

THE FIRST IML CONTEST
Sunday, May 20, 1979

THE ENVELOPE, PLEEZ!
THE WINNER IS SAN FRANCISCO'S DAVID KLOSS
by Jack Fritscher

Written in June 1979, this feature essay was published in *Drummer* 31, September 1979.

I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written March 24, 2004.

II. The feature article as published in *Drummer* 31, September 1979

III. Eyewitness Illustrations and Captions

I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written March 24, 2004.

Historically, this is the first article published anywhere in the gay press about the first International Mr. Leather Contest.

On June 30, 1979, I wrote this playful review-essay and the captions for the five pages of twenty-six photographs shot by my longtime friend Bob Maddox for his Male Hide Leather shop inside the Gold Coast bar, Chicago. I published this entertainment photo feature on pages 20-24 in *Drummer* 31, September 1979.

Leather Timeline: IML and the White Night Riot. That first IML contest was held in Chicago, Sunday, May 20, the night before the fiery White Night Riot in San Francisco protesting the "Twinkie Defense" verdict that gave assassin Dan White an absurdly light sentence for the double murder of City Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone.

My original *Drummer* article was reprinted with permission in the 2004 coffee-table photo book, *International Mr. Leather: 25 Years of Champions*, compiled by my pal Joseph W. Bean for IML, Inc., and the Leather Archives & Museum.

IML'S TRIBAL FUTURE:
The intent of this leather article
written at the "Dawn of IML History"

In the newly uncloseted world of 1970s leather culture, my mission as editor in chief of *Drummer* demanded the invention of gay words to expand the vocabulary of the love that once dared not speak—so we could have new specific words to use to write and report in the magazine about erotic-play concepts and sexual identity never before fully articulated.

This essay marked the first appearance in print of the word *homomascularity* which I coined in 1977. I focused my high-concept term not on sex, as in the word *homosexuality*, but on gender identity for masculine-identified men. I designed *homomascularity* as a calm and supportive word, unlike the word *hyper-mascularity* which, because of the prefix *hyper*, sounds like a clinical analysis of the bad, exaggerated, and swaggering machismo of insecure males straight and gay. Respectful of female-identified lesbians in leather, I coined, at the same time, the coordinate term *homofemininity*.

At the height of the 1970s Golden Age of Leather, during that wild and wonderful

summer and fall of 1979, the twin contests of the first IML (May 1979) and the first Mr. Drummer (November 1979) presented a wonderful chance to lampoon, with tongue-in-cheek satire, some of the reasons feminists questioned the Miss America contest with its signature swimsuits paired fetishistically with high heels.

So, in this first national and international entertainment article about IML, I took a cue from the Platonic Ideal of a Leatherman that Chuck Renslow seemed to seek, and I theorized along with him that the ideal Leatherman had personal and community values, and was something other than some handsome, muscled porn cliché tricked out in borrowed chaps.

Playing devil's advocate and theorizing about "masculine leather identity" was my vocation as a gay writer of magazines and novels during that first decade of gay lib when everything we did was pretty much being done for the first time. Incoming new writers way younger than I, like Gayle Rubin and Patrick Califia, were also theorizing about gender identity in places other than *Drummer*. As a then-new culture of leatherfolk trying anything once, we all had to think about, analyze, assess, and name what it was we were doing and where it was we were evolving.

That's one reason why publisher John Embry and I chose Robert Dunn, our ad man at *Drummer*, to fill Renslow's generous invitation for *Drummer* to provide a judge at that first IML. I asked Dunn to be a talent scout gathering interviews and photos for publication. Embry, however, always envious of Renslow's business acumen, sent Dunn as a spy.

As soon as he had heard Renslow's first announcement of IML, Embry, who had few original ideas, decided that he must, Must, MUST have his own Mr. Drummer contest. When Dunn returned from the very successful IML, I remember Embry's face, red with rosacea, and green with jealousy, as he grilled Dunn for every production detail from Chicago. Six months later, Embry, racing to catch up, faked his first stab at a real contest. At the annual CMC Carnival held every November in San Francisco, *Drummer* announced that our frequent cover man Val Martin was now the first Mr. Drummer. It was just that: an announcement, not a contest. During IML, David Kloss had won a true public contest. Prior to CMC, Val Martin had been selected privately inside our office at *Drummer* by only three people: art director Al Shapiro, publisher Embry, and editor-in-chief me.

All that backstage intrigue notwithstanding, there was never any question that the IML and Mr. Drummer pageants were terrific photo opportunities for a magazine like *Drummer* that had hungry pages to fill each month.

Both as editor and as a deeply embedded leatherman, I liked the stage competitions because, instead of "hired porn modelles" in our *Drummer* pages, the contestants, walking the real-world "leather runway" at both IML and Mr. Drummer, brought forward actual players who were into authentic leather, such as First IML Runner-Up Durk Dehner.

In fact, two years before that first IML, when Embry had hired me in Spring 1977, I published my longtime friend Lou Thomas' sultry Target Studio photos of the homomale Dehner, billed as "Durk Parker," in *Drummer* 15 (May 1977). Long before "Reality TV," the "Reality IML Contest" and the "Reality *Drummer* Contest," created a steady supply of hot photographs of genuine leather contestants who were a natural reflection of our diverse readers who were themselves real guys into authentic BDSM.

This, precisely, is what made *Drummer* an international leather pop-culture hit: we reflected our readers and helped create and spread the very leather culture we reported on.

