

Burns' Night 2016

Heather? Check. Haggis? Check. Highland Pipers? Check.

While these three things contributed to the 53rd Annual Burns' Night celebration, what made the evening such a success at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston, RI were all of the folks who were there to celebrate not only Robert Burns, but Scottish culture and customs as well.



Gathering for cocktails prior to dinner, friends old and new cheerfully greeted one another, sharing fond memories and catching up on news. A sense of camaraderie pervaded the crowded foyer as attendees moved into the great hall for dinner.

After the requisite toasts to the Queen and the President, followed by the blessing, the crowd enthusiastically applauded David Ward's resounding Address to the Haggis, and happily raised their glasses in yet another toast.

Brian O'Donnelly's humorous introduction of Joe Muzzy, speaker for The Immortal Memory portion of the evening, bordered on a "roasting", but was all in good fun, and Joe graciously accepted Brian's good-hearted ribbing.

Joe's talk was both interesting and informative, as Joe focused on what inspired Burns to write his poetry. While we may be well familiar with Burns' writings, Joe really helped us see how Burns' drew his inspiration from what he knew – Scotland and its history and lore. With a nod to Burns' penchant for whisky and ale, none were too surprised to learn that love, too, inspired Robert Burns. Another toast to the bard was proposed, and people happily joined in.



The impeccable RI Highland Pipers brought the crowd to its feet! Led by pipe major Debbie Kane, the group was flawless in both their music and marching, unhampered by the performance space. Their performance included a beautifully captivating and heartfelt piece dedicated to the pipers' late, longtime leader.

The delicious meal provided by Morin's caterers was well complimented by the very generous donation of shortbread favors supplied by Walkers.



Representing a wide range of clans, colorful tartans created a cacophony of color as dancers whirled around the dance floor to the sounds of the Irish Express. Called by Joyce Dell, most of the folks present participated and the breathless participants were most grateful when the band slowed things down a bit for waltzing.

As the playing and singing of Auld Lang Syne closed the evening, one could not help but bask in the glow of having spent a delightful evening with friends and family, celebrating our Scottish heritage and culture.