



Show Me Leather Contestant Handbook

Mission Statement:

Show Me Leather's mission is to provide a place where we can develop leaders and educators who represent the Leather Culture in all of its many facets. Through diverse leadership and a wide-range of educational opportunities, Show Me Leather will work to build bridges between the Leather and Kink communities, striving to connect all, from the new and curious to the most experienced and celebrated Leather folk. We are committed to the betterment of all through our passion for educational outreach, service to others & a new found dedication to strengthening the pathways of communication between Leather and those who live in the spirit of Leather, regardless of the labels by which we identify or the groups to which we affiliate.

Contestant Requirements:

Contestants must be at least 21 years of age

Contestants must reside within the state of Missouri. If the contestant is in a separate state, but near the Missouri border, the production team will reach out to confirm your eligibility

(Person of Leather): Must have been in the community for a minimum of 3 years

(Ms. Contestants): There is no sex or orientation requirement, but the contestant must identify as a woman

(Big/Littles): Middles are also eligible to compete for either title of this contest. Judging will be based on the standards for the chosen title on the application.

(Power Exchange): The competing pair must have been in the dynamic for at least one year. Any number of individuals may be in the dynamic, but only two individuals may compete.

Contestants must complete and submit their application prior to the deadline (this includes submission of a safe for work (SFW) photograph to be used in social media content)

Contestants are required to create an auction basket:

- This is described in more detail in the contest preparations section.
- These are to be assembled, and a photograph of the basket is to be sent to Contestants@showmeleather.org no later than July 1st, 2024, with a list of contents.

SML Titleholder Requirements:

Show Me Pet has a requirement to attend and be judge's pet for MML (Mr. Missouri Leather), date to be announced

Each titleholder is responsible for hosting a minimum of 2 visibility events – These could be educational events/classes, charity fundraisers, travel fund fundraisers, or speaking at an event/venue for the title they represent

Each titleholder is responsible for holding 1 fundraiser event for a charity – charity of choice must be focused on furthering the Missouri queer/leather communities. Fundraisers towards the titleholder travel fund are not applicable for this.

Each titleholder must attend the following year's SML contest for a step-down speech

At the end of their title year, one of the titleholders will serve as Judge's person (Will be decided at producer's discretion)

From each title family (each contest year), one of the titleholders will become Head Judge two years after their win date. (Will be decided at producer's discretion)

The owner/producer or Show Me Leather reserves the right to remove or recall any current or past SML title if, in any way, they feel as though the titleholders have failed to properly fulfill the duties of the title or if they have in any way damaged the name or reputation of Show Me Leather.

If a titleholder wishes to compete in a further title, there is a title track that they will follow:

Show Me Leather Title Tracks:		
Current Title	Continuing Title Track	Contest Name
Show Me Leather Big	International	TBD
Show Me Leather Little	International	TBD
Show Me Leather Person of Leather	Regional Person of Leather	Midwest Leather Kink Alliance
Show Me Leather Power Exchange	Regional Power Exchange	Midwest Leather Kink Alliance
Show Me Leather Pet	National	Route 66 Leather Contest
Show Me Leather Ms.	National	Route 66 Leather Contest

SML Contest Preparations:

- **Auction Baskets (submitted by previous titleholders):**

One of the items that you will need to prepare in advance will be an auction basket. It is a basket with a \$50 max item value, so no need to spend lots of money.

An Auction Basket is a selection of items made by each contestant prior to the contest to bring in funds that will go towards the winning contestants needs like traveling and hotel stay for the next level of contest. Some people feel like they need to run out and spend a lot of money on the items they offer up. This is not the case! Some things that are popular are homemade baked goods (especially cookies), handmade crafts with Pride themes and coupons for services that you or your friends/loved ones can offer. Offers for bootblacking/leather care service, massages and one-on-one classes are popular.

Donations are the lifeblood of an auction basket. Be creative! You can also theme your basket in some clever way - maybe a self-care basket with bath bombs you made yourself, or a leather love basket that contains the basics needed to clean and shine boots. There are many members of the community that may have extra supplies they can give you.

Last point to make about auction baskets is that the term "basket" is used loosely. Some examples of this would be like buying a small cheap crate from Walmart and painting it in leather pride colors and symbols. Another idea would be to decorate a laundry basket in every bandana flag we could find. So, you have a lot of options and do not need to break the bank. Something one of a kind, unique, and a good representation of you and/or the title you are running for is always the best way to go.

