



JOEL CASTILLO , EDITOR

NGRA

APRIL, 2010

BIGHORN GAZETTE

In this issue... PRIDE, Miss Cow Patty 2010,  
NGRA Board Elections & so much, much more!

Email any submissions, photos, etc to: [BigHornEditor@ngra.com](mailto:BigHornEditor@ngra.com)



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**



It is hard to believe that we are now in the month of April. Elections are underway for the offices of Vice President, Secretary and Member at Large. I look forward to finding out who will fill these seats of the board, joining that of David Hering – Treasurer, Brian Rogers – Trustee, and myself. With one year under my belt going into my second year I am positive that it will be a smoother year for me as my feet are now wet and firmly planted on what is required in the role of President. Remember to exercise your right to vote.

While we always look for ways to raise funds to help our organization, I encourage everyone to help NGRA in a great way to raise needed funds with volunteering at PRIDE, on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. This year NGRA will be running the front gate again as this is something we do best. For everyone that signs up and volunteers and works 4 hours, helps NGRA earn \$10 for every hour you volunteer. Those interested in volunteering please visit PRIDE's website at [www.lasvegaspride.org](http://www.lasvegaspride.org) to sign up. Let's show our support to SNAPI and help them have a very successful PRIDE.

*-David Blackwood*

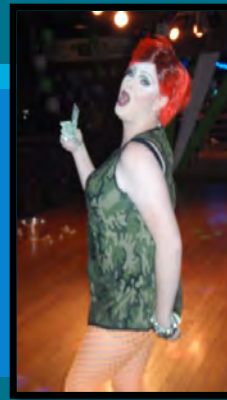
NGRA President



NGRA Board of Directors (L->R: JD Jensen, David Hering, Brian Rogers, David Blackwood, Colin Moulton, & Jeff Neal) with Miss Shyla Marshall, contestant for Miss Rodeo Nevada



NGRA's 2009 Member of the Year – Michael Judkins (with David Blackwood, Kimberli Foxx, & JD Jensen) being presented his award.



Miss Ginger Grant works it out at the "NGRA Goes Green" event at Charlie's Las Vegas

### FROM THE EDITOR:

Hello readers and thanks for tuning into another edition of the BigHorn Gazette! This month, in addition to the "Straight From The ... (Horse's Mouth) " Column, I am introducing a new column where we are featuring an NGRA member and introducing them to our newer membership! I am always looking for new ideas to keep the BigHorn Gazette fun and fresh for you. Email me your ideas!

Also, I want to say thank you for the honor of being voted as the February Member of the Month! Thank you. Remember, you can always email me at: [BigHornEditor@ngra.com](mailto:BigHornEditor@ngra.com). Thank you!

-JOEL CASTILLO  
BIGHORN GAZETTE EDITOR

### 2010 NGRA Board of Directors Elections

The voting process for the 2010 Board of Directors has begun. Electronic ballots were sent on March 23, 2010. The last day to cast your vote is April 11, 2010. The results of the election will be announced at the General Membership meeting on April 19, 2010.

Running for the office of Vice President are Joel Castillo and Shaun Sewell. For the office of Secretary are candidates, Jeffrey Neal and Dennis Shaull. There are four Member-at-Large seats available. Candidates for those seats are: Winsor Cooper, Mitch Gill, Doug Graff, JD Jensen, Boan Jordan, Colin Moulton and Ken Wong.

In the event you did not receive your ballot, please contact our Election Chairperson, David Hering at [BoardElections@ngra.com](mailto:BoardElections@ngra.com).



## Miss Cow Patty 2010

If any of you out there have ever dreamt of being a loving heifer, then this competition is for you! Miss Cow Patty is open to everyone in our community. It is a fun camp drag event where contestants dress up and perform to a fun, silly, or even a serious song. Judging will cover talent (performance) and your Cow Patty-ness! The winner is CROWNED as Miss Cow Patty and \$100 prize money is awarded.

All men & women interested in competing for the much-coveted title of Miss Cow Patty should reach Faye Deway (aka Bill Watkins) for registration information! All are encouraged to enter. You can reach Faye by phone at (702) 510-5051 or email at [b0424@mindspring.com](mailto:b0424@mindspring.com). See ya at the pasture!

# WANTED

## NGRA

### Big Horn 14

## Rodeo Director



It is time to start thinking about BigHorn Rodeo 14, 2011 taking place in May during the Memorial Day Weekend. In order to proceed and start the planning of this undertaking, we are looking for our Rodeo Director for BigHorn Rodeo 14, 2011. Candidate should possess the following qualities:

- Well Organized
- Good People Skills
- Rodeo Experience

If selected candidate must submit monthly progress and activities of the Rodeo Planning Committee to the Board of Directors.

