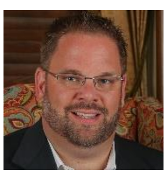
November 2023 Live Event-AICA Fall Roundtable Industry Track Panel #9; “Independent Board Members and Lenders to Traditional CEFs”

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

John Cole Scott, CIO at Closed-End Fund Advisors and Founder of CEFData.com, moderates the ninth and final panel of the AICA November 15th, 2023 live event; “Independent Board Members and Lenders to Traditional CEFs”. Read the transcript below to hear the discussion among Mr. Scott and panelists Moritz Sell, Independent Director, Tom Hunerson, Independent Director, and Shane Kein, Managing Director & General Manager, Head of Financial Institutions with Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.


John Cole Scott


Moritz Sell


Tom Hunerson


Shane Kein

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John Cole Scott: This is the first time we’ve done this panel, but as I thought about closed-end funds, my father spent 27 years as an independent board member as an institutional investor in the funds, and I thought it’d be wonderful to build a whole panel of just independent board members. But sometimes my wishes don’t happen and I can only get two good board members, so I added another wonderful participant, a lender to closed-end funds. Which is another unique perspective because closed-end funds, especially credit funds, get lent to, and those people care about getting their money back too.

All right, I’d love for you guys to start, introduce yourselves with a little flavor of your background in the universe of closed-end funds and how people should take your comments.

Moritz Sell: I guess I'll start, we'll start from this end. Moritz Sell, I started my career in closed-end funds in mid-1990s, I was running a proprietary trading desk at a German bank and I had the observation that there were several dozen US listed closed-end funds investing in single country European countries and they were all at massive discounts, 20-25% was not unheard of. I think Phil had probably run his first activist campaign, I had sort of noted that. I think we met on the emerging Germany fund, right?

Yeah, I became the largest investor in single-country European funds and we made a lot of money closing those discounts. I also ran some proxy contests, I got elected to some boards, which I guess instilled some fear in some other management companies when I turned up on the shareholder register or just turned up to a meeting, and sometimes even before launching a proxy contest they would simply liquidate in front of me. It was all happy days.

I guess at the very end of that I got involved, I was the largest shareholder of an abrdn Australia Equity Fund, and even though the board didn't want me on the fund, the founder of abrdn was wise enough to convince them to put me on that fund. Rather than liquidating that, I basically said, "Why don't we try a managed distribution policy?" A 10% managed distribution, I think it was one of the first equity funds to do that. And sure enough, low and behold, we went from a 20-something percent discount to a 10% premium and they started doing at-the-moneys. Anyway, that fund is still around today and I'm still on that board.

Tom Hunersen: Hi, my name's Tom Hunersen, and I'm not really involved with Moritz, although we're both a part of the abrdn team of independent directors that help them with their various funds here in the US. Just briefly, my background, I think I come from a different background than everybody else in this room. I used to run a global infrastructure advisory and origination business for an international bank. I did that for a number of years, became involved with Macquarie Bank. And Macquarie in 2005, I think was in that window of time when closed-end funds were interesting, and they saw an opportunity to do something about democratizing what was their expertise, which was infrastructure, and in particular principal ownership of airports and tunnels and things like that.

So they asked me to join that board, and we IPO'd in 2005 and had a good run. And we were recently acquired by abrdn, so I'm currently talking to you as an independent director of ASGI, which is abrdn's, Josh Duitz was talking about it this morning, but that's his fund. So my background, at the moment I do this for abrdn as an independent director. Subsequent to my time in the front office of a bank, I became involved in dealing with distressed assets and broken banks, so I did a lot of work in Ireland, I did a lot of work in Greece, and I did a lot of work fixing things, and in particular focusing on governance.

My area of interest, and I think for the purposes of this sort of a conversation, it's really not so much the portfolio management, obviously that, but also from a fund's perspective, making sure the trains run on time, and making sure you're selling what's actually written on the package, and making the fund run the way it was intended to run. We can talk more about that but that's kind of the perspective I bring.

Shane Kein: Hi, I'm Shane Kein, I head up the financial institutions group at SMBC. I've been a fund's banker for almost 30 years now, I started off my career at Bear Sterns and had a few other stops in between. I've been at SMBC for a little over 10 years now, and we concentrate on providing financing and coverage to a wide assortment of funds, whether regulated funds such as closed-end funds, open-end funds, BDCs, and unregulated funds. I know the last panel talked a little bit about BDCs, but that's something that we're spending an incredible amount of time on right now.

