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James Tyrcha.
Photos
by Verdell
Shannon

IML-bound: Trans man Tyrcha claims title, preps for IML

BY ROSS FORMAN

James Tyrcha transitioned 10 years ago this April, and yet for years after he lived in fear of rejection just for being transgender. Two years ago, that stopped—when he came out to everyone about his transition.

"I just needed to be open about my transition and be an advocate for the transgender community," said Tyrcha, spurred to speak out by bathroom/locker room use debates for transgender and the hoard of trans-bullying and physical attacks, particularly against trans women.

Flash-forward to the present, and Tyrcha is now an award-winning trans male.

Tyrcha, 39—who grew up in suburban Minooka, now lives in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood and works at Crew Bar & Grill and Jackhammer—was the winner of the first Mr. Leather 64Ten contest, held in mid-March at Jackhammer (2015 Mr. Leather64Ten Michael Pacas was appointed). Leather-goods retailer Leather64Ten hosted a slew of weekend events around the contest for Chicago's leather community. This was the first contest Tyrcha ever entered, as one of five competitors.

"I was thrilled, flying high. The experience was like no other," said Tyrcha, the founder of the website TransMaleChicago.com. "Being on stage was absolutely overwhelming, an experience that created lifelong companionship, brotherhood."

"It was an unbelievable bond created between us competitors."

Tyrcha admitted he was reluctant to enter the contest, worried about his physique and how it'd compare with/against his opponents.

He said he won the title "because of my passion to change the community and make a difference in the world—and that's what being a title-holder is all about."

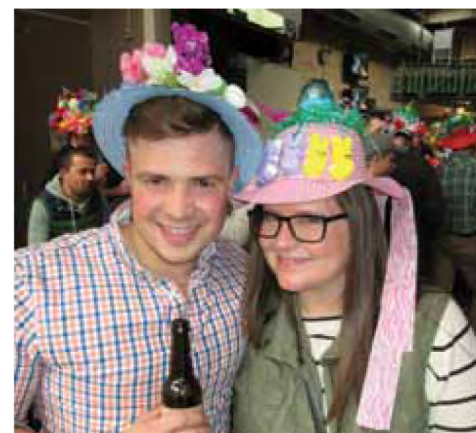
Tyrcha was emotional when asked about the

title. "For me, acceptance is the most important thing in the world—and the future of our community relies on acceptance, 100 percent," he said. "Without acceptance, our community cannot grow and change; it will [just] stay stagnant forever."

Tyrcha's title earned him entry into the IML Contest this May in Chicago, along with more than \$5,000 in prizes. And he is confident about his chances to shine at IML, where he will battle among 50 contestants. His IML goal is simple: "To win," he said without hesitation. "I want to represent our community in ways that are unimaginable."

Tyrcha said the 64TEN title has skyrocketed his social-media status. Within the first 72 hours after winning, he had more than 500 Facebook friend requests from all over the world, including Australia, Italy, Germany and beyond. "The fact that I'm a trans male doesn't matter to them. What matters is I'm representing our community and making a change—creating dialogue for acceptance," he said.

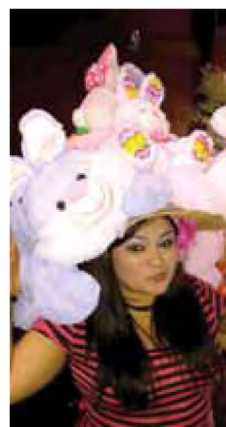
Tyrcha said both Crew and Jackhammer have been "very supportive" of his transition.



SIDETRACK

Windy City Cycling Club's fundraising Easter Bonnet party, Easter Sunday., March 27.

Photos by Jed Dulanias



SCOT'S

Easter really went to their heads, Easter Sunday., March 27.

Photos by Rick Bejlovec



BILLY Masters

"I'm fairly new to modeling but I've been a performer for many years in musicals, concerts and the like. I am a singer/songwriter first but I feel it's time for me to try my hand at modeling."—

Steve Grand's post on a website while looking for modeling work a couple of years ago, under the name Finn Diesel. More on that later...