Putting a good basket together tends to be the part that takes the longest, so that is one of the best places to start.

- **Self-Promotion**

While the contest will publicly post that you will be running for a title, it always feels better when we have friends/support in the audience. You should ensure to tell those around you about the competition and invite them to attend. There will also be the auction baskets and other silent auctions occurring so they could find something they may want to take home as well!

Contest Weekend Expectations (Overall flow and general schedule expectations):

- Friday:
 - Meet with SML and support staff before the beginning of competition start. This will allow you to ask questions, get familiar with the venue space, and meet the support staff.
 - Meet and Greet with judges, just prior to show kickoff (See judging categories)
 - Self introduction: After introducing you all to the judges and crowd, you will be given 1-2 minutes for a quick self intro. Things to remember: the crowd may know very little of who you are, so include your name, pronouns, and what title you're running for, as well as a little of who you are.
 - Pop-Questions (See judging categories)
- Saturday:

- Breakfast (Food Provided)
- Private interview with Judges (see judging categories)
- Educational Presentation (See judging categories)
- Fantasy and Speech Rehearsal with DJ/support staff
- Dinner Break (Food Provided)
- Speech (see judging categories)
- Fantasy/Talent/Storytime (See judging categories)
- Winner(s) presented
- Photographs with Judges/Staff/Winner(s)
- Sunday:
 - Victory Brunch (Food Provided)
 - Required for all winner(s), but all are welcome to attend. Contestants served first, followed by judges, support staff, and then public.
 - Winner(s)/Production team meeting
 - Winner(s) will meet with production team to go through expectations, contracts, and ask questions about anything related to the titleholder position

Judging Categories:

- **Meet and Greet/Pop Questions (All) (50 Points)**
 - This piece of the competition has two major parts:
 - The meet and greet portion is the first part of the competition. It will be where, in a general club atmosphere, attendees and Judges get to have their first impression of who you are. The main goal of these situations is to mingle and meet with many different individuals, but to also seek out the judges and introduce yourself. This will allow them to see how you act in a social setting, and understand a bit about who you are. Attire is usually focused around how you would dress in a “bar/social setting.”
 - In the second part where it’s more structured, the judges will have submitted questions to the contest organizers. These questions will be pulled randomly from one of two hats/buckets by the contestants, one question out of each hat/bucket. They will consist of two types of questions: one serious and one fun. The first question could have many different focuses, so it’s good to know your leather history, your title track, previous title holders, what you intend to do with the title you’re running for, current Missouri issues in legislature that may affect the community, and who you are as a person. The second fun question focuses around how you can think and respond in the moment when someone throws you a curve ball. This also does not have a single set topic, but really reflects on who you are and how you think.
- **Private Interview (All) (100 Points)**
 - This part of the competition will consist of the following: Judges will call up (in a pre-defined order) contestants one at a time. Judges can ask you questions relating to many different aspects, both related to your title and yourself. This interview portion will last approximately 15 minutes, with a possibility of being recalled for an additional 5

minutes. See below for a list of potential topics (but not limited to) and information you should prepare ahead of time.

- Know your information regarding the founding of Show Me Leather and some of its history.
- Know your Leather history/category history:
- Know your previous title holders
- Know what state/regional/international contests are associated with your title track
- What are some current issues of LGBTQIA and Leather communities facing (This can include legal battles, medical struggles, or accessibility issues)
- What you want to do with the title/within your community
- Be prepared for any questions even remotely connected to your title track and history, etc.