Those interested in applying for Rodeo Director should send in their letter of intent and qualifications to David Blackwood at [president@ngra.com](mailto:president@ngra.com) no later than Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Candidates will be interviewed by the Board of Directors at the May Board of Directors meeting held on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.



## Fundraising Report



The NGRA Fundraising Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month. Last month we were privileged to have our meeting at Member at Large Doug Graff's house. This month we are fortunate to have Doug open his house up to us once again. It is here where we brainstorm and come up with some of the ideas that are then presented to the Board of Directors to approve for the organizations Fundraising opportunities. We welcome all members to come and provide input.

April brings us two wonderful events, with our first being the Miss Cow Patty Contest. This will happen on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at Charlie's at 9:30 p.m. This campy-drag event is a herd of fun, with no shaving involved, unless you so choose to. A \$100 cash prize will be awarded to whoever walks away with the bow vine title of Miss Cow Patty 2010. Anyone interested in competing in this herd of fun event is encouraged to contact Bill Watkins at [b0424@mindspring.com](mailto:b0424@mindspring.com). Our second event for the month is Proud to be Country, NGRA's Salute to the Grand Ole Opry, on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 p.m. at Badland's Saloon. This is during the festivities leading up to Las Vegas PRIDE, so come out and show your support while we show why we are Proud to be Country.

May has the annual Closet Ball Competition coming up on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at Charlie's. If you have an alter ego just hiding in your closet waiting to come out, now is your chance to show the world, ok let's start with NGRA first. A \$100 cash prize, crown and title sash will be awarded to the winner of Closet Ball 2010. Here are just a few of the rules:

- Contestant and Sponsor must be at least 21 years old.
- Competition fee of \$10 for each contestant
- Contestant will have 1 hour for transformation

For more information please contact David Blackwood at [president@ngra.com](mailto:president@ngra.com)

# TRUSTEE'S REPORT

By Brian Rogers

Spring is finally here and that means Las Vegas Pride is right around the corner. The Southern Nevada Association of Pride, Inc (SNAPI) has over 17 separate social, entertainment and cultural events planned starting April 10 and culminating May 2. Included in those events are the kick-off party at Charlie's on Thursday, April 22 and NGRA's "Salute to the Grand Ole Opry" on Saturday, April 24 at Badlands. NGRA will also be participating in the April 30 Pride Night Parade and running the gate again for the May 1 Pride Festival.

Miss NGRA 2010 Kimberli Foxx is our point person for the parade and Mr. NGRA 2010 JD Jensen is our coordinator for the Pride Festival. Everyone is welcome to participate with NGRA in the parade. Watch for details in this newsletter and via email blast.

JD is currently soliciting volunteers to fulfill NGRA's commitment to staff the gate for the Las Vegas Pride Festival on May 1st. We have over thirty 3.5-hour volunteer slots open. Volunteers will scan tickets, check ID's, and do wrist-banding. We expect about 10,000 people to come through those gates during the course of the day. Talk about People Watching! It's great fun and it's actually a fundraising event. NGRA volunteers earn \$4 an hour for NGRA from the SNAPI Love Program! If you want to join the fun and contribute your time to the community, please contact JD at [mrngr2010@ngra.com](mailto:mrngr2010@ngra.com).

At March's NGRA Finals Planning Committee meeting we made several appointments:

Winsor Cooper has agreed to take on the vital task of Transportation Manager. His sub-committee will schedule, contract and run the shuttles and party buses for the event weekend. We will be recruiting volunteer drivers for the vans and reaching out to other organizations for help in staffing party buses. If you are interested in serving on this sub-committee, please contact Winsor.

John Grubbs will be taking on the role of Volunteer Coordinator. We will need volunteers for set up of the rodeo venue and for security during the event. Contact John if you want to volunteer for Finals rodeo.

Laura Scott is our new Rodeo Equipment Manager. She will inventory equipment, verify compliance, obtain backup equipment and arrange delivery, set-up and return of all rodeo equipment and radios.

Tony Clark is our Special Event Coordinator. He will plan all the parties, coordinating with the AVI Resort and the Lariat. Tony will also work with our sponsors to ensure they are happily integrated into our events.

The 2010 Royalty Team, JD and Kimberli, will head up our local fundraising activities. They will plan and run special tournaments, bingos and other activities. IGRA has approved that all of those non-rodeo related funds will stay in our community and go to local charitable organizations (TBA). In addition, they will support the IGRA Royalty Team's entertainment and fundraising efforts at the actual rodeo in the VIP skybox.