John Cole Scott: Great, so this is for Tom and Moritz. Independent board members deal with discounts, it comes up a lot today at this conference and discounts are terribly wide right now. As you view your role on the board, where do you discuss and how do you discuss discounts? And how do you layer in sectors, market, firm, fund? Because discounts can be normal, abnormal universal, where do you see it? Let's start with Tom first.

Tom Hunersen: It keeps me up at night. I think there's a variety of responsibilities in managing the business, and the discount is one of what you would describe as a problem for your business that you need to address. So the question from a director's perspective is, are we doing everything we can? Is there a process, and a plan, and a team, and a budget to do the things to ensure that there is a proper understanding of our proposition in the market and the perfect market theory is working?

The frustration I guess is that in all the conversations we had at Macquarie, and now at abrdn, there's a lot you can do, and there's a lot that is done. Recently the board commissioned a study to examine this very issue and to put together a professional proposal with external input, et cetera. And the conclusion from it was we're doing everything we can for the moment, and let's keep working, which isn't really satisfying.

So what I can say is, I think there are some tools available. I think your distribution policy is an obvious one that makes a difference. It may just be a passing moment difference but it does make a difference. I think things like education matter, I think coverage matters. I think the proposition that you're offering as a team, the quality of your board, all those things matter, but I am perpetually frustrated. Moritz, are you feeling differently?

Moritz Sell: Yeah, I guess, but the first point I'll make is we talk about the discount premium every board meeting, that's always top of our minds. I guess I'm lucky in that the Australia fund that I referenced before that I've been on, for most of the 15-something years I've been on that fund it's traded at a premium, so we haven't had the same stress. I'm actually on the board of FCO, which trades at a premium also, and actually I probably spend more time thinking about that.

About discounts? Sure, if it's a single digit discount I don't worry about that at all, and I think it's more important to look at the peer group and the overall state of the market. Discounts are part of closed-end funds, for investors they're interesting. So it's only if it's really at a persistently wide discount for a long period of time then that requires some action. Or if people are knocking on the door, you've got activists complaining about it, then you have to take some action, sure.

John Cole Scott: Great. So Shane, let's go back to the leverage conversations. Let's cover a little why closed-end funds use leverage and the lay of the land for leverage in the closed-end fund space.

Shane Kein: Yeah, sure. So we've heard throughout the day, almost each panel mentioned leverage, so it is fairly topical. Why do closed-end funds use leverage? It's really to enhance the overall returns of the fund, also it allows for a fund to be fully invested. So just the overall landscape of the leverage market, roughly 62% of closed-end funds do use some form of leverage. That totals about, call it $68 billion of leverage, $37 billion of that is on the taxable side, $31 billion on the muni side.

On the taxable side, of the $37 billion roughly 80% comes in the form of bank debt and repo. What we've seen over the last few years from the first half of '22 to the first half of '23, we saw a pretty massive de-leveraging on the taxable side, about $18 billion. Most of that was on the repo side, about $14 billion of that, and about $4 billion was coming from the bank debt side. The reason why the repos saw a bigger movement, it's just easier to lever that down. In terms of what types of funds, muni funds generally employ the most amount of leverage, whereas we heard earlier, equity funds probably tend to do the least amount of leverage. MLP funds, in their heyday had about $10 billion of leverage, now it's only about a billion and a half.

So the market has definitely gotten smaller over the years. You look at the bank participants, they've reduced their positions, we've reduced our positions, we've seen a lot of funds merge. We're seeing not only funds merge into each other, but we're seeing funds actually merge into BDCs, so that's something, everything's getting grayer now. I'd say that the movement into private credit, into alternatives, is something that is here to stay.

John Cole Scott: Very good. So this again is for Moritz. The shareholder base of a fund is one side of the analysis of who you represent as independent director, but also every year you do the 15(c) review. Maybe comment about how you layer those two perspectives into the work of being on a board.

Moritz Sell: I don't really think there's an interconnection between the 15(c) process and what the shareholder register looks like. In the absence of institutional shareholders that you see on the shareholder register, we don't really know who the retail investors are, we also just have to make assumptions about it. What did you want me to comment about?

John Cole Scott: With your work on the fund, talk about what you know about the shareholder base. And so like I said, it's often through the 13 filings for those roles, and then you have to make assumptions maybe by asset class or other factors for who else owns it.

