

sept / oct 2024

# RIVER TALK



RIVER SAFETY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT





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PHOTO: JOHN STREET





# President's Message

## Peter Fitton

Hear ye, Hear ye ... The Town Crier has made a proclamation recognizing the 90th year anniversary of TIA and thanking the association for promoting safety on the river going on 5 generations!

TIA originated in 1934, and on Saturday July 20th, TIA celebrated a milestone at its AGM held at the waterfront Gananoque Playhouse Theatre. Following a traditional hearty breakfast and the Town Crier's live proclamation, a crowd of over 240 attendees sang happy 90th year anniversary to music provided by Tim Hallman and enjoyed a special occasion cake.

The TLTI Fire Rescue fire boat was on parade providing a pump & hose demonstration. TIA made 90th year anniversary donations of \$5,000 each to the Township Leeds 1000 Islands Fire Rescue towards the purchase of another boat, and to the Clayton Volunteer Fire Department towards refurbishing their infamous "Last Chance" fire boat.

Greetings were received from TLTI Mayor Corinna Smith-Gatcke who delivered a Congratulatory message from MPP Steve Clark, and from Mayor John Beddows, Town of Gananoque. TIA is grateful to the TLTI and the Town of Gananoque for Community Grants to help fund the replacement of worn-out rock shoal markers. Brockville Councillor Katherine Hobbs delivered a Congratulatory Certificate from Mayor Matt Wren recognizing TIA's 90th years of service milestone.

TIA Student Bursaries of \$750 for post secondary education were announced being awarded to Claire Warren, Gananoque Secondary School, and to Madelynn Jones, Thousand Islands HS, Clayton.

Many of TIA's Past Presidents were in attendance. Following a role call a salute was given for their devotion and service to TIA. Special recognition was given to Graham "Skip" Armstrong" who served on the Board as Secretary -Treasurer for over 40 years.

The AGM speaker was Scott MacCrimmon, President Hucks Marine & Resort talking about the Evolution of Boating ... Past, Present & Future. Scott doesn't foresee a flood of electric boats in the near future and suggested the first half of their boat trips should be upstream! Our 90th year fellowship event was the 10 Cottage August 3rd Dock, Deck & Den Boat Tour organized by Island Patriot Dan McWilliam with over 30 boats registering for some quality time on the river.

Now to enjoy the quiet and colours of fall!



# From the Editor

Allison Burchell-Robinson

By now it is no secret that the Thousand Islands Association, also known as the Thousand Islands Association for the Preservation of River Quality, is celebrating its 90th year. Back in 1934 a group of people concerned about the safety and care of their island cottages got together to form the Thousand Islands Summer Residents Association. Over the years the name changed as did some of the concerns but prevalent from the start was the shoal marking program. That too has undergone many changes since its rudimentary design of lumber sticks painted yellow and attached to a paint can to the sophisticated markers today, each marker a warning to avoid the surrounding area.

Over the 90 years that TIA has been in existence, there have been twenty-six Presidents, a mix of Canadian and US residents and four have been women. Recently River Talk has been running a column entitled "The Next Chapter" featuring contributions from all living past presidents. They were asked to write about their accomplishments while in office, the prevalent concerns of TIA at that time and their current occupation.

Common concerns for all are membership as in how to find them and how to keep them and the constant upgrading and improving the shoal marking program. It is ironic how even today one finds the common perception that shoal markers are put out by the government. Over its years TIA has written extensively again and again that the marking the shoals is our flagship program yet the myth continues. Imagine the River without them...

A Membership Committee was formed in 1941 to address the same concerns of today. Membership fluctuated over the years with a high point in the early eighties. There was a marked decline in the high water years abetted by Covid but the numbers are increasing again...

An early concern for TIA was garbage and the lack of facilities to collect it as well as a call for a public restroom at the Gananoque Town Dock. Early Presidents highlighted these needs. As with most organizations TIA won some battles while others remain on the docket.

Every President had his/her agenda but the underlying and on-going theme was then and remains River Safety, Environmental Awareness and Community Support.





