

Membership Meeting
 Sunday, December 14th, 2008
 Lee's Liquor Lounge 4:00 p.m.

NSGRA is a proud member of



We thank our IGRA Sponsors:



We thank our 2008 local Sponsors:



GLBT Pride

 AND ALL OUR LOCAL NSGRA
 PARTNERS!

 Please visit:



WWW.IGRATRAVEL.COM

IGRA shares in the normal commission rate instead of sites like Travelocity and the funds are used to support IGRA Finals. It costs you nothing extra to use it, too!

Write ⁱⁿ the Saddle

December 2008

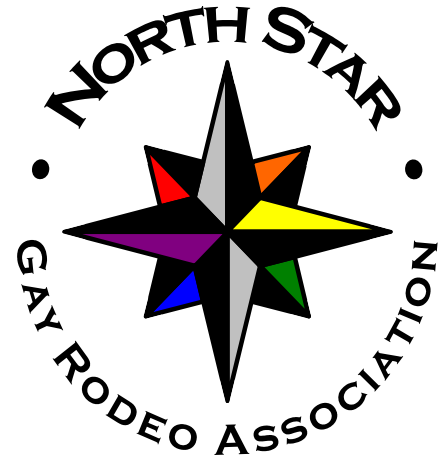
2008 NSGRA Holiday Party

The Saloon
 800 Hennepin Ave
 Minneapolis, MN
 Saturday, December 20th
 3:00 PM

Appetizers and Beer/Soda
 Bust will be provided.
 Beer/Soda Bust is free to
 NSGRA members with a
 \$5.00 requested donation to
 nonmembers

We will be collecting
 nonperishable food items for
 The Aliveness Project Food
 Shelve.

Please attend and bring your
 friends!!!



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**NORTH
STAR
GAY
RODEO
ASSOCIATION**



PO BOX 48039
COON RAPIDS, MN
55448

HTTP://WWW.NSGRA.ORG
(763)-78-NSGRA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ric F.....President
Jack R.....Vice President
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LeAnn V.....Treasurer
Carl STrustee
Frankie SContestants
Steve O.Fundraising/Entertainment
Patrick SSponsorship
Carl S Membership
Patrick S Public Relations
Linda R.....Rodeo Director

2009 Rodeo List

Road Runner Regional Rodeo
Phoenix, AZ 1/16– 1/18

IGRA University
Las Vegas, NV 2/20 – 2/22

Cowtown Rodeo
Fort Worth, TX 2/27 – 3/1

Sunshine Stampede
Fort Lauderdale, FL 4/3 – 4/5

Rodeo in the Rock
Little Rock, AR 4/17 – 4/19

Hot Rodeo
Palm Springs, CA 5/1 – 5/3

Great Plains Rodeo
Oklahoma City, OK 5/22 – 5/24

Sierra Stampede
Sacramento, CA 6/5 – 6/7

Canadian Rockies International
Rodeo
Calgary, Alberta 6/26 – 6/28

Heartland Rodeo
Omaha, NE 6/26 – 6/28

Rocky Mountain Regional Rodeo
Denver, CO 7/10 – 7/12

Liberty Stampede Rodeo
Philadelphia, PA 7/31 – 8/2

Windy City Rodeo
Chicago, IL 8/21 – 8/23

TGRA Rodeo
San Antonio, TX 8/28 – 8/30

**For More Rodeo Action,
go to this website:**

WWW.IGRA.COM



Road Runner Regional Rodeo
Phoenix, AZ January 16-18, 2009
www.agra-phx.com

Rawhide Wild West Town
5700 W North Loop Road
Chandler, AZ 85226

Host Hotels:

Grace Inn Phoenix
10831 S 51 St
Phoenix AZ 85044
Reservations: 1-800-843-6010
Ask for the Arizona Gay Rodeo
Association room block
Reservation Deadline: December
15, 2008
Room Rate: \$85.00 plus tax per
night

Radisson Hotel Phoenix City
Center
3600 N 2 Ave
Phoenix AZ 85013
Reservations: (602) 604-4901
Ask for the Arizona Gay Rodeo
Association room block
Reservation Deadline: December
15, 2008
Room Rate: \$121.00 plus tax per
night



NEWSLETTER TEAM

Black Bart.....Editor
Steve L.....Editor in training
Carl S.....Assistant



**Be sure to read about IGRA
University in Las Vegas on page
6. At the time of editing, round
trip airfares are as low as
\$300.00**



**Please Help Us By
Sending Your Updated
Address Info &
Email Address To:
membership@nsgra.org
or call us at
(612) 82 - RODEO**

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings!