This reflective identity of diverse leatherfolk is also, precisely, why the culture around

IML has such deep roots, and such a promising and ongoing tribal future.

I've always thought the goal of gay media should essentially be to mirror the readers and viewers to themselves—which was why, even years before these contests, I invented for *Drummer* the “Tough Customers” page which featured write-ups and personal sex photos submitted by actual readers themselves. Under Joseph W. Bean, my page later became the popular magazine *Tough Customers*. ©2004, 2013 JackFritscher.com

II. The feature article as published in *Drummer* 31, September 1979

THE FIRST IML CONTEST

Sunday, May 20, 1979

THE ENVELOPE, PLEEZ!

THE WINNER IS SAN FRANCISCO'S DAVID KLOSS

by Jack Fritscher

“Mr. America” looks like an “a-sexual all-Ameri-canned boy” compared to the sexually up-front All-American Men of the International Mr. Leather competition.

[The All-American Boy store, the first expensive and chic clothing shop to open on Castro Street in the 1970s, was held up for ridicule and satire by Folsom Street leathermen mostly because of its Lacoste shirts and pretentious name which was ironic long before the ruinous Age of Irony began in the 1990s.]

“Lats” and “Latitude” for lots of “Attitude”! When these Leathermen do you like they do you when they do you, you know you’ve been done.

Ain’t no way nobody is gonna rain on a macho meat parade: well planned, and packaged better than a basket lunch, by Chicago’s classic Gold Coast bar (where we Midwest *boys* knew to go to come out as interstellar *men*.)

Gold Coaster hoster Chuck Renslow runs full upstairs/downstairs action with manager Pat Batt backed up by Male Hide Leathers.

Together, the hottest twelve contestants this side of the Apostles, *man*-ifested themselves in hard-assed leather, definition harnesses, and Pavlovian jockstraps.

Judging was by godlike Olympic methods: “Keep in mind that what you are judging is not necessarily the handsomest face or the most muscular body; but, rather, the man who best typifies the Ideal Leatherman. A man whose *command presence* and *sense of self* communicates that special quality we celebrate as ‘Leather.’”

Medallions hung on adult manly chests. Not a missed congeniality in the lot, these men typify what the upcoming new decade of the 1980s have in store: *The New Homomascularity* calculated to blow the righteous socks off straights overdosed on stereotypical fags.

Every man on stage was a winner, while the International Mr. Leather First Place went to David Kloss, sponsored by the Brig bar, San Francisco.

The other men, daring to put their pecs and ass on the world’s toughest *Chorus Line*, were: Terry Hunter, Carol’s Speakeasy, Chicago; Reg Simpson, RR, Miami; Donald Rahn, Foxhole, Denver; Stan Masterson, Landmark, Daytona Beach, FL; Daan [*sic*] Jefferson, Gold Coast, Chicago; Jim Kazlik, Wreckroom, Milwaukee; Harry Shattuck, South Town Lumber Co., Denver; Bill Maggio, Harder Than Hell Productions, Chicago; Jesse Capello [second IML

Runner-up], Café LaFitte in Exile/Coral Bar, New Orleans; Durk Dehner [first IML Runner-up who was a *Drummer* model from Lou Thomas' Target Studio, and future founder of Tom of Finland Foundation], American Uniform Association, L. A.; Bruce Wachholder, Touche, Chicago; David Kloss, the Brig, San Francisco.

The judges were Chuck Gockenmeyer, General Manager of Leatherman Inc, New York; Robert Dunn, Advertising Director, *Drummer* magazine; Dom Orejudos (Etienne); Tom Gora, *In Touch* magazine; and Lou Thomas, Target Studio, New York. **Review ©1979, 2013**
JackFritscher.com

III. Eyewitness Illustrations

PHOTO CAPTIONS

TOP PHOTO: THE SIX SEMI-FINALISTS

Terry Hunter of Carol's Speakeasy (Chicago); Dean Jefferson of the Gold Coast (Chicago); Harry Shattuck of the South Town Lumber Co. (Chicago); Jesse Capello of Café LaFitte in Exile (New Orleans); Durk Dehner, American Uniform Association (Los Angeles), and David Kloss, the Brig (San Francisco).

CENTER PHOTO: THE JUDGES

Chuck Gockenmeyer, General Manager of Leatherman Inc. (New York); Robert Dunn, Advertising Director, *Drummer* magazine; Dom Orejudos (Etienne); Tom Gora, *In Touch* magazine; Lou Thomas, Target Studio (New York)

BOTTOM PHOTO: THE WINNERS

David Kloss (center) with (left to right) Pat Batt, Manager of the Gold Coast; Jesse Capello, Second Runner-Up; Durk Dehner, First Runner-Up; and Chuck Renslow, producer of the Mr. International Leather Contest and owner of the Gold Coast. ©1979, 2013 JackFritscher.com

SOURCING HISTORY NOTE

This original article from *Drummer* is excerpted from the award-winning leather history book *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer - A Memoir of the Sex, Art, Salon, Pop Culture War, and Gay History of Drummer Magazine 1970-1999*, 300 photos and illustrations (color in KINDLE). This WINNER of the "Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year Award" from the NATIONAL LEATHER ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL is available from [AMAZON](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR004) ([click here](#)) in paperback and KINDLE.

Read more at www.DrummerArchives.com