

MARIA GEE ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM CIRCUIT MEMBERS

2009 MONTANA CIRCUIT DIRECTOR NOMINEE *Q&A*

1) Question:

I would like to know what are their 4 top priorities for the upcoming year (in order of importance)? Example: membership numbers, DT's, rodeos . . .

1) Answer:

- 1/ circuit rodeos
- 2/ circuit system and national concerns for building WPRA
- 3/ divisional tours/permit finals
- 4/ membership numbers

2) Question:

If elected, what responsibilities do you feel you will have as Montana WPRA Director? These responsibilities should address those concerning the Circuit Rodeos, WPRA jackpots and events, Board meetings, and any other area you feel is important. Considering the answer to this question, do you feel your current responsibilities will allow you to fulfill these duties?

2) Answer:

My responsibilities as Montana director will be to coordinate our efforts as members of a professional association to step up and protect our interests. We all have a responsibility to be ambassadors to our sport and conduct ourselves with grace under fire and to follow guidelines to have a say in our competitive arenas. This includes sharing responsibilities for less glamorous jobs and being available. Being a board member also is a serious undertaking; rules of order for running meetings and coming to a reasonable consensus while keeping the end range goal in mind will be important tasks. Our national board needs to hear the concerns of our circuit members. Each vote must count and I will need to be able to speak a clear reasoning for issues that affect us possibly differently from those in other circuits. There also will be tough decisions that face our association where independent thinking and collaborative conclusions will be important.

I spent much time considering the final part of this question. I have spoken to past directors. One common theme is that no one really has enough time. This position was never designed to be an income producing proposition or a full time job. It was built to give back to a sport that has supported us and because we believe we have something to add. I have also asked for support ahead of time because I know our goals can only be accomplished together.

3) Question:

Do you feel it is important that the Montana Circuit Director be at the Circuit rodeos?

3) Answer:

I personally do plan to be at some circuit rodeos. I believe relationships with committees can be established prior to the rodeo taking place and with our members also having a clear agenda prior to the season beginning.

4) Question:

What are your plans to attract new members to the WPRA and keep the organization growing? It seems to be an organization that in the past, catered mainly to women who want to pro rodeo, but that is a small faction of the barrel racing population . . . so,

4) Answer:

I do believe there is a space for what was our divisional tour draw in the past and our current co-approvals. It is a way for someone to compete locally, fill a permit if that is their goal, or change their competition focus.

4b) Question:

. . . is the WPRA only interested in keeping that group of gals or are they looking to expand into different markets?

4b) Answer:

The current WPRA board is opening the door to different markets. We will still need to fill a unique niche and be the very best at that.

5) Question:

What would you like to see changed with the WPRA?

5) Answer:

I would like to see our association mend some fences and be positive forces for change. It is still a privilege to compete at rodeos such as Houston, Cheyenne, Cow Palace, Ellensburg, and Livingston. We need to sustain our current partnerships and support the rodeo industry while maintaining the integrity of our association.

6) Question:

As the future Montana circuit director, how will you attempt to better ground conditions and promote equal fairness to ground conditions at rodeos? (Please do not answer with slack after the perf only because this rule will not always be implemented.)

6) Answer:

As the future Montana circuit director, I believe we can return to having a designated person for each rodeo. I believe our spokeswomen will be important in preparing a plan if there is a specific rodeo which can be improved. Then a plan can be formed with people who do have relationships with the committees. Also, each member can be responsible by deciding on one person to speak for them at the rodeo in question and addressing the judge first to come up with the best possible solution. Safety is paramount; equal fairness has been accomplished at many of our circuit rodeos and anything else will need to be addressed individually.

6b) Question:

How can we as an organization be helpful to the rodeo committees regarding this topic? How will the persons involved be accountable to see that this is taken care of?

6b) Answer:

We must be persistent and pleasant. Sometimes we have learned from hardships of horses getting hurt. We are still responsible to choose to be a part of the solution. We also need to remember our committees believe in what they are doing and if they are there in a tractor they may be doing their best with what they have. We can be prepared ahead of time and then our common goal must be to have safe ground and happy people.

7) Question:

I would like to see the WPRA communicate with all the fairgrounds in Montana to see that the grounds stay open and available through out the rodeo season for easier access to those traveling to and fro throughout the state even when they do not have an event going on. Personally I found it very frustrating as I traveled this past summer to find a place to stay overnight only to have the grounds locked up tight and inaccessible. This is a rodeo state and I believe that we should be doing all we can to make sure that all facilities are open and available no matter what the date or time of arrival can be. It is not like you can pull into local Walmart and rest and water your horses. I feel very strongly as an association we should be communicating with these fairgrounds to keep their facilities open to those traveling . . . I am more than willing to pay fees . . . What will you do as a director to help facilitate this?

7) Answer:

This could be an early gesture of each rodeo designee to contact their rodeo grounds and find out their policy. That way the first contact has been made working toward our goal of the best ground possible.

8) Question:

How long have you been a member of the WPRA?

8) Answer:

I bought my permit in the fall of '98 and have had my card since August of '99.

9) Question:

What would you do to make the top divisional barrel racing competitors in Montana want to join the WPRA?

9) Answer:

I want to see our top divisional barrel racers want to be part of our association for the reasons that are listed in question/answer 11 below and because we can be involved in different levels and still meet the goals we set forward for ourselves. We can work to sanction specific events that benefit our horse industry.

10) Question:

As a future Montana circuit director, do you feel it's necessary to present yourself at rodeos to get a real grasp of what's happening in your circuit as well as for the future of professional barrel racing at rodeos?

10) Answer:

Yes, I believe as director that I will be present (hopefully competing at some) but present at least at some rodeos and then in good contact with issues that arise. I have had the good fortune to compete at a majority of our home rodeos in the past as well as being on the road in years past and I believe I can put this experience to good use.

11) Question:

With the state of professional rodeos turning more to limited entries, how can you help the average card holder who has paid her dues and holds a daily job be able to have the opportunity to enter some of the more elite rodeos?

11) Answer:

There are currently bonuses such as the circuit finals, DNCFR, and circuit champion seeding into San Antonio. These are very worthy possibilities. The Canadian Finals being opened to some U.S. residents is another option as well as their tour rodeos which have a finals in Calgary. These are some very good rodeos that are closer from Montana than from many Canadian addresses. Placing at Billings is still a good way to get to some of our winter rodeos. There are ways to accomplish our goals. I do believe in more open entries such as Denver, San Angelo and will support this whenever possible.

12) Question:

Across the nation, professional sports are represented by adults. Why should the Women's Professional Rodeo Association feel it necessary to add a Jr. division to the WPRA and count the money won towards future professional rodeos, when they were not actually competing against the professional adults?

12) Answer:

I believe this is an attempt to open the WPRA to other markets and offer an incentive for younger members to want to compete in the WPRA when it is possible.

13) Question:

As a future Montana director, how do you feel about WPRA events other than rodeo?

13) Answer:

I believe in sanctioned events that allow us to compete toward our goals. I do believe only rodeo money should count for rodeo qualifications. I believe there are very workable solutions to sanction events and give another area of competition its own set of bonuses and perks and will work for you, our members, towards this end.