

# RIVER TALK

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RIVER SAFETY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

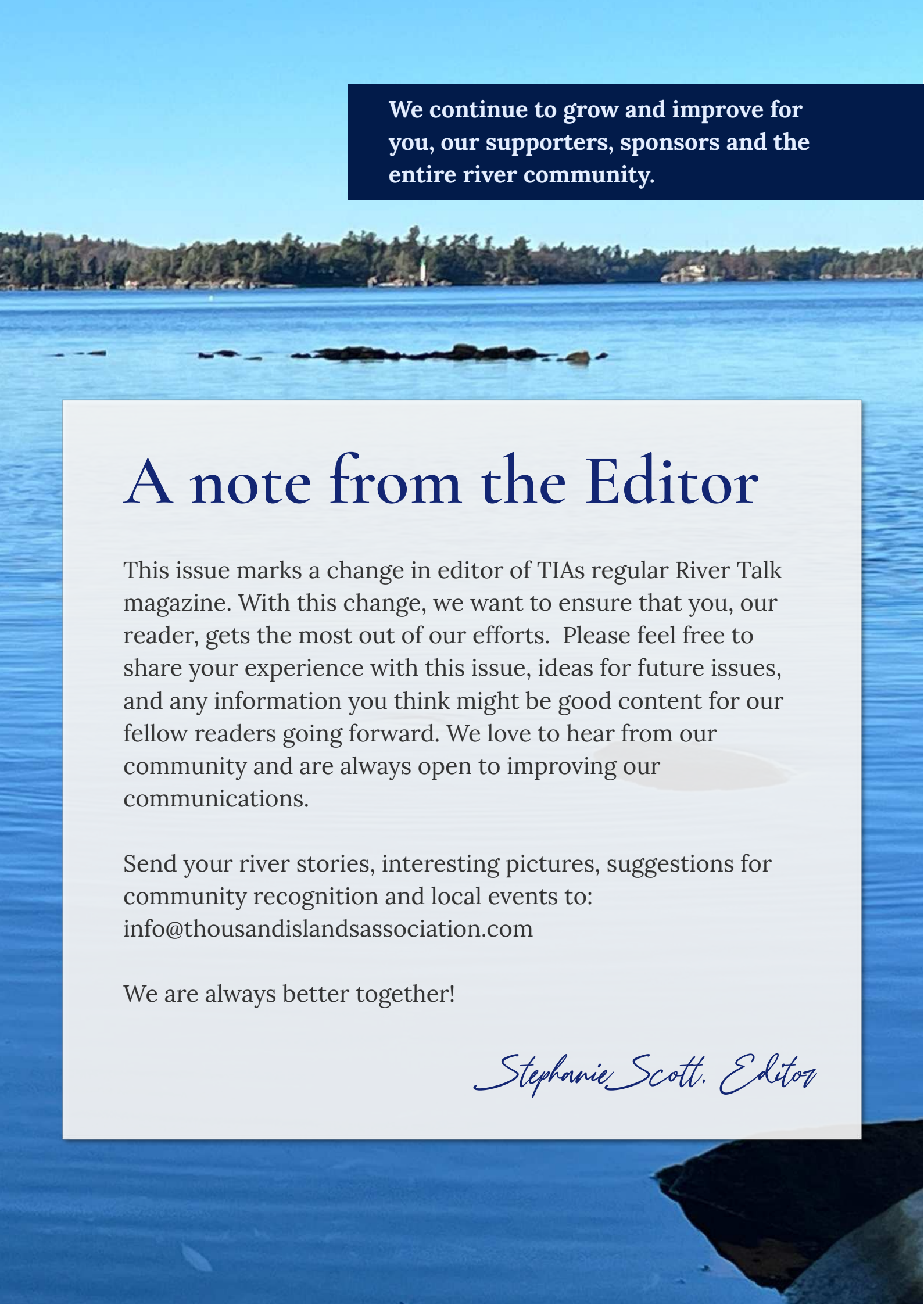




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We continue to grow and improve for you, our supporters, sponsors and the entire river community.

## A note from the Editor

This issue marks a change in editor of TIAs regular River Talk magazine. With this change, we want to ensure that you, our reader, gets the most out of our efforts. Please feel free to share your experience with this issue, ideas for future issues, and any information you think might be good content for our fellow readers going forward. We love to hear from our community and are always open to improving our communications.