Well here we are deep in the thick of the holiday background is I hope you are enjoying



Holiday Season! What ever your religious or this festive season with those you cherish and love.

At the November meeting I brought up putting a committee together to look into the possibility of creating an Ethics Guideline for the Membership of NSGRA. This is not a set of rules rather a guide to gauge how members should act while at official North Star functions as well as how we should be treating and interacting with one another. This whole idea is in the infant stages at this point so please if you would like to be on this committee or if you have any input on the subject contact me at mrnsgra08@yahoo.com.

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who turned out for our Royalty Contest Weekend. It was a smashing success. The Brass Rail outdid themselves by turning over the reigns of the bar on Friday night for the Beer Bust and Royalty In Review Show. The beer bust was highly attended by both NSGRA members as well as community members. The Royalty contest was amazing. Once again the NSGRA Membership showed interest and showed up in full force, we had all but three of our current Board of Directors there and many, many members of the general membership. Agusta and I enjoyed our final hoorah as Mr. and Miss NSGRA 2008 and helped welcome a brand new Royalty Team for 2009.

Speaking of the new royalty I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge congratulation's to Miss NSGRA 2009 Gosh Alice Jones and Mr. NSGRA 2009 Nate Vanwey. Both of these contestants showed a true desire to want to represent North Star over the upcoming year and are making plans to continue on and represent NSGRA at the 2009 IGRA Royalty contest in Toronto at the 2009 IGRA Convention. They are also very eager to dig in and help out in every way possible with the association. Please help me welcome them into their new roles as the 2009 Royalty Team.

Plans are under way for our 2008 Holiday Party which once again will be held at The Saloon on Saturday December 20th at 3:00pm. This year we are trying something different and are not having the Holiday Party on the same day as the general membership meeting. Also this year the Holiday Party will be open to the general public and not just NSGRA members. I thought it would be nice to keep business and pleasure separate. There will be appetizers and a beer/soda bust free of charge for all NSGRA members. The beer/soda bust will be available to the public for \$5.00 suggested donation. So make sure to mark the date on your calendars!

Until next time, I hope each and every one of you enjoys the festive Season.

Sincerely,
Pup Ric
NSGRA President



Season's Greetings!

I would like to welcome our newest members to NSGRA: George H, Mrs. Margie P. and Allen V. "Santa" is really happy to see the continued growth in our membership!

PLEASE let us know if your mailing address or e-mail address has changed. We don't want to lose touch when you change addresses (either kind). Sending newsletters in electronic formats is faster than a printed version and saves postage and trees. Nevertheless, we will send a printed version to any member who requests it.

If you are a current NSGRA member and have not been receiving the email versions of the monthly newsletter, please check your Spam guard. The emails are sent blind carbon copied to respect our members' privacy, and they currently come from blackbart@blackbart.net. Our new editor, Steve L, is getting a new computer for Christmas, so good ol' Bart is taking care of the newsletter one more month.

NSGRA encourages all members to contribute articles for Write in the Saddle. Ideas for articles and other submissions are always welcome! It is our connection with each other. Let us hear from you!

Please don't forget the membership holiday party on the 20th!