# Getting Into the Green Scene

**Winky McGowan**



What changed between days as a kid to now? One of the big, though subtle, items is how the environment has changed. As kids we saw 2 weeks of the summer season, but as a retiree we see changes through more of the season.

When we were young, the prevailing wind was from the SW. On rare days it would come from the west, off the mainland, bringing house flies. Today we see wind shifting around the compass, some days through all 360 degrees. Wind often was strong enough for good sailing and it kicked up enough wave action in "The Lake" that we didn't venture that far in a canoe or rowboat barely paddling around Burnt, Bostwick, Bluff, or over to Hay Island. We did however sail and water ski around the Admiralty Group. Rarely was a day so calm that reflections were prominent. Now I've explored much further afield in a kayak and have taken wonderful photos with reflections.

At the water's edge we searched through the snail shells for the larger ones to add to our collection. Now I rarely see snail shells in the water. The water became less clear as we aged - that is until zebra mussels invaded -

then we could see deep into the water column. We started wearing water shoes as protection against the sharp-edged zebra mussels. What! - we were barefoot kids.

When we were young, submerged rocks showed their colors and you could see their shapes. In recent years we see long, ribbony drifts of green algae and submerged rocks are covered with various shapes and colors of algae, which change over the season, so you can't tell where a rock ends.

In recent years, we have had a lot of wildlife drama. We've enjoyed catching glimpses of mink passing over the rocks, deer crashing through the woods and swimming to another island, osprey in the air suddenly plunging into the water to bring a fish up in its talons, beaver checking us out or tail-bombing us - but less happily seeing where beaver girdled large oak and ash trees, and/or felled large trees and removed many of the branches - even the non-native swans can be fun to watch, but tempered by knowing how their population has expanded and how they bully other water birds and can be aggressive toward boaters, especially when their cygnets are small.





# Wildlife Corridor:

*It's turkey season!*

**Stuart Arnett**

It's that time of the year again when thoughts start of organizing family reunions around the Thanksgiving turkey. Traditionally; at least in North America, Thanksgiving is thought to have started to celebrate a bountiful harvest with the first such celebration being in 1621 in Plymouth, Massachusetts when the natives Wampanoag people met with the English.

The Eastern Wild Turkey which is our subspecies of the wild turkey was native to Ontario was hunted to extinction in the 1800's and the last native turkey was recorded in 1909. The reintroduction program started in 1983 with Ontario trading River Otters for 74 Eastern Wild Turkeys that were released near Kingston.

The program flourished and today the population is stable. A typical brood or clutch of eggs can range from 4 to 17 and can take less than a month to hatch. Newly hatched chicks can leave the nest within 12 to 24 hours to forage for food and can fly short distances after only 3 to 14 days. This ability helps with their survival rate but it is still thought that only approximately 50% of hatchlings survive.

Some fun facts about these turkeys:

- An adult turkey has more than 6000 feathers with the Toms, the males, being the most colourful especially during mating season.
- They eat a wide range of foods including acorns, nuts, seeds, snails, worms, bugs - and much more.
- They prefer to run and can reach speeds of 19 kms/hour but they do roost at night in the tree tops.
- As their main predator is the coyote (which unfortunately carries a bad reputation) the wild turkeys range continues to expand.
- Wild turkey is also a sought-after game bird. Due to their proliferation there is both a Spring and Fall hunting season. You can find numerous recipes online.

Happy Thanksgiving.



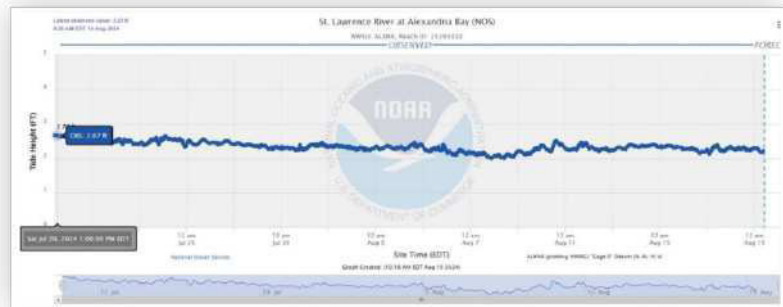
# Water Level Updates:

2024 Helped By A Rare July Peak – Average Year Holding Steady

**Vince Barton, Ken White, Ross Stewart**

During TIA's 90th year AGM Celebration Alex Bay hit a Peak of 2.68 ft. (over chart datum), as a region-wide event added 0.43 ft of water mid-July!