Other NGRA member appointments previously announced include: Shaun Sewell - Communications Director, Bill Watkins - Art Director, Bill Trunzo - Finance Committee, Guy Puglisi - Rodeo Secretary, Lorry King - Asst. Rodeo Secretary, Mitch Gill - Head Scorekeeper and Doug Graff - Rodeo Announcer.

The NGRA Finals Planning Committee meets each month immediately following the General Membership meeting. Come get involved!

Save a Horse...

Your Trustee

# The Royalty Roundup

From...  
Mr. & Miss NGRA 2010

Happy Spring!

The end of February was very busy for us as well as NGRA. We were very proud to represent NGRA along with several members at the Sin City Sisters Red Dress event at the end of February. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone for coming out to support the Red Ribbon Country Revue.

March started with the crowning of the new Las Vegas Pride Royalty crowning ceremony. Congratulations to Andy Du Bois and Diva Delafuente, Mr. and Miss Las Vegas Pride 2010. It was a joy for us to be invited to participate and represent NGRA at their crowning on March 5 at Charlie's. Diva and Andy have represented Las Vegas around the Southwest, and we look forward to working with them throughout 2010. Congrats, again, Andy and Diva. Along with the Adult Pride Royalty team, SNAPI also crowns a Youth Pride Royalty team and this wonderful contest happens the same day as our annual Miss Cowpatty contest. We as your NGRA royalty team are proud to be attending this event held by SNAPI, where Kimberli has been honored to have been asked to judge. Also don't forget that the Las Vegas Pride Celebration is at the end of April and NGRA will once again be working the front gate and be involved in the Friday night Pride Parade. Watch your email and the NGRA website for more information.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who came out to support the two NGRA fundraisers in March: NGRA Goes Green, our St. Patrick's Day / Recycling-themed fundraiser, and the annual Board of Directors show, which we were happy to help Jeffrey Neal organize. We look forward to seeing everyone at the "Miss Cowpatty Competition" on April 10, and at "Proud to Be Country: A Salute to the Grand Ole Opry" on April 24 which is part of the Official Pride celebration kick-off week.

Also we want to remind everyone about the NGRA Board of Directors elections going on as we speak. The Board of Directors is the group of individuals we, as an association, choose to make the very important decisions that keep our fabulous organization on track. Remember, with any group, new ideas are how we grow and thrive, however, there is also something to be said about people with experience. Make sure you vote because as the old adage says if you don't vote now you don't have the right to complain later.

Until next time in rodeo spirit,

*Kimberli Foxx*

Miss NGRA 2010

*JD Jensen*

Mr. NGRA 2010



JD Jensen, Mr. NGRA 2010

&

Kimberli Foxx, Miss NGRA 2010

Photos courtesy of [www.PhotosByEarl.com](http://www.PhotosByEarl.com)



# The Royalty Roundup

From Miss IGRA 1<sup>st</sup>  
Runner-Up 2010

As my year came to an end, it seemed that it had just started and then it was over. I have a lot of blessed memories and wonderful new friendships as well as rekindling old friendships. To the Board of NGRA and its membership I say thank you for allowing me to represent you as your Miss NGRA 2009. As I traveled across the rodeo circuit, I came in contact with many of rodeo fans that where in awe that a Gay Rodeo was in Las Vegas, NV. and doing well. I want to give a big thank you to Badlands Saloon and their staff for all of the support through the year as well as being one my big sponsors in the IGRA Royalty Competition. And to Jackson, just let me say that you will always have a special place in my heart. Also I need to thank Charlie's for letting me produce some of my events. To all of my sponsors, a great big thank you. This thing that we call "Royalty" cannot be achieved by just the contestant themselves; it takes a large group of supporters, friends, and a great community. To the Las Vegas community I could not have raised the amount of money for those in need without each of you, thank you for being there and pulling out that last dollar to help. And to the entertainers, raffle sales people, beer bust and shot sellers and all of those that produced and spent their own money on raffle prizes, I stand in awe of each of you and I tip my hat to each of you and I applaud you. I don't have room to write everyone's name that helped me as well as listened to me when I had an idea as well as a sounding board when I wanted to give it all up, but I have to list a few that when above and beyond of what was needed to make everything run well,

Bill T. (aka Katrina), Eddy K., David B., Chris R., Collin M., David H., Doug G., Alex M., Alex W., Michael J., Shawn S., Joel C., Pork Chop, members of the IRSCDE, INC.; and friends and family around this great nation. I look forward to staying involved with not only NGRA and this community, but also IGRA.

Look out DeShannon Christi is out there raising money for the community both locally and on the international level. Come out as support and say hello. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you. And last but not least to my partner Mike, I could not have traveled and done all of this without you in my life, thanks for all of your love and support.

