

m a y 2 0 2 3

RIVER TALK



RIVER SAFETY

ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT





Contents

03 PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

04 FROM THE
EDITOR

05 IN CASE YOU
WERE WONDERING

06 GETTING INTO
THE GREEN SCENE

07 WILDLIFE
CORRIDOR

08 WATER LEVEL
UPDATE

09 SPOTLIGHT

10 NOTEWORTHY

11 WHAT'S
HAPPENING

The 2023
membership
campaign is still
underway - click
here to join or
renew today!



President's Message

Peter Fitton

The TIA rock markers are out on the river saluting you and alerting everyone to dangerous shoals to go around for safe passage.

May sees most cottage openings, discovery of uninvited winter guests and droppings, and the Canadian and American long weekends celebrating outdoors again with the good times of summer ahead. Be careful of ticks and the potential Lyme disease from bites to your family and pets. [Click here to read more about symptoms and treatments of tick bites.](#)

May can also be a teaser month for temperatures and gardening. To start seeds, transplant young plants to outdoors, and planting nursey stock has everything to do with knowing your frost dates. [Click here to read what the Almanac has to say and go exploring with their Learn-To-Garden Series.](#)

May 14th is Mother's Day. It is not a federal holiday, but it should be! A day to celebrate motherhood. It is about honouring the mother of your family, the influential mother-like figures in our lives and recognizing the women for the strong and wonderful people they are. Find a way to show your gratitude.

Last issue we introduced to you our 2023 intern, Grace Mychajlyszyn who is studying Environmental Science at Queen's University. Grace is now onboard with TIA for the summer as Environmental Program Coordinator. Look for her messaging on TIA social media platforms and in future River Talk issues on topics of TIA river safety and environmental awareness program activity. I hope everyone tried to recognize Earth Day in April and are committed to continue the environmental movement to protect our precious resources – please promote the 3 Rs throughout the year – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.



Again, a reminder to SAVE THE DATE Saturday July 22 to attend the TIA Breakfast and AGM at the waterfront Playhouse Theatre. More details about the event and speakers in future issues to follow.

Membership Renewal! Thank you to those who have already renewed and a reminder to others that we need your membership support to remain sustainable – it is tax deductible. [Click here to go directly to our website membership page.](#)

On the river, I like to remember May as Better Sleep Month. What better place to find this peace than the Thousand Islands? However, note abundant fresh air can increase appetites!



Allison Burchell-Robinson

I recently had an interesting conversation with the grandson of one of my neighbors concerning shoal markers. He assured me these markers were old-fashioned and, in fact, obsolete. To say that I was taken aback is mild at best. I had grown up with these markers, they were part of my life and adventures on the St. Lawrence River. How would people travel the River without them? Easily he replied and pulled out his iPhone. Everyone has an app he said somewhat breezily and immediately I thought of my 87-year-old neighbor who has yet to use email. He continued and we've always had charts. I remembered the countless times I'd tried to hold the charts open and readable in the pouring rain or unrelenting wind. I asked what you do when there is no signal available. He replied that he already knows where he is going. What if the fog is so dense you can barely see the nose on your face let alone an app on your phone? At least the markers give you a bit of a warning.

Couldn't we agree that all the available aids have their use and it is better to add to them rather than take away? Men and women who lived long before us had their aids to help them navigate and I am certain that even then there was a primitive way of marking dangerous spots, rocks or pitfalls -what we today call shoals. The grandson acknowledged it and we continued.

Why did I think more people didn't join the Thousand Islands Association and help support the shoal marking program? Is it because some confuse the channel markers put out by the government and think it's the same program. It is not! Do people take the markers for granted and may not even notice them? Probably but they would notice if the markers disappeared or were not in evidence when taking a trip into unknown waters. Are some boaters unaware of the dangers when embarking on the water? Definitely!

The conclusion to that conversation was positive for both. The River needs all the aids we use to navigate. You may well have a chart and an app, you could also sponsor a shoal marker. Talk about prestige. [Click here to learn more about sponsoring and how to join TIA.](#)





In Case You Were Wondering

Dave McWilliam & Alec Turner

What to do about our favourite feathered friends the Canadian Geese...Love them or hate them, they are here. Some over-winter, while the large flocks return to nest and procreate.