July 20 – early August



## Good Fall Boating Conditions Downstream for Lake St. Lawrence

Water levels in Lake Ontario and the 1000 Islands region are tantalizingly close to Long-Term Average. This provides an opportunity for some positive relief to our neighbours downstream. The ILOSLR Board has begun to exercise its Deviation Authority to provide more favourable levels in Lake St. Lawrence (Cornwall/Massena to Iroquois) for recreational boating and haul-outs through October 18th.

Lake St. Lawrence, being in the forebay of the Moses-Saunders Dam, is highly susceptible to changes in water levels due to ongoing changes in outflow – making recreational boating and haul-outs very unpredictable. All water “held back” will be fully offset starting October 19, 2024.

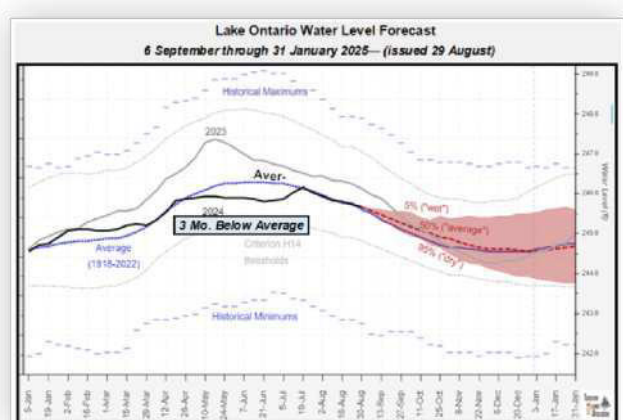
## “Toronto Experienced Its Rainiest Summer Ever, But Why?”

Click Here for an excellent video and informative article. Toronto Airport had shattered its record with 498 mm (19.6 in.) by August 21st. This precipitation helped keep Lake Ontario near normal given high outflows.

We begin September at 2.0 ft above chart datum, just about average for this time of the year. This level bodes well for a graceful end of the 2024 boating season.



August 6 – September 5



Forecast for all of 2024, a truly AVERAGE year. And for 2025, there isn't any indication yet of high water next spring!



# Then & Now

**Winky McGowan**

A big difference between then and now was in fuel. When we were young the large appliances were gas powered (the woodstove for cooking was before my time) and the long gas cylinders were brought out from town and hauled uphill to the house. Lights were small lamps, probably kerosine, and candles. And yes, we kids were allowed to carry lit candles upstairs to the hall table at bed time. The soot had to be cleaned off the glass chimneys; the light was much dimmer than the later electric lights or than a neighbor's gas lights, which were blindingly bright. Electricity came to the island around 1964. Eventually the gas appliances were swapped for electric ones and we no longer had to monitor how full the gas cylinders were.

Before the automatic electric water pump, we had a gasoline (?) powered pump to pump water from the river to fill a fairly large water tank on a metal tower. Water came to the house by a gravity feed. Someone had to keep tabs so the tank wasn't drained dry.

When the tank was being filled we were allowed to stand underneath and get splashed with the overflow water, which felt colder than the water in the river!

Action on the water has shifted. addle boards, kayaks, seadoos, foils (hoverboards), inflatable motor boats and many more larger cruising craft have been added to the mix of river fun. We see a few water skiers - either on 1 ski or a wakeboard - but much of the action has shifted to the inflated sit on tubes towed by a boat.

One of the biggest changes for us was the switch to staying in the little house on the little island and the big house on the big island changed ownership. The new owners have done a superb job of bringing the 1800s house into a more usable, modern condition for multiple generations, while keeping much of the old feel.



