

Dear IGRA Membership,

First of all, I hope you all know that I, and the other candidates, for IGRA President care deeply about IGRA, and have for many years. I know that all of you also care deeply, and want this organization to be successful. **This is my underlying philosophy of leadership: we all care.**

I am running for IGRA president because I believe that I can help IGRA deal with several complex and very challenging issues facing our organization. These challenges require careful, thoughtful, and informed consideration from the Board of Directors (BOD), executive BOD, and membership. I believe that these challenges are true existential threats to our organization. I also believe we can solve them.

We have structural challenges. These structural challenges are outdated Bylaws, Board Structure, and Rules that prevent us from being nimble in times when swift decision-making is needed. We cannot effectively guide our organization with 3 board meetings per year and I would propose monthly board meetings via zoom in addition to the in-person meetings. I do not include the fourth board meeting at the convention, because in my experience this meeting is essentially ineffective: tabling most agenda items to convention activity.

We have financial challenges. As you know, IGRA became a 501C3 approximately 4 years ago. What you may not know is that I don't feel that this is the best vehicle for our organization. I believe we are better off as a Not-for-Profit Business. Being a 501C3 is not a financial magic bullet that attracts large sums of money. In fact, we are often excluded from eligibility for funds when our mission and programs do not align with the goals of the grantors. Furthermore, the regulations, rules, reporting, limitations, compliance, and laws are much more challenging than one would think. That said, I believe if we are going to be a 501C3, we need to be an exemplary one. My goal, should we desire to continue down this path would be to apply for *Guidestar GOLD* status, and to the best of our ability, meet all the requirements of this national

seal of approval. We need a grant writer and I would seek out a member or group of members to monitor and submit continuous, appropriate grant applications, or find a percentage-based professional grant writer. As someone who ran a \$5 million budget for a 501C3 for 5 years, I have the necessary experience.

We have IT infrastructure challenges. Our IT infrastructure is out of date and may soon become obsolete. We have no redundancy in our systems (except the website) and need to find a way to bring our systems into the current decade. This is a CRITICAL need and I, as an interested board member have already initiated a potential solution that will be thoughtfully, carefully, and openly considered at the first BOD meeting of my term should I be selected as the next leader. As a businessman who designed, maintained, and upgrades a web-based tool for a business-critical function for hospitals, I have the necessary experience.

We have fundraising challenges. We need a balance of Royalty and Rodeo. Right now, Royalty seems to shoulder the main responsibility for fundraising and to me this is wrong. Royalty fundraising is a valuable, appreciated, and important contribution to our organization; however, this needs to be combined with BOD outreach to corporations and potential sponsors, grant writing, and event planning (beyond the bar scene) to create a holistic approach to revenue accumulation.

We have interpersonal challenges. While no organization is free of interpersonal conflict, we can prevent these from playing out in the boardroom and the rodeo arena by focusing on mutual respect, honesty, and openness. Furthermore, IGRA needs an appropriate way to manage grievances in a safe, professional, non-judgmental way that seeks to resolve festering issues, not ignore them. Pushing people out of our organization will never solve the problem. Unfortunately, this seems to be our current strategy for conflict resolution. We have lost our way on this issue and we need to find our way back. This begins with me.

I will encourage us to come together around a common goal. If elected, I will immediately establish the “**Road to 2025: 50 years of Gay Rodeo**” and invite EVERYONE to be a part of this amazing opportunity to show the world our historic contributions, starting in 2023, 2024 and culminating in the WGRF 2025. No IGRA member that wants to contribute will be left behind in this initiative.

I will establish an “**IGRA 2.0**” committee of under 40-year-olds (ok, maybe 50) potential future leaders and team them up with current leaders to benefit from exploration, mentorship, and organizational transfer of knowledge.

We can only attract new members AND retain old members by being an attractive organization that is fun for all, welcoming to all, and supportive of all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my ideas to deal with our many challenges. I have more ways that I believe we can revitalize our organization and I am asking for the opportunity to participate with you all in doing so. Thank you for your consideration when you vote for the next IGRA president.

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