Moritz Sell: It's a lot of guesswork. That's one of the great problems we have, is we don't know. Are these shares being held in taxable accounts or not? We just don't know. It's very hard.

John Cole Scott: And then as you think about the 15(c), what type of measurement stick do you use? Is it more a peer group base?

Moritz Sell: Well, yeah, at the end of the day it's about performance, and fees, and it's really about relative fee structures and relative performance, performance against benchmarks. Those are the key things that we're looking at.

John Cole Scott: Tom?

Tom Hunersen: I might just add a bit. One of the questions that's been raised in conversations over the course of the day is how do you differentiate your book from the world? I guess one of the things that we did was, this is tracking back now to Macquarie and what is now abrdn, is define ourselves as being related specifically to infrastructure. It's in the name, it's in the genes of the organization that runs that portfolio, it's in the brand, and presumably it brings something to the conversation. It also overlaps into our shareholder base, so there were a bunch of institutional investors who took an interest in us because of that, and we have an engagement model for those. So I think that differentiation makes a difference if you can create a proposition that's got its own sort of place in the spectrum.

In terms of the 15(c) process, I'm going to harp on one of my things right now; 15(c) is a big deal in an annual process run by any fund, and one of my things I think that people don't spend enough time thinking about is who's looking at the 15(c)? You actually have a very detailed document, long document, a big process to run with whoever it is that's proposing, and the question is are the people who are looking at it and reading it, do they understand what they're reading? Or are they bringing the right expertise or competence or experience?

I'm a big fan of having a properly constituted board of trustees who brings the skill sets, brings the expertise, brings the confidence to actually dig into the 15(c) and be able to engage in a productive conversation rather than just a box-ticking exercise. For those who look at it, I know it's kind of boring, it's kind of dry. But for people who look at individual closed-end funds, I think one of the things to look at, maybe not the first thing but one of the things, is does it have a properly constituted, competent, diverse, skilled, experienced board? So that's one of the things anyway.

John Cole Scott: Interesting. So Shane, let's focus on taxable fund leverage since that's more of your wheelhouse. How has it changed and evolved over time? Currently we're talking about the educated guessing about where interest rates could and should go. What are you seeing from the fund managers as they work with you on how to add or adjust leverage now, and maybe in the near term?

Shane Kein: Yes, so managers right now, they're very focused on cost, and they've always been very focused on cost. From a manager perspective, they have a very inefficient, or maybe unsophisticated capital structure, as the previous panel had mentioned. And so I do think that as time goes forward that managers would really need to rethink how they want to run their capital structure. Over the years we've always offered longer term financing, but 99% of the time managers would just choose very short-term one-year and inside of that financing, they would always go floating. I'd always offer fixed, I could do the fixed five-year, fixed three-year, no one except for one manager wanted to do fixed.

It’s very different, and this was mentioned on the last panel, the BDCs that we cover, they have a much more sophisticated capital structure and we work with them about issuing notes into the capital markets, we also help them hedge their rate exposure. They’re much more open to really having a much better capital structure. And I think the closed-end funds find themselves right now where they’re stuck having to borrow at SOFR+ 100 to 200 in some cases, it depends on the fund, depends on the sponsor, but it is something that I think funds will probably rethink how they’re going to finance themselves in the future.

John Cole Scott: Yeah, absolutely, we cover BDCs as you know as well, and they really do look at the left and the right side of the balance sheet way more in our experience than closed-end funds.

Let’s get back, and we covered it a little bit, but the amount of leverage being used, some funds have leverage, less common in equity funds, more common in credit funds. In your experience, I know there’s no leverage at ASGI, but if you think about leverage, or you put your hat on, what if ASGI one day had leverage, what would opine you would consider about the risk and the opportunity there?

Tom Hunersen: Sure. Well, just to marry up the comments on hedging as well, at Macquarie we did have leverage, we were fully leveraged. We liked leverage, and I think we had a relationship with a broker-dealer that gave us a good deal, and we actually hedged it. We had a portfolio of hedging, it was I thought well thought through, well-tested by the board I should also add. And as a part of a strategy for the fund, in the right market environment, it was enhancing to the overall portfolio, it was accretive.

