

Robert Burns Club of Milwaukee

40+ people in high spirits (liquid and otherwise) attended the annual Robert Burns Club of Milwaukee Traditional Burns Supper held at Klemmers Williamsburg Inn in West Allis, Wisconsin on (so appropriately) Valentine's Day, February 14, 2016, since Burns is the Poet Laureate of Love. The theme of Romance continued throughout the evening.

The snow made driving particularly challenging and some freeway exits were closed. Milwaukee has been experiencing single digit and below zero weather recently. However, many are cold but few are frozen....

The menu was whiskey marinated sirloin steak or chicken a la Klemmers, with haggis (of course), tatties (of course) and neeps (of course), and shortbread cookies and peppermint ice cream sundaes for dessert. As always, vegetarian and medical options were available. At the registration table, a dish of York peppermint patties in heart shaped wrappers had the sign "Please take one. Our guests are worth a mint."

President Priscilla Kucik gave the Welcome and President's Address, welcoming all, and noting that since Robert Burns was considerate enough to be born in January, we are not experiencing the post-holiday letdown common to the rest of the world. By the end of the evening, we expect our guests to be physically and culturally nourished by the traditions of a Burns Supper.



The Selkirk Grace popularized by Robert Burns began the traditional Burns Supper.



Vice President Ian Day performed his signature dramatic rendition of Burns' "Address to a Haggis", with flying knife blades and a resounding "bethanket hums" belch.

Priscilla Kucik and Ian Day presented a joint Toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. Priscilla noted, "Where would Robert Burns been without the lassies? We would have a few nature poems in a small pamphlet." Priscilla paid tribute in words to three of the women in Burns' life --his wife Jean Armour, Agnes Mc'Lehose ("Clarinda") and Mary Campbell ("Highland Mary"). Ian Day followed each tribute in Burns' own words with the songs honoring them.

Russell and **Jessie Read** were back by popular demand to impart their wisdom to the younger generation, in the "Toast to the Lassies" and the "Lassies' Reply". Russell noted that although women are thought not to have "logic", he finds that both sexes share many of the same traits. His bonnie lassie Jessie agreed, especially that both sexes tend to multitask. Burn's fathering approximately 13 children in 11 years shows he is a master at multitasking but his wife Jean takes the prize for giving birth on the day of his funeral. Both agreed that each gender, with its idiosyncrasies and foibles, cannot live without the other, and that is what makes life fun and worthwhile.



The ever-popular raffle highlighted the Milwaukee Burns Supper and has made it possible to hold the ticket price for the last 10+ years. Like Robert Burns, many of us "suffer the supreme curse of making three guineas do the work of five". Tickets were \$1 for one, 6 for \$5, and \$10 for "as lang's yer arm" (and you can use anyone's arm). Prizes were awesome and plentiful and some guests decided to buy a second vehicle to transport all of them home.



The Caledonian dancers, a feature at Milwaukee Burns Suppers since the beginning, educated and delighted the guests on Scottish dancing as well as performing. Members and guests were encouraged to participate in the "sangs and clatter" during the meal.

Piper Tony Palese continues to be a crowd pleaser and is hosting a piping competition on March 5.

The evening always ends with the circular singing "Auld Lang Syne".

