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HILL LIFE & PEOPLE

Search for animal life on the Hill proves lucrative

Transport Minister Marc Garneau shows us what Montreal looked like to him while aboard the Challenger. MPs sport yellow roses in support of finding a cure for cystic fibrosis.



Liberal MPs Kate Young and Will Amos, left, and NDP MP Richard Cannings, a biologist by training, centre right, inspect a bumble bee discovered during a nature search in the Hill precinct last week. Photograph courtesy of the Canadian Wildlife Federation

By MARCO VIGLIOTTI

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The Hill is bursting with life, and not all of it is human.

Throngs of Hillites combing through the Parliamentary Precinct last Thursday as part of a national biology contest found 137 different species of animals in the air, water, and on land, according to the Canadian Wildlife Federation, a conservation charity which organized the event.

The nature search on the Hill was one of dozens of "Bioblitz" events organized by the CWF to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Confederation. They encouraged Canadians to identify the number of species they share their cities with, to get a national snapshot of the country's wildlife.

The Bioblitz on the Hill saw two teams, made up of representatives of various political parties and non-partisan parliamentary staff, spend 45

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The bioblitz on the Hill saw two teams, made up of representatives of various political parties and non-partisan parliamentary staff, spend 75 minutes making their way through the surrounding area in a friendly competition to identify the most species.

Among the interesting finds were a barely visible freshwater plankton, a yellow-banded bumble bee, which is listed as a species of special concern, and a butternut tree along the escarpment of the Hill, according to the CWF.

NDP MP and biologist **Richard Cannings** (South Okanagan-West Kootenay, B.C.) came closest among those who tried to guess the number of species that would be identified ahead of time, estimating 167.

The CWF is also inviting Canadians to play along by guessing the total species identified under the project as of Oct. 31, the end of the scheduled Bioblitz events.

More shuffling of the public service

Deputy clerk to the Privy Council **Serge Dupont** is retiring after more than three decades as a civil servant.

The announcement came Friday as the Prime Minister's Office rolled out new staffing changes to the upper ranks of the public service.

Mr. Dupont joined the federal public service in 1983 and has served as a deputy minister for the Natural Resources department and as an assistant deputy minister with Finance Canada, in addition to other senior positions.

"I enjoyed working with Serge very much," Conservative MP and party leadership candidate **Lisa Raitt** (Milton, Ont.) [wrote](https://twitter.com/lraitt/status/865651309512318978) (<https://twitter.com/lraitt/status/865651309512318978>) on Twitter in reaction to the news.

"He is smart, diligent, and gives good counsel. I wish him the best in his retirement."

Mr. Dupont will be replaced by **Andrea Lyon**, who is currently serving as deputy minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

In turn, Ms. Lyon will be succeeded in her position by **Chris Forbes**, the associate deputy minister of Finance Canada. The duo will start in their new positions on May 29.

In other news, **Guyaine Roy** has been promoted to associate deputy minister of the Canadian Heritage department. She started in the new role on May 23.

Ms. Roy previously served as assistant deputy minister, cultural affairs, with the Heritage department.

Grit MP rings in his birthday on the Hill

Liberal MP **Sean Casey** (Charlottetown, P.E.I.) celebrated his birthday last week in style.

As Parliament was in session, Mr. Casey said on Facebook that he spent his 54th birthday on Wednesday on the Hill, with his phone beginning to vibrate at 6:07 a.m. with "kind, thoughtful people sending wishes."

Upon arriving at his Hill office, he saw his office door plastered with paper birthday greetings that he said his staffers denied responsibility for.

"Subsequent investigation has led me to narrow the suspect list to a certain Minister of The Crown," he wrote on Facebook.

Mr. Casey is the parliamentary secretary to Heritage Minister **Mélanie Joly** (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.).

He said that his parents also called him to serenade him with a birthday song, as did his colleagues in the House, while he was also treated to a rendition in his honour during a Hill reception later in the evening hosted by the The Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada that featured popular East Coast rockers Sloan.

Minister Joly and others, he said, were "kind enough" to take to the podium at the SOCAN event and announce to all that it was his birthday.

