

RIVER TALK

sept / oct 2026



**MEMORY LANE: THE
PLAYHOUSE**

FIRE HOSE CLINIC RECAP

SUPER MONARCHS

**10 THINGS THAT MAKE
COTTAGE CLOSING BEARABLE**

**THOUSAND
ROCK ISLANDS
ASSOCIATION**

Founded in 1934



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

From the Editor

It is our hope each issue, that you learn something new. A new tip/trick or broadened general means we are doing our job to keep you aware, safe, and good stewards of the River. We have several volunteer contributors well versed on a variety topics whom are generous enough to share their wealth of knowledge issue after issue. But there is always room for more.

If you have an expertise, or interest that you would like to see explored, there are no doubt others with similar queries. We are always happy to get new ideas and questions for each issue. Email us anytime with your thoughts at thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com. We will do our best to dive into your topics and share the lessons.

We continue to enjoy building ties and bonds up and down the river and are happy to include you in the journey.

Stephanie Scott.
Editor

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.

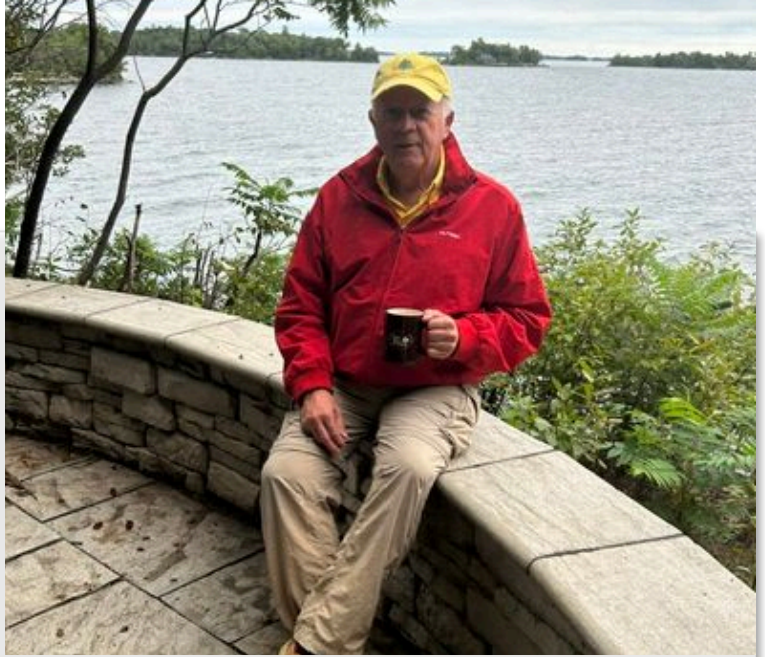


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President's Message

Peter Fitton



The River Changes, but the Memories Remain

There is something almost magical about the Thousand Islands in September. The pace of summer begins to slow, the days grow shorter, and the upper St. Lawrence River takes on a quietness that is difficult to describe unless you have experienced it.

The boats become fewer, the docks less busy, and the familiar sounds of summer gradually disappear. Early mornings can be cool and misty, while evenings bring a stillness across the water that seems to invite us to pause and reflect.

Nature is changing as well. The first migrating birds are beginning their journeys south, following routes that have connected these islands to distant places for generations. Soon, the forests along the shoreline will provide their annual spectacular display of red, orange, yellow and gold. The autumn colours reflected in the calm waters of the St. Lawrence are among the great rewards of staying a little longer.

For cottage owners, however, fall also brings that familiar feeling of a bittersweet goodbye.

What makes leaving difficult is not the cottage itself, but everything that happened there: summer breakfasts on the deck, evening boat rides, swims off the dock, family gatherings, friendly visits with island neighbours and countless sunsets over the river. These are the memories that make the Thousand Islands more than simply a beautiful place. They make it home.

As we celebrate the harvest season, we have much to be thankful for—the extraordinary river and islands we are privileged to enjoy, and especially the people who care enough to protect them.

Now in its 92nd year, the Thousand Islands Association continues that tradition. Through our Rock Shoal Marking Program, support for island emergency services, CPR and AED training, environmental initiatives and the dedication of our volunteers, TIA remains committed to river safety, environmental awareness and community support.

Thank you to our members and volunteers, our business sponsors, and our local municipality support for helping make that work possible.

