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SIDETRACK

Sunday Funday Presidents' Day Onesie Day, Sun., February 19.

Photos by Jed Dulanias

Academy Awards, Sun., Feb. 26

Drink in the glitz and glamour of the xxth Annual Academy Awards this Sunday. Among the many viewing options around town are:

—**Sofia Hosts the Oscars at North End**, 3733 N. Halsted St. Red Capret commentary beginning at 6:30 pm. Night features Oscar trivia with prizes and beer and drink specials. Hosted by the indomitable Sofia Saffire.

—**Center on Halsted's A Night With Oscar party**, 3656 N. Halsted St. Enjoy the Academy Awards presentation in a fun and festive atmosphere that includes cocktail service, reserved seating, buffet dinner, silent auction and a raffle drawing. Last year, this event was attended by over 300 participants and raised more than \$80,000 to support the many programs and services of Center on Halsted. Tickets available at community.centeronhalsted.org.



Northalsted Frost Fest, Feb. 25-26

Cool off in this weirdly warm February at Northalsted Frost Fest, taking place this weekend, Sat., February 25 and Sun., February 26.

Saturday brings you a Craft Beer Festival, featuring over 40 craft brews with the opportunity to sample your choice of 15 of them while dancing in their huge outdoor heated (if need be) tent.

Then on Sunday, fill your bellies with the fourth annual Soup Walk, featuring soups from Northalsted's finest restaurants which can be sampled at different retail locations along Halsted and Broadway.

For more info, including ticket information, visit www.northalsted.com/events/frost-fest/.

Photos from 2015's Frost Fest by Anthony Meade.



the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Mercadito's 'Amor por Favor'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

As most of you are aware, millions of people celebrated their love for each other last week during Valentine's Day (which some might say is over-commercialized).

In keeping with that special day, **Mercadito** (108 W. Kinzie St.; MercaditoRestaurants.com), on Feb. 13, hosted "Amor por Favor"—an event that mixed education, food, cocktails and a few



Grilled New York strip and poached lobster at Mercadito.

Photo by Andrew Davis

free bottles of Jose Cuervo tequila.

Mercadito mixologist Paul Tanguay provided a bit of information about tequila, including its origins, and quizzed attendees (providing a few free bottles to people who answered his ques-

tions correctly). Jose Cuervo spokesperson Dustin Miller was the special guest.

However, the evening was also about Jose Cuervo cocktails (including the wonderfully refreshing V9, which includes blanco, pineapple, ginger, super greens and lime).

Chef Aldo Ayala made some delicious dishes (including some that even converted my dining companion). Vientre de puerco featured herbarinatd pork Belly, roasted sweet potato, cinnamon, honey, chile guajillo and microgreens. We also greatly liked carne y langosta, which combined grilled New York strip and poached lobster.

Mercadito has these experiential dinners monthly, with the upcoming dinner "Feliz Primavera" on Monday, March 20, 6-9 p.m. Chef Patricio Sandoval will prepare dinner, and the five-course menu will be paired with Fidencio mezcal. Tickets are \$75; visit <https://www.mercaditorestaurants.com/experiential-dinners/>.

Note: Restaurant profiles/events are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.

News items

—Coinciding with the end of Chicago's Restaurant week, more than 20 Andersonville restaurants have signed on for Andersonville's first official neighborhood restaurant week, continuing through Feb. 26. Some of the participants will include Hamburger Mary's, Big Jones, Andersonville Brewing, Vincent, Appellation/Pastoral, Lalibela Ethiopian and Replay Andersonville. See Andersonville.org.

—Celebrity chef Rick Bayless, known for his show Mexico: One Plate at a Time, closed his Chicago restaurants Feb. 16 in solidarity with staff who wish to participate in demonstrations called "A Day Without Immigrants," CBS Chicago noted. "For three decades, we've been a place that has welcomed, respected and promoted our immigrant staff, friends and restaurant family," Bayless said on his website. Bayless closed Frontera Grill, Topolobampo, Xoco and Fonda Frontera.



BILLY Masters

"Every mother I knew went to work pregnant. Black mothers had a baby in the break room and went back to work."—**DL Hughley** on Beyoncé's Grammy performance. I must agree that's a lot of fuss over someone leaning back in a chair!

Did you have a happy Valentine's Day? **Colton Haynes** did. And he went public with news that he's got a boyfriend. PHEW—and we were all so worried about him! Because I know you're interested, Colton's beau is Jeff Leatham—and if you're anything like me, what you read was "Jeff Leatherman!" Can't you just see Colton lying in a sling with a ball gag in his mouth? Leatham is a florist. His bio (you didn't expect Haynes to be dating someone without a bio, did you?) says, "Jeff has been creating a sensation with his floral designs and installations since he first began working with flowers at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills." Now I'm thinking Jeff is the one with the ball gag!