Send your river stories, interesting pictures, suggestions for community recognition and local events to:  
[info@thousandislandsassociation.com](mailto:info@thousandislandsassociation.com)

We are always better together!

*Stephanie Scott, Editor*





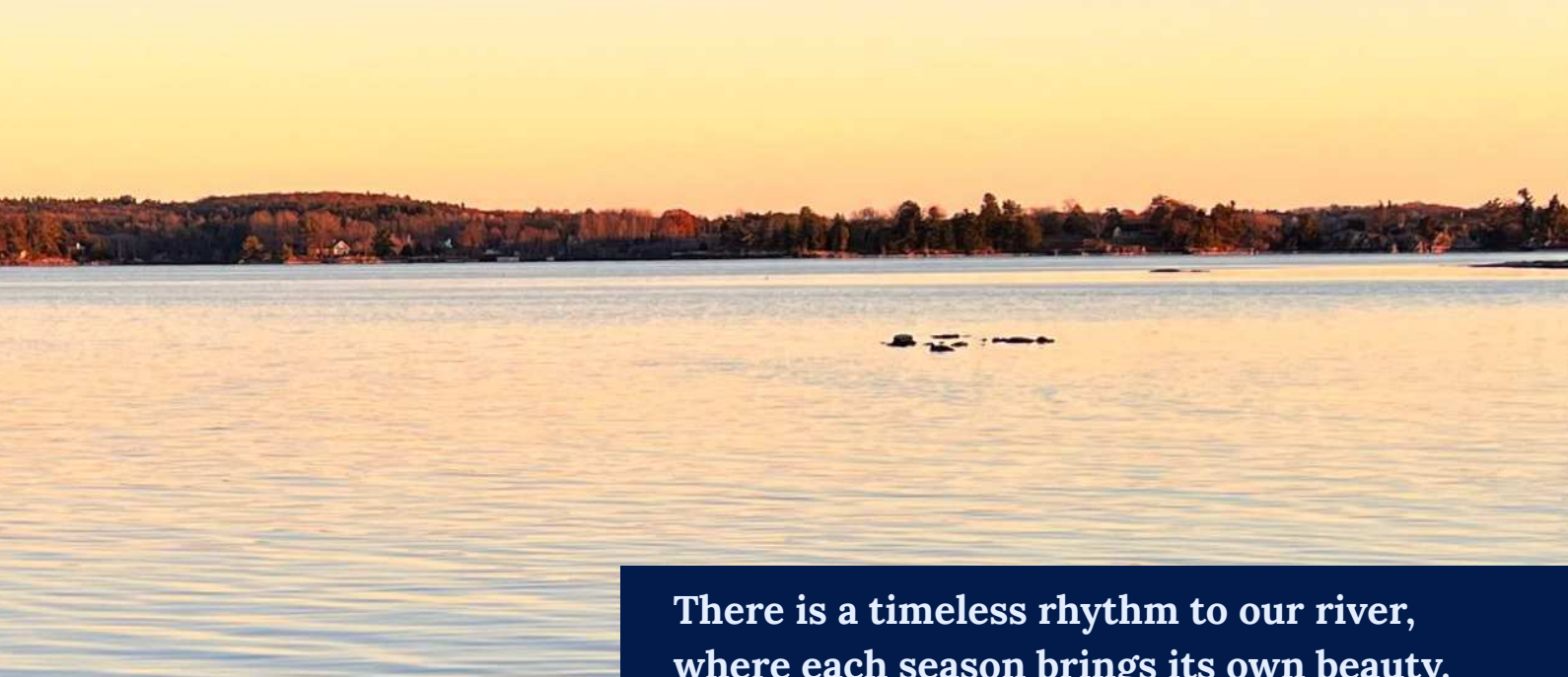
# President's Message

## Peter Fitton

As the year winds down and we approach the threshold of 2025, there is a quiet sense of renewal. The shift from the vibrancy of autumn to the stillness of winter invites reflection and anticipation.

The promise of a new year is always full of opportunities for new plans and memories. I am a strong believer of plan to manage and manage the plan. I invite you to “Embrace the Magic of New Beginnings and a Fresh Start” with a look at 25 New Year’s Resolutions to Inspire – good for all ages!