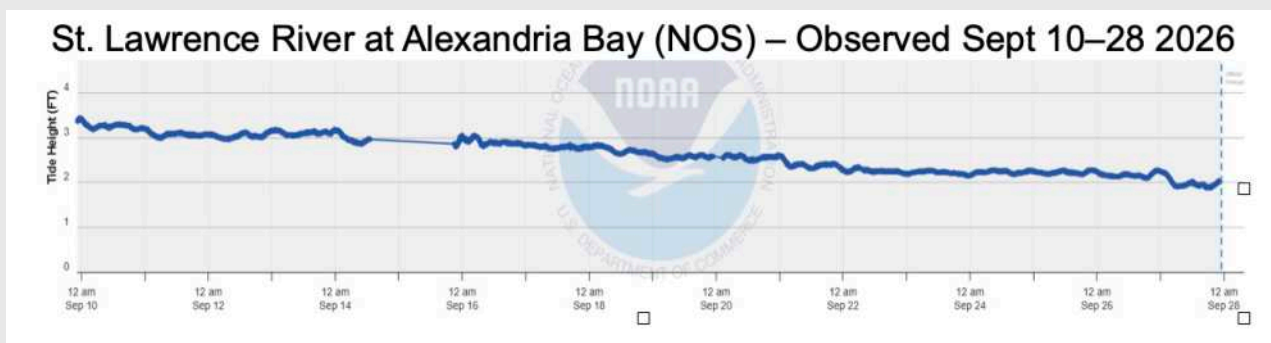
And when you turn the key in the cottage door for the last time this year, take comfort in knowing that TIA and the river will be here waiting for us when spring returns.

Until then, may the memories of another wonderful summer on the river keep us warm through the winter ahead of us.

Finally, Fall's Downward Fall (of Water Levels)

By: TIA Water Levels Committee, Barton, Stewart & White

Did you ever imagine we might have a summer where the water level never fell? For the longest time it felt that way, hovering between 3.5 and 4 feet above chart datum, the summer of 2026 has been described as the “perfect water level season”. But all good things eventually come to an end!



The Rule Curve flow for the week of September 26 through October 2 is 7,340 m³/s. However, when the level of Lake Ontario is above 74.80 m (245.41 ft) at the beginning of September, Plan 2014 prescribes an increase to the Rule Curve flow. Based on the current level of Lake Ontario (75.02 m or 246.13 ft), a 590 m³/s increase is prescribed for a total flow of 7,930 m³/s, the target flow for the week of September 26 to October 2.

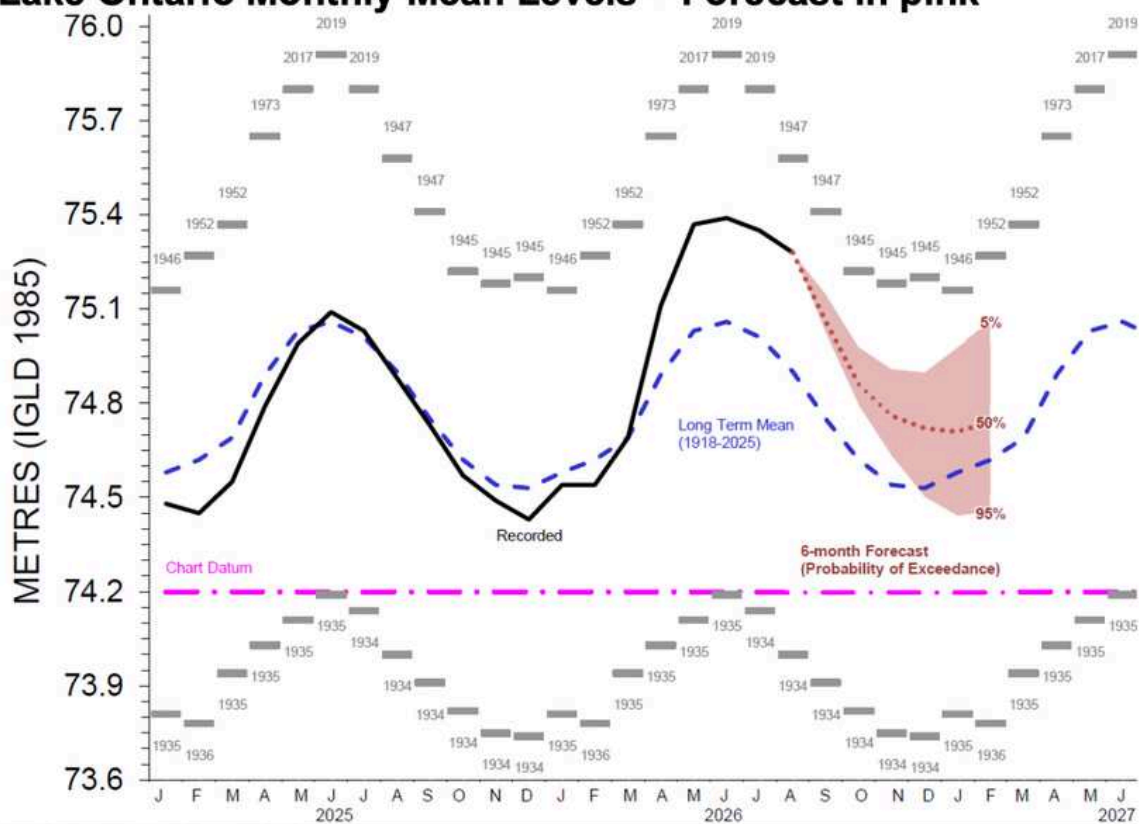
Simply stated, because the level was above a certain height on September 1st, 8% more flow than the Rule Curve will be drained this week. 10% extra flow was used the previous week of September 19–25. As of September 16 all of the gates of Iroquois Dam have been raised fully out of the water (to help moderate the impact of the high outflows on Lake St. Lawrence levels).