As a part of a strategy, if it’s in the prospectus that this is a part of the proposition that you’re selling, I think you have a duty to provide leverage when the opportunity is there in the market. And I think well managed alongside of an effective investment strategy by a portfolio manager, it’s accretive. So generally, I know there’s a deleveraging going on, I think there are other reasons for that. In the longer term, as a part of managing a portfolio which is diversified and has a bright path in terms of the investment performance, leverage is a good thing.

And I think again, getting back to the board, I think it’s important to have people on the board who understand leverage, and who understand how to assess lending relationships and hedging structures and portfolio management, et cetera. If you’ve got all that in place, good thing.

John Cole Scott: Thank you. You want to talk about some of the bond funds you sit on?

Moritz Sell: Sure. It has to be a partnership with the investment manager, they’re going to make the recommendation. We want to have an informed conversation about leverage, but I think at the end of the day it’s going to be the investment manager, portfolio manager’s decision and recommendation that we’re going to follow.

John Cole Scott: Great, so we’ll go back to Shane, leverage seems to be a big topic. When you look at the asset classes that are various in the closed-end fund portfolio, so imagine lower rated high-yield bonds versus first-lien loans versus investment grade. What level of detail do you go into as a lender when determining the amount of leverage and different levels and rates in terms?

Shane Kein: Yeah, so we don't go into it position by position, we would bucket it. So if there was a fund that was invested 70% in CCCs, we would limit the CCC amount to maybe 20-25%. But we are very focused also on the different asset classes, so certainly anything on the loan side is fairly easy for us to do. We're focused on liquidity on volatility, so we'll look at the volatility of these asset classes over time.

One of the one I'd say, asset classes, it's fairly hard for not only us but for other lenders to do, is more structured finance, more structured securities because the valuation, it's hard to really understand what that valuation really is. Whereas it's an equity, equity fund or even any type of loan fund, we can see where the values are. So it's really just we look at the manager, that gets a lot of weighting, the actual manager, then we look at the types of assets, if we need to bucket certain, like the CCCs, we'll put on diversification parameters either by issuer or by sector.

We don't want to lend 75% in any one sector, we may limit the portfolio position to 5% per position, so diversification is so important for us. But really as a lender what we're really relying on is the protection from the 1940 Act, which is the leverage limitation. The 300% asset coverage is really the guiding principle that we follow. Since 1940 there's never been a bank that has ever lost money in this type of financing.

John Cole Scott: To BDCs or closed-end funds, yes. I thought of this while you were speaking, but the portfolio has Level 3 assets or unrated bonds, we did talk about there's a difference about how you might view lending to a Nuveen versus a smaller manager. How do you work through those harder inputs?

Shane Kein: Yeah, the Level 3s, that's BDCs, and certain interval funds have Level 3s, so we will assign certain advance rates based on Level 3 assets. So if it's a fund that has 90% Level 1, Level 2, we won't set any advance rates on those Level 3s because it's a smaller part. If it's a fund that will have a majority Level 3, then we'll set advance rates based on the type of collateral it is. If it's a first-lien piece of collateral, we'll set an advance rate of 80-85%, if it's second lien, 70-75%, equity might be 30%. It depends on what types of collateral is in the fund.

John Cole Scott: This next question I just thought of, so I apologize, but it shouldn't be outside your wheelhouse in my experience. We talked today a lot about institutional investors communicating with funds that they own. I assume, because I'm never in these rooms, that some of these conversations are public and some are more private. And so there are large owners of closed-end funds that don't really bang a loud drum, but I have to imagine that they reach out to you and you deal with them. So maybe some commentary about what it's like as a board member to interact with 13 filers in the market, if that's possible?

Moritz Sell: Sure. Yeah, early on in my career boards just did not want to talk to institutional investors. Often it's the lawyers in the room that try and shut down those conversations. I think it's really important and the engagement is great. You can head off a lot of problems before they happen if you're engaging with the larger shareholders.

Tom Hunersen: As directors versus the manager, et cetera, my experience is that board directors don't typically talk to activists or shareholders. The chairman might, and I have in my previous life, but I think from the director's standpoint it's important to speak with one's voice, it's important to have a clear relationship with all shareholders, a consistent relationship. And so I think speaking through the chairman and speaking selectively is probably advisable, there's no reason not to speak to them. I certainly think it encourages engagement, whether it's by written or verbal terms for investors to approach the fund or the board. But it should be managed carefully, it's a high-stakes conversation.