# Spotlight

## TIA Presidents of the First 46 Years

A.F. Castle	1934	Unknown	1950-55	Unknown	1966-73
George Webb	1936	Ralph Britton	1956	Rene Constantin	1974
George Douglass	1938	Victor M. Birks	1958	Graham Armstrong	1977
Dr. William Hale	1942	Frank Breyer	1962	Ed Bailey	1980
Robert Goodwillie	1946	Henry Bruner	1964		

A BIG TIA THANK YOU TO YOU ALL!

If you have any information about past Presidents from 1950-55 and 1966-73, please tell us!



Photo courtesy of John Street.

## TIA Presidents Over the Past 41 Years

Alan Bickerton	1983	Paul Regan	1999	Bryan Jones	2009
Susan Smith	1985	David Orr	2001	Orm Murphy	2011
William Browning	1990	Barbara Butts	2003	Thornley Stoker	2014
Jeffrey Crouse	1995	Bruce Wilson	2005	Allison Burchell-Robinson	2017
Orm Murphy	1997	Patricia Tague	2007	Peter Fitton	2019

A BIG TIA THANK YOU TO YOU ALL!



Photo courtesy of John Street.



# Summer 2024

*A summary of summer events!*

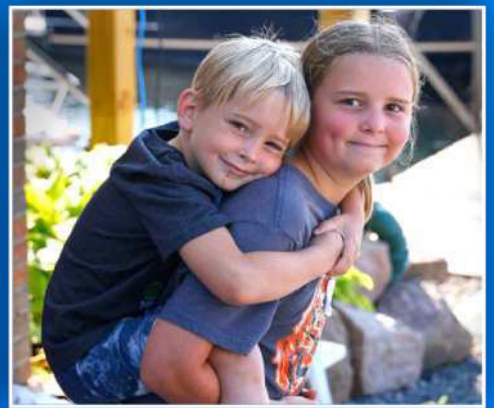
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## **TIA Celebrates 90 Years with a Splash!**

Gananoque, July 25, 2024 - The Thousand Islands Association's (TIA) Shoreline Breakfast and AGM this past Saturday, July 20th was a great success. River Rats, new and old, gathered at the Thousand Islands Playhouse to enjoy a full hot breakfast, cake for a morning dessert and time spent with fellow boaters and river lovers.

The morning was kicked off with an official proclamation honouring TIA's 90th Anniversary from Town Crier, Brian Mabey. Some more special guests included, TLTI Mayor Corrina Smith-Gatcke, Gananoque Mayor John Beddows, City of Brockville Councillor Katherine Hobbs and Scott MacCrimmon, President of Hucks Marine & Resort as the Featured Speaker of the AGM. The event also had representatives from like-minded organizations, Parks Canada, Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust and the Great Lakes Plastic Clean Up there to educate and promote awareness of the good work their respective groups do.

A highlight of the day were the two donations of \$5,000.00 each to the TLTI Fire Rescue team towards the purchase of a new boat, and to the Clayton Volunteer Fire Department towards refurbishing their infamous 'Last Chance' fire boat. Breakfast goers were also treated to a 'waterworks' show from the TLTI Fire & Rescue's fire boats.





# 2

## 2024 Island Patriots

It started in 2018 with a simple idea of engaging our river community in a fun, casual one day event that would help the TIA in its ongoing fundraising efforts while encouraging our river community to get to know each other and experience parts of the 1000 Islands they would seldom navigate. Although we were distracted by flooding, a global pandemic, travel bans, and personal health

challenges since the inaugural tour, all the comments received from event Patrons and Patriots have been nothing but positive and enthusiastic for the next tour, scheduled of 2026.

We can't thank our Island Patriots enough for stepping up to be part of an unusual event with complete strangers. Not only do their efforts support the TIA, they exemplify the spirit of an Island Patriot. "That's one rank above a River Rat!"

Special thanks go to Wavve Navigation for the assistance with our mapping and navigation tips as well as Anna Cowen who did most of the heavy lifting when it came to getting the message out to the membership.

This year's event sold 31 boat passes and raised \$1,860 for the TIA. Our Patriots may have greeted up to 124 people at their docks although some welcomed more patrons than others depending on their location on the river. So, to date the Island Patriots have raised \$3,460 for the TIA shoal marking efforts thanks to your support in our fun-raising efforts. (That should be enough to put a marker on the Jackstraw shoal so I can have my bumper back?)

