



WINTER 2018

Newsletter

Safety, Environment & Community

President's Message



*By Allison Burchell-Robinson,
TIA President*

It will never happen to me. How many of us have said that either to ourselves or when talking quietly among friends? But, it did happen to an eleven year old boy on Labor Day weekend this year. He and his family were boating on the St. Lawrence River near Rockport when their boat capsized. Tragically the boy drowned and his body was not recovered for 48 days.

The St. Lawrence is a mighty river, a river of beauty and awesome in its breadth and depth. It is also a dangerous river and often an unforgiving one. Everyone who ventures on it or in it needs to remember that personal safety should always be our first concern.

How many of us have watched kayakers, canoers, paddle boarders glide by in the hot summer sun... How often do you see those cigarette boats thunder by or watch other boaters speed by without a thought about the wake left behind... What about sunbathers perched at the tip of the bow of a traveling boat or fishermen standing to cast as the boat rocks precipitously in the choppy water.... How about swimmers far from shore. What do they all have in common? Many/most are not wearing a life jacket. And, all too often, in the warm months, my family and I are guilty as well. When we first got our pontoon boat, we were stopped by the police for a routine check. We were reprimanded for not knowing the exact location of the stored life jackets. But, nothing was going to happen to us.

Boating on the St. Lawrence River has changed over the years. A friend recently remarked to me that he learned the river from a St. Lawrence skiff, one end of which had been bashed on the rocks and a transom fitted to hold a small 3 ½ horsepower motor. His children learned boating from that same boat as will his grandchildren. Licenses were not required then but most boaters knew and observed the rules of navigation. And nothing was going to happen to us.

Today, there are more boats on the river and the boats are bigger and faster. Often new boaters start with a 30 foot plus cruiser with power far exceeding those boats of yesteryear. Unfortunately not all know and understand navigation rules and regulations. But, nothing is going to happen to them.

We who spend our summers on the St. Lawrence River have a responsibility to respect the power of this awesome river and to remind our neighbors and fellow boaters as well. A license to operate your watercraft is mandated and one of the penalties for not having one is spelled out in the accompanying article. If you do not have a license, time this winter would be well spent studying and taking the exam.

The drowning accident that took the life of that eleven year old boy is a heartbreaking reminder that it can happen to any of us. The members of the Thousand Islands Association extend their deepest condolences to the family.

— Allison Burchell-Robinson

Photograph © Doug McLellan

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM
CALLI THE SAFETY LABRADOR**



I'm Calli and like you I've got lots of River friends. I'm a Labrador Retriever and I'm made for water. I've got 4 paddles, webbed paws and a warm coat. Even so, I really do have this lifejacket for those dark, stormy, cold trips.

This holiday season I'd like to suggest a gift idea. Buy someone special one of those new (almost invisible) life jackets that inflate when you hit the water. Every year we lose someone on the River because they weren't wearing a life jacket. These are cool, they'll save a life and they won't make you stand out...like a poodle with pom-poms.

Also, tell your River friends to join the TIA. Boats hit shoals and people and dogs fly out. The more shoals we can get white markers on, the safer we will all be.

Calli has grown up on the River with Doug & Caroline - who wish everyone health, happiness and a quick winter.

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

One of our objectives for 2018 was to learn more about our membership, who we are and where we reside. With the help of our new membership form, here are some things we learned.

Our membership now stands at 768 (approximately 2/3 Canadian, 1/3 American). We have 136 individual memberships (one member each), 214 couples' memberships (two members each) and 68 family memberships (three members each). 39 new members joined TIA in 2018.

...continued on page 2

– Our Roots –

History of the Thousand Islands Association

This history of the Thousand Islands Association is taken from the report compiled by Veronica A. Cooper in 1995 based on information from the Gananoque Reporter and the association's annual meetings. It covers the years 1934 through 1988. This is the fourth of a series of articles that will present the history of the association.

1975 – 1979



By Allison Burchell-Robinson

The last years of the 1970's were a busy time for TIA. At the 1975 annual meeting the Director of the Eastern Region of Parks Canada, there to talk about the potential expansion of the St. Lawrence Islands National Parks, fielded so many questions that he ran out of time leaving many members frustrated at not being able to voice their concerns. Also addressed at the meeting was the increase in parking fees at the Town Dock. TIA learned that a license was now needed before building boathouses or docking facilities.