Before we leave 2024, let us share some river memories. TIA conducted a well received CPR and AED training session. Brian Mabee, the Township Crier, made an official proclamation honouring TIA’s 90th Year Anniversary at the July AGM breakfast. Congratulations and recognition certificates were received from our local Mayors and MPP and an anniversary cake was enjoyed by a record number in attendance. TIA made \$5,000 donations to the TLTI Fire Rescue towards the purchase of a new boat, and to the Clayton Volunteer Fire Department towards refurbishing their infamous "Last Chance" fire boat. The fundraiser Dock, Deck & Den Tour was resurrected sponsored by Island



**There is a timeless rhythm to our river,  
where each season brings its own beauty.**

Patriots offering their island properties to Patrons to visit and become acquainted with their river community neighbourhood. The Trash Free Clean Up Days attracted great support resulting in thousands of pounds of garbage removed from our SLR shores.

In 2025 TIA will focus on more River Safety and Community Support initiatives. In addition to our ongoing commitment to the replacement of worn-out rock shoal markers, a CPR and AED training session is planned to be offered again, and attention will be given to promoting education about Fire Pumps procurement, training, and maintenance.

December is National Giving Month. The TIA Annual Appeal has become a critical component to balancing our budget, and we thank you for recognizing TIA as a worthy charitable cause for annual support. All donations receive Canadian and American tax receipts. Please [Donate now.](#)

**May your holidays be filled with warmth, love, and laughter.  
Season's greetings and best wishes for a happy, healthy New Year!**

