

Guitarist plays right tune in winning MTV commercial role

By Denise Burgess
Contributing Writer

A young artist, the glitz of Los Angeles, an opportunity to be recognized on the music world's mecca — MTV.

A combination that has afforded one 24-year-old a chance at grabbing the big brass ring.

Todd Pyke opens the door with a swish that coordinates with his light brown hair that reaches mid-back in a cascade. His 6-foot-4 frame carries an easy-going atmosphere.

Pyke is the winner of Washburn Guitars' "Hottest Guitarist" contest.

The competition was an open call for guitarists nationwide to prove themselves in Los Angeles with a grand prize of appearing in a Washburn commercial to air on MTV.

The contest started with 40 entries, was whittled down to 14, then to six, over three weekends. The fourth and final weekend was "free-form" competition that decided first through third places.

"We played over tapes that did not have vocals or a lead guitar. Then, during the free form, we were handed brand-new Washburn guitars never

played on before," Pyke anxiously recalls of the moment of truth.

"Some guys were doing flames but I concentrated on feeling and really tried to communicate."

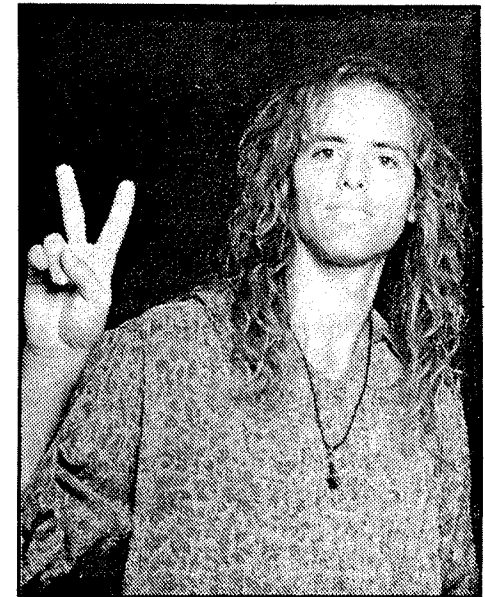
Pyke returns to Los Angeles next week to record his commercial. He has been assured his name will be mentioned in the commercial that includes his creative input.

"I've never been involved at this level in the corporate part of music. I've hired a lawyer and talked to agents," says Pyke as he rubs his face, pushing a long mane back and shaking his head.

Pyke has been playing guitar since he was 8, and now pursues his dreams because, he says, "My love (is) music and it is the only way I know how to make money."

If activity breeds prosperity, Pyke is in the plus column. He is an instructor at Guitars West in San Marcos, plays with the band "Deja Vu" at Ponders in Escondido, entertains the brunch crowd at Kiosk Cafe in Del Mar on Sundays, and does studio work for movie soundtracks, including the surfing movie, "Life's A Beach."

Pyke believes he owes a great deal



Todd Pyke is hoping he can turn victory in a guitar contest into a career in the music industry.

to his current producer, Arno Kimsey at Midy By The Sea studios, and has a short-term goal of putting together an original project.

Long term, Pyke says he would like a career similar to John Lennon.

"I don't think there is any musician that wouldn't want a career like that," he adds.

Pyke is very philosophical about his music and the upcoming publicity.

"I want to bring a message to the world through my music and make a contribution. This commercial could make anything from a record contract to just a flash in the pan."