Carl S
2009 Membership Chair

NSGRA MEMBERSHIP MEETING**DECEMBER 14TH**

Please attend the membership meeting at **4 PM** on Sunday, December 14th at Lee's Liquor Lounge. Participation makes our association strong so please attend! Lee's is located 4 blocks from downtown Minneapolis at 12th Street and Glenwood Ave. (101 N. Glenwood Avenue)

NSGRA STORE

With the holiday season here, please keep in mind that NSGRA has an online store open 24 hours a day every day--just go to www.nsgra.org and click "store". You will find our team shirts, lapel/hat pin, name badges just a few clicks away. You can even join or renew your membership there! If you click the hyperlink "you can get more merchandise here" you will be sent to <http://www.cafepress.com/nsgra> opening the door to t-shirts, tote bags, coffee mugs and more! For those of you without an Internet connection, you can either go to your friendly neighborhood library to get online, or call our hotline at 763-78-NSGRA and we can mail you an order sheet.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT**CARL S**

I would first like to say thank you to the membership for this opportunity to represent the NSGRA Association at the IGRA level. Please feel free to approach me about any concern you have with the local or national organization that supports our western lifestyle.

It was exciting to attend the NSGRA Royalty competition at the Brass Rail. Our contestants were wonderful and they will represent us well. Congratulations to Miss NSGRA 2009 Gosh Alice Jones and Mr. NSGRA 2009 Nate Vanwey. Please remember we all need to support our Royalty this year as they help us uphold our commitment to our community.

Happy Holidays!

Carl

DANCE NEWS

Come to the last Friendly Fridley Dance on December 20th! (Local GLBT dances are shifting to the VFW) The North Air Banquet Hall is located at 6831 Hwy 65 (Central Avenue) in Fridley. From I-694 go north 1.5 miles on Highway 65 to Mississippi Street. Turn right (east) then the first left (north) onto Lucia Lane. The end of the block is the entrance to the parking lot. The cost for entry is \$10 per person. There are free 2 step lessons at 7:30pm, and open dancing from 8 pm – midnight. Be sure to thank Mike and the other 2stepMSP members who organized these dances!

There are two dances at the Ballentine VFW at LynLake in South Minneapolis this month. Saturday December 6th features free pizza! Ring in the New Year on Wednesday, December 31st. Both dances are from 9PM – 12:30AM. The cost is \$10 and that includes one drink ticket. It is located at 2916 Lyndale Avenue South.

Lee's Liquor Lounge offers weekly country-dance to the GLBT community on Sunday evenings. Lessons begin at 6 pm with open dancing starting at 7 pm. Looking for a cheap place to grab a bite to eat? Lee's also has a \$3 light dinner offered during these colder months. Lee's is located 4 blocks from downtown Minneapolis at 12th Street and Glenwood Ave. (101 N. Glenwood Avenue) Additional dance information is at <http://www.2stepmsp.org/>.

A real cool article about the VFW/Lee's Liquor Lounge dances, featuring a North Star's super cute twosome, was recently in the Southwest Journal--a Minneapolis community newspaper. Visit <http://www.swjournal.com/videoPlayer.php?video=424> to see a video presentation or visit <http://www.swjournal.com/index.php?&story=12788&page=152&category=64> to read the full article.

JOIN TEAM NORTH STAR!

PATRICK S

Something New That May Be Right for You:

I need to organize team of cowboys and cowgirls to represent NSGRA at all of the events we can possibly get to in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and beyond. The theme or look will generally be something like the cover and content of American Cowboy magazine and the drama will be low. Some dress will be more cowboy/cowgirl formal than others. It depends on the event. Sometimes we would all attend the same event and other times we would split up to cover multiple events. We would also support the NSGRA Royalty at fund raisers etc. Sometimes we need to cover NSGRA events and non-NSGRA events at the same time.

It is important that we have at least six people actively volunteering on this PR related team to ensure that we can cover most events and be able to support those times when other activities require some members to be unavailable. Member of this team should be involved in country dancing or interested in learning. Accommodation for disabilities would be addressed. We need people of all ages on this team. Knowing a few things about horses will be important on this team because you will be real cowboys and cowgirls. If you don't know much about horses, that will be one of the development areas we will work as a team and maybe go on some related field trips, etc. (I don't know much about horse either.) More details will be worked out once I have gotten notice from people who are interested in joining this team.

Contact: Patrick Schreier at patrick_schreier@hotmail.com and let me know you are interested in being on the PR team or just want to talk about it more.

Thanks!

Patrick (Patrizio) Schreier 612-360-3781

Are you ready for IGRA UNIVERSITY?