As of September 23, the Lake Ontario level was +12” above average (for that date), the highest for all the Great Lakes. For comparison, a year ago the level on September 23 was nearly spot on average. Imagine the record low being about 3 ½ feet (43”) lower than this day. Now that’s “high bottom”!

IJC Water Levels Boards

		Average	Last Year	Record High	Record Low
Lake Ontario		75.02 m	+31 cm	+33 cm	-35 cm
		246.13 ft	+12 in	+13 in	-14 in

Lake Ontario Monthly Mean Levels – Forecast in pink



Looking at the pinkish 6-month French horn of uncertainty, levels are predicted at 50% to be above average into the heart of winter, with similar spreads of uncertainty between the upper 5% Wet and lower 95% Dry as in 2025. The winter season is always interesting. Stay tuned!



The 2026 Fire Pump Clinics and the Neighbourhood Network Program

By: Jim Côté, Chair, River Safety

TIA's Fire Pump Initiative continued this past summer in two ways.

The first was in conjunction with the Dock to Door Program of the Leeds 1000 Islands Fire Services, with three demonstration clinics by the Fire Prevention Team, headed by Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) Doug Richardson and Station Captain Peter Evans. These clinics involved presentations on best practices in fire prevention on islands, the benefits having a pump on hand to contain island fires, a primer on pump use and maintenance, and hands-on use of the two portable pumps TIA donated to Fire Services in 2025.

Thanks are extended to the hosts of two of these clinics, both of whom are TIA Members At Large: Mark Yehle of Troughton Island and Jeff Rand of Juniper Island. The third clinic was held at the Government Dock in Ivy Lea and was attended by islanders and mainlanders alike. For those who missed it, here is the link to the CBC coverage of the 2025 program.

The second way the initiative continued was with the launch of a pilot program – the Neighbourhood Network Program (NNP) – in three island groups (Admiralty, Lake Fleet, Navy). This program is designed to establish a system for mapping the locations of all portable water pumps that can be used to fight local island fires until Fire Services arrive in their fire-fighting boats and afterwards if civilian assistance is needed for larger fires. Thanks are extended to the following “skippers” who volunteered in each island group to canvass their neighbours and distribute this pamphlet to determine who already owns a pump but also to emphasize the importance of having (well-maintained) portable fire pumps for emergency preparation on islands: Jamie Armstrong, Philip Kearns, Jeff Rand, Charlie Shields, Sheldon Waterman, and Mark Yehle.

So far, approximately 40 pumps have been identified in these island groups, locations of which will be mapped for the skippers and Fire Services to use in emergencies to contact pump owners if a concerted effort is needed to fight a fire on one of the islands. This program will continue next year to contact more islanders in these three island groups.

If you have not been contacted and would like further information about how to become part of the program, please contact me at markerwatchers@gmail.com



Fire prevention presentation by
FPO Doug Richardson.

