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weekly nightlife section in



# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### Benny's Chop House; mayor honors chefs

BY ANDREW DAVIS

**Benny's Chop House** (444 N. Wabash Ave.; [BennysChopHouse.com/](http://BennysChopHouse.com/)) is a deceptive spot.

The steakhouse has a distinctly upper-crust feel, from the menu (more on that later) to the stately decor—and one might expect a haughty atmosphere. However, it's as welcoming as the corner diner where one might get a slice of apple pie, a cup of coffee and a server who calls you "hon."

Hostesses greet diners with non-plastic smiles, and staffers (including Director of Operations Mitchell Schmieding and Chef Gaetano Ascione) mingle among diners with hellos, stories—and checks on how patrons like the food/drinks.

And the food... Ascione certainly knows what he's doing—and here's hoping he doesn't

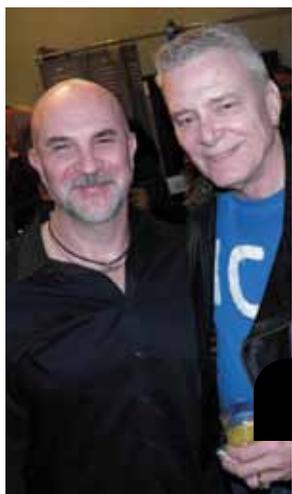


Carrot cake at Benny's Chop House.  
PR photo

change a thing (or much) in the near future. Even something such as nachos are elevated, as the blue chips are dotted with jalapeno and chop-house bacon (and this dish was actually one of my favorite of the night). The arancini were delicious, as were the petite crab cakes and oysters Rockefeller (and I'm not even a fan of the shellfish).

I was fortunate enough to sample a Benny's beef tasting—including the Japanese Tajima Kobe, A5 filet, which didn't even need a knife to cut. However, one can't go wrong with the USDA prime natural filet mignon or the prime dry-aged, bone-in ribeye.

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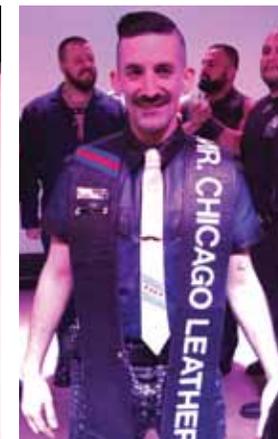


## FULL KIT GEAR

Happy third anniversary! Thursday, January 25.  
Photos by Kirk Williamson



## Mr. Chicago Leather '18



Stitch (above) was chosen from a field of six contestants as **Mr. Chicago Leather (MCL) 2018**. Stitch will go on to represent Chicago at this year's International Mr. Leather (IML), now in its 40th year.

The contest was held in the theater at **Leather Archives & Museum**, Saturday, January 27. For those who could not get tickets to the sold-out event, a simulcast was shown at **Touche**, which sponsored the contest as well.

Speeches during the event on the topics of community service and leather brother/sisterhood were given by IML 2017 Ralph Bruneau—who also served as one of the judges—and outgoing MCL Daddy G. Contest organizer David Boyer presented Joey McDonald with the annual Chuck Windemuth Mentorship Award. John Pandal returned from England once again to emcee the show.

The contest was followed by a raucous Victory Dance at Touche.

Photos by Kirk Williamson



Left: IML 2017 Ralph Bruneau. Center: MCL 2018 Stitch (center) flanked by eight former MCLs. Right: Joey McDonald (left) receives the Chuck Windemuth Award from David Boyer.



## TOUCHE

Nice to "meat" the MCL '18 judges and contestants, Friday, January 26.  
Photos by Kirk Williamson



## BILLY Masters

"This is a détente, ladies and gentlemen."—**Patti LuPone's** first words on the mike when she showed up to rehearse the tribute to **Andrew Lloyd Webber** for the Grammy Awards. We hear they even hugged!

