

ASHoF's Annual Christmas Party enjoyed by over 100 attendees at Slabtown Aurora Armoury



More than 100 attendees enjoyed the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame's Annual Christmas Party at Slabtown Aurora Armoury on Thursday night.

ASHoF President Javed Khan reflected on the moment in the warm reception area: "It's all about celebration tonight. We're here at a historical site and I love that a military building has been preserved by the new owners in such a beautiful way. It's great to see the Hall of Famers come in. It's all about getting together. I love celebrating as much as we can with our dedicated staff. The majority of the staff are volunteers. We have 54 volunteers and it's that time of year to reflect and celebrate. That's the #1 thing I love about this event."

Resplendent in a red velvet jacket and matching Merry Christmas bow tie, Khan greeted dozens of guests who were dressed in their best festive attire to add to the holiday cheer.

They quaffed an array of Christmas cheer available at Slabtown's well-staffed bar and enjoyed a steady supply of delectable appetizers---sliders, pizza, shrimp, and sandwiches---followed by a range of desserts. The sliders were, in a word, addictive in a lovely sort of way.

Attendees enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere generated by the dulcet tones of Andre Soares and Lawrence Moule who as Take Two delivered the kind of music that melts seamlessly into the guests in the background and your drink in the foreground.

Bartender Jay Broer, who's been with Slabtown since it opened at its Town Park location, presented me with my drink of choice on a cold snowy evening. "Cider House Rules" is a cheeky concoction that connects to the literary genius of John Irving. Broer described the hot cider he was serving: "It's our Apple Cider with notes of cinnamon, cloves, and orange peel. It's real Christmas stuff. Served with brown sugar around the rim of the heated glass and an orange slice."

A warm drink on an unseasonably cold December night was a key strategy to prepare for coverage of an OJHL game in Caledon with a 7:30 puck drop in the coldest arena in Christendom.

A significant attendee who was soaking in the warm seasonal ambiance was Mayor Tom Mrakas.

A long-time advocate for sports in Aurora, Mayor Mrakas praised the ASHoF and the quality of the event at Slabtown.

"I'm here to have a great time and wish everyone well---to have a Merry Christmas. It's great to be here and to get together with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductees and volunteers. Anytime you get to interact with this community, it's always a great night."

As the Mayor suggested, it's all about the company you keep at such a function. Indeed, It was fun to chat with Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee and former New York Rangers star forward Steve Vickers, Silver Screammers documentary star and Auroran staffer Diane Buchanan, fellow Aurora Optimist Club member, ASHoF volunteer extraordinaire, and UW political science graduate Connor Logan, and Aurora Legion President Bonnie Robertson with whom I share a fondness for warm winter drinks featuring just the right amount of cinnamon.

In addition to sharing the conviviality of Christmas with that great crew, one of the features of the evening captured the Season of Giving.

Guests had the opportunity to contribute to "Hockey Ends Hunger" with all proceeds going to the Aurora Food Pantry.

Co-founded by Julian Antonini, the registered charity now aligned with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame raised over \$4,200 at its annual Hockey Game at SARC last Saturday afternoon and is only \$800 short of its \$5K goal.

All funds raised by this dynamic local organization are used to battle food insecurity a societal crisis that is magnified at this time of year.

By Jim Stewart Local Journalism Initiative Reporter