"Between the text messages, the emails, the phone calls, the social media posts, and the kind words spoken directly to me, I am getting more attention than is warranted for my 54th birthday," Mr. Casey posted.

"Thanks again, everyone. It was a fun day."

Mr. Casey was one of only two non-incumbent Liberal MPs elected in the 2011 vote.

His wife, **Kathleen**, represents a Charlottetown riding in the P.E.I. provincial legislature.

Garneau shares out-of-this-world pic of Montreal

Montreal is commonly regarded as one of Canada's most picturesque cities, thanks largely to its masterful blend of new and old, of Europe and the Americas.

But leave it to the transport minister to upstage all of our Instagram-worthy snapshots of the city with his own literally out-of-this-world photo.

Remarking on the 375th anniversary of Montreal, celebrated on Wednesday, **Marc Garneau** (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Que.) tweeted a photo of Montreal as he saw it from space in 1984.

“Montreal has so many beautiful landscapes to appreciate. However, none can compare to the one I witnessed in 84,” he posted on the social media website.

A captain in the Canadian Navy, Mr. Garneau became the first Canadian in outer space when he travelled aboard the Challenger in October 1984.

He left the Navy in the late 1980s to join the Canadian Astronaut Program, and became the president of the Canadian Space Agency in 2001.

Montreal from outer space in 1984. Photo courtesy of the Twitter account of Marc Garneau

The House goes yellow

Parliamentarians last week donned colourful accoutrements to show their support for the fight against a fatal genetic disease.

MPs of all political stripes donned yellow roses on Wednesday to express solidarity and support for those living with cystic fibrosis and to support efforts to find a cure.

In fact, it was tough to find an MP on either side of the Chamber not sporting a yellow rose.

Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Minister **Navdeep Bains** posted on Twitter a [photo](https://twitter.com/NavdeepSBains/status/864925262861008897) (<https://twitter.com/NavdeepSBains/status/864925262861008897>) of himself and several members of the Liberal caucus donning the colourful lapel accessories, including Natural Resources Minister **Jim Carr** (Winnipeg South Centre, Man.), Government House Leader **Bardish Chagger** (Waterloo, Ont.), and veteran MPs Judy **Sgro** (Humber River-Black Creek, Ont.) and **Joyce Murray** (Vancouver Quadra, B.C.).

Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains tweeted this photo last week of himself and his Liberal colleagues, including, Government House Leader Bardish Chagger, third from left, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr, third from right, and MPs Judy Sgro, second from right, and Joyce Murray, far right, sporting yellow roses in support of the fight against cystic fibrosis. Photograph courtesy of the Twitter account of Navdeep Bains

Conservative MP **Kerry Diotte** (Edmonton-Griesbach, Alta.) also posted a photo on Twitter of himself and colleague **Scott Reid** (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, Ont.) sporting the yellow roses, saying he was “glad to support” him in his fight against cystic fibrosis.

Mr. Reid (<http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca/blog/cf-awareness-day-on-parliament-hill/>) was credited by Cystic Fibrosis Canada (CF Canada), a charitable group dedicated to finding a cure, for organizing the annual Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Day on Parliament Hill last year.

NDP MP **Linda Duncan** (Edmonton-Strathcona, Alta.) also posted a photo (<https://twitter.com/LindaDuncanMP/status/864902140648714240>) on Twitter of her and her party colleagues **Jenny Kwan** (Vancouver East, B.C.) and **Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet** (Hochelaga, Que.) sporting yellow roses.

May is cystic fibrosis awareness month.

In recognition, CF Canada launched a campaign (<http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca/about-us/cystic-fibrosis-canada>) earlier this month to ensure Canadians are aware of the significant challenges around access to drugs many cystic fibrosis sufferers are facing.

The campaign seeks to draw attention to lack of access in Canada to Orkambi, a drug that CF Canada says has potential to change lives for sufferers. It includes a petition to provincial governments to make the drug accessible to those who need it through provincial coverage plans, as well as an email campaign, and a series of advertisements and stories, according to CF Canada.

Liberal MP **Chris Bittle** (St. Catharines, Ont.) rose in the House on Wednesday to recognize May as cystic fibrosis month and to commemorate CF Canada and countless others groups and tireless volunteers working to find a cure.

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The Hill Times

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