



GAY RODEO IS NOT FOR PUSSIES

The Pacific Northwest Gay Rodeo Association wants to redefine all things cowboy for Portlanders and beyond.

PNWGRA is now in its third year as the International Gay Rodeo Association's only three-state association—encompassing Washington, Idaho and Oregon. It began in 1992 as the Idaho Gay Rodeo Association, but leaders soon realized that most of their members were from Seattle and Portland. As a result, three years ago the association broadened its geographic footprint and incorporated members from all three states into a single rodeo group.

Gene Bunting, the recently re-elected two-term president of PNWGRA, hails from Albany, located about 40 minutes south of Portland. He is leading a new era for PNWGRA—an organization that covers a territory larger than California's Golden State Gay Rodeo Association and the Dallas-based Texas Gay Rodeo Association.

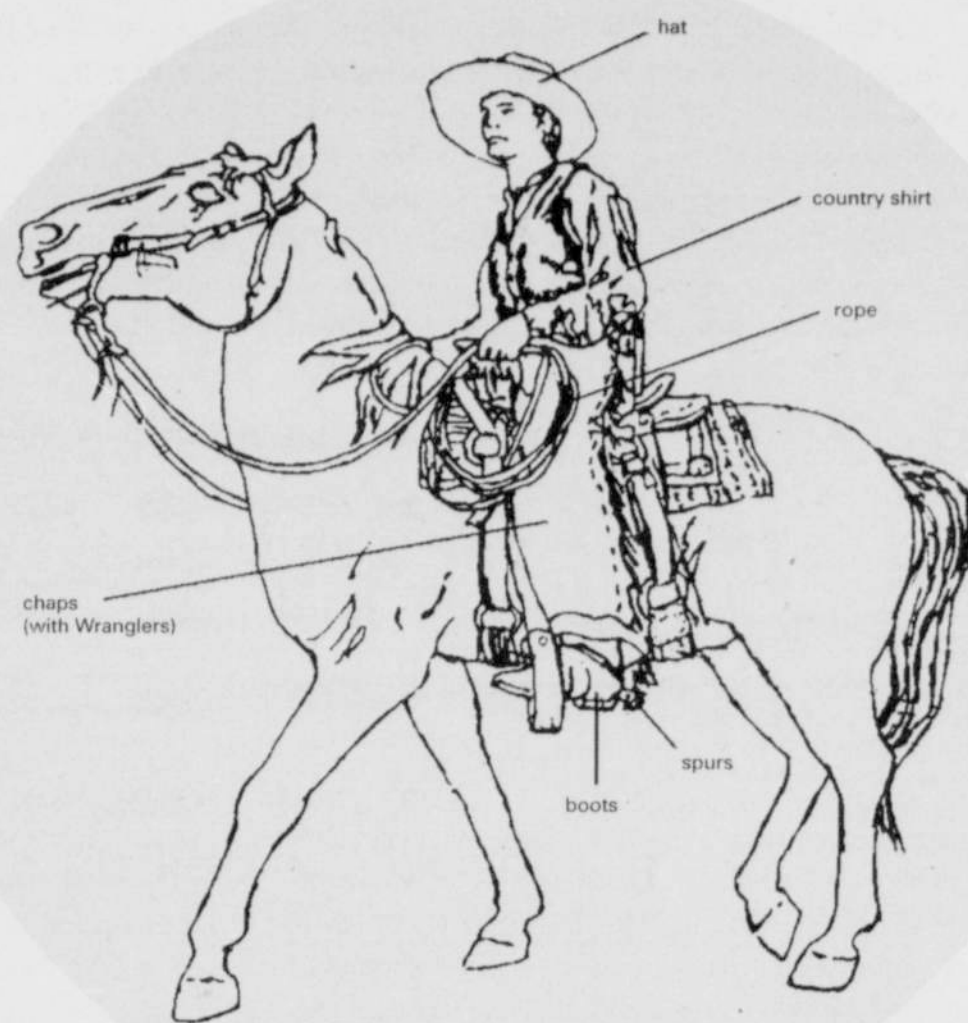
For those who have not been to a gay rodeo and wonder if it's the same as "regular" rodeo, let us be your guide. Some believe gay rodeo, by definition, must be a less competitive kind of rodeo—a wannabe rodeo. After inspecting the stock at a gay rodeo, you'll be astounded to learn these are notissy bulls—they are *exactly* the same as regular rodeos. The bulls stand as tall as a man's shoulder and weigh a minimum of 1,200 pounds—with some weighing closer to a ton. (That's a lot of bull!) And, as with regular rodeo, broken bones, massive bruises and other injuries are commonplace.

