



PARTY CENTRAL

by Emily Haws

Boats on the brain at Chamber of Marine Commerce's Marine Day on the Hill reception

Former Liberal cabinet ministers David Collenette, Tony Valeri, and Stan Keyes were spotted.

Boats were on the brain at the Chamber of Marine Commerce's second Marine Day on the Hill Reception, held on Oct. 16 in the Wellington Building. Well, that and the United States' steel tariffs.

About 100 Hillites, marine commerce executives, and other guests mingled over drinks and hors-d'oeuvres for about two hours, and much of the topic of discussion was cross-border trade. A high percentage of people wore navy suits, which seemed fitting given the focus on marine transport.

While most of the industry representatives seemed pleased by the new United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA), they were also urging federal legislators to do something about the Sec. 232 steel and aluminum tariffs which U.S. President Donald Trump imposed earlier this year.

"It's still a bit of a hold-over issue that's still being [resolved]," said CMC president Bruce Burrows. The bi-national organization represents 130 stakeholders, including industrial shippers, ports, and logistics companies.

The group is also urging the government to move forward with new pilotage legislation. The 40-year-old system requires vessels to have a Canadian pilot on board in compulsory areas to guide it, which the CMC argues these costs are too expensive.

The night was the capstone event to the lobby group's Marine Day on the Hill, where it spoke to members of the House Transportation Committee and Transport Minister Marc Garneau, who gave remarks about halfway through the event. Emilie Simard, his director of communications, was also spotted.

The committee room had a great view of the Ottawa skyline, and mellow hip-hop beats filled in as background sound. Some guests also stopped to look at the rotating slideshow of photos of ports represented by the organization.

There was also a neat display of products transported by ship for guests to look at, which included durum wheat, distillery malt, iron fines, and cement powder, among others.

Party Central met Ducks Unlimited's James Brennan just in front of a display featuring the economic importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. CCF MP Erin Weir then popped into the conversation, with Mr. Brennan explaining he was invited because his organization had done some work with the CMC.

Mr. Burrows started the opening remarks, then passing the microphone to former chair Wayne Smith, and incoming chair Allister Paterson. Mr. Smith was

presented with a bottle of Speaker's Scotch for his retirement, and his wife Nancy was given a basket of flowers.

After remarks from Mr. Garneau, Liberal MP Vance Badawey, NDP MP Brian Masse, and Conservative MP Kelly Block joined for a multi-party panel on marine transportation, moderated by Mr. Burrows.

When it comes to transportation infrastructure and trade policy, it's time for MPs to "park the politics, park the partisanship, and get to work together," said Mr. Badawey, which was met with applause.

It was difficult to hear the panel both because of the speakers and because the audience decided to go back to networking. It was shushed several times during the 15-minute discussion, but to be fair, they had to stand as they listened to it.

As for having a panel at all, Mr. Burrows said it's because the CMC "wanted to do things differently."

"We thought it would be a little more interactive, a little more interesting to get more of an off-the-cuff feel from Members of Parliament," he said.

Mr. Masse slipped out shortly after the panel ended, saying he was meeting a Windsor-area friend for dinner. There was no shortage of MPs at the event, including Liberal MPs Francis Drouin, Kyle Peterson, and Sean Casey, and NDP MPs Robert Aubin and Pierre Nantel.

Former Chrétien-era transport minister David Collenette and former Liberal MP and House leader Tony Valeri, were also spotted, as was former revenue minister Stan Keyes, who is now the chair of the Hamilton Port Authority's board of directors. Transport Canada bureaucrat Donald Roussel was also there.

Industry executives in attendance included St. Marys Cement/Votorantim Cimentos's Jim Reznik and the Town of Goderich's Chip Wilson (the community has a port on Lake Huron). Fertilizer Canada president Garth Whyte chatted about Canada's potash exports, which was one of the products in the jar display.

Several groups of political staffers sat in the windowsills and munched on popcorn or seared beef served on slices of cucumber, drinks in hand.

The libations were mostly run-of-the-mill wine or beer, but those looking for something more adventurous were treated to a dark n' stormy made with ginger beer and Newfoundland Screech Rum. It was spicy with a bit of a sweet aftertaste, served with lime and lots of ice.

Yours truly feasted on the cornmeal and canola cake with salted caramel, while the fish cakes with dill aioli sauce and the smoked duck, also served on mini toasted baguettes, were also tasty.

As guests headed out the door they were treated to a gift bag containing a pair of earbuds, some booklets, and a foam ship. Overall, it was a nautical night.

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A nautical evening in Ottawa

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Former Liberal MP Tony Valeri, Elizabeth Wilfert, her husband and ex-Liberal MP Bryon Wilfert, Hamilton Port Authority chair and former Liberal Stan Keyes, and Larissa Penn.



James Brennan of Ducks Unlimited.



Lian Al-Qadomi, Asha Jibril, and David Currie.



About 100 Hillites and marine commerce execs mingled.



Chamber of Marine Commerce president Bruce Burrows.



Liberal MP Vance Badawey and Terence Bowles of the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.



Mr. Keyes and the Chamber of Marine Commerce's Wayne Smith.



Liberal MP Don Rusnak and Bloc Québécois MP Michel Boudrias.



Canada's federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau.



Panel participants: Mr. Badawey, NDP MP Brian Masse, and Conservative MP Kelly Block.



Ms. and Mr. Wilfert with Mr. Valeri.



Former Chrétien-era transport minister David Collenette.



NDP MPs Pierre Nantel and Robert Aubin.



Mr. Valeri speaks as Mr. Garneau listens.