It's time to start planning and saving for your trip to IGRA University because February 20 – 22 is just around the corner. Tell your partner/boyfriend/girlfriend/mother/father that the gift you really want is a trip to IGRA University in Las Vegas. This is a great way to spend time in Las Vegas with rodeo folk while developing yourself and NSGRA. I am planning to attend and the more the merrier. I have attached a summary of the courses to allow you to catch a glimpse of what goes on there. **Note the western dance section.** This is probably not the final definition of the courses or most anything else so keep an eye on the IGRA website, <http://www.igra.com> or <http://www.igra.com/University/index.htm>. Let me know if you are interested in going (Patrick at patrick_schreier@hotmail.com)

IGRA University 2009 - ACADEMY OF RODEO ARTS Las Vegas Campus - February 20 – 22 (Fri, Sat, & Sun) Advancing IGRA Through Education

Wayne Jakino Rodeo

Announcer's Seminar:

AN-01: That's Entertainment:

What type of announcer does your rodeo need?

How the announcer can help with Sunday rodeo attendance

What does the Announcer need from the Rodeo Director

Ten ways an announcer can make the audience love your rodeo

The announcers' role during an emergency, the forgotten link.

AN-02: Announcer's Workshop:

IGRA Western Dance

Institute:

DA-01: Two-Step for Competition and Fun:

DA-02: Waltz for Competition and Fun:

DA-03: Line Dance Stylings - a New Dance:

Association Executive Series

AE-01: Successful Venue and Hotel Contracts:

AE-02: Media & Your Rodeo:

AE-03: Rodeo Finance - Budgets and Cash Handling:

AE-04: Planning and Managing Venue Logistics:

DA-04: Dance Competition - a Primer:

Association Development

AD-01: What YOU Need to Know about Robert's Rules:

AD-02: Trustee Orientation:

AD-03: Who's Who in Your

Association:

AD-04: Your Association as a Business:

Community Service (Royalty)

CS-01: IGRA Royalty Competition Prep School Overview:

CS-02 IGRA Royalty Competition Workshop:

CS-03: Developing and Ensuring Gender Diversity:

CS-04: Fundraising and Community Outreach:

Rodeo Production Series

Rodeo Production 100 level:

RA 100-02: Organizing an Effective Rodeo Planning Committee

RA 100-03: Managing Contestant Registration

RA 100-04: Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

Rodeo Production 200 level:

RA 200-01: Things a Rodeo Director Should Know

RA 200-02: Rodeo & Association Sponsorships

RA 200-03: Running a Safe Rodeo...tips from Health and Safety

RA 200-04: Vendor and Activity Area Development

Rodeo Production 300 level:

RA 300-01: Rodeo Checklist Review for Trustees and Rodeo Staffs

RA 300-02: Rodeo Equipment Review & Event Running Orders

RA 300-03: Grand Entry: Agony or Ecstasy

RA 300-04: Rodeo Stock Requirements, Tips and Contracts:

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas...except what you learn at IGRA University!!

Patrick (Patrizio) Schreier, Sponsorship Chairman

When I got on the World Wide Web in the fall of 1996, I had, perhaps, the worst dial up speed imaginable due to having dilapidated phone service where I was living. Fortunately, the Internet was not nearly so interactive and graphics rich as it is these days, so a slow connection speed wasn't such a hardship.

Today we have connection speeds capable of downloading mountains of data in just minutes. We also have many online services that allow us to interact and meet others in ways almost impossible to imagine 12 years ago. With the click of the mouse, one can create a profile, meet new cowpokes and chat with old friends. Most members can't afford to go to many rodeos in any given year, but it is easy and inexpensive to be a “virtual cowboy” or “virtual cowgirl”.

Our website (www.nsgra.org) is generously hosted by www.gaycowboycentral.com so I'd like to talk about this website, first. Some 293 cowboys from Minnesota show up on a membership search, but of those, perhaps 100 or so have profile photographs and I suspect the system double counts some members in the search process. Nevertheless, it can be a cool way to meet local guys from across the world. Lest anyone ask what about the cowgirls, there is also a sister site called www.gaycowgirlcentral.com. Both sites are open to singles and couples and it is more than just a dating thing, too. On this site you can search for people by location, age, ethnicity, keyword and username. You can join for free and get to use much of the features (sending messages, uploading photographs and so on) or upgrade and have total access.

