ChicagoPride.com News
April 28, 2007

## 29th Annual International Mr. Leather Contest: May 24-28, 2007

Actor Hal Sparks to Entertain at IML in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL -- The world's hottest leathermen will once again come together to compete for the title of International Mr. Leather, Thursday, May 24 through Monday, May 28, 2007 (Memorial Day Weekend) in Chicago. IML is pleased to announce a return engagement at The Legendary Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State Street. Actor, stand-up comedian and musician Hal Sparks has just signed as the headline entertainment at this year's Contest.
This year's host hotel, The Hilton Palmer House, 17 E. Monroe Street is SOLD OUT! However, IML has secured a block of overflow rooms at The Chicago Hilton, 720 S. Michigan Ave. For reservations, call (312) 922-440 or go to imrl.com and click on the "hotel reservations" link on the home page. Room rates start at $164/night.

IML 2007 Weekend Event Packages start at $150 with special upgraded seating packages available. All packages include: admission to the International Mr. Leather 2007 competition, admission to all other official IML events (Opening Ceremonies, Physique Competition, Salute! - Closing Ceremonies, IML Victory Celebration Party and the Black and Blue Ball), free admission to the Leather Market, free shuttle bus service, an official IML 2007 t-shirt plus special promotional offers and gifts.

IML Weekend Packages can be purchased online at www.imrl.com or at www.boxofficetickets.com; by calling (800) 494-TIXS (Intl. (503) 245-0288); or via facsimile at (800) FAX-TIXS (Intl. (503) 245-0290). Weekend Packages should be picked up at The Palmer House Hilton beginning Thursday, May 24 in the afternoon through Sunday, May 27. Cancellations are subject to a $25 processing fee. There will be no cancellations after April 30th, 2007. Special seating accommodations for persons requiring wheelchair access or those who are hearing impaired can be requested through Box Office Tickets.
International Mr. Leather 2007 will include the following main events:

29th Annual International Mr. Leather Competition presented by Miller Beer
Sunday, May 27 at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4 p.m.)
The Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State Street, Chicago

15th Annual International Mr. Bootblack Competition presented by Bootwerks
Friday, May 25 through Sunday, May 27
Hilton Palmer House, Leather Market

Other official IML weekend events include:

The Leather Market – Celebrating its 25th Year!
The world's best collection of leather and fetish vendors.
Friday, May 25 from 12 – 7 p.m., Saturday, May 26 from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., Sunday, May 27 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Monday, May 28 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Hilton Palmer House

IML Opening Ceremonies presented by Recon
The introduction of contestants and judges, drawing for contestant numbers and unveiling of the IML 2007 Flag.
Thursday, May 24 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.)
The Hilton Palmer House, Grand Ballroom

Pecs & Personality (Physique Competition) presented by Interactive Male
IML contestants are judged on their appearance and stage presence.
Saturday, May 26 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.)
The Hilton Palmer House, Grand Ballroom

Salute! - IML Closing Ceremonies presented by Leatherpost.com
Introduction of 2007 winners, "parade of colors" featuring leather clubs and organizations from around the globe and signing of the IML Flag.
Sunday, May 27 at 11 p.m. (doors open at 10 p.m.)
The Hilton Palmer House, Grand Ballroom

IML Victory Celebration Party presented by Leatherpost.com
Music by DJ Eddie Baez.
Sunday, May 27 after the IML Contest until 4 a.m.
House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago

Black and Blue Ball – presented by Recon
The traditional IML final blowout celebration. Music by DJ Matthew Harvat.
Monday, May 28 from 8 p.m. – 4 a.m.
Excalibur Nightclub, 632 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago

Tickets to individual IML 2007 events are available at www.boxofficetickets.com and will be sold at The Palmer House Hilton throughout IML Weekend. Single ticket prices are as follows: International Mr. Leather Competition ($60), IML Opening Ceremonies ($30), Pecs & Personality ($30), Salute! – Closing Ceremonies ($10) and Black and Blue Ball ($30). Please note: Single tickets to the IML Victory Celebration Party ($50) are only available through the House of Blues, by calling (312) 923-2000.

International Mr. Leather contestants are judged on a variety of criteria including community involvement, speech, presentation and overall presence. The winner of the IML 2007 Contest will receive a prize package consisting of donations from businesses and organizations supporting the leather community. Complete contestant information, including contestant applications, can be found atwww.imrl.com.

The 2007 International Mr. Leather Judges are: Bo Ladashevska, Matt Foreman, Master Jim Glass, Scott Bloom, Ted Lassen, Gil Kessler, Glenda Ryder, Joe Reusch, and Matthew Johnson. The Tally Masters are: Blackkat and Jim Kiley-Zufelt.

Bo Ladashevska, Mr. Leather Montreal 2006, was named International Mr. Leather 2006, winning over a field of 52 contestants from five countries: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the United States. Larry Golubski, Mr. Long Beach Leather 2005, was named 1st Runner-Up. Philippe Lepine, Mr. Fetish Switzerland 2006-2007, was named 2nd Runner-Up.

The 15th Annual International Mr. Bootblack Competition will be held Friday, May 25 through Sunday, May 27 in the Leather Market at The Hilton Palmer House. The winner will be selected by the vote of IML Weekend Package-Holders. Each paid weekend package includes a ballot for the competition that can be cast for the bootblack of the holder's choice. The winner will be announced at the International Mr. Leather Competition on Sunday, May 27. Benjamin Palmer, sponsored by PumpJack Pub and Priape Vancouver, was awarded International Mr. Bootblack 2006.

The Leather Market, located at The Hilton Palmer House, features the world's biggest collection of leather and fetish vendors. This year the Leather Market celebrates its 25th Anniversary. More than 15,000 people visited the Market in 2006. Admission to the Leather Market is included with all Weekend Packages. For all other visitors, a suggested donation of $3.00 will benefit The Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago. The $3.00 Day Pass can be purchased at The Palmer House Hilton throughout the weekend. A complete list of vendors, as well as vendor applications can be found atwww.imrl.com.

Entertainer Hal Sparks will bring his many talents to The International Mr. Leather Contest at The Chicago Theatre on Sunday,

May 27. Best known for his portrayal as Michael on the groundbreaking Showtime series "Queer as Folk," Sparks has also made a name for himself in both the music and stand-up worlds. For more information about Sparks, as well as details about his upcoming CD release, visitwww.halsparks.com.

About 400 gay leathermen gathered in Chicago in 1979 for the first International Mr. Leather contest. Today, the event has grown to be an annual tradition for the leather and fetish community – drawing contestants and attendees from around the globe. Once an event for "hardcore" leathermen, IML has expanded in recent years to include a more diverse crowd – from the experienced to the curious. Last year's event drew more than 15,000 guests from around the world.

American Airlines is the official airline of IML. For fare discounts, travelers should contact American Airlines at (800) 433-1790 and identify themselves as IML attendees with Star File #A7757AP.

For more information on International Mr. Leather 2007 and to get updated event information, log on to the official IML website, ww www.imrl.com.

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