From Olympic-Level Canoe Club to World-Class Theatre: A Trip Down Memory Lane

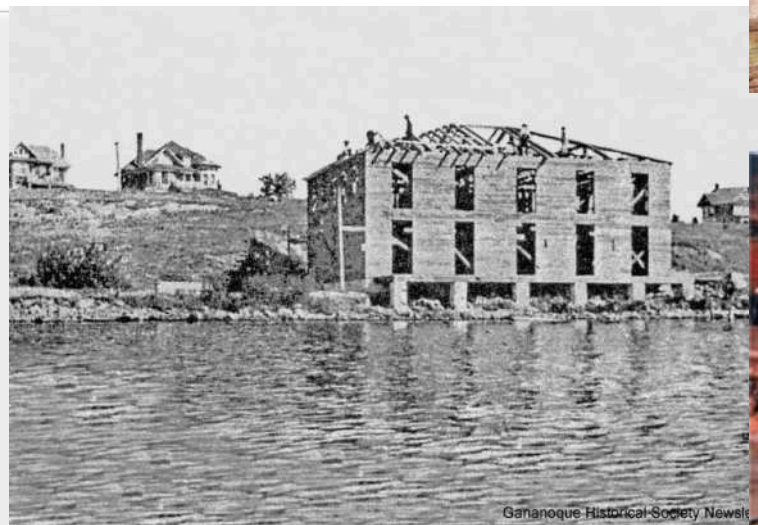
By Paul Côté

Most everyone is familiar with the Thousand Islands Playhouse but only the older readers will remember the building as the Canoe Club. It didn't become the Playhouse until the 1980s. Before that it had a long and illustrious career catering to an

enthusiastic group of canoeists. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, canoeing as a sport was all the rage all across North America. The early 1900s saw Gananoque join the ranks of this competitive sport.

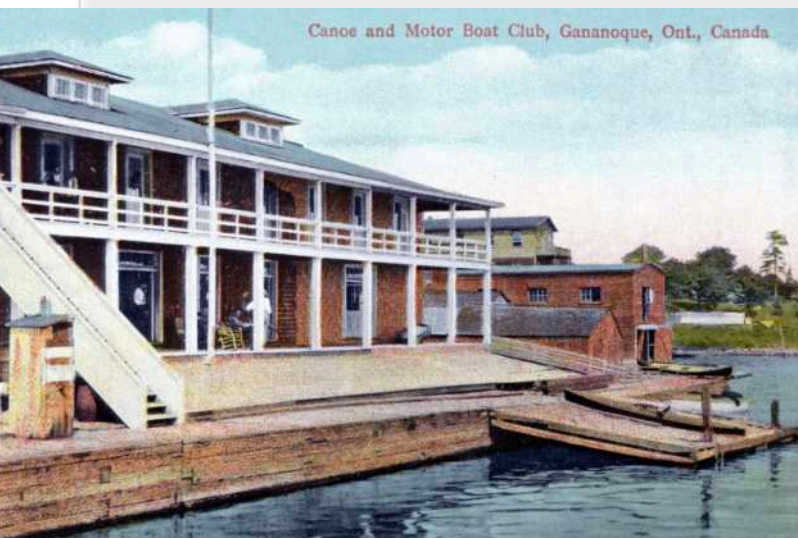
Not to be left out, the Gananoque enthusiasts built the club house in 1909, and as can be seen in the photo, its locale was one of the first buildings on that part of the shoreline. By the 1920s, it was a going concern, although it lacked many features we now see. Later in the 20s it was really taking shape and

entered its golden age. The 1930s, especially, were the glory days. The club took several national and even Olympic cups.



Gananoque Historical Society Newsle





After World War II, the club started to lose its vigor but one thing the club was noted for decades to follow were the weekend dances. By the early 80s, the old building was showing its age and its future was uncertain.



Luckily, the Thousand Islands Playhouse arrived on the scene and resurrected the ageing edifice. In 1982, with the sale complete, the Playhouse began its extensive renovations and turned the old building into an attraction that Gananoque has been proud of. Of special interest to us is that it is also the venue for the annual TIA AGM.

Learn more about the Canoe Club history here:

- Gananoque Canoe Club**
- TILife : What's in a building**
- 1000 Islands Playhouse History**



Migratory “Super” Monarchs

By: Jean Dabros

This summer promised to be a productive one for the Monarch butterflies in my garden. My neighbours here, along the shores of the St. Lawrence all observed the same thing – our gardens were busy with butterflies of all shapes and colours.

While there were many Monarchs laying eggs it was harder to find caterpillars or chrysalids (ants love to eat the eggs and wasps will prey on young caterpillars or parasitize the caterpillars or chrysalids). With all the competition it wasn't until late August that the caterpillars were able to successfully undergo metamorphosis and fly away. Due to their somewhat later start each of these butterflies were members of the “Super” Monarch generation.