The following year, TIA subsidized two dock boys to carry baggage at the Bay Street dock and spent \$550.00 for garbage removal. The association presented a written report at the meeting of the St. Lawrence Islands National Parks Committee regarding planned expansion of the national park holdings and the possible expropriation of some lands. The estimated cost of the plan was 15.6 million

dollars for approximately 17 square miles of land. According to the plan, "the presence of privately owned cottages destroys the desirable natural environmental character of the area".

A newspaper's headline in 1977 proclaimed that "Garbage Overflows Ivy Lea Receptacle". At the annual meeting members learned that the trailer which TIA was paying to have emptied on a weekly basis was insufficient. TIA protested a regulation requiring non-residents to export their boats, motors, etc. when leaving for the season. That same year the association approved a new constitution.

After years of negotiation with US authorities, consent was finally given in 1978 for TIA to place buoys on uncharted shoals from Deer Island to Clayton. Garbage pick-up costs rose to \$885.00 and rose again to \$1000.00 in 1979. The controversy that year was the lack of space at Bay Street for short term docking. TIA resolved to consider the suggestion that it make representation to councils so as to have a say in the matters of docking and garbage removal.

Photographs © Arthur Child Heritage Museum

Membership Update (continued)

We also discovered where many of our members reside during the summer. The biggest island regions: 19% resides in The Admiralty Group; Ivy Lea has 7%; Navy Group, Lake Fleet Group, Wellington and Surrounding Islands all 6 % each. Over 13% of our membership resides on the Canadian mainland and 8% of our membership is boaters.

Some island regions have only a few TIA members. In Brock Isles, we have 8 members, 2 members in Wolfe, and 12 members from the U.S. mainland. We have work to do. If you know folks who reside on your island, in your island region or boats with you in the islands, who are not TIA members, please ask them to join in supporting TIA. Simply point to a shoal marker and remind them that without TIA members, there would be no shoal markers.

In addition, 26 area businesses became TIA business sponsors. To find out who they are just go to the TIA website and click on the sponsors page. If you frequent a business(s), ask them to become a TIA business sponsor. It is a great way for them to promote their business to hundreds of people who could buy their products and services.

In January, we will once again be asking for your membership support. Our goal is to reach 1000 members. Some good news for those who will be renewing their memberships, you will not need to complete the longer membership form as you did this year. You will only need to fill out your name(s), email address and, if you have any, information changes from 2018.

As always, we thank you for your membership support and for promoting TIA. See you on the river in 2019.



By George Kittredge



It was all so much easier a hundred years ago!

Don't Leave Home (or Dock) Without It!



© John N. Street



© Thousand Islands Association



© Julia Purcell



© Thousand Islands Association



© Doug McLellan



© Finn Long



This family has been on the River over 100 years and they take no chances!



By Tony Charters

I received this article from a fellow TIA member (unattributed by request) however, I had written one on a similar theme so, with a little nudge from our design team, I combined them...

Stopped by the OPP off Ivy Lea for a seemingly routine check of her pontoon boat, it seemed that all was in order until the officers asked to see her boating licence. "Oops. Left it back on the island, sir, it's just over there and I'd be happy to go get it for you." They replied, "No good, ma'am, it has to be on the boat or on your person. You are subject to a \$312 fine and we are now going to have to impound and tow your boat to Rockport at your expense".

One can easily imagine her jaw dropping to the deck in disbelief. A member of TIA with a Florida licence who had gotten her Canadian licence out of courtesy. Happily, relief from the immediate crisis was close at hand. Her passenger piped up and said he had a licence on him. Fine, he could drive the boat, but the charge against her stood as she had been driving the boat.

The next step was a court appearance in Brockville. After hearing her story, the magistrate agreed to waive the fine. As an American, she was not required to show a boat operator's licence unless she had been boating in Canadian waters for 45 or more consecutive days, which she hadn't, or if her boat had been registered or licensed in Canada (unknown but see my note at the end).

