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Tackling the issues facing the industry at CMA Shipping 2014

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By [Barry Parker](#)
from New York

The Connecticut Maritime Association's "Shipping 2014: Speed" event, really three days of non-stop conferencing, a trade show, seminars, private meetings and dinners, is now history. The

conference organisers, led by Jim Lawrence, have reported record numbers of attendees—certainly borne out by the massive crowds at the Stamford venue about one hour outside of midtown New York.

The culmination of the week was the Gala dinner, attended by nearly 800 shipping professionals, financiers, lawyers and others, where the new Commodore [Scorpio Group's Robert Bugbee, was honoured.](#)

At a high level, important themes voiced at the conference show signs of cross-currents. A number of industry leaders, including former Intercargo chair Nicky Pappadakis and Bimco's current president John Denholm, railed against the seemingly excessive, and inconsistent, heaps of regulation being dumped on the maritime industry. In adjacent presentations, the audience heard from Marshall Islands' Clay Maitland, in a refrain repeated annually, that the shipping industry is invisible to the masses and that the industry profile needs to be raised, which, to my view, necessitates regulation.

Sitting in the audience, riveted (sometimes) by the presentations for three days a wide range of views were expressed by the panelists. Notably ABS ceo Chris Wiernicki, and DNV GL's maritime head Tor Svensen, both said that regulations would be a force driving ship design in the next decade, and beyond. Wiernicki decried the prescriptive style regulations and stressed the importance of big data, while Svensen noted that fuel availability and pricing would also play a major role in the changing face of shipping.

The one regulator in the sessions, US Coast Guard's Admiral Joe Servidio, stressed the importance of watching for low

probability incidents that might have a big impact, an idea that ties in to Wiernicki's views on data analysis.

Energy was a theme throughout the plenary sessions, h with uncertainties surrounding scrubbers, enabling higher sulfur heavy fuel to be consumed), LNG fuelling, and low sulfur distillates discussed with great passion, but without any firm conclusions.

The best of the major sessions concerned Green shipping (discussing the money angles, as well as the environmental benefits) and the Role of Media. The "Green team" included entrepreneur James Rhodes, whose Magnuss Ltd has created a commercially viable sail for cargo vessels. Also on the panel was Alistair Pettigrew, from Blue Communications, an advisor on shipping matters to the Carbon War Room, who has figured out ways of providing finance for more sustainable shipping. They were joined on the panel by Pappadakis, and DNV GL's Svensen, who sees environmental matters as a major determinant of future ship designs.

Teekay's Jonathan Anthony, a communications expert, showed how social media has transformed Teekay- a company that has truly embraced the flattening impacts on its organizational structure, using social media tools to dramatically enhance internal communications. MTI Networks' Darrell Wilson, meanwhile emphasized the dangers of unauthorized postings by crew, notably during casualties or pollution incidents.

Looking forward is a popular conference pastime. As participants were counting down the time until the big Bugbee-fest, the final afternoon session- "The Future of Shipping" again, a topic reprised annually fell flat, simply because it was trying to cover too much ground. This was despite being skillfully moderated by Dagfinn Lunde, as the topics veered from market prospects, to matters of crewing and labour, to the scourge of piracy.

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