- **Educational Presentation (All) (100 Points)**

- The educational presentation portion is required to be 7-10 minutes. After you have finished with your presentation, there will be a Q and A session for about 5-10 minutes.
- The Q+A session will mainly be from the crowd, but the judges could throw a question in here or there. One of the ways to think about this type of presentation would be to think of the following scenario: What if you were at an event, the presenter isn't able to make it, and someone asks if you could step up and present on a topic? This can be a 101 class where you can use it as a stepping stone for much longer conversations.
- In your presentation, it's important to give a high-level overview as this will not only be a presentation to the judges, but also to your fellow peers in the community. This may not seem like much time, but with the right preparation, you can really cover a lot of ground.
- This presentation should also be something that really displays who you are, your interests, and your personality. It's not just about giving information, but ensuring the audience and judges feel engaged with you, so you can even make it more interactive.
- During this, you are allowed to have helpers in the audience giving time markers.
- If you exceed the allotted time, you will be allowed to continue speaking. Judges will not be the one to penalize contestants for going over time. Tallymaster will deduct points to the final score as follows:

Over/Under time by 1-15 seconds	No Penalty
Over/Under time by 16-60 seconds	5 Points deducted
Over/Under time by 61 seconds or more	10 Points deducted

- **Speech (All) (100 Points)**

- The speech portion of the contest is required to be 60-120 seconds. The speech itself could cover many things: Who you are, what you intend to do if you win the title, how you intend to accomplish your goals within the community, etc. While 60-120 seconds doesn't sound like much, you can really speak volumes in this short time. Be cautious when preparing and practicing your speech, as using filter words such as "um", "like", "you know", or "ok" can hurt how your message is conveyed. As such, it is important to write, re-write, and rehearse your speech.

- This is also intended to see how you handle your stage presence. It will be you giving your short piece to a crowd and the judges. It's understandable to be nervous, but don't let your nerves take over your message.
- During this, you are allowed to have helpers in the audience giving time markers.
- If you exceed the allotted time, you will be allowed to continue speaking. Judges will not be the one to penalize contestants for going over time. Tallymaster will deduct points to the final score as follows:

Over/Under time by 1-15 seconds	No Penalty
Over/Under time by 16-60 seconds	5 Points deducted
Over/Under time by 61 seconds or more	10 Points deducted

- **Fantasy/Talent/Storytime (100 Points)**

- **Fantasy (Ms, Pet, Power Exchange, and Person of Leather):**
 - Fantasy is a 3-5 minute stage show that is where you get to showcase yourself, your kink/fetish, and your creativity. It must be bar/public appropriate and must be cleared with the SML staff prior to the competition. This can tell a story, or be a narrative, not only a display of your inner demon. There is a requirement to have at least one kink/fetish represented in the fantasy, but have fun with it!
- **Talent (Little):**
 - What is your talent you'd like to display? This can be anything from a song and dance, to a puppet show, making a skit, quick paintings, etc. This is a representation of you, so let your personality shine through. This is a 3-5 minute show.
- **Storytime (Big):**
 - You are to create a story/narrative and present this to the crowd/audience/judges. Prior to the beginning of your story, we will call for any littles who would like to sit in on your storytime. This is a 3-5 minute story.
- **ALL:** The DJ on site will not mix or produce any music for the contestants. You will be required to provide a flash drive with your musical numbers on them. Please bring a flash drive (marked with your name/scene name) with only the musical number on it. You will have a chance to rehearse with the DJ and stage manager/support staff for cues and testing.
- During this, you are allowed to have helpers in the audience giving time markers.
- If you exceed the allotted time, you will be allowed to continue. Judges will not be the one to penalize contestants for going over time. Tallymaster will deduct points to the final score as follows:

Over/Under time by 1-15 seconds	No Penalty
Over/Under time by 16-60 seconds	5 Points deducted
Over/Under time by 61 seconds or more	10 Points deducted

- **Overall Appearance/Lifestyle (50 Points)**

- This category will not be something you see in the schedule. It will be completed by the judges once all the other contest pieces have completed and it will be where the judges give you their feedback in a general sense and have their final say overall. It may speak to a list of different categories: Who you are, how you carry yourself, how you dress and present yourself, etc. Some of this may be how they saw you interact with those around you. They may list advice or comments in this section as well.

After the contest (what will SML provide new titleholders):

At or after the completion of the contest, the producer guarantees the following to the new titleholders for each year:

- Winner's back patch
- Winner's rocker (with current year)
- Travel fund

Travel Fund:

The travel fund will be generated from fundraising during the weekend of Show Me Leather. This is done primarily through raffles and silent auctions of the baskets. The raffle will occur on stage while nearing the end of the contest, prior to the announcement of the winners. Silent auction sheets will be collected and winners will meet with the SML support staff for payments and to collect baskets/items. Details on disbursement of funds and amounts will be relayed by the producer to the titleholders.