Something that truly was groundbreaking when it first hit the stage in 1982 was **Harvey Fierstein's** Torch Song Trilogy. The show is poised to return off-Broadway next season in a 35th-anniversary production starring **Michael Urie**. But it won't be the same ol' show. Fierstein has given director **Moises Kaufman** "a newly edited text that reconceived the way I want the story told." The plan is to now call the play Torch Song. Perhaps Arnold will now say, "No wire hangers, EVER!"

Plans for a reboot of the '80s sudser **Dynasty** are progressing. The CW green-lit filming a pilot that, at this point, does not include any of the original cast. The story remains the same: a secretary named Cristal (note the spelling) marries her wealthy boss, Blake, and clashes with his bratty daughter, Fallon. To stress diversity, which is de rigeur these days, Cristal is a feisty Latina, and Jeff Colby (from a rival family) is African-American.

I just spent a wonderful evening with **Matthew Morrison** and **Seth Rudetsky** in Fort Lauderdale. It took place at the venerable Parker Playhouse, which, on that night, celebrated its 50th anniversary—and I bet many of the people in the audience were there on opening night! The evening, under the aegis of impresario **Mark Cortale**, was quite fabulous. I have enormous fondness for Matt, having known him since Hairspray—he was and is the ONLY Link Larkin in my book. With his stunning looks, smooth moves and glorious vocals, he's an old-fashioned, all-around entertainer who held the capacity audience in the palm of his hand. As usual, Rudetsky was an incomparable host and kept the show moving effortlessly and expertly. The series continues April 1 with the amazing Andrea Martin. Grab your tix now at ParkerPlayhouse.com.

When **Judy Garland** died in 1969, she was buried in Ferncliff Mausoleum in Hartsdale, New York. That decision was made by her then-husband **Mickey Deans**. However, all of the Garland-Minnelli-Luft kids live in Southern California and



Billy enjoyed a recent event with **Matthew Morrison** (above) and **Seth Rudetsky**.

Photo by Brian Bowen-Smith

had no interest in spending eternity in Westchester County. After years of negotiations, Judy was moved from Crypt 31, Unit 9 at Ferncliff to what is now being called the Judy Garland Pavilion at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. This cannot be good news for one big fan from California. A few years ago, he made a pilgrimage to Garland's grave and found out that an adjacent plot was available. He paid \$15,500 so he could be buried by his idol. Perhaps he can get a spot near the Pavilion!

Speaking of Garland, there's a new book coming out that contains explosive details about her life. Third husband **Sid Luft** had not finished his memoirs when he died in 2005. Although their marriage ended in divorce in 1965, Sid is described as "chief conservator of the Garland legacy until his death." The manuscript, *Judy and I: My Life with Judy Garland*, has been completed and will be released March 1. In it, Sid discusses Judy being molested by Munchkins, her drug and alcohol abuse, her numerous suicide attempts and other juicy tidbits.

In what continues an unprecedented string of weekly nude celebrity videos, this week's "Ask Billy" question comes from Stan in Los Angeles: "Do you have **Danny Wood's** video? I've seen some of the stills, but the clip has been deleted from everywhere I've checked."

Because I know some of you are wondering,

Bourbon Halsted
Rue Bourbon Rue Halsted

Mardi Gras at **SIDETRACK**
FACE & BODY PAINTING!
DANCERS!
BEADS!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24
GLOW PARTY
DANCE FROM 9PM-2AM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25
MASQUERADE PARTY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28
FAT TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY MARCH 8
DANCE
TO YOUR FAVORITE POP & DRAG QUEEN VIDEOS!
LIP SYNC
TO WIN FUN PRIZES!
DRAG BY DIDA RITZ, ALEXIS BEVELS & THE VIXEN
HOSTED BY DIXIE LYNN CARTWRIGHT
9PM TIL 2AM
NO COVER

RuPaul's DRAG RACE WATCH SEASON 9 WITH US THIS MARCH!

"Who the hell is Danny Wood?," he's a member of NKOTB—otherwise known to those of us over 40 as New Kids on the Block. Last week, a video of him sitting back in a chair and masturbating while chatting online with someone surfaced. Why well-known people do this is a mystery to moi—I would never be so foolhardy. Once the video leaked, Danny got his people to have it squelched by threatening to sue. But I laugh in the face of such threats. I laughed at **Colin Farrell**, so I'm certainly laughing at Danny Wood—and that's a lot of wood to laugh at, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When Danny is hangin' tough (to say nothing of simply hung), it's definitely time to end yet another column. I'm celebrating President's Day down in Florida. While people are praying at Mar-a-Lago, people around me are on their knees for a different reason. You can get in on the fun at BillyMasters.com—the site that answers all your prayers. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before we get a video of Colton's rosebud! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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