Monarch butterflies experience four generations a year. The first three generations (breeding Monarchs) undertake the journey of migrating north. Each of these generations have a four-week lifecycle, flying north and stopping to lay eggs on milkweeds, with the new generation taking on the next leg of the journey.

The fourth generation – the “Super” generation – will migrate late summer from the Thousand Islands to their overwintering grounds in Mexico (some 4800 kms) and then, in spring, start the return journey, heading northwards.

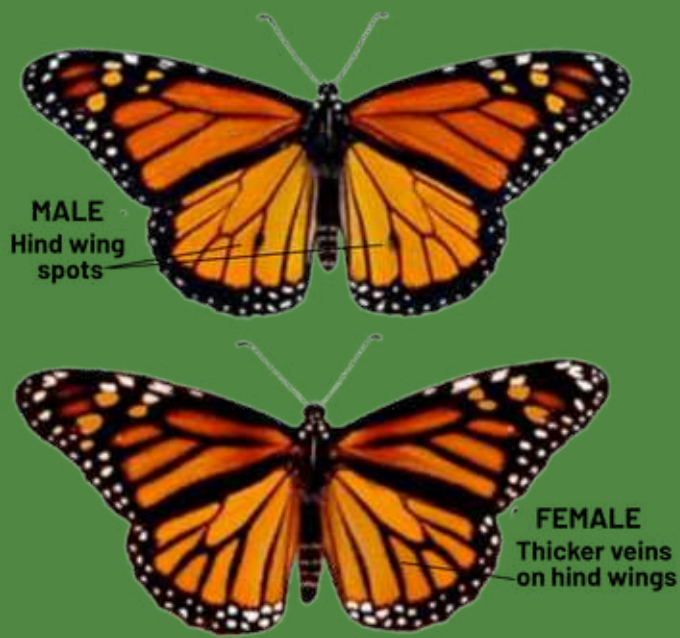




What makes a Super Monarch?

Late summer, with the onset of cooler nights, shortening daylight and aging milkweeds, a change is triggered in the biology of the Monarch. These Monarchs will live eight times longer than their parents, and will have a different morphology than the three generations preceding it. Migratory Super Monarchs have larger forewings than the breeding population, with an elongated aspect ratio to facilitate soaring and gliding, conserving critical reserves of fats required for the long journey. There appears to be a correlation in the distance the butterflies have to migrate with the morphology of the wing – Monarchs from Eastern Canada (migrating to oyamel fir forests in Mexico) have larger bodies and more elongated forewings than populations west of the Rockies that migrate shorter distances to California. These migratory butterflies enter a reproductive diapause, pausing sexual development until the warmer spring temperatures reactivate their reproductive systems. They mate before beginning their northward journey to lay eggs on emerging milkweed plants. That the Super Monarch is able to cover such distances to return to a specific forest in Mexico (where their great-great-grandparents left from) is a biological marvel.