# 3

**The Trash Free River Clean Up Days** were a huge success this year! In just two mornings, in June and August over 30 people came together to collect 1363 lbs of garbage from the shores of the St. Lawrence River. 1100 lbs of that was just from one day and one site!

Items found over the summer included household garbage, enough tires for five cars, a sofa, many dashboard units of speedometers, and tons of plastic bottles, cans, Styrofoam, broken glass and more.





# 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.



**Sept 21, 2024 @ 10:00-4:30pm**

**Annual Lyndhurst Turkey Fair**

426 Lyndhurst Rd,  
Lyndhurst, ON



**Sept 28 @ 11:00-3:00pm**

**TIWLT - Old Time Country Festival**

Glen Elbe Learning Centre, 870 CR 42, Athens,  
ON

Admission FREE.

Click here for more information!

**Oct 25 @ 5:00-7:00pm**

**TIWLT- Spooky Species**

Glen Elbe Learning  
Centre, 870 CR 42,  
Athens, ON

Fun Halloween event for  
kids! Click here for more  
information!

**Nov 8, 2024 @ 8:00-10:00pm**

**The Great Canadian Comedy  
Caravan - Fundraiser Edition!**

185 South St, Gananoque, ON

Buy tickets here!







# The Next Chapter

As we celebrate TIA's 90 years, this column will focus on past presidents, their memories and their accomplishments. And to prove there is life after TIA, we'll cover what our ex-presidents are doing now.

## **Bruce Wilson, TIA President, 2005-2007**

My presidency was a busy and exciting time full of challenges and opportunities for this wonderful association. I worked hard to promote good relationships with the Town of Gananoque and Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands. We worked closely with the fire departments of both the above municipalities to ensure fire protection and emergency services to all of our island residents including providing fire pumps and training to many of our members. Top priority as always was our flagship shoal marking program. My pet project was the 1000 Islands Parkway clean up, where we picked up litter twice annually, followed by lunch and fellowship at our home on Shipman's Lane. Through the years I have been most impressed by how our membership have embraced and the pride that they show in their TIA. Congratulations and here's to many more successful years.

## **Patricia Inglesbury Tague, TIA President, 2007-2009**

As President of Save The River, I was asked to join the Board of TIA. Both groups had some crossover interests and a shared border, so it made sense to have representation from the US. While I live on Wellesley Island year around, we spend a great deal of time on my family's island in Canadian waters. At the time, TIA had just finished a program to install, and train interested parties on the operation of water pumps throughout the islands. When I came onboard, we subsidized and trained islanders on the use of AEDs. When I became president, we looked at clearly defining our mission and launched into some strategic planning sessions. We also devised a questionnaire for our membership to better understand their concerns. With the promise of a bequest, we established a bi-national scholarship program, we supported fire and rescue operations, and increased membership from both sides of the border. TIA's most visible (and successful) program continues to be shoal marking, increasing the safety of boating in the Thousand Islands. After stepping down, I continue my role as a community advocate while working with organizations to enhance the lives of those residing in the region. Oh, and I just received my diploma in Plant-Based Culinary Arts from Le Cordon Bleu in Ottawa.

## **Bryan Jones, TIA President, 2009-2011**

I joined the board of TIA in 1994 as the "water levels expert". I was our representative at all the discussions regarding the objective to adopt a new plan to replace 1958D. I also wrote the articles about water levels in "View from the Doc" column in the newsletter

When Pres Barbara Butts put forward the idea of a shore breakfast/AGM, I became the Annual General Meeting, AGM, coordinator.

When I assumed the President's role our finances were dwindling. During the years of my Presidency our goal was to try and increase membership and to find other sources of funding. As President I wore three hats. I was President, produced the newsletters as well as remaining the AGM coordinator. I was the first and last president who had to organize and run my AGM. After my term, I continued on as the AGM coordinator until 2021. I left the Board in 2022 to happily continue in my retirement.



## 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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