Years ago, I worked with a very famous performer—a true triple-threat. Make that a quadruple-threat, because my life would often be jeopardized if I questioned anything this person said. This was difficult when I heard complete fallacies being spoken in interviews. I once tried to privately correct some of the inaccuracies—I was told that the facts were wrong. This person went from claiming to have been "almost nominated for an Oscar" (How are you "almost nominated?") to later describing how it felt to have been nominated. Years later, I saw a TV interview where this person talked about WINNING an Oscar. When nobody questions you ... the truth becomes irrelevant.

That was a long-winded way to get into a story about **Adam Lambert**. The pop star has had one of the most erratic career trajectories I've ever seen. After languishing for years in musical theatre, he enjoyed a meteoric rise on American Idol. He may have come in second, but trumped **Kris Allen** in his post-AI career. Then, the inevitable lull. He rebounded as the front man for a reconstituted Queen, which brought him a huge payday. But without new material of his own, he risked becoming a tribute artist. His most recent solo effort was well-received, but the ensuing tour did poorly—many dates played to paltry audiences even after tickets were discounted to low double-digits on Goldstar.

Now he prepares to fill yet another legendary singer's shoes—**Meat Loaf's** in The Rocky Horror Picture Show Event. But Adam claims this wasn't the role Fox wanted him to play: "They actually asked me early on—this is sometime last year—to look at the role of Frank-N-Furter. I was really flattered, and I thought, yeah, that could be quite fun. But [with my] schedule, [it was] just not looking likely. And on a side note, I kind of felt like in 2016, to be cis and playing the role of a trans character, it felt inappropriate to me. ... I think casting **Laverne [Cox]** was so brilliant." Because, eh, transvestite, transsexual—it's all the same, right?

If ever Pantene revives its "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful" campaign, might I suggest **Steve Grand** as the new spokesperson? Poor Steve. He's just too pretty for his own good. Now, there may be some people out there who don't know who Grand is. He's an out-and-proud singer whose campaign to finish his All American Boy album became the fourth-most-funded music project in Kickstarter history.

But the body of work Grand is best known for is his body. To be fair, Grand is a very good-looking guy with an amazing physique, which he has flaunted to acclaim with selfies, workout videos and underwear shots. And why not show it off—especially if it translates into attention and money. But that comes with a price. In a widely circulated interview, Steve made some of the following statements: "I'm such an easy person to target. Young, good-looking, white, gay men—we love to hate those people;" "I take my music seriously. I'm a good musician and I'm a good performer and I also like to work out my body and show it off sometimes. It's a fleeting thing; when I'm 50, I'm not gonna look like this;"



Steve Grand has had plenty to say, according to Billy.

Photo by Hal Baim

"I never was a model. I never got paid for any of it. I'm just another guy who has photos online of me in my underwear and that's really all it is. ... I just wanted to take pictures of myself with my clothes off."

First, some fact-checking: Despite assertions to the contrary, Grand was most certainly a model. In 2010, he did one of his most revealing photoshoots under the name of Steve Chatham—and I assume DNA magazine pays its cover models. There were other risque shoots under the name Finn Diesel. They probably slipped his mind. What outraged fans was that this hot, young, white guy was lamenting his plight and describing himself as a "target." My favorite post said, "Don't hate Steve Grand because he's white; hate him because he's clueless." That sums it up. Grand tried to smooth things over on Twitter: "I say a lot of things. Some of those things don't always come out quite right. I can do better, and I'm going to continue to try and do so." As long as he's still showing skin, I'm OK with that. Just don't ask me to hum any of his songs.

I recently told you that **Sophia Loren** was charging \$750 for a meet-and-greet. Apparently, **Mariah Carey** is charging \$700 for a similar experience. But let's be clear—it's a meet and a greet; it's not a touch, hug, kiss or otherwise fondle. Fans in line were told that you walk over to her, stand next to her, pose and move on. Well, you can't blame Mariah. She can barely move since she's always poured into a dress at least four sizes too small, which is ready to burst. You jostle her the wrong way and the whole infrastructure could be compromised! Fans were told that Mariah might touch them if the spirit moved her ... assuming the spirit could move.

Logan McCree is making a drastic career change—he's retiring from gay porn to become a firefighter in Scotland! Logan, whose real name is Philipp Tanzer, was previously an Army medic and wants to continue being of service to the community—which is kinda what he did in his last job. But I digress. He's open about his past, but nobody seems to care. One of his fellow firefighters said, "We would all have preferred it if he was a female porn actress. But he is what he is. ... None of us have a problem with his past. I haven't seen any of his movies, but apparently he's very good. He's just Philipp. He's a damn fine guy." I hasten to add that, despite his gay-porn past, Philipp hopes to marry a woman: "I can only imagine to be in a relationship with a woman." Well, nobody's perfect.