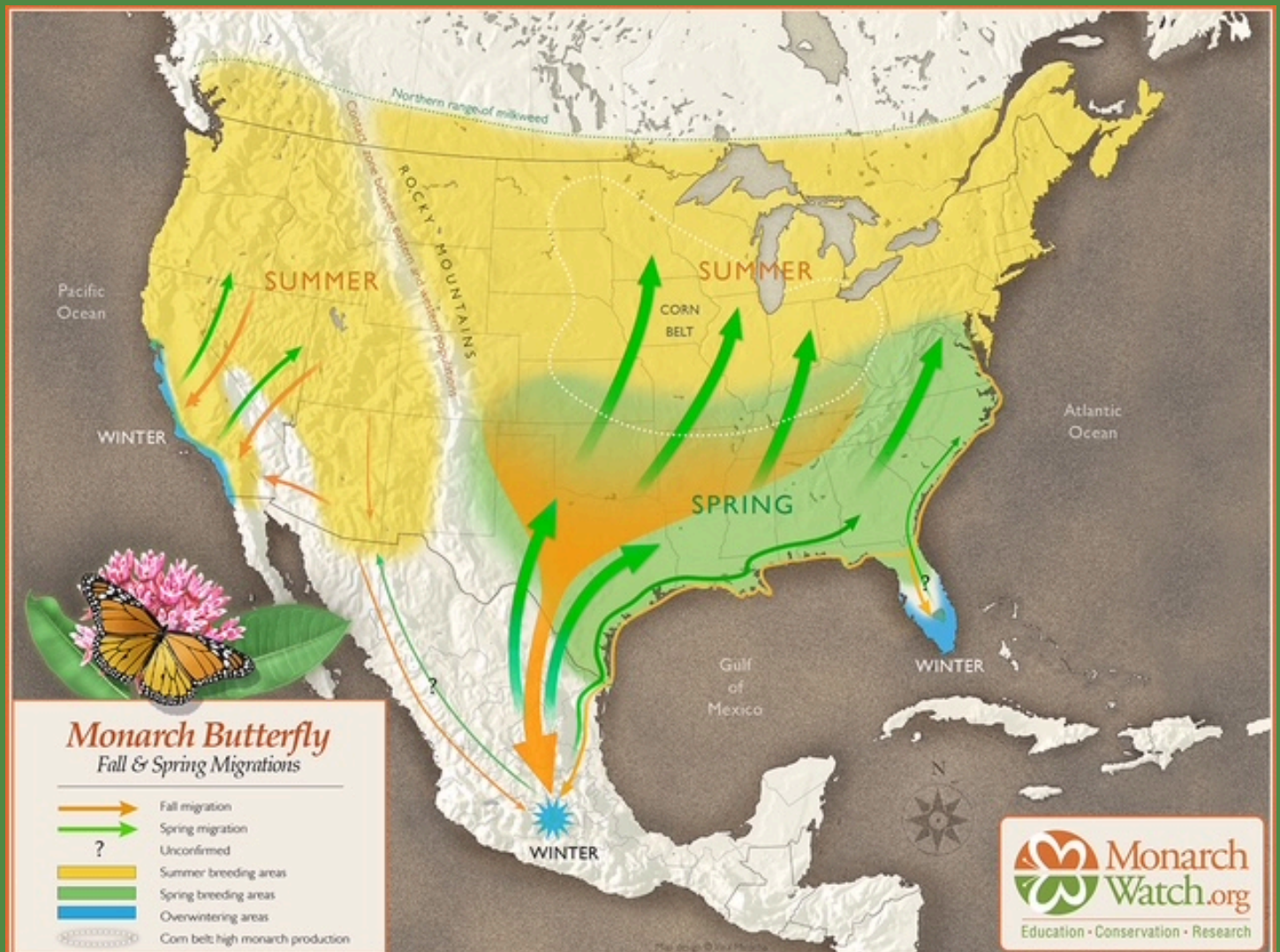
The difference between Male & Female Monarchs