Let's rodeo,

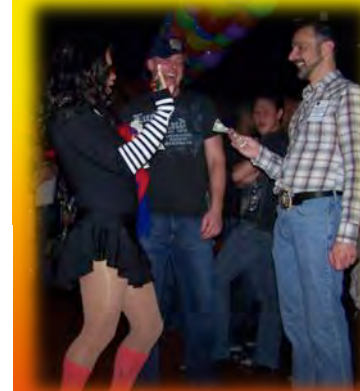
DeShannon Christi, Miss IGRA 2010 - 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up



Sabel D'Zyre,  
Miss Vegas Gay  
Pride 1993  
&  
Miss Closet Ball  
2008,  
(aka Joel Castillo)  
on the Pride Carpet  
at Las Vegas Pride  
Coronation 2010



Kimberli Foxx,  
Miss NGRA 2010  
(aka Ric Franklin)  
performs at  
Las Vegas Pride  
Coronation 2010



NGRA's infamous  
Ugly Betty returns  
to perform with  
some "Single  
Ladies" ... Pictured  
with NGRA  
Members, Jason C.  
& David  
Blackwood, at Las  
Vegas Pride  
Coronation 2010

Las Vegas  
Pride 2010  
Pride Parade  
Marshall,  
Hot  
Chocolate,  
with NGRA  
members,  
Sabel D'Zyre  
& Guy  
Puglisi



# HAPPENING IN OUR NGRA COMMUNITY

**NGRA PRESENTS**  
**MISS COW PATTY**  
**2010 COMPETITION**

**SATURDAY**  
**APRIL 10, 2010**  
**9:30 P.M.**

**NGRA'S CRAZIEST, CAMPIEST COMPETITION**

Charles Las Vegas  
 5012 Arville Road, Las Vegas, NV 89118

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT NGRA AND THE 2010 NGRA ROYALTY TEAM FUNDRAISING TRUST

**NGRA PRESENTS**  
*A Tribute to*  
**GRAND OLE OPRY**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2010**  
**9:30 P.M.**

**GRAND OLE OPRY**

**proud to be country**

www.LasVegasPRIDE.com

**PRIDE 2010** parade may 2nd 4th Street, Downtown Las Vegas festival may 1st Clark County Government Center

**NGRA** Rural Community Partner of Las Vegas PRIDE



(Left) NGRA Secretary, Jeff Neal gets caught licking the frosting. (Center) Emperor XII Jason Dyer performs for Hang 'Em High. (Right) NGRA Members Jason, Colin, Jeffrey, Brian, & John enjoy the festivities at Badlands Saloon.



# NGRA Featured Member Spotlight

## Laura Scott, Member Since 1995

Laura Scott first joined NGRA in 1995, but it her fondest rodeo memory actually goes back way before then. She was living in New Mexico at the time, and the country bar out there started up a dance team, which she joined. Her first *out-of-the-bar* venture was this thing called *Gay Rodeo*. Yes, she thought they wore tutus too. She and her friends headed to Phoenix in January of 1991, "I walked into the Corona Ranch and knew I was home. The camaraderie that I felt with everybody there was something I will never forget and still the number one reason why I love rodeo now just as much as I did then."

In 1994, her girlfriend at the time was a member. She would help out at the various fundraisers around town and even attended a few rodeos. She said, "I figured if I was doing the work, I might as well join." So NGRA gained a new member in Laura Scott! In 1997 Laura served on the Board of Directors as a Member At Large - a position she held for a second term in 1998. Laura was appointed, and served, as NGRA Vice President in 2001, and also as Fundraising Director in 2003.

Laura's commitment to NGRA took another step in 1998, when Laura became part of the 1998 NGRA Royalty Team as Ms. NGRA 1998. She reigned with an amazing Royalty Team comprised of Ms. NGRA - 1st Runner Up, Amy Smith; Miss NGRA 1998, DeShannon Christie; and Mr. NGRA 1998, Benjamin Avant. Laura said, "NGRA 1998 was an awesome year. Between my best friend Amy, DeShannon, and myself, I am sure Benjamin was over all three of us." She went on to the IGRA Royalty Competition later that year to compete for the much-coveted title of Ms. IGRA 1999. Laura brought home the black sash to NGRA that year! "Being Ms. IGRA was somewhat bittersweet for me. That night when I won, was like a blur to me. All I can remember was looking out and seeing Truly LaFemme jumping up and down. Next thing I knew, we were told to get off stage. As I was preparing to go to Oklahoma's Rodeo later that year in May, my Grandmother had passed away two days before I was to fly out. That was the hardest thing I had ever been through and before I knew it, my year was over. I was so sad because I knew inside I could have done better. I was on stage in Little Rock, Arkansas stepping down and hugging Doug Graff, my Mr. IGRA, telling him I wasn't ready to leave. I wanted a do-over."