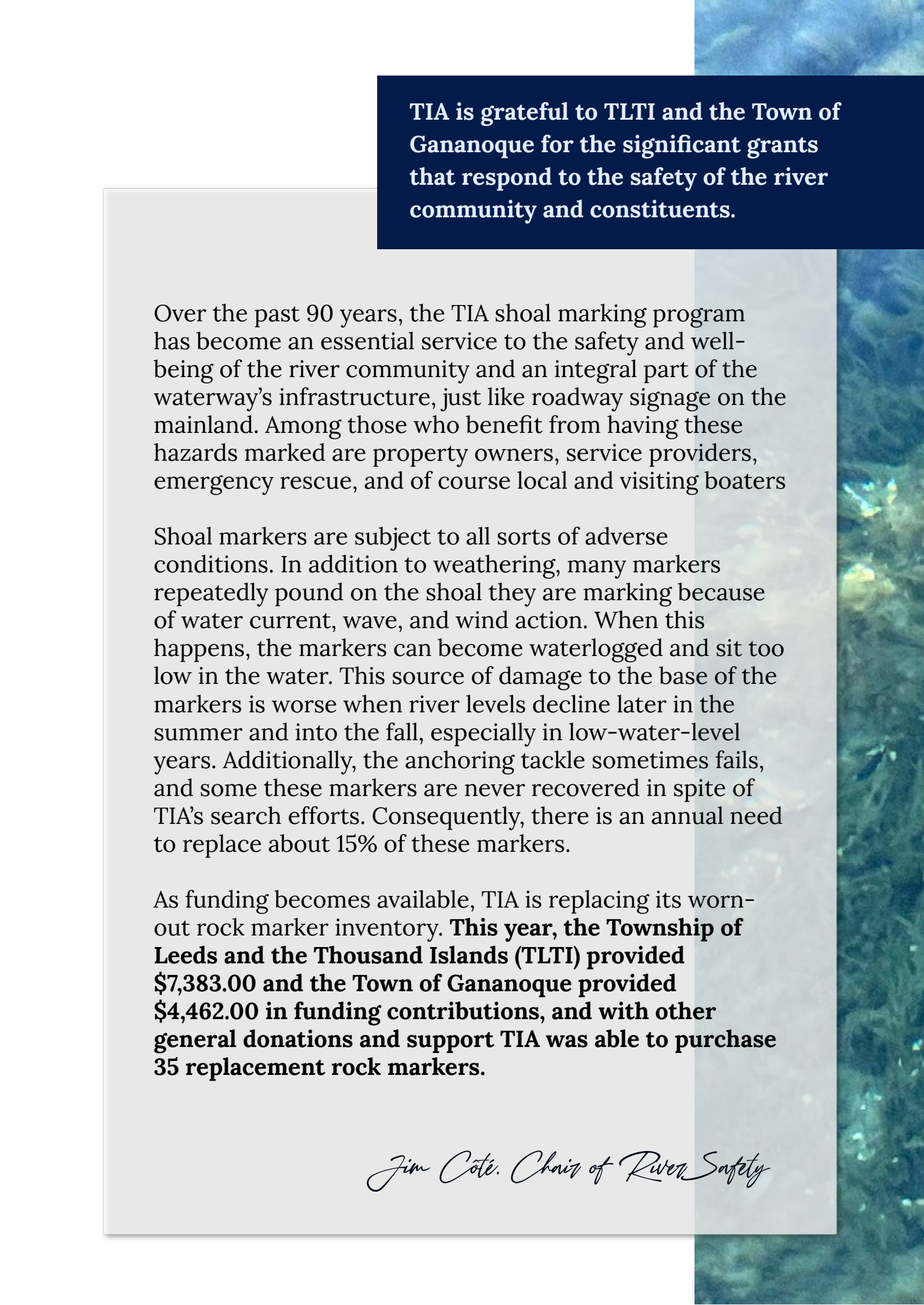




Pictured here are the markers that were taken out of service this year because of damage to their base causing them to become waterlogged (note the waterline stain high on the marker)

## TIA Continues to Invest in Replacement Markers

TIA's flagship program is the placement and monitoring of Coast Guard compliant special purpose hazard buoys, now numbering over 200, to mark shoals in the Canadian waters of the Thousand Islands from the east end of Howe Island to Brockville. TIA manages and monitors the placement of these shoal markers with a sophisticated GPS mapping program and an individual marker identification system.



TIA is grateful to TLTI and the Town of Gananoque for the significant grants that respond to the safety of the river community and constituents.

Over the past 90 years, the TIA shoal marking program has become an essential service to the safety and well-being of the river community and an integral part of the waterway's infrastructure, just like roadway signage on the mainland. Among those who benefit from having these hazards marked are property owners, service providers, emergency rescue, and of course local and visiting boaters

Shoal markers are subject to all sorts of adverse conditions. In addition to weathering, many markers repeatedly pound on the shoal they are marking because of water current, wave, and wind action. When this happens, the markers can become waterlogged and sit too low in the water. This source of damage to the base of the markers is worse when river levels decline later in the summer and into the fall, especially in low-water-level years. Additionally, the anchoring tackle sometimes fails, and some these markers are never recovered in spite of TIA's search efforts. Consequently, there is an annual need to replace about 15% of these markers.

As funding becomes available, TIA is replacing its worn-out rock marker inventory. **This year, the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands (TLTI) provided \$7,383.00 and the Town of Gananoque provided \$4,462.00 in funding contributions, and with other general donations and support TIA was able to purchase 35 replacement rock markers.**

