

Making the lip **HIP**



Actor sees
retro style
in the return
of facial foliage

Special to the Herald News

Actor Jason Della Valle of Wayne is not afraid to flaunt his facial foliage, also known as a mustache. He would like to see such tonsorial tinsel make a comeback, and for men to wear it proudly.

By ED BEESON
Herald News

Who killed the mustache?

"We think it was Freddie Mercury," says Jason Della Valle, 25, of Wayne, meaning the late, flamboyant singer of '70s rock group Queen.

Others might suspect Col. Mustard with the razor in the lavatory.

Whoever the culprit might be, "There was a time when a mustache was the coolest thing you could do to your face," Della Valle says. That was the 1970s, a time when the mustache was "a symbol of sex," he says.

But things went downhill and by the time CBS cancelled "Magnum P.I.," which starred the bushy mustache of Tom Selleck, men's whiskers had entered their long winter of discontent.

Hair retreated from men's upper lips with the bitter disgrace of Napoleon marching out of Russia.

Jason Della Valle wants to reverse the course of men's grooming. He wants to make the mustache hip again.

near exclusive property of firefighters, porn stars and uncles, and a generation of young men has come to age not knowing the gentle touch of its bristles on the lower lip.

Della Valle wants to change that. He wants to reverse the course of men's grooming. He wants to make the mustache hip again.

Hence, "The Glorius Mustache Challenge." An aspiring actor and filmmaker who trained at New York University, Della Valle decided that if he were to revive the mustache, he must first raise awareness of its plight. He would make a documentary about the mustache in modern American culture, which he hopes will herald its revival. Filming is under

by summer for submission to festivals.

("Glorius" is purposely misspelled, Della Valle says, because he plans to follow up this documentary with a feature film about a mustachioed man named Glorius.)

He challenged 50 friends and associates, ages 17 to 30, to grow a mustache for the first time in their lives.

Della Valle and his cameraman, Michael Turco, a 22-year-old friend and magician from Wayne, filmed their progress, from stubble to 'stache.

The rules were simple: For one month leading up to last Thanksgiving, every participant would grow a mustache. Not allowed were beards, goatees or what he called "flavor tasters," those little tufts of hair below the lower lip and above the chin.

To coach them along, Della Valle, who had already grown his mustache, bestowed upon his charges inspiring words like, "Look at it like a business card." Or, "It's not the mus-