Moritz Sell: I don't want my first engagement with institutional shareholders to be when I'm up for reelection or being proposed for the first time. I think it's important to maintain relationships with the players, some of them are in the room and I've known them from my career for many, many years. But I like to have regulator conversations with institutional investors, whether they're on my shareholder register or not, just to understand the marketplace.

John Cole Scott: Yeah, of course we find there's some investors that are so quiet, you know they're there but you never see them. They don't even come to conferences, we invite them all the time. So Shane, there is another piece we were talking about, and I know this happened in the fall of '08 for a PIMCO fund, it couldn't pay its dividend, I want to say it was November, but paid two in December. You discussed it lightly, but maybe truly cover what it looks like for a closed-end fund to breach leverage and how it can have different outcomes based on the work you did at the onset of the leverage.

Shane Kein: Yeah, so as it relates to any breaches, obviously we want to get our money back, we're very focused on ensuring that the lend is a safe lend, and so there have been times when we've seen some funds that do breach the 300% asset coverage. We had a fund last year who had this situation, and we usually give a certain timeframe to cure their breach, usually it's been five and 10 business days. And in this case this was a five business day cure period and on each day we tried to say to the manager that, "You need to cure the breach," and they just didn't feel like doing it and they were hoping that the market would recover. It didn't, and so they were sitting at 299.9% asset coverage, then it hit an event to default. It was essentially a technical event of default, but it was just kind of silly and shortsighted as to how they did that. We weren't going to lose money at sitting at 299% asset coverage, but I'd say that they were probably the loosest that we've ever seen and they're no longer a client of ours.

We've had other client, some MLP funds, where they had experienced some deterioration in the asset coverage and they quickly notified the banks. Usually in large complexes, they're monitoring their asset coverage on a daily basis. As a lender, we get either weekly or biweekly reports on asset coverage. But for the largest guys, or even midsized managers, they don't want to be in a position where they're breaching.

In some agreements that we have, some lending arrangements that we have, although the LTV at 33%, or conversely at 300% asset converge, sometime what we do is we put a float up to 38-40%. So that if there is a situation where a fund is creeping up on their leverage, it doesn't force them to have to de-lever at 33-34%, they can float up to 38%. I wouldn't say that's very common but it's something that we've put in a few of our agreements, and it's overall very helpful to the portfolio managers and the fund itself.

John Cole Scott: Good. I assume there's some questions because this is a relatively interesting panel.

Moritz Sell: The audience looks very thirsty.

John Cole Scott: We have some time for questions. I have a few pocket questions if I have to, but Phil?

Audience Question: Moritz, what's your opinion about independent directors owning shares of the fund?

Moritz Sell: I think it's really important. I'm a strong advocate.

Tom Hunersen: Yeah, and it's actually in the charter that directors do own shares in abrdn.

Audience Question: You're only on the board of this one particular, which makes sense, but sometimes you have a fund complex where somebody's on a board of 120 BlackRock funds. That's a problem because maybe they don't want to own shares in any of those funds. I guess that gets to the larger questions, should you be on 120 boards?

John Cole Scott: I know where City of London stands on that. Yes, sir?

Audience Question: I have a question for Shane, you mentioned the reluctance to sometimes take on fixed-rate debt. Wouldn't listed closed-end funds be more likely to take on a fixed rate in the form of preferred so that they wouldn't have to[inaudible] to SMBC but to other outfits?

Shane Kein: They could issue a preferred if they wanted to. We're coming from the lens from the bank debt, so there are some funds that have certainly preferreds and bank debt, and in that case they could always have the preferreds fixed. But if the bank debt is the only part of the capital structure, that's kind of what I'm referring to. It's really just a cost issue that these managers just don't want to have to take on.

John Cole Scott: Question over there?

Audience Question: Yeah, sort of along the same lines. Shane, do you think that part of the discount is the mystery of how on the liability side of how these closed-end funds are funded? When you compare the asset side, [inaudible] open-ended funds who pretty much every day you know what's going on, and when you contrast it to the BDCs, as we were saying, very sophisticated funding mechanisms, I think retail investors [inaudible]. I have no idea how [inaudible], all I know is the NAVs dropping quickly, and that maybe alludes to how fee structures are much wider compared to [inaudible] instruments.

Shane Kein: I don't know how much of a correlation there is on the closed-end fund side with the leverage, the inefficient leverage to discounts. It could play into it in terms of as it relates to maybe the leverage is also eating into expenses. It is something that I think that probably most likely the investors don't really even pay attention to the leverage piece, they probably don't really understand exactly what that really is.