When Scots are putting out fires with their bags and pipes, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Let me remind you that there's even more dish at www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's not afraid to show what's under the kilt. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Adam Lambert wins his next Grammy <wink>. Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



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THE GLENWOOD

Pride Idol, the weekly competition to find the best talent in Chicago's LGBTQ community, kicked off Wed., March 23.

Photos by Kirk Williamson

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Brunch at Appellation; upcoming lecture

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I recently went to weekend brunch at Andersonville's **Appellation** (5212 N. Clark St.; PastoralArtisan.com/appellation)—which I could also seemingly call Pastoral/Appellation, as the 75-seat bistro is an extension of the Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine business located at the same address.

Something that surprised me was the fact that there weren't too many diners at Appellation at 11 a.m. Maybe people were still adjusting to the recent time change. (I know I've had my struggles.)

Hopefully, the place was bustling after I left because the bistro has quite the impressive brunch.

Appellation has a wide-ranging selection of dishes (including sweet and savory items as well as sandwiches)—and, much to her credit, the server was candid with me and my dining companion about which dishes worked better than others (which might have saved this write-up from going in a different direction).

To start, she was on the money about trying the



Arborio rice porridge at Appellation.

PR photo

grapefruit mimosa. I'm not a huge fan of grapefruits, but this Ruby Red concoction was refreshing and VERY delicious.

Regarding the culinary fare, we started with arborio rice porridge, accompanied with poached pears and honeycomb brittle. For some reason, this initially gave me pause—but I would return for this dish alone. The dish was almost comforting, with the right amount of sweetness.

For the main dish, my friend had the smoked whitefish tartine with fennel apple salad and pickled mustard seed deviled eggs—which he really liked. I also really liked my selection: grilled hanger steak with sunny eggs, cheddar grits & kohlrabi-Brussels sprout slaw (and hanger steak can really trip up some chefs). We concluded things with ricotta fritters with grapefruit curd—a pair of tasty desserts that happened to be the right size.

Appellation (or Pastoral/Appellation) has other items that warrant trying, including cornmeal-and-sage pancakes, the Croque Monsieur and (most grandly) the continental breakfast with Quicke's Devonshire Butter, Crescendo Crescenza, Pio Tosini Prosciutto di Parma served with toasted miche and panettone. Hopefully, there'll also be more people sampling the fare this eatery has to offer.

Lecture on fats at Next Door

A free event focusing on good versus bad fats will take place Wed., March 30, at Next Door, 659 W. Diversey Pkwy., 6:30-8 p.m.

Ed O'Brien (Ed-Obrien.com), a dietary expert and former owner of Bountiful Eatery healthy eating restaurant, will lead the discussion.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/good-fat-vs-bad-fat-tickets-23060051234?aff=EMAIL>.

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN
YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



Team Cheetah Ride For AIDS Fundraiser

Fri., April 1, 6-10 pm
Big Chicks,

5024 N. Sheridan Rd.

Hot girls, facny guys, Jell-O shots and raffles prizes, all to raise money for Team Cheetah's participation in this year's Ride For AIDS. \$20 suggested donation includes two drink tickets and a raffle ticket.



Man Bits: A Solo Photo Show

Sat., April 2, 7-9 pm
The Sofo Tap,
4923 N. Clark St.

Join photographer Shannon Jenkins to view this solo photography show. Shannon's latest collection is a colorful, sexy salute to the male form featuring several hunky Chicagoans. Photo by Shannon Jenkins



Candy Land: Miss Club Krave 2016

Sat., April 2, 9 pm
Club Krave, 13126 S. Western
Ave., Blue Island, Ill.

Over \$600 in cash and prizes. Honoring Miss Club Krave 2015 Jazzelle Boyette (pictured). Categories are interview, presentation, gown and talent. Contact Jason Howell at 708-289-0462 for more info.



MISS CONTINENTAL ELITE & PLUS

The preliminary rounds of both pageants in one night, Sunday, March 27, at the Park West.

Photos by Jack Neilsen