The first website I used to chat and meet people was www.gay.com. It is best known for having chat rooms where you can “converse” with groups of people or use private chat for one on one conversation. They have more chat rooms than you can imagine, but the one that caught my eye most was the cowboy chat room. This site also has premium (paid) and free membership, profile pages, and is interactive.

One sweet cowboy I met on gay.com created his own website: www.homorodeo.com. This site is very social, rodeo related, and not as commercial as the others I have listed. (It does have premium features, as one has to pay the bills of hosting a website.) I like how they have created a 2009 calendar to raise money for IGRA contestants. One cool feature their list of who is going to all IGRA sanctioned rodeos. It's a great way to fill your dance card before venturing to a new city.

Another way of being a virtual cowpoke is to join various e-groups. An e-group is like a bulletin board that operates on the Internet. Anyone who joins the e-group can post messages that other members will see. Each member can choose the method they prefer for viewing the messages. Most members are choosing to receive messages in their e-mail box.

NSGRA has an e-group for the board, a rodeo e-group and membership e-group for the rest of us. E-mail membership@nsgra.org for details on how to join these groups. IGRA has an e-group at <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/IGRA/>. You can also go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and then search for specific topics such as “gay rodeo”, “gay cowboy”, “lesbian cowgirl”, etc.

Another idea is to create your own webpage or blog—both can be a great way to meet new people and stay in touch with old friends! Bottom line: the Internet as a tool, don't be afraid to use it!

See ya online!

“Black Bart”

EMPLOYER SPONSORED EMPLOYEE GIVING PROGRAMS

Editor's note:

Please read these three articles from our sponsorship chair. They offer NSGRA a new perspective in gaining financial support in the corporate world and may help us develop increased underwriting of future rodeos. Great ideas, Patrick!

Employer Sponsored Employee Giving Programs – Can I Support NSGRA?

If you work for a company that conducts an annual employee giving program where you are allowed/encouraged to designate payroll deductions to charitable Federations (**United Way, Community Shares, etc.**) it may also offer the option of writing in “**Minnesota North Star Gay Rodeo Association Inc.**” as one of 501(c)(3) organization designated for some or all of your pledge. Where I work the employee giving program is operated by a third-party (Amerigives.com) who builds the website for the campaign and handles the related business processes. Beside the typical task of allowing the employee to designate a payroll deduction to be collected and distributed to one of the federations, it also allow you to write in a 501(c)(3) to receive some or all of your contribution.

The third-party typically handles the overhead of verifying the 501(c)(3) is valid and qualified to receive the payroll deduction you specified and also handles the quarterly distribution to the 501(c)(3) organization. Where I work I was able to use this write in option to designate NSGRA as one of the receivers of my charitable payroll deductions.

This method is most useful if you want to make an annual contribution in small increments at each pay period to reduce the burden of making the contribution all at once.

At your companies next employee giving campaign, check if you have the option to designate your contribution to the Minnesota North Star Gay Rodeo Association Inc., a 501(c)(3) corporation.

As a side note, it is really important that NSGRA keep our address up-to-date with the IRS and State because the processor of the contributions may find and use the addresses found in the IRS or State databases when they distribute the funds. If the address they find is old, it makes it more difficult to get the funds.

Things you will likely need to designate an organization:

Common Name: North Star Gay Rodeo Association

Legal Name: Minnesota North Star Gay Rodeo Association Inc.

EIN: xxxxxxxxx (Employer Identification Number assigned by the IRS to identify NSGRA, call Patrick to get this 612-360-3781).

Contact: Jerome Hager - Secretary,

Email: secretary@nsgra.org

Address: NSGRA, P.O BOX 48039, COON RAPIDS, MN 55448

Phone: 763-786-7472

If NSGRA is already in the employer's database, it may have old/bad information and you will need to take steps to update it or the processor may not successfully contact NSGRA.

Patrick (Patrizio) Schreier, Sponsorship Chairman

EMPLOYER VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Employer Volunteer Programs – Can I Support NSGRA?