*Jim Côté. Chair of River Safety*



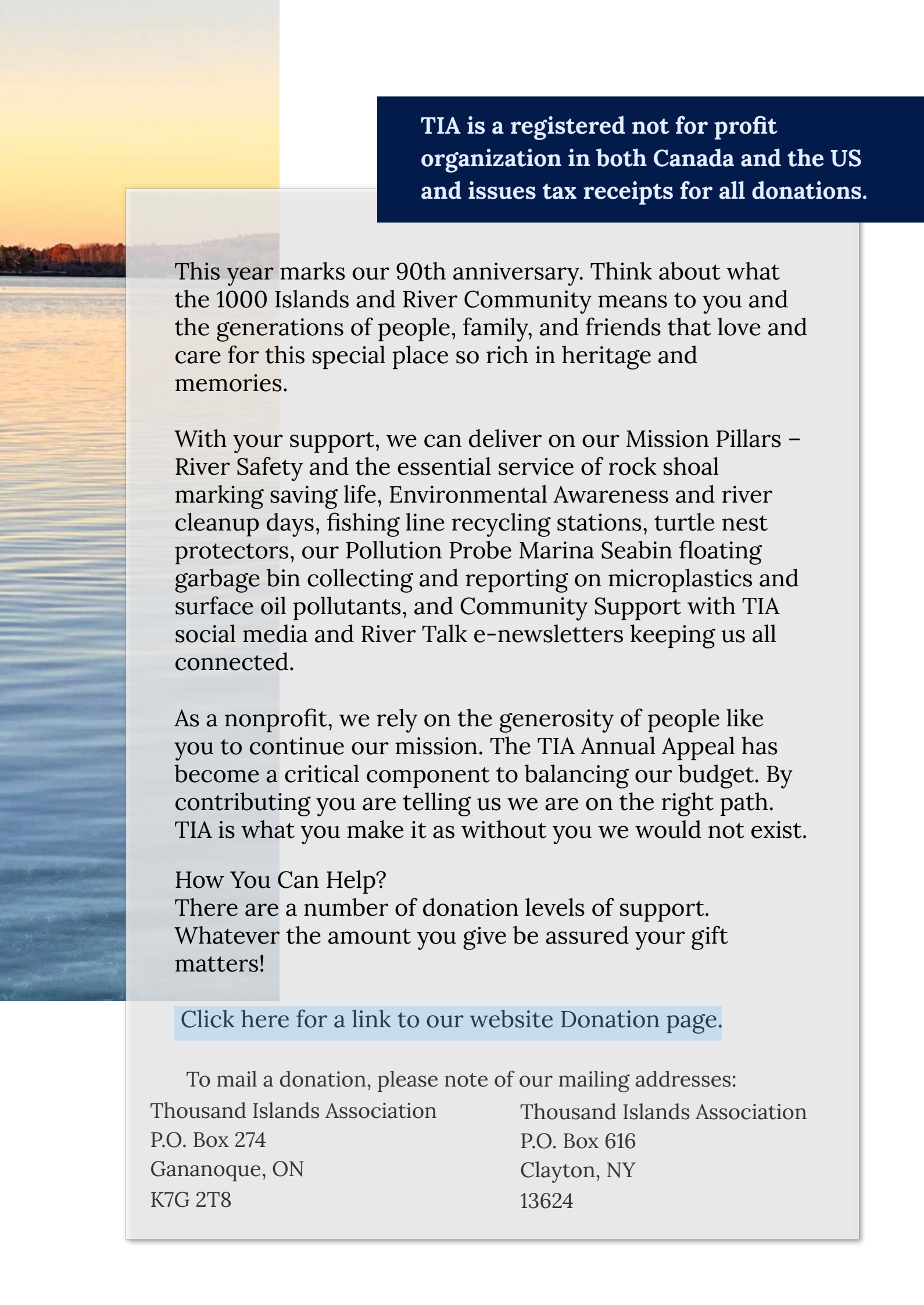


We appreciate your support

# Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 is National Giving Day, and we are reaching out with a simple but significant request: please help TIA's programs make a lasting impact in our river community.





**TIA is a registered not for profit organization in both Canada and the US and issues tax receipts for all donations.**

This year marks our 90th anniversary. Think about what the 1000 Islands and River Community means to you and the generations of people, family, and friends that love and care for this special place so rich in heritage and memories.

With your support, we can deliver on our Mission Pillars – River Safety and the essential service of rock shoal marking saving life, Environmental Awareness and river cleanup days, fishing line recycling stations, turtle nest protectors, our Pollution Probe Marina Seabin floating garbage bin collecting and reporting on microplastics and surface oil pollutants, and Community Support with TIA social media and River Talk e-newsletters keeping us all connected.

As a nonprofit, we rely on the generosity of people like you to continue our mission. The TIA Annual Appeal has become a critical component to balancing our budget. By contributing you are telling us we are on the right path. TIA is what you make it as without you we would not exist.

#### How You Can Help?

There are a number of donation levels of support. Whatever the amount you give be assured your gift matters!