Audience Question: It's always too late, right?

Shane Kein: Exactly, they may say, "Why are you spending all this money on leverage?" Where it had benefited them for many years, so it goes both ways.

Audience Question: Let me ask the directors, following up on leverage, how do you ascertain or determine whether or not leverage is accretive to the return on the fund? Do you just do it superficially or do you have computations made in order to calculate how well the fund's doing with the leverage?

Moritz Sell: Typically we're prepared reports which are going to lay it out for us. If it's not accretive then obviously we're going to take some action.

Tom Hunersen: If there is leverage, there's a detailed piece of the management process that directors see regularly, including the cost of it, the structure of it, and all the elements involved. Periodically, let's say maybe it's annually at least, but I'd say more than annually, you can take that leverage and measure the performance of that piece of the puzzle in a generic sense, and establish whether or not it's costing more than it's returning. It's a relatively straightforward thing to establish based on the performance of the overall fund.

Shane Kein: Just on that, I'd say that a lot of the managers that we finance have a very thorough process in terms of determining who they want to provide that leverage, and then after that process then it will eventually go to the board for approval. I don't know if there's any case where the manager themselves are just deciding on who to go with for leverage, it really always needs board approval.

Tom Hunersen: I'd say it just slightly the other way around too. If you're out there with a levered fund and you're promising a levered return, a total return, and it suggests that it will perform better because of the leverage, the board has to have evidence that that's the case. That's a part of the paper trail that you have to make sure is there.

John Cole Scott: One more?

Audience Question: Can you talk a little bit about the fees? And as board members, how do you go through the process of evaluating the appropriate fee for your fund?

Moritz Sell: Tricky. Obviously it's a requirement, we do it, and in the US it's a very legal process. The lawyers are preparing lots of documents for us to review, and you can imagine there's always a group of peer funds that the fees are compared to. It's never going to be out of line. They'll never present you board papers saying that these fees are excessive, I've never seen that, and it's very, very rare that fees get adjusted one way or the other.

In my own nearly 20 years of being on a board, the only thing that we as an independent board managed to get through was some sort of break point, some sort of break fees, above a certain AUM level, then we'd get a fee reduction. If you start going after fees, and they're probably high, they're certainly high compared to other alternatives like ETFs, management doesn't like that.

Tom Hunersen: I'll just add a couple of comments. First of all, one of the key things you manage as a director is the expense level for the overall fund, so you look at all expenses of the fund. Directors being one of those, you need a proper process to evaluate where we are relative to our peers. We use outside service providers to give us a report based on a selected sample size of competitors.

My opinion is that you can kind of choose your competitors, and that perverts the process a little bit. It's not as good as it possibly could be, but the key is it's based on industry, it's based on independence, and it's based on the proposition, which includes share ownership by the way, so that you arrive at a number which you can stand over and explain and is reasonable in the context.

John Cole Scott: I'll say we do a lot of work with the gross non-leverage expense ratio comps is our process, and I imagine it's got to be one of the many factors you guys look at.

I think this panel's been wonderful and I think we're out of questions. Still true? Okay, well, I'm just going to close the conference very quickly, so no need to even stand up.

It's been a full day, you've been here for a very long time. We have fed you and there's drinks, I promise, but this could not happen if you weren't here. We couldn't do it without the presenters, we couldn't do it without the attendees, there'd just be an empty room with me and a whole lot of sandwiches, so I truly appreciate it.

We are hoping next year possibly to do a BDC event if we can find the right financial model and partners, because it's a related structure and a slightly different story but I think there's a lot of opportunity there. We're seeking potentially the first week of June, for anyone trying to keep a calendar, and we do plan to hold this event next fall. We had initially planned for October, better weather, but we've often held this event the day before or the day after the ICI Closed-End Fund Conference because we find there's a high amount of crossover, about 30% of the attendees here were there yesterday. But if there's a better time, let us know. People want us to go to Florida, Florida's not terrible but there's just a lot more people in New York to draw together.

So just give us the feedback, there'll be a survey. We super appreciate you being here, and don't forget to listen to our podcast every Friday, *The NAVigator*, and we're doing regular interviews with Jane King beyond these conference interviews with members on our website. So you probably get our emails because you're here, but if not, please sign up. Thank you so much and let's go have a drink.

Recorded on November 15, 2023.

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