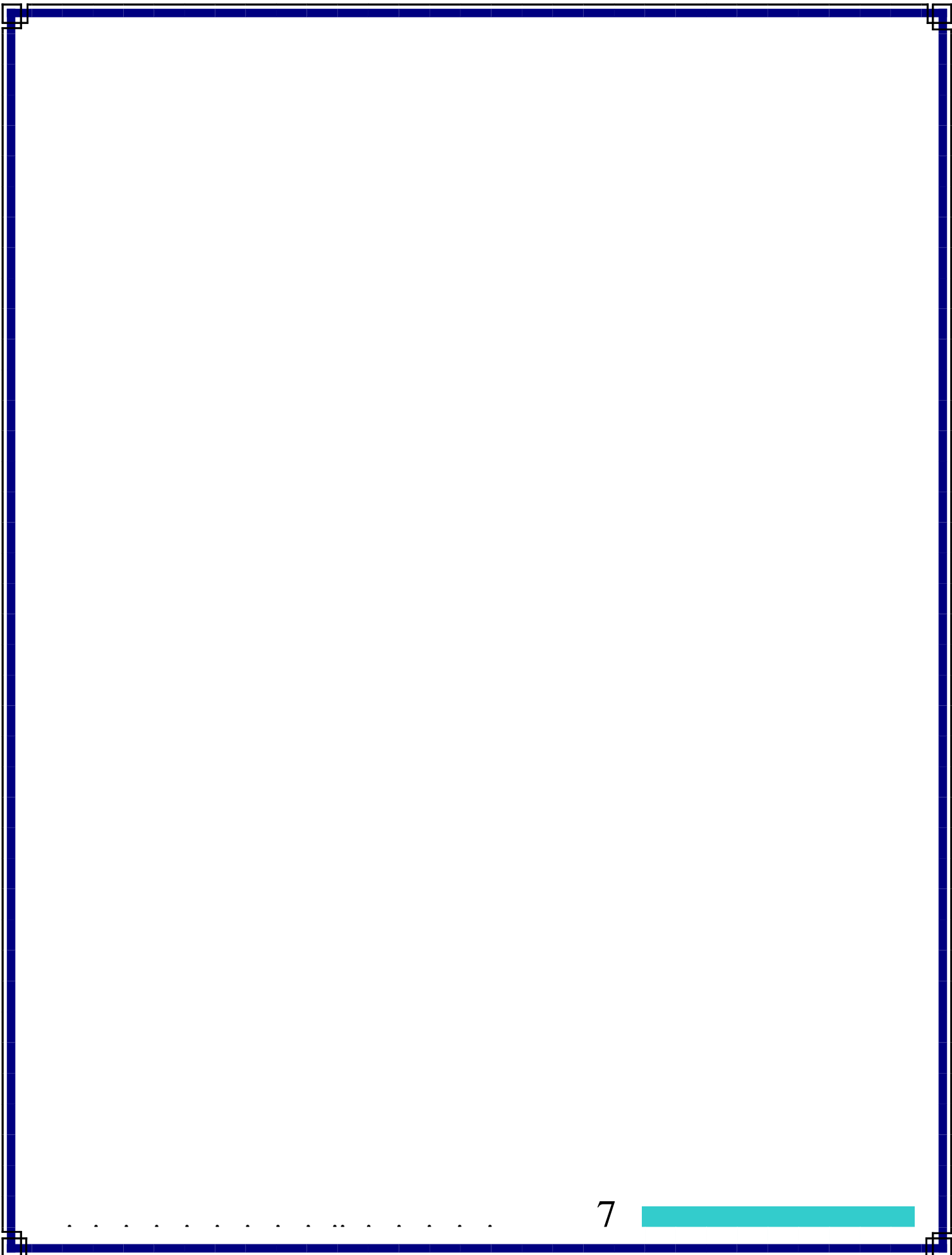
A group of us went to Salt Lake City over the Easter weekend to distribute **The Pride Guide** to their community center, bars, and bookstores. It is just incredible how supportive and united the community is in Salt Lake. We as a community have many roads to travel if we ever want to have a gay and lesbian community as strong as those in many other cities. As liberal and progressive as Las

Vegas is, I feel as if we are behind the times in many areas. We went to several of their bars and they were just huge! One of the clubs we went to made us feel like we were in an episode of **Queer as Folk**; it was wild!

Speaking of Pride and volunteerism, NGRA will be hosting its first dance tent at **The Las Vegas Pride Festival** on Saturday, May 12, 2001. Please come out and support your community, it is surely going to be a lot of fun for everyone. If you are interested in volunteering for the NGRA events or would like to help build our float for the **Pride Parade** on Friday, May 11, 2001, please contact Don Phillips (Mr. NGRA 2001) via e-mail at MrNGRA2001@aol.com or leave a message on the NGRA hotline at 615-6261.

Calendar of Events

- April 28, Saturday** ***"General Membership Meeting and the Stepping Out With Pride Show"*** at Backstreet. Showtime 9:45pm.
- May 5, Saturday** ***"3^d Annual Big, Bold and Beautiful Show"*** Imperial Court show at Cobalt, starts 9:30pm.
- May 11, Friday** ***"Nighttime Pride Parade"*** Starting time 8:00pm at Hoover and 4th Street near Charleston, Downtown area.
- May 12, Saturday** ***"Stepping Out With Pride 2001"*** Festival at Sam Boyd Stadium 11:00am to 9:00pm
- May 19, Saturday** ***"Somewhere over the Rainbow"*** To Celebrate the Opening of Las Vegas Rainbow Guesthouse, a Fund Raising Event for Nevada Gay Rodeo. RSVP by May 1 - 699-8977 (Flyer enclosed)



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