My employer also has programs that will contribute \$500 to one 501(c)(3) organization where I have volunteered 40 or more hours in the last year. The process for making a request was similar to the matching gift program described above and the volunteer hours may have been confirmed by the organization using the same system/portal as the matching gift program.

My company also has a program for employees who server on a non-profit board. Because of a difference in what they defined on their website and on the application form, I also applied for this one. But they followed the version on the form and since I am not an officer, vice president, assistant vice-president (they give these titles to many of their employees), I didn't qualify. I knew I probably didn't but this contribution is for \$5,000 dollars and I couldn't understand why my service on a board was only worth \$500 dollars. Oh well.

Patrick (Patrizio) Schreier, Sponsorship Chairman

EMPLOYER SPONSORED GIFT MATCHING PROGRAMS

Employer Sponsored Gift Matching Programs – Can I Support NSGRA?

If your employer has a program where they match contributions you make to charitable organizations, **Minnesota North Star Gay Rodeo Association Inc.** may be within their guidelines. I was able to do this where I worked. NSGRA is classified as a “civic” 501(c)(3) organization. My employer allows most “civic” organizations, but other employers may have more restrictive guidelines.

My employer has a third-party who administers this program via a website that has been branded with my employer's logo. The process of requesting a match starts by indentifying the organization that will receive my contribution. If the organization is already loaded in their date base, using the search tool should find it, if it is not or is incorporated with a different name, I had to enter a bunch of details about the organization and submit the request. Later I could go back and review the request and could see them making progress at verifying the status against the IRS database, our status is “Advanced Ruling, and eventually the organization, NSGRA, had a status of approved. But that is not the end of it.

The non-profit organization is notified that a match request has been made and they must login to the match administrator's web portal to acknowledge that the contribution from the employee was received. (This is where my contribution to NSGRA is stalled at the time I wrote this article.) Based on a contribution to another non-profit organization, once the organization logs in and confirms the receipt of the employee's contribution, the match is approved for payment. The payments occur only at four times during the year and it may be a while before the approved match payment is actually sent to the organization (The next date where I work is Dec. 15th 2008).

Patrick (Patrizio) Schreier, Sponsorship Chairman

Editor's note: the following proposal was made and seconded at the October membership meeting. This was placed in the November and December newsletter and will be voted upon by the membership at the December membership meeting as per our bylaw structure. The rationale of this proposed bylaw is to impress upon the Board of Directors the importance of fulfilling their commitment to the membership. The board already has a policy allowing officers to take time off for personal reasons and this bylaw includes due process to insure fairness.

BYLAW PROPOSAL (in bold):

ARTICLE VI -- BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The goal of this organization is to have equal or nearly equal representation of both men and women on its Board of Directors.

Section I. Qualification. Those qualified to serve on the Board of Directors shall be members in good standing of the organization. **Any member serving on the Board of Directors, whether by election or appointment, who does not complete his or her term, is ineligible to be on the Board of Directors the following year, unless the majority of the current Board of Directors rules at the time the resignation is submitted, that the resignation was for good cause.**

December 2008

Sat	6	GLBT Country Dance – VFW in uptown (www.2stepmsp.org)
Sat	13	Storm Beer Bust – Mpls Eagle 5-8 PM (www.mnstorm.com)
Sun	14	NSGRA Membership Meeting—4 PM Lee's Liquor Lounge (www.leesliquorlounge.com)
Sat	20	GLBT Country Dance – North Air Banquet Hall in Fridley (www.2stepmsp.org)
Sat	20	2009 NSGRA Holiday Party— 3 PM The Saloon (www.gaympls.com)
Wed	31	New Year's Eve GLBT Country Dance – VFW in uptown (www.2stepmsp.org)

January 2009

Sat	3	GLBT Country Dance – VFW in uptown (www.2stepmsp.org)
Sat	10	Storm Beer Bust – Mpls Eagle 5-8 PM (www.mnstorm.com)
Sun	11	NSGRA Membership Meeting—4 PM Lee's Liquor Lounge (www.leesliquorlounge.com)
Sat	17	GLBT Country Dance – VFW in uptown (www.2stepmsp.org)

Season's Greetings!