The best advice is to accommodate them, that said here is a few ideas about controlling the numbers on your property.

Lawn: Do not manicure your green space, although it is tough to ignore. Geese do eat grass but they prefer short grass where there are new shoots. Perhaps, rethink having grass, or leave it long and natural.

Ultrasonic sound generators: These tend to annoy pets and your neighbours too. They may provide some relief, until wildlife gets use to them and they become ignored.

Flashing Lights: These devices are not unlike those flashing amber lights on construction barriers, though more elaborate, and more expensive. They tend to get ignored over time. Your visitors WILL know where to find you especially at night.

Owl decoy (and other critters including coyotes): They will quickly figure out that there is absolutely nothing to fear from these critters swaying in the breeze. The googly-eyed beach ball variety are cute or you could try wooden articulating toy snakes or floating inflated swans.

Loud music: Most likely will just annoy your neighbours. The geese, could care less.

“Bangers” or pneumatic cannons These expensive agricultural devices used in orchards and wineries make gun-shot like bang and not likely to endear you to your neighbours for several kilometres, nor your partner.

Dog/Cat: Our personal favourite. What better trick than to train them to keep the geese at bay but have a boat at the ready when Rover decides he is going to chase the swimming geese down river.

Motion detecting sprinkler: This method does require you to have water and electricity to power the pump and the device. Additional care has to be taken to ensure your loved ones don't set off this device when dining alfresco.

Physical barriers...aka “the goose fence” Another personal favourite. This can be as simple as rope/twine strung between bushes, trees or stakes at about a foot off the ground with attached items that will move in the wind. The more elaborate version is aluminum rods that screw into studs anchored in the rock and then fishing line with trail marking tape and “scare tape” tied at intervals. Caveat with a fence, is ensure that no one goes out at night not knowing.

Good Luck with whatever method you choose, as we join you for the daily washing of the dock, the chairs....

Getting Into the Green Scene:

Plastic Beach

John Healey



“In the North American Great Lakes it is estimated that around 10,000 tons -- 22 million pounds -- of plastic enters the water every year and concentrations of plastic in the surface waters are similar to those found in the oceans.”

Plastic Pollution in the Great Lakes written by Matthew J. Hoffman, PhD., 2019.

Growing up and being active along the St. Lawrence River gave me a deep appreciation for the seaway.

Exploration of the many islands and seemingly endless shoreline filled my days and taught me the basic truth that all of us are connected with nature. Everything is everything, and by polluting this world we are polluting ourselves. The notion of the corruption of the waterway became abhorrent and shortsighted in my mind.

The Plastic Beach series came together after a backwoods camping trip into Lake Superior Provincial Park in 2018. I was struck by the amount of plastic I found on the shoreline at this remote site. Normally I would collect the trash

and deposit it in the first garbage can I came across, but this time I took it home and examined everything, trying to understand what it was and why was it there in the first place. I looked for evidence of branding, clues of manufacturing dates, and the extent of deterioration of each item. I then developed a strategy to collect items from other locations along the entire St. Lawrence Seaway. I targeted a stretch of shoreline along each of the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair, and three locations along the St. Lawrence River, specifically the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, Refuge faunique Marguerite-D'Youville across from greater Montreal, and Parc de la Plage Jacques-Cartier near Quebec City. This collection and production phase of the project took another four years to complete.

The images of discarded shopping bags, fragments of milk jugs, and crushed bottle caps, among other things, remind me of our legacy of plastic pollution and how we treat this habitat that is home to millions of creatures.

Plastic Beach by John Healey is on at the City Hall Art Galley in Ottawa Ontario from May 25 through August 27 with the opening reception Thursday May 25, 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Admission is free.

www.johnhealey.ca
john-healey@rogers.com
IG @johnhealeyimages

Wildlife Corridor:

Honeybees

Stuart Arnett

Honeybees are absolutely amazing creatures and deserve our utmost respect! While that may sound like a pretty strong statement; I as a former beekeeper, have first-hand knowledge.

