



HEARD ON THE HILL

by Shruti Shekar

Luck is on the Hill as MPs celebrate Irish Day



Liberal MP James Maloney turned Centre Block green on June 12, hosting the first ever Irish Day on the Hill. Photograph courtesy of James Maloney's office

Liberal MP **James Maloney** hosted the first Irish Day on the Hill on June 12 and it was a pretty huge hit.

Mr. Maloney, who is the chair of the Canada-Ireland Friendship Group, said he came up with the idea of hosting an event on the Hill a couple of years ago, but time seemed right given he is looking to introduce his motion to declare March as Irish Heritage Month.

That motion, M-139, has been on the notice paper since May 30, 2017 and, if moved forward, it would "recognize the important contributions that Irish-Canadians have made to building Canada, and to Canadian society in general."

"In conjunction with that, I've also been working with the Irish community in Toronto for a while and I wanted to celebrate Irish heritage on the Hill," he said in a phone interview the day after the event.

The party was organized with the help of **Jim Kelly**, the Irish ambassador to Canada, and his family. MPs and Senators of all stripes attended the shindig that was hosted in Centre Block.

Mr. Maloney said he "deliberately" held the event outside of the month of March so it wasn't considered St. Patrick's Day part two.

"I'm going to continue to do that going forward, the reason being the point of the evening is not to have another St. Patrick's Day, but the point of the evening is to celebrate the great contributions the Irish community has made over generations in Canada," he said. "It's not about green beer and everything else that is associated with St. Patrick's Day."

Mr. Maloney said the party was topped off with Guinness beer, and oysters were flown in from Ireland, specifically from Galway and County Waterford.

He noted that NDP MP **Daniel Blaikie** and Conservative MP **Kevin Waugh** both spoke at the event.

Spotted at the event were Conservative MPs **Matt Jeneroux**, **John Barlow**, Liberal

Senator **Terry Mercer**, Indigenous Services Minister **Jane Philpott**, and Liberal MP **Brenda Shanahan**.

"We also had a strong representation from the [Irish-Canadian] community from Ottawa and people from Toronto," Mr. Maloney said. "There were also so many local sports and cultural organizations, and the Irish Chamber of Commerce all participating."

Trudeau pumps up top donors ahead of 2019



Reporters were blocked off at a Laurier Club event last summer, pictured, and nothing has really changed in a year to allow for more access. This year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau encouraged donors to grow the club in a push before for the 2019 election. *The Hill Times file photograph*

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** encouraged Laurier Club members to speak to friends and neighbours about the Liberal Party and its accomplishments in an effort to motivate the party's highest donors to become fundraisers ahead of the 2019 election.

"We know this is a big summer, this is a summer in which we'll be working hard and also recharging our batteries for that great last sprint over the next less than 500 days until the next election," he told party faithful at the annual Laurier Club Summer Reception and Garden Party, held June 18 at the Canadian War Museum. "And I know that all of you will be super active on the ground across the country as well."

The event is held in appreciation of donors who contribute \$1,500 or more annually, or \$750 if you're under the age of 35.

During his remarks, Mr. Trudeau also suggested the Conservative Party was still **Stephen Harper's** party, and separately added Canadians must reject the populist and nationalist movements sweeping other countries. His wife, **Sophie Grégoire Trudeau**, and Liberal Party president **Suzanne Cowan** introduced him.

Journalists were given access to Liberal Party fundraisers in April 2017 after negative media coverage about so-called "cash-for-access" fundraisers, which saw donors shell out upwards of \$1,000 in exchange for closed-door access to cabinet ministers.

It seems nothing has changed since journalists called out the party for the new restricted access, as media attending the War Museum event were still only allowed to cover the remarks and had to stay within a cordoned-off area, accompanied by an escort.