"Gay rodeo is every bit as competitive as regular rodeo," Bunting says. "The stock is the same, the events are largely the same—and people will get a real sense of what rodeo is all about."

HISTORY OF GAY RODEO

Gay rodeo has been around for a long time. Created in 1976 in Nevada, the Reno Gay Rodeo was started as a fund-raiser for muscular dystrophy. Most gay rodeos generate money from gate receipts and sponsors that is then funneled back to community organizations. The PNWGRA constitution requires it to donate 30 percent of all proceeds to Northwest charities.

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HOW TO DRESS LIKE A COWBOY: A SHOPPER'S GUIDE

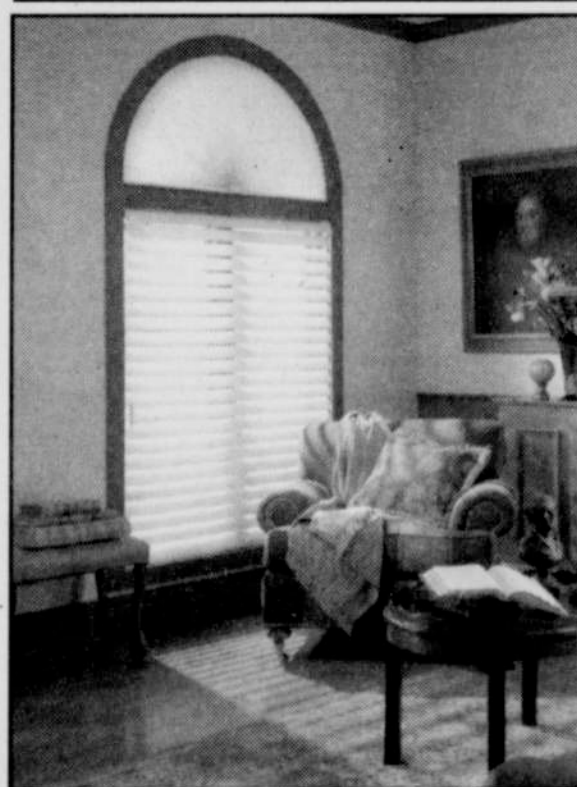
WEAR WRANGLERS. The official jeans of all cowboys are available just about everywhere. If you wear Abercrombie & Fitch or Guess jeans, people will point and laugh at you. No, really, they will.

COUNTRY SHIRTS are essential. The best are vintage-style shirts available at great thrift stores and resale stores like **Buffalo Exchange**, 1420 S.E. 37th Ave. and 1036 W. Burnside St., or **Red Light**, 3590 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. and 1111 S.W. Stark St. Both have lots of cool Western shirts for cowgirls and cowboys. Remember, wear them tight and tucked in.

COWBOY HATS are de rigueur at all rodeos—and just look cool even at the hottest martini bar. Good places to buy hats include **Culpepper & Co.**, 11078 N.W. Frontage Road in Troutdale; **Boothill Western Wear**, 2139 N.E. Cornell Road in Hillsboro; and the **Portland Outdoor Store**, 304 S.W. Third Ave. There are lots of styles—from Stetson and suede to straw and leather. Black is still for Bad Barts, and white still represents the Lone Ranger. Dress accordingly.

CHAPS started out in the Old West, and while they are not necessary, they are cool. Chaps must be worn with shorts or jeans—no bare asses hanging out, please! Remember, these are cowboy chaps, not leatherman chaps. And if you ride a horse with these things on and no seat in your pants, you'll really understand the true meaning of "chapped." Consequently, they should be brown (not black) and broken in—not perfect Harley-Davidson shiny leather. So, be warned that **Spartacus**, 300 W. 12th Ave. and 15536 S.E. 82nd Ave. in Clackamas, doesn't specialize in these chaps, although it does have nice bridles (and other horse paraphernalia) for at-home use. Rather, go to **Langlitz Leather**, 2443 S.E. Division St. They've long served both the rodeo and leather communities and can help you get your chaps right.

COWBOY BOOTS are mandatory for Western aficionados, and more than 2,000 styles can be found at **American Boot Company**, 11652 S.W. Pacific Coast Highway in Tigard and 3205 S.W. Cedar Hills Blvd. in Beaverton. For fancier cowboy boots—and I mean boots so fabu that you'll want to keep them out of the cow poo—visit **Imelda's Designer Shoes**, 1431 S.E. 37th Ave. Wearing the rights boots will really let you kick up your heels in style! 10



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