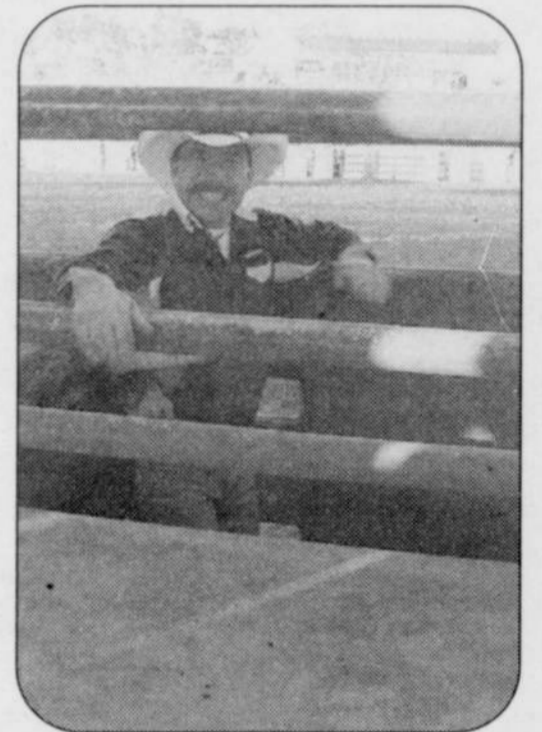


THE COWBOY WAY

Just in time for *Brokeback Mountain*, gay rodeo enthusiasts wrangle new members in the Pacific Northwest

by Joshua Ryan



cow·boy (kou'boi') n. A hired man, especially in the Western United States, who tends cattle and performs many of his duties on horseback. Also called *cowman*, *cowpoke* and *cowpuncher*. Also regionally known as *buckaroo* or *vaquero*.

For many, the term "gay rodeo" is an oxymoron, just like "military intelligence," "jumbo shrimp." The term conjures up angry bulls with flaring nostrils dancing in pink crinoline tutus like those worn by the hippos in Disney's classic *Fantasia*. Set that image aside and picture this: a strong shirtless cowboy with a single sinewy arm stretched overhead waving a Stetson cowboy hat. He looks like Tom Selleck in those Marlboro Man ads—brawny chest, gloriously covered in rippling muscles and sprinkled liberally with hair. A rivulet of hot sweat streams between his bulging pectorals, trickling down his washboard abs and disappearing into the top button of his skintight Wrangler jeans. The cowboy epitomizes masculinity as he rides a tawny stallion bucking up and down and up and down. He has only seconds to ride.

This image is really what gay rodeo is all about. So, while the uninitiated might think gay rodeo sounds improbable, a group of cowboys and cowgirls wants to invite the queer community to a whole new way of having fun. And to those who love the sight of a man (or woman!) in Wranglers, now's the time to shout, "Yippy yay-hoo!"



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