All-party Aviation Caucus lifts off



Showing off some style at the new Aviation Caucus were, from left, incoming Canadian Federal Pilots Association national chair **Mark Laurence**, outgoing national chair **Greg McConnell**, Conservative MP **Ted Falk**, Liberal MP **Stephen Fuhr**, Conservative MP **Jim Eglinski**, Conservative MP **Todd Doherty**, Conservative MP **Dane Lloyd**, Conservative MP **Kelly Block**, Conservative MP **Bob Benzen**, Liberal MP **Larry Bagnell**, and Conservative MP **Tony Clement**. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

In the aftermath of former Alberta premier **Jim Prentice's** death in a small plane crash in October 2016, MPs from several parties have created the Aviation Caucus to look into aircraft safety regulations.

Conservative MP **Jim Eglinski** and Liberal MP **Stephen Fuhr** are the co-chairs of the group that is planning to study the shortage of qualified pilots in September after the House comes back from the summer break.

During the first meeting on June 13, the Transportation Safety Board was invited to discuss why Mr. Prentice's plane went down, according to a press release about group's formation.

TSB officials told MPs that because the small aircraft did not have a black box, a flight data recording device, they were not able to reach many conclusions about the cause of the crash. TSB officials also noted that the type of plane that Mr. Prentice was in does not go through planned inspections, and the operator had also never been inspected by Transport Canada.

Conservative MP **Todd Doherty** said the agency's findings were "scary stuff," and should concern all Canadian travellers, according to the release.

The group plans to develop policies related to recreational flying, commercial flights, and issues in the industry so that it is safer.

The Canadian Federal Pilots Association has long encouraged MPs to engage on the aviation file and its representatives were at the meeting.

Mr. Prentice was a Conservative MP from 2004 to 2010 and held several portfolios in former prime minister **Stephen Harper's** cabinet, including minister of Indian affairs and northern development, industry, and environment.

He left federal politics in 2010 and was elected Alberta's Progressive Conservative

premier in September 2014, but before that was the senior executive vice-president and vice-chairman of CIBC.

Prior to his death in the crash that killed three others, he was an adviser at the private-equity firm Warburg Pincus and spent five months as a global fellow at the Wilson Center's Canada Institute in Washington, D.C.

Ryerson University creates centre to protect whistleblowers

Ryerson University's Centre for Free Expression created a new initiative that will aim to protect whistleblowers and create a safe space for future whistleblowers.

David Hutton, one of the members of the CFE Whistleblowing Initiative steering committee, said in a phone interview that the initiative was founded in March and helps whistleblowers that are "putting themselves at risk to protect others."

"Our goal is to help them," he said. According to the centre's website, the

initiative will "enable Canadians to live and work with integrity and to combat misconduct that may threaten the well-being of our communities and our democracy."

There is limited whistleblower protection in Canada, and Ontario is the only province with laws that pay people to come forward about violations to securities laws, according to a June 2017 *Yahoo Finance* article. Those rules include offering protection and rewards based on the degree of the information that is leaked.

"Ontario [has] actually the best whistleblower law in Canada because it prohibits retaliation, it lets you go confidential and it does have the prospect of a reward," **Stephen Kohn**, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney, said to *Yahoo*.

The CFE initiative aims to improve those laws not only in Ontario but also across Canada. Improved laws would provide protection and "encourage adoption of effective organizational whistleblower protection policy and procedures in both public and private sectors."

Mr. Hutton said that the centre is also working on an advice program that would offer "practical help," like connecting individuals who choose to become whistleblowers with lawyers.

"They may need legal representation and depending on what the issue is... there are lawyers willing to help on a pro-bono basis," he said, adding the advice program is still being finalized.

Others on the steering committee include lawyer **Peter Jacobson**, **Anna Myers**, executive director of the Whistleblowing Internal Network, **James Turk**, director for the Centre for Free Expression, and lawyer **Sandy Boucher**.

—With files from *Emily Haws*
sshakar@hilltimes.com
@shruti_shekar