When asked what is it about NGRA that has made a member out of her for so many years, she replied, "Truly my love for rodeo and the people involved. I have watched NGRA's growth since almost its beginnings. When I first joined, we had just over 40 members and this past year we had 130 I believe. That says a lot about this organization and this community as they have embraced us more and more as each year passes. I had moved to Texas for about 5 years and came back over a year ago. As much as I think I needed that break, being back in NGRA really has kept me going. It's a sickness really." Laura Scott is in-demand these days. While working on staff at QVegas magazine, she also had the pleasure of being asked to serve as Assistant Rodeo Director for Arizona Gay Rodeo Association's (AGRA) 25th Anniversary. "I was asked in December to be AGRA's Assistant Rodeo Director, which really helped me get re-acclimated and it helped prepare me for future endeavors. I was Rodeo Director for NGRA back in 2002 and my true calling, I believe is to go back and do that again and, hopefully, do it with a better understanding of people, the mechanics of rodeo and a more mature outlook. It was a great way for me to re-introduce myself to rodeo after being away from it, at least in a big way, for a few years, but doing so, I realized, it was like riding a bike. Passion and knowledge make for great bedfellows and fortunately after doing this for so many years at least my passion is still there and I haven't completely lost my mind. Working a rodeo for me has always been the greatest learning tool. We get to see it from a different perspective, and hopefully, take that and make it into something great for your rodeo. I was in charge of the arena area and all that encompasses like Officials, procuring a Stock Contractor, Equipment and many other things. I am a task driven person, so being in a position like that, is my comfort zone." She further expanded, "I think of Rodeo the same way I think of Love. *'I do both completely and with passion. 'Cause if not, what's the purpose?'*"

NGRA is playing host to IGRA World Finals this year at the Avi Resort in Laughlin, NV. Our Trustee, Brian Rogers is the World Finals Rodeo Director. When asked if she is on the Planning Committee, Laura replied, "First off, the fact that we are finally hosting finals is an awesome thing. I am so proud of Brian Rogers and the rest of the team for getting it here. Brian asked me to do a multi-media presentation for finals, which is very exciting for me. We worked on a presentation together in 1998 to bid on convention and it was such a great experience, I was thrilled to be asked to do this and I hope to make it worthy of the World Gay Rodeo Finals. I will also be working in the Rodeo Arena that weekend and really doing anything we need to make this a success not only for IGRA, but to show everybody that NGRA can put on a quality finals."

Thank you, Laura! We look forward to many more great things from you!



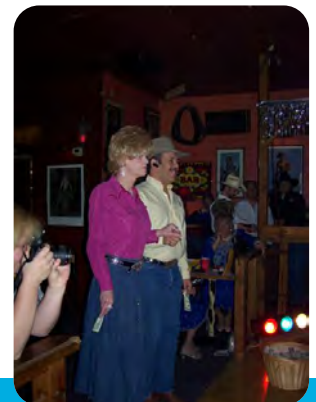
Ken Wong sings live for the first time at Badlands with Chris



Member at Large, Doug Graff performs



Shawn Sewell receives a tip from Miss Blondie



Kandice Kane & Jason Dyer tip a performer



# Upcoming IGRA Rodeos & Events

*Editor's note: Please note that GSGRA's Palm Springs "Hot Rodeo" [April 30-May 2, 2010] has been cancelled.*



**Saddle Up...**  
 ...FOR THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FGRA'S  
**SUNSHINE STAMPEDE RODEO**  
 PRESENTED BY  
**BUD LIGHT**  
**APRIL 16 - 18, 2010**  
 BERGEREON RODEO GROUNDS  
 DAVIE, FLORIDA

Tickets, Room Night Packages and Sponsor Information available NOW at [www.FGRA.org](http://www.FGRA.org)



Golden State Gay Rodeo Association - Bay Area Chapter  
 Presents

## ROUGH STOCK RODEO SCHOOL

Saturday, April 24, 2010  
 9:30am - 5:00 pm

Learn Bull Riding and Chute Dogging  
 Professional Instruction  
 Excellent Livestock

**Only \$85 per person**  
 GSGRA Members receive a \$15 discount

RSVPs required. For complete details, visit

[www.BayAreaRodeo.com](http://www.BayAreaRodeo.com)  
 hotline: 415.561.9228



**WORLD GAY RODEO FINALS**  
**IGRA 2010**



**TAUGHLIN NEVADA**  
**OCTOBER 22-24**  
**RODEO • BEACH PARTY • CONCERT**  
**Your Ultimate Rodeo Vacation!**

Presented by The International Gay Rodeo Association

For more information and to purchase tickets online visit [IGRA.com](http://IGRA.com)




# HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY



The Annual AFAN AIDS Walk will take place on Sunday, April 25, 2010. Please contact Miss NGRA 2010, Kimberli Foxx to join the NGRA Team.



The Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence cordially invite all NGRA members to their monthly Oink Night at the Fun Hog Ranch! Also, this month please join them for:

## “Anything Butt...”

What will you wear to a “Sisterly” event where you get to let your creativity flow. Make your eveningwear out of anything and everything you can find! Paper, trash bags, duct tape, you name it, you can wear it!

All those that wish to show off their creativity will gain free entrance and a chance to enter the Anything Butt fashion contest. Will you take home the first place prize?

All those that wish to watch and see the outfits of the night are more than welcome, just be sure to bring 5 bucks for the entrance fee.

All proceeds benefit SADAP.

Thursday, April 1, 2010 at 8:00 PM at Charlie's Las Vegas.



More grand than any other PRIDE parade ever held in Las Vegas, its SNAPI's 12th Annual PRIDE Night Parade! Join us on April 30th from 8 to 10 p.m. in downtown Las Vegas for the most glamorous, glittering spectacle ever created by the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community of Southern Nevada. This year's PRIDE Night Parade features Las Vegas' gay and straight business community, nonprofit organizations, GLBT service agencies, civic groups, and churches as well as SNAPI's newly crowned adult and youth royalty.

The Board of Directors of SNAPI is excited to return to downtown for our 12th annual parade. The parade route begins at West Charleston Blvd. and heads north along 4th Street to Ogden Avenue. Secure your spot where the action happens early. The main stage is at Bridger Avenue just two blocks south of the Fremont Street Experience.

There is a competition for parade entries vying for trophies for best walking units, vehicle units, and floats. Judging takes place at the grandstand so support your entry with thunderous applause as they strut their stuff for our celebrity judges. SNAPI invites the entire community to enter a float, vehicle, or walking unit in the PRIDE Night Parade. Entries will be accepted until April 20th. To enter, go to the SNAPI website at [www.LasVegasPRIDE.org](http://www.LasVegasPRIDE.org) and click on “Events” for all the parade information.

## NGRA Member Runs for King of Diamonds



John Grubbs, NGRA's member of the month for January, is running for the title of King of Diamonds, as part of the King and Queen of Diamonds Pageant

beginning at 9 p.m. on Friday, April 23 at Charlie's Las Vegas.

John is out and about in the community selling “cards” for \$1 each! Every card John sells adds to the points that he receives during the pageant.

All the money raised by all of the contestants in the King and Queen of Diamonds Pageant will go to the Imperial Royal Sovereign Court of the Desert Empire general fund for Reign 12. Proceeds at the end of Reign 12 will be redistributed to local charities throughout our community.

The King and Queen of Diamonds Pageant is one of 7 annual camp pageants that are preliminary pageants for the King and Queen of the Desert Pageant, sponsored by the Court. Last year's pageants raised over \$10,000 for the community.

If you see John out at any of our fundraisers, stop him and buy a card! And let's all go out and support John on Friday, April 23 at 9 p.m. at Charlie's!

If you'd like to contact John, e-mail him at [emsinvegas@gmail.com](mailto:emsinvegas@gmail.com).



# Straight From Horse's ...

By Joel Castillo



Welcome readers! This is a new, and will be an ongoing, column for the NGRA BigHorn Gazette called, "Straight from the Horse's..." (mouth). This will be an interview with Cowboys & Cowgirls from across the IGRA Competitive Circuit. We will highlight certain events in rodeo monthly and talk to the riders and their animal counterparts for an in-depth exposé into the world of competing in an IGRA Sanctioned Rodeo. Please join me in welcoming FGRA Rodeo Director, Jim Mitchell

**Joel C:** Hello, Jim! Thank you for taking time for our readers today. When did you first join Florida Gay Rodeo Association and get involved with IGRA?

**Jim M:** I joined FGRA as a founding member in the summer of 2005. It was very exciting to be a part of the small group that started, to what has become a successful organization. We are now 300+ members strong!

**JC:** Will we ever hear Jim Mitchell announced as a competitor sometime soon?

**JM:** I wouldn't rule it out. I wouldn't rule it out at all.

**JC:** What is your favorite event as a spectator?

**JM:** Pole Bending. It is NOT easy by any definition. I count the strides and the change of leads. Living vicariously through the contestants.

**JC:** And as one who works behind the scenes?

**JM:** Chutes during Deco or Wild Drag. It gets really busy back there, and with a good crew that works well together? THAT makes it fun.