[Click here for a link to our website Donation page.](#)

To mail a donation, please note of our mailing addresses:

Thousand Islands Association  
P.O. Box 274  
Gananoque, ON  
K7G 2T8

Thousand Islands Association  
P.O. Box 616  
Clayton, NY  
13624

Water Level Update:

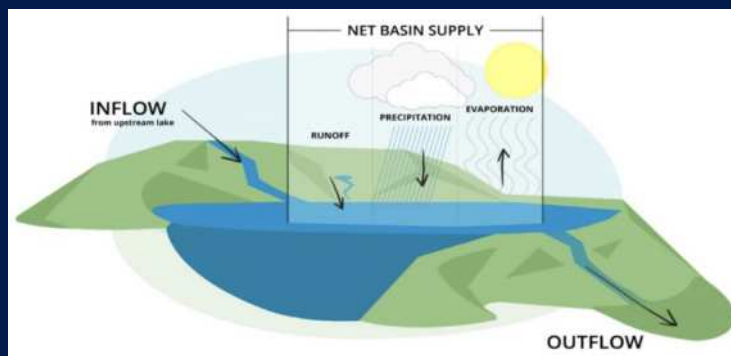
# Precipitation Slowed this Fall

Vince Barton, Ken White, Ross Stewart

Your guides in separating truth from fiction and old memories when it comes to water levels.

## Understanding Net Basin Supply

Runoff, precipitation and evaporation all play into the overall levels of the basin levels.



## What is the current water level?

September saw 81% of average precipitation in the LO basin (2.69" vs. avg of 3.31"), October saw 57% of average precip in the LO basin (1.85" vs. 3.27" avg), and after a few wet days, November is at 76% through November 24th. Precipitation north of the border made the difference!

The Lake Ontario basin saw significant precipitation over a 3-day period from 11/20-11/22 (Wed-Fri) - 1.14" entered the basin in just these 3 days out of the 1.93" received for the entire month through 11/24. SNOW!

We're now only 6" above Chart Datum in Alex Bay, up from 1-inch! Lake Ontario & the Upper River are 6" below average for last week of November. That's 244.06' elevation for the 24th.





We hope you all have your boats safely  
on the land for the winter!  
Happy Holidays from the Water Level  
Committee

## Is the water level really that low?

We all suffer from memory errors, from seeing lots of 'normal levels' and very few really LOW levels. River Rats are saying they've "never seen it so low! Who let the plug out?" The water is near normal, NOT Crazy Low!

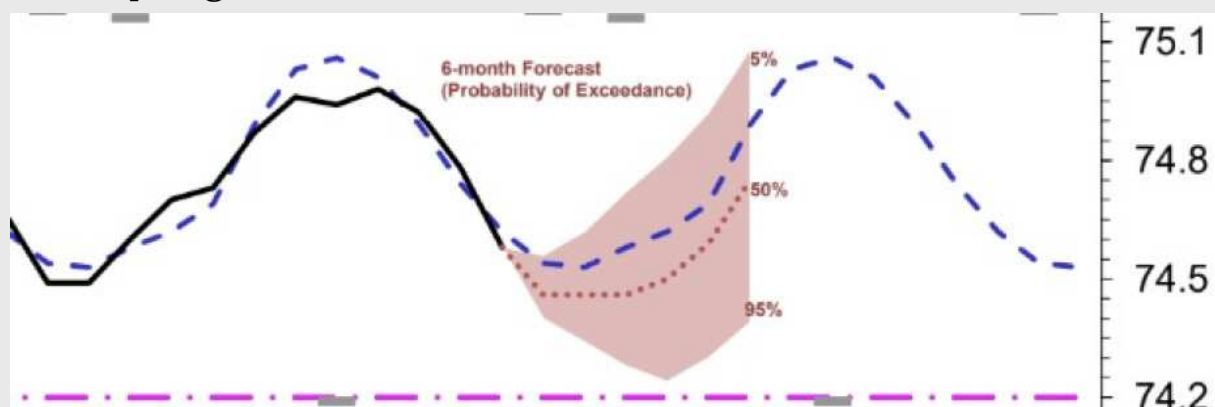
Vince went back 26 years on Nov 24th and found only 4 years lower than 2024 and another 6 within 2 ¼". That's almost 40% very close to this year!

Data: 2024 - 244.06', 2022 - 244.16', 2016 - 244.26', 2014 - 244.23', 2012 - 243.64', 2007 - 243.73', 2004 - 244.26', 2002 - 243.90', 2000 - 244.23', 1999 - 244.16', 1998 - 243.80'

## What is the forecast for the next 6 months?

For the next 6 months, Nov-April as well as 2024. The range from dry to wet is deceptively huge, with the 50% probability of exceedance staying below average. Such a wide forecast range happens every year. In essence there is little to no correlation to spring levels!