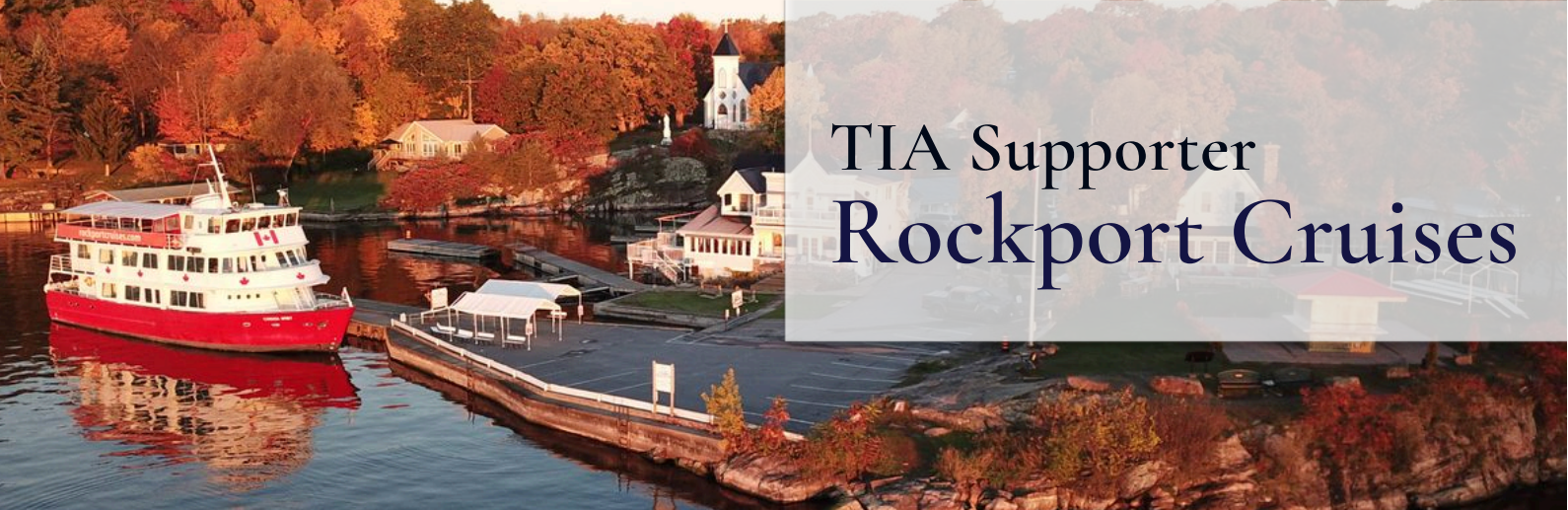


The mating of Male & Female Monarchs



Migration Map of the Monarch





TIA Supporter Rockport Cruises

Gather 'round while we tell you our history of the 1000 Islands, ON, Canada. For generations, Rockport, ON has welcomed visitors to one of Canada's most iconic landscapes; the magnificent 1000 Islands. Nestled along the St. Lawrence River, the historic village of Rockport has long been a gateway to the region, where travellers experience the natural beauty, rich history, and world-renowned scenery that make this destination unlike any other....But where did it all begin? Rockport's rich history dates back over 200 years when Scottish and Irish settlers first came to the area.

In the 1880's, Rockport was an important steamboat building, transportation and cord wood refueling centre. Since its early days, Rockport Boat Line, now proudly operating as Rockport Cruises, has played an important role in sharing the story of the 1000 Islands with visitors from across Canada and around the world. What started as a small river community specializing in the boat building industry, has grown into one of the region's premier tourism destinations, with cruises welcoming more than 100,000 guests each season. Every voyage introduces visitors to the area's legendary castles (Boldt and Singer), historic estates of Millionaire's Row, picturesque island cottages, and the remarkable landscapes that have captivated travellers for generations. As one of the region's longest-standing tourism operators, with over 72 years in business, Rockport Cruises is the only Canadian-owned boat line to showcase Boldt Castle on every cruise, making it a favourite among travellers.

As summer transitions into autumn, the St. Lawrence River offers one of the most spectacular ways to experience Ontario's vibrant fall colours. Towering maples, golden birches, and colourful island shorelines create breathtaking scenery that can only be fully appreciated from the water. Fall is one of the region's best-kept secrets, a quieter season with crisp air, stunning photography opportunities, and an unforgettable perspective of the islands.

We invite you to experience the beauty of the 1000 Islands aboard Rockport Cruises this fall. With promo code "FALL10" you can save 10% off fall cruises. Join us as we continue a proud tradition of sharing the stories, history, and natural wonder of this remarkable region, one cruise at a time. Visit RockportCruises.com for more information and to book online today.



Monarchs & Milkweeds

By: Stephanie Scott

Did you know that the milkweed is the only larvae host plant monarchs will lay eggs on? The only plant the monarch caterpillars eat? That monarchs would not survive without the milkweed?

As a result, supporting the monarch means not just planting flowers that attract butterflies, but also encouraging the growth of natural milkweed in the region.

This is another example of how important it is to understand the flora found in the region and on your own property. We all do a level of landscaping, but understanding what we are looking to remove/re-home and its impact on the environment, is key.

If you are removing milkweed, consider replanting more in an alternate area. You can easily collect your own seeds.



Want to know when the seeds inside the pod are ready to harvest?

Gently press the seam of a milkweed pod. If it pops open, the seeds are ready, if the seam bounces back, they are not ready to harvest.

TIA Supporter Kehoe Marine Construction



For more than 25 years, Kehoe Marine Construction has been proud to call the Thousand Islands home.



Founded in 2000, Kehoe began as a small, family-owned dock manufacturer and has grown into one of Ontario's leading marine construction companies. From our facility on the Thousand Islands Parkway in Lansdowne, we are fortunate to have built that growth around an incredible local workforce, many of whom live in the same communities where we work every day.

Our people are a huge part of what makes Kehoe who we are. The knowledge, craftsmanship and pride within our team have been developed through years of hands-on experience on the St. Lawrence River and throughout the Thousand Islands. Our crews understand the river, the weather, shoreline conditions, island access and the challenges that come with working in this unique environment.

While Kehoe is known for larger marine construction projects, we are equally proud to help with the smaller jobs that matter to local property owners. No job is too small. Our residential services include custom stationery and floating docks, shoreline protection, boat lifts, PWC solutions, material barging to the islands, pump outs, repairs and renovations. Our experienced carpenters can also assist with a wide range of waterfront and property renovation and repair work.

Kehoe has also grown significantly in commercial and heavy civil marine construction, including dredging, piling, shoreline infrastructure and complex marine work. Our Lansdowne facility is home to our Canadian manufacturing operations, including Kehoe sectional barges and our range of in house-built workboats.