Honeybees are very social insects that live in a structured caste system with a dominant queen, female workers, and male drones. It is extremely organized, and everyone has their job to ensure that the hive thrives. The Queen is like the goddess of the hive, which is totally committed to her, but her role is to solely lay eggs. She lays approximately 1500 per day and the entire hive can host between 50 and 60,000 bees.

The Drones only role is to mate with the Queen while she is on her mating flight. During this flight she will mate with several drones. Drones cannot feed themselves and those that are fortunate enough to mate die immediately afterwards. The drones that do not mate are expendable and as autumn arrives are forced out of the hive leaving them to starve.

The majority of the hive (the 50 to 60,000 females) can be subdivided into “House” bees and “Forager” bees.

Within the House there are the following:

Nurse bees feed and care for the growing larvae.

Queen attendants feed and groom the queen exclusively.

Hive Cleaners clean used larvae cells for the next brood.

House bees also build and cap the honeycomb as well as collect pollen and propolis from returning foragers.

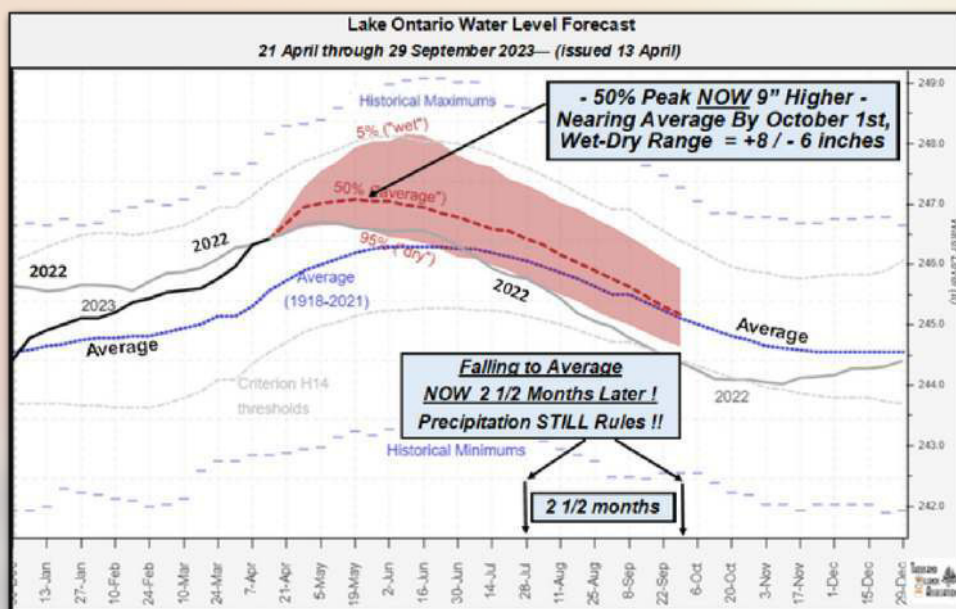
Outside the house, the Forager bees collect nectar, pollen, propolis and water, all key ingredients to a healthy hive. They also function as guard bees, protecting the hive from intruders and emitting pheromones to warn of impending danger.

As you can see bees have a very sophisticated life and it is intrinsically connected to ours. Honeybees alone pollinate 80% of all flowering plants and more than 130 types of fruits and vegetables. Scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of bees and other animal pollinators.

Save the bee!

Water Level Updates:

High Ottawa River Flows – Suddenly a Developing Story



Lake Ontario Water Level Forecast

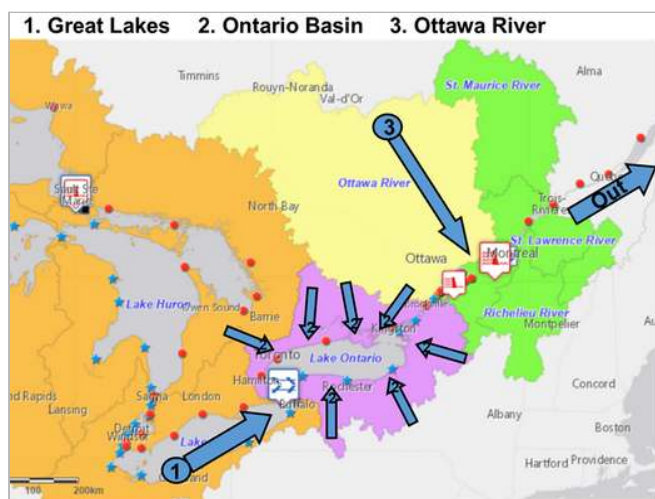
Edits by TIA

Vince Barton, Ken White, Ross Stewart

SUMMARY –Watching the Rapid Melt Driven Ottawa River Spring Freshet:

The 2023 Season will likely be an Above Average Year for Water Levels

- The River is 3.0 ft above chart datum. (A full foot above last month)
- Water levels are now about 10" above the late April 100 year average.
- ILOSLR Board outflow has been reduced due to Ottawa River & F-Limit flows



- The yellow area is the Ottawa River Basin (3) with the spring freshet well underway.
- The high snowpack & water content in the Ottawa basin plus fast melt have led to local flooding from Ottawa to Montreal.
- What does this mean for the 1000 Islands? We don't know YET!
- The Ottawa River Board forecasts levels to stabilize the week of April 24.
- Outflows from the Moses-Saunders, although reduced, remain above average.
- The outlook will change weekly as daily precipitation and temperature events occur.

The outlook for the 1000 Islands, is high water levels this spring, with potential minor flooding in some low-lying areas – but nothing like what we experienced in 2017 & 2019.

Click [HERE](#) – Breaking News UPDATE – Ottawa River Impact on the 1000 Islands

Spotlight:

Clayton Opera House



Allison Burchell-Robinson

She may be old but she is certainly aging well. The 500 seat Clayton Opera House in Clayton, New York is a three-story stone building whose cornerstone was laid in 1903. It was completed by the town in 1904 at a cost of \$15,000. The masons were early tenants of the third floor remaining there until 2000 only moving in the absence of an elevator (since remedied) when too old to climb the stairs. Other tenants included a telegraph office, a diner, local high school basketball team, an early Hawn Memorial Library and a funeral parlor. At one time the town's current three museums (the Boat, Arts center and Thousand islands) were in residence there as one.

The Opera House was home to many local theatre and dance groups but it was the actress, singer and vaudeville star May Irwin who first brought the house to national attention. May was a Canadian, born in 1862, and had a stage and cinema career that spanned more than 30 years including the first screen kiss in cinematic history. May was an early and enthusiastic performer at the Clayton Opera House with a summer home on Club Island. May died in 1938 and while her entertainment style has long been out of favor, she was the first of the many entertainers to follow.

Today, the Opera House is a year-round entertainment destination with shows ranging from the sounds of big bands to country, rock and blues music including a taste of Broadway along with movies and comic wit as well. In 2002 it was deemed a permanent arts center and a 3.25 million dollar renovation ensured that the building will live in perpetuity. In 2007 the Thousand islands Performing Arts Endowment Fund was created with the Northern New York Community Foundation to ensure that the performing arts thrive in the in the 1000 islands region.

Working for the last ten years to carry out that mandate is Julie Garnsey, the Executive Director. One of Julie's biggest roles is bringing in the audience and that she does. It's an enormous job bringing in performances to satisfy a diverse audience year-round and continuing to meet the bottom line. The growing number of Member Patrons reflects that success. Performers and audiences both look forward to being in the Clayton Opera House. It's the in place to be!

To view the full 2023 Performance Calendar, go online to ClaytonOperaHouse.com.

Night Lights:

Outdoor lighting is changing rural areas

Noteworthy

Robert Dick

For the 2021 FOCA Lake Stewards Newsletter

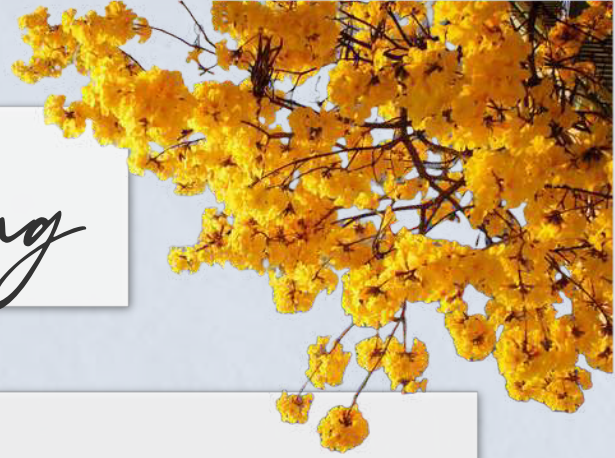
The attractions of cottage country include green and blue vistas during the day, and the soundscapes and starry skies of late evening. But the latter attraction is quickly changing, and the culprit is a “green” lighting technology. I refer to the proliferation of white-light LED fixtures. They are marketed as low energy and cheap; however, these attributes promote outdoor lighting where previously there was none. LED fixtures consume so little energy compared to the older incandescent lights that many cottagers leave them on all night and even when their cottage is vacant. What was once a dark countryside has now become illuminated as an extension of urban lighting patterns shifts across the landscape.

Sometimes something modest becomes a blight when multiplied by thousands of residences. It is ironic that a product developed to save energy and preserve the environment is having the opposite effect: LEDs are causing a 2.2% per year increase in outdoor lighting! Within your lifetime, the sky will be twice as bright, and we will be using twice the energy for lighting. Why does this matter? How can something as simple as a door light affect the night? First, outdoor lighting fundamentally changes the aesthetics of the night. The night sky is featureless “black” when we are next to bright lights. It reduces the visibility for both people and animals. Many animals don’t want outdoor lighting. It makes foraging animals vulnerable to predators. Although moonlight illuminates the countryside for about a week each month, the rest of the time there are long periods of darkness when the animals can gather food in relative safety, and star gazers and late-night walkers can enjoy the night darkness, free from glare. The proliferation of light is caused by outdoor lights on buildings, along laneways and shoreline lighting. Whether used for landscaping or waterfront “enhancement”, outdoor lighting changes the night environment and disrupts the ecology of wildlife. It also undermines the enjoyment for those who may prefer the natural night they can’t get in the city.

How you can help:

1. Shield your light fixtures so light shines where you need it.
2. Use amber “bug lights”. Amber will reduce the impact of glare and will also attract fewer mosquitoes.
3. Use lower wattage lamps.
4. Turn off your outdoor lights when you don’t want to have visitors, when you go to bed, and certainly when you are away.

What's Happening



April showers are giving way to May flowers and that means summer is on the way along with vacations & good times in the 1000 Islands region. It's never too soon to start thinking and planning ahead.

The Thousand islands Playhouse has announced its 2023 season beginning June 2nd. Check out what's coming on their website and order your tickets now or even better, get a subscription.

You can book a ride for a private tour in a vintage speed boat by contacting the 1000 Islands Boat Museum and be sure to find out about their summer programs to keep your youngster engaged and learning!

Schedule visit to see the exhibit "Eyes on the Sky" and learn about the Canadian navigation system and air traffic control at the History Museum of the Thousand Islands in Gananoque Ontario.

See what the Science Café has to offer at the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust where there are always lots of opportunities for fascinating & educational things to do!

Be sure to visit the events calendar on the website for the Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands, as dates for summer events & activities are quickly added.

Take a moon hike or a Mother's Day weekend hike at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center on Wellesley Island.

Stay informed with the status of Blind Bay and the ongoing controversy with updates from Save the River and Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) in Clayton NY.

There is so much to do and enjoy when in the 1000 islands, either visiting or summering. Do check out the local town halls, libraries and chambers to find out even more.





Thousand Islands Association (TIA)

Due to seasonality, varying water levels, vandalism and equipment failure, the Thousand Islands Association (TIA) disclaims any liability for the absence of any of its shoal markers from time to time.

The Thousand Islands Association (TIA) is a not for profit organization that is proactive in addressing safety on the river, promoting environmental preservation and supporting the interests of the Community for the benefit of the 1000 Islands region of the St. Lawrence River.

thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com

P.O. Box 616
Clayton, NY 13624
United States of America

P.O. Box 274
Gananoque, ON K7G 2T8
Canada





TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE



Clarke & Wright Professional Corporation
Barristers and Solicitors



Keyes Insurance Brokers



To learn more about any sponsor, click on their logo.



TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



To learn more about any sponsor, click on their logo.