**JC:** Jim, which IGRA rodeo events do you think of competing in one day?

**JM:** Poles, barrels, and flags

**JC:** Congratulations! I understand you are FGRA's Sunshine Stampede Rodeo Director this year.

**JM:** This is actually my 5<sup>th</sup> year as Rodeo Director for the Sunshine Stampede and I love every minute of it.

**JC:** What IGRA Rodeo or other Equestrian Events have you competed in?

**JM:** I have not competed at an IGRA event. I'm actually a convert from English, Three-day events (stadium jumping, dressage, cross-country). I competed for about 8 years and rode on drill teams as well. I believe I just outed myself... the horse folks are never going to let me live this down.

**JC:** You are a strong presence as an IGRA Official, what have you done?

**JM:** Thanks, that's very kind of you to say! My focus has been on the Arena, and working towards certification as an Arena Director. I've served as Assistant Arena Director, Arena Crew Coordinator, & Assistant Chute Coordinator. It was a lot of time and work, but totally enjoyable and worth it. I'll be forever indebted to the Officials that helped me learn during the process. I completed my certification in 2009, and now I'll be Arena Director for three rodeos this year. I am also working as Arena Crew Coordinator for finals and, if time permits, I'll be completing my Rookie Chute Coordinator requirements over the summer.

**JC:** Wow! You are an ambitious cowboy for sure! I hear you also have been an Instructor at IGRA University? What do you teach?

**JM:** Well, here I go again outing myself. In my daytime, non-rodeo life, I'm an accountant. So, I do teach some classes related to my profession, but mostly I teach classes that focus on building teams to run a rodeo and Logistics and Operations. I like to think of it as sharing more than teaching. I think that everybody can always learn something from anyone. It's all in the presentation and approach. FGRA would not have been able to produce our first rodeo without University. The whole team came out and we were able to get so much information. Without it, the Sunshine Stampede would not be the rodeo it is today. So, in a way, it's almost as if now it is my turn to share what we've learned in Florida.

**JC:** So, since you are in a very sharing mood, let's focus on Rodeo Director for the remainder of the interview.

**JM:** And what perfect timing... the stampede is less than 3 weeks away.

**JC:** What is your goal for the 2010 Sunshine Stampede Rodeo?

**JM:** Well, obviously, we want to be financially successful so we can support our charities. That is the reason why we all do this, and, unfortunately, I think that some people forget that. Rodeos are not just a big party. They have an honorable purpose and can have a wonderful impact on the community. Ft. Lauderdale is my hometown, so I have a personal connection here. Other goals? We like to send everyone home with an excitement about rodeo. If they are Officials, Spectators,

Contestants, or Volunteers, we want them to leave our rodeo energized and excited about the sport and IGRA. And from a personal view, just trying to get through the weekend on 10 hours of sleep and not losing my voice. But then again, some people like it when I can't talk.

**JC:** I'm sure none of our readers feel that way. We have only nice cowboys and cowgirls in Sin City. What do you think makes a good Rodeo Director? And what makes a great Rodeo Director?

**JM:** Wow, that is one tough question. So many people have different skills, different approaches, but the basics? First, and foremost, you have to be passionate about the sport and the event. This job takes up a lot of time and any rodeo director needs to be able to deal with the challenges it places on them at home, work. Well... everywhere. Rodeo Directors need to have a good business sense, because these events are a business. We cannot ever forget that. You have to be able to build a great team, empower them, and get them to share your passion. As Rodeo Directors, we cannot do it all. If you don't build a strong team, that you trust and delegate to, it can be a very rough journey.

**JC:** What is the most difficult element of being the Rodeo Director? Is it Stock Contracting, Re-Rides, getting the best Officials on your Team, Grand Entry, or PR & Marketing?

**JM:** Those are all important details for sure. But for me, and it might be different for others, the biggest challenge is having a thick skin and realizing you simply can't please everyone. You do your best, plan, check and recheck, but there will always be someone who doesn't like or appreciate what you and your team have done. You have to focus on the positive comments and the things that went well. Of course, you have to examine things that did not go well, but you cannot dwell on them and let it affect your passion.

**JC:** Very well said. What has been your most difficult challenge as Rodeo Director?

**JM:** Our first rodeo, in 2006, absolutely! We had to start from scratch. We didn't have so much as a barrel. A vest. A pole. Nothing. Trying to make sure we had everything covered. Fortunately our officials were so much help.

**JC:** I know each rodeo is different, but how many Assistant Rodeo Directors do you like to have for your association's rodeo?