While our projects now take us across Ontario and beyond, the Thousand Islands remain home. We are proud to employ local people, support local businesses and contribute to the communities along the river.

Most importantly, we are proud of the people behind the Kehoe name. Their skill, dedication and connection to this area are what allow us to keep building on the river we are lucky enough to call home.

Did you know...

If you or your spouse own or rent property other than your home address in Ontario, you may be eligible to vote in more than one municipal, district social services administration board and/or school board election.



This is your sign to get on the list for the October 26 municipal election.

Check, update or add yourself to the voters list with our online tool until **August 12**, or directly with your municipality after this date.

Register now



Cottage Life

FALL  **SHOW**

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, MISSISSAUGA

Community Opportunity to manage Invasive Species on the Thousand Islands Parkway

By: Jean Dabros



The St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) and the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) are partnering to address the spread of *Phragmites australis* (European Common Reed), one of Ontario's most aggressive invasive plant species. Through a successful provincial funding application focused on invasive *Phragmites* management, they have secured support to control approximately 9,700 square metres of infestation along sections of the Thousand Islands Parkway. They have invited the Thousand Islands Association to join them in the final phase of this project, removing biomass.

This first phase of work will focus on sites east of County Road 5 near Mallorytown Landing. Approved treatment methods will be used to manage the invasive stands, after which the dead plant material must be removed from the affected areas. Removing this biomass is a critical step in restoring habitat, reducing the likelihood of regrowth, and allowing native vegetation to recover.

Final dates have yet to be confirmed but the plan is for the biomass removal to take place over the weeks of October 12 and October 19, 2026.

If you are interested in volunteering for this very worthwhile partnership, please contact Jean Dabros at jean.dabros@gmail.com.

10 Things That Make Closing the Cottage Bearable

1 The mosquito buffet is closed: You can finally sit outdoors after 6:00 PM without being carried away by a swarm or bathing in deep-woods bug spray.

2 Spider detente: You no longer have to play a rock, paper, scissors with the dock spider to see who's shoe it is?"

3 Mouse eviction season: You can stop worrying about who is making scratching noises in the drywall—until next May, it's officially their cabin.

4 Wardrobe reset: You can finally retire the anxiety creating, mildly mildew-scented bathing suit and embrace the forgiving comfort of oversized flannel and sweatpants.

5 Financial relief: You no longer need to cut back your food and drink budget just to pay for boat gas.



The death of the weekend chore list: No more spending half your Saturday fixing a temperamental water pump, scrubbing spider dung, or trying to figure out why the toilet is making that noise again.

Goodbye, packing logistics: You no longer have to play a high-level game of Tetris trying to fit coolers, luggage, three dogs, and a bag of trash into your trunk every Sunday evening.

You can reclaim your weekend: instead of spending four hours bumper-to-bumper on the highway, questioning every life choice that brought you to this gridlock.

Wi-Fi that actually works: You can stop holding your phone in the air at the end of the dock trying to catch a single bar of 3G just to check your emails.

An excuse to decline visitors: You no longer have to act as an unpaid Airbnb host for distant cousins or "friends of friends" who suddenly want to catch up the second the weather hits 25°C.





Transforming your yard into an extraordinary outdoor living space requires expertise, craftsmanship, and a clear vision. Going into their second decade of service provision, **Thornbusch Landscaping Company Inc.** delivers comprehensive residential and commercial landscape design and construction tailored to turn outdoor dreams into reality. Whether creating a backyard oasis for entertaining or enhancing curb appeal for a property, Thornbusch Landscaping provides end-to-end solutions. The team manages every phase of the transformation, taking projects from initial concept through to final build.

Services Offered:

- **Hardscaping:** Patios, walkways, stone retaining walls, armor stone installation, and custom outdoor fire features.
- **Landscape Design & Construction:** Planting design, garden bed installation, sodding, and full property layout upgrades.
- **Property Maintenance & Grounds Care:** Seasonal cleanups, lawn care, and ongoing commercial grounds management to keep landscapes pristine year-round.



What sets Thornbusch Landscaping apart is a dedication to structural integrity, meticulous attention to detail, and top-tier customer communication. By selecting high-quality materials suited to local climate conditions, every project is built to stand up to the elements and increase overall property value.

Ready to elevate your outdoor space? Visit thornbuschlandscaping.com to explore their portfolio, learn more about available services, or schedule a design consultation today.

TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL



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Houseboat
Holidays



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