Last week, everyone was abuzz about 14 semi-naked Russian air cadets in their underwear. The situation began when cadets at the Ulyanovsk Institute of Civil Aviation made a video to the song "Satisfaction," by Benny Benassi. Apparently the original video of the 2002 Italian dance hit featured scantily clad women doing construction work. Back in 2013, British Army officers made a parody video of song. But in this new Russian version, the scantily clad Soviets strut through the halls, engage in some twerking and suggestively devour fruit. In short order, an official condemnation was released. "Frivolous dances in underwear in the institute's uniform cap on the territory of the aviation university are unacceptable"—which I bet sounded a whole lot better in the original Russian. The head of the campus said, "I honestly do not want to comment on this disgusting behavior of cadets. To be honest, I must sit and digest what I've seen." It should be noted that a good source of potassium is bananas.

Within hours, the video disappeared from the web and the lads were threatened with expulsion—which I thought was Phase Two of the Clinique regime! And then the craziest thing happened—thousands of people came to their defense and started posting their own videos. This quickly became known as the "Satisfaction Challenge," and much of the support came from within Russia itself. A group of "chic grannies" did a version. So did a group of Ukrainian swimmers. We even saw one made from a group of welders from the Urals—which sounds far more titillating than it actually is. With hundreds of thousands of hits, the Russians realized maybe a little attention to their aviation program wasn't such a bad thing. But where, oh where, can you find the video that started this craze? At BillyMasters.com, naturally.

A big story in the news was the death of Storm Chasers star **Joel Taylor** on the Atlantis Harmony Caribbean cruise. Allegedly, the death was an OD from GHB, although no official toxicology has been released. That didn't stop several revelers on the ship from contacting me, sharing some salacious tales (or, in this case, tails). Originally, it was reported that the death happened in the middle of a concert by **Olivia Newton-John**. False—but let it be known that when it's my time to go, that's how I'd like to exit ... preferably during the medley from Xanadu. We're told Taylor passed out on the dance floor and died shortly



**Storm Chasers' Joel Taylor met an untimely end.**

Photo from Storm Chasers' Facebook account

thereafter. The FBI was investigating the death since it happened on open waters, but the case was dropped after it was determined that foul play was not involved.

This was not the only incident on the cruise. Porn couple **Jesse Jackman** and **Dirk Caber** had to leave the ship in Puerto Rico. According to reports, they had a fight, Dirk got drunk and passed out. He was later found to have pneumonia and was rushed to an area hospital. It seems a cloud was hanging over this trip before it even left dock in Fort Lauderdale. Two prospective passengers were stopped from boarding when they were found to be carrying what has been described in the press as "a ton of illegal drugs on board." I'm not sure exactly how we're defining "ton" these days. Authorities confiscated 25 Ecstasy pills and a baby-powder container with 7.87 grams of ketamine. Hardly a ton—in fact, it's barely a fraction of a pound! It must be that new math all the kids are doing.

After several aborted attempts at a reboot, **Murphy Brown** is back. The show previously announced a reunion series in 2012, to coincide with the election. At the time, creator **Diane English** said, "We're having a little conversation with CBS about a few episodes, and I think it's possible. **Candice** knows about it, and we're going to talk to her more in July once she wraps her Broadway play." Alas, that didn't happen, but Diane never gave up hope (although I almost did since release of DVDs of the series stalled because of rights to the music). After 20 years, the network, the producers and the star are all on the same page and want it to happen. The one unknown is how many of the original cast members will return.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Frank in Baltimore: "What do you know about that garbage man who became a model? He's so freakin'

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hot. And I hear he's even posed nude. Do you have the photos? Is he gay?"

A gay garbage man? And I said that with my best Googie Gomez impersonation. You are obviously talking about the quite stunning **Jeff Tomsik**, who was a garbage collector in Ohio before someone discovered him. Regarding his sex life, he's predictably cagey: "I never kiss and tell, but all you need to know is I'm an honest faithful guy." And yet, I need to know SO much more! And, yes, he has posed nude. When asked about it, he says, "Well, what happens behind the scenes, stays behind the scenes." Happily, they are front and center on BillyMasters.com.

When one man's trash is another man's treasure, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Since we ran long (and I mean REALLY long), I barely have time to remind you to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that never holds back. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I learn how to say anything more than "Da!" in Russian. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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