**JM:** Each year, the Stampede has one Rodeo Director and three Assistant Rodeo Directors with each assigned to an area. We have one assigned to the Arena; one assigned to Front of House (they handle the vendors and the front gate); and one for Administrative (they handle the volunteers, security and treasury). Our entire roundtable is made up of 15 of the most incredible committee chairs ever! We are going into year #5 and almost all of the rodeo roundtable is from the first event in 2006. Each of the roundtable members reports up to the Rodeo Director or an Assistant. We break off and work in small teams relating to our assigned areas, then about 5 months before the rodeo we start meeting as a whole group. And yes, 5 months before; you can't pull off a rodeo of this size in a few weeks! Each year I'm amazed at how dedicated these people are and what a great job they do. But, the best part is that we have all become very close friends, with this incredible event binding us all together.

**JC:** At the end of the day, with all the work that goes into it, why do you do it?

**JM:** Because I absolutely love it. No other way to put it. Corny as it may sound, there is something to working hard with good people and doing something well.

## NGRA Members Celebrating Birthdays in April:



Patrick Schreier	April 2
Mark Remillard	April 3
Jon Wall	April 3
Mark Ackley	April 4
Adam Johnson	April 15
Tracy Skinner	April 21
Gary Wiens	April 21
Winsor Cooper III	April 23
Bill Watkins	April 24
Louise Adolphus	April 30
Guy Puglisi	April 30



### NGRA's 2009 Member of the Year

The votes are in and we have a winner for the 2009 Member of the Year! May we have a drum roll please... Congratulations to Michael Judkins! Michael was originally nominated for his fundraiser "Dusty & Desperate." He is a staple at NGRA events. So, next time you see him, be sure to congratulate him and thank him for his tireless efforts! Giddyup, Cowboy!



Michael Judkins, NGRA 2009 Member of the Year (Left) & Joel Castillo, NGRA Member of the Month February, 2010

### NGRA's Member of the Month - February

Congratulations to the February 2010 Member of the Month, Joel Castillo! Joel has been a member since 2008. Joel was nominated for volunteering to take over as Editor of the NGRA BigHorn Gazette. Congratulations, Joel!

#### FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH CONTINUED: JC: Do you ride? Have your own horse?

JM: I ride once in a while, and no, no horses for me anymore. Horses are a huge commitment. Unfortunately as I grew older and had to focus on career, I couldn't continue.

#### JC: What is their name and tell us about him/her.

JM: My first horse was Shadow. He was a magnificent jumper, and I think he actually enjoyed it? He was definitely playful, probably why we got along so well. I've never bonded with any animal as much I did with that horse. I never had to use a lead. I had my first really bad fall off of Shadow. We went through an Oxer and took the entire jump down. We both went down hard. Shadow got up first. He walked over to me and nudged me. I think he knew I was hurt before I realized it. I'll never forget it. Some years later, my second horse was the Artful Dodger, or as we called him, Dodger. Dodger stood at 17.2 hands. He was enormous and athletic, but stubborn beyond belief!! Loading him into a trailer could take minutes or hours, it all depended on his mood for the day. I'm dating myself here, but if you watch the barn scene in the movie "Arthur," Dodger is in the corner stall towards the back of the barn.

#### JC: Who is your favorite Rodeo Competitor (both IGRA Circuit and Non-IGRA)?

JM: Well, I think all the contestants are great. Just getting out there and competing is an accomplishment.


#### JC: Any last parting words of wisdom for our readers?

JM: Wisdom? Not so sure I would call it wisdom, but I would say get out there and get involved!! Why? Because it is "A LOT OF FUN"!

#### JC: NGRA is currently accepting letters of intent from prospective Rodeo Director's for BigHorn 14. What advice do you have for that person?

JM: Think it through before you submit your name. Do you have the time and the desire? And, are you doing it for the right reasons?

JC: Thank you so much for your time today, Jim. And have a GREAT Rodeo!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 *NGRA Appreciation Night @ Charlie's	3 *Men of Charlie's Monthly Contest, 9:30 PM
4 Happy Easter! 	5	6	7 *Fundraising Meeting @ Casa de Graff Doug Graff's 917 Wood Bridge Dr. , LV, NV @ 6:30PM	8	9 *NGRA Appreciation Night @ Charlie's	10 *NGRA Miss Cow Patty Contest @ Charlie's 9:30PM
11	12 *NGRA Board of Director's @ The Center 6:30 PM	13	14	15	16 *NGRA Appreciation Night @ Charlie's *FGRA Rodeo April 16-18	17 *Sister's Oink Night @ Fun Hog Ranch
18	19 *NGRA General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM *NGRA Finals Planning Committee Meeting	20	21	22	23 *NGRA Appreciation Night @ Charlie's *All May Newsletter submissions due	24 *NGRA Proud to Be Country Show @ Badlands 9:30 PM *GSGRA Rodeo School
25 *AFAN AIDS Walk	26	27	28	29	30 *2010 Las Vegas Pride Night Parade	