Vince's Case in Point: "November 24th, 2016, saw a water level of 244.26', barely more than 2" above where we are this year on November 24th, 2024. I think we all remember what happened in the spring of 2017 - clearly, [2016] November's water level did NOT mean low water in the spring!"







# Spotlight - Anna Cowan

## *TIA Environment Ambassador*

By: Peter Fitton

Anna Cowan, a member of the Cowan family on Minota Island in the Admiralty Group, introduced herself to the Thousand Islands Association (TIA) in early 2020 in response to a TIA Petition sent to Ottawa about a call to action for controlling extreme water levels and the environmental impacts such as shoreline resiliency when left unchecked. Anna was in her third year of an Honors Degree in the Environment Program at McGill University. Her Major was in Ecological Detriments of Health, and her minor was in Interdisciplinary Life Sciences. TIA welcomed Anna's interest in TIA, and she quickly became involved in Program Development with TIA's Environmental Committee headed by Britton Bedford-Jones at the time.

In the spring of 2021, and with the support from ECO Canada Summer Student Co-op funding, TIA launched the position of Environment Ambassador with Anna Cowan being the perfect candidate. Her 16-week assignment was to promote TIA's Mission Pillars with a focus on Environmental Awareness through TIA Program Development and messaging using social media. This included liaison with Save The River in Clayton and adopting community engagement events such as river clean up days. Anna then became the youngest TIA Board Director for a two-year term that started in October 2021.





**Anna is one rock solid TIA supporter!  
The Board thanks you for your many  
contributions and support of TIA's mission**

After graduation, Anna spent just under two years at the Thousand Islands Boat Museum (TIBM) as the Communications and Engagement Coordinator where she worked with the TIBM team to promote and grow the Museum and engage visitors with our fascinating river history.

This past summer Anna returned to TIA with a Work Plan to support program activities under our River Safety, Environmental Awareness, and Community Support Mission Pillars. Her Social Media posts recognized TIA business sponsors and connected the River Community with

messaging about events such as River Clean up days.

Anna comes from a long line of River Rats, tracing back to the 1890s when W.G Matthews bought Minota Island in the Admiralty group. Six generations later, Anna and her family still enjoy summers on the river. Anna grew up on the water and credits her passion for protecting the environment to her time spent in our collective slice of paradise.





# Natural Signs that Predict Winter Weather?

By: Stuart Arnett

**Two of the most common predictors of the severity of winters are the coloured bands of a woolly bear caterpillar and the abundance of acorns.**

One popular myth surrounds the abundance of or scarcity of acorns as a predictor of the length and severity of the upcoming winter. The truth is that oak trees and many others, have irregular cycles of boom and bust. Every 2 to 5 years a boom or “mast year” occurs, where large oaks can drop up to 10,000 acorns in the fall. This particular fall saw a huge abundance of acorns and thus according to lore predicts a harsh winter.

Whether the acorns can predict the weather is another question but an over abundant supply of acorns and winter food can definitely increase the survival rate of wildlife. Wildlife that forages throughout the winter months depend upon these mast years to be able to flourish and reproduce.



# The Folklore of the Woolly Bear Caterpillar

The Woolly Bear is actually the caterpillar of the Isabella Tiger Moth and has a head and tail in black and a rusty coloured centre. Folklore states that the longer the black head and tail, the longer, snowier and more harsh the upcoming winter will be.

If this were true the woolly bears that I have seen this fall “predict” that our winter will be relatively mild with a bit of harshness near the end.




Harsh Winter




Average Winter



Mild Winter



More black on head means  
a strong start to winter



More black on tail means  
harsh end to winter

## Share *your* knowledge with us

Are you an environmental enthusiast? Have you taken an interest in birds, fish or any of the flora that populates in the Thousand Islands region? If so, give us a shout and share your knowledge. We'd love to hear from you.



# TIA Community Board

River Talk is introducing the Community Bulletin Board to allow organizations, businesses and persons to post notices, events and meetings relevant to the River Community.

## Thousand Islands Playhouse released its 2025 Season lineup

Mary Poppins is coming to the Playhouse next summer! Check out the other productions online



## New FACEBOOK Group

### Thousand Islands Waterfront and Island Rentals

Two thousand members have joined this group in less than one year.

**Todd Bickerton -  
Admin**

**Dec, 7 2024 @ 6pm**

Christmas Parade in  
Lights and Fireworks,

Clayton, NY





# Membership Matters

Did you know that TIA is the sole organization responsible for the spring placement, seasonal maintenance and fall removal of over 200 orange and white ROCK markers between the eastern tip of Howe Island and Brockville?

Contrary to what many still believe, this work is done by TIA, NOT Parks Canada or the Canadian Coast Guard.

Beyond this, TIA also provides the funding for an additional 100 markers that are placed in American waters each season by Save The River between Cape Vincent and Morristown.

Established in 1934, TIA is a not-for-profit organization that relies heavily on membership to fund the work we do each summer.

## CHOOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

\$25 - Student - River Rat Cadet  
\$50 - River Rat Individual  
\$75 - River Rat Couple  
\$125 - River Rat Warren (Family)

\$250 - Mariner(s)  
\$500 - Navigator(s)  
\$1,000 - Pilot(s)  
\$1,500 - Commodore(s)

**PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW  
YOUR EXISTING MEMBERSHIP TODAY**

# 2024 Holiday

Water shoes are also great idea for protecting your feet in the islands. Choose a slipper, runner or moulded rubber style depending on use and preference.

8 pk, low profile, waterproof LED Solar Lights for the dock, deck or walkway. These lights shine white or blue in Waterproof LED

Versa-Brella UPF 50+ Personal Sun Shade - Portable Umbrella for sport & outdoor use. Clamp secures to your boat for relief from the sun 360-Degree Swivel Adjustable Position

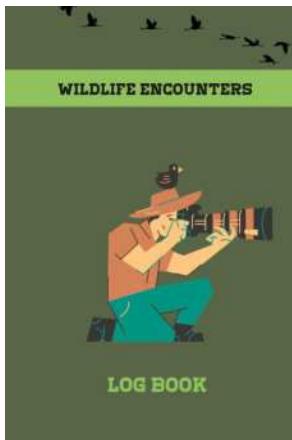
Laminated reference cards for boating knots. These cards can clip to your boat or bag for easy reference. Great idea for boaters of all ages.



Mustang Survival Minimalist PFD Belt Pack. Stays on your waist until you need it and inflates with the pull of a cord. Great for active, water activities.



# Gift Ideas



Thousand Island Playhouse tickets. The 2015 season has been released and tickets are available in 4, 6 or 7 ticket packages. Gift cards are also a great gift.

Portable, washable mesh trash bag great for your boat or kayak. Adjustable straps clip onto boat railing and the toggle keep garbage from blowing away.

Wildlife Log Book. Document local sightings of birds, fish and mammals. Track populations, and unusual sightings. Great entertainment for young cottage guests.

No cottage or boat trip would be complete without a deck of cards. These waterproof cards are great for life near the water.

Thousand Islands merchandise is always a hit. Check out this new Vineyard Vines ball cap, sold through Good Dog Charlies in Alex Bay.



# TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



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# TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



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## 2024 BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

SPONSORSHIP RUNS FROM MAY 1 TO APRIL 30

90 Years Young... and Counting !!



### Captain Level \$150

- ❖ A One-Year Business membership to **TIA**
- ❖ Social media mention on **TIA** Social Media
- ❖ Your hyperlinked business logo on the **TIA** sponsorship webpage

### Admiral Level \$500

- ❖ A One-Year Business membership to **TIA**
- ❖ Social media mention on **TIA** Social Media
- ❖ Acknowledgement during **TIA**'s Annual General Meeting
- ❖ Your hyperlinked business logo on the **TIA** sponsorship webpage
- ❖ Your hyperlinked business logo in our scrolling banner at the top of all **TIA** webpages
- ❖ Hyperlinked logo in all **TIA** River Talk publications (Our digital newsletter published 8 times per year)
- ❖ Invitation to submit an article about your business for inclusion in **TIA** River Talk

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### Our Mission: River Safety - Environmental Awareness - Community Support

Business Sponsorship support helps TIA to fulfill its mission to the river community and its flagship program of maintaining 200 shoal markers essential to the safety of boating and our local and seasonal residents.

[www.thousandislandsassociation.com/sponsor](http://www.thousandislandsassociation.com/sponsor)

## 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.

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