So, when is a Boating Licence not a Licence (or a License)?

In the USA, most states require boat operators to carry a card or paper issued by a recognized agency that certifies that they have successfully completed an approved boating safety course. This card is considered to be and is often referred to as a "Boating License" but, because it does not expire and does not need to be renewed, it is not officially called a boating license.

In Canada, it seems that the **Pleasure Craft Operator's Card (PCOC)** is considered in the same way and is also often referred to as a "Boating Licence". By whatever name you call it or spell it, it must always be in your possession when operating a powered watercraft, including a PWC.

Fortunately, both countries recognize each other's cards, I mean licences (or licenses).

*Note: Just to further confuse the matter, in Canada, another type of boating licence is the **Pleasure Craft Licence** that documents the unique licence number of the pleasure craft. In the USA, it is called a **Boat Registration Certificate** that proves that your boat is registered with a unique registration number. They must also be in your possession when operating powered watercraft.*

TIA Officers

President: Allison Burchell-Robinson
Secretary-Treasurer: Deborah McGee
Past President: Thornley Stoker

Directors

Troy Donovan
Peter Fitton
Bryan Jones
George Kittredge
Ormond Murphy
David Orr
Ken White

Emeritus: Graham Armstrong, William Hale
Newsletter Editor: Tony Charters

TIA Membership

Those white shoal markers are placed and maintained by TIA and Save The River. They would not be there if it were not for you as the program receives no outside funding. Your membership makes it possible.

Membership Fees:

Single: \$50 (Includes 1 AGM breakfast)
Couple: \$75 (Includes 2 AGM breakfasts)
Family: \$100 (Includes 4 AGM breakfasts)

Events

Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Look for July date in Spring Newsletter.
AGM Speaker: Susan W. Smith, Editor of Thousand Islands Life Magazine

Dock, Deck & Den Tour: August 3, 2019

THOUSAND ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

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SAVE THE RIVER



By John Peach

Greetings from Huckleberry Island and Save The River, the Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper. In late August I had the good fortune to be appointed Executive Director of Save The River after filling that position on an interim basis during the summer. Save The River's shoal markers, so generously paid for by TIA, have been pulled and stored for the season.

As I watch the winter ducks move onto the River I am reminded that there are many issues facing it. Two new non-native species of phytoplankton were positively identified by Cornell researchers this summer, underscoring the continued threat of invasive species getting into our beloved River and lakes. Ballast water filtration and treatment remains an unresolved issue that requires strong leadership and legislation on both sides of the border.

There appears to be some progress on the large infrastructure challenge to rebuild the inadequate sewer and wastewater systems in our River communities. It will take hundreds of millions of dollars and resolute political resolve to follow the lead of Kingston and upgrade these antiquated systems. Save The River has been providing letters of support for the municipalities that are seeking the funding. Also, many of our riverfront septic systems need checking to make sure they are working as originally intended.

The threat of Asian Carp escaping the Chicago canal gets more real every year. There is a Corps of Engineers plan to attempt to block the Carp's eastward

movement at Brandon Road Lock, about 50 miles southwest of Chicago. This plan relies on a combination of additional underwater electrical current, noise, water jets, air bubbles and contract commercial fishing below the barrier. Funding of the construction and maintenance of the project is still up in the air as of this writing. I view this issue as one of the most important threats facing the River.

Earlier this fall, Save The River announced its "Replace Single Use Plastics" campaign to rid the River of plastic bags, straws, cups, etc. The program will be run in conjunction with local River activists. It will start initially in Clayton, Alexandria Bay, and Cape Vincent. We hope to expand it as soon as it is successful in those communities. Save The River branded reusable bags of recycled material are already available at our storefront.

Please come visit us at our 30th Winter Environmental Conference in Clayton on Feb 2 at Clayton's 1000 Island Harbor Hotel. We will feature excellent speakers on Diversions, Micro plastics, Asian Carp, American Eels, "Replace Single use Plastics" and the River premier of the "It's Hard to be a Tern" video. For more information on the conference or Save The River please feel free to contact me at executivedirector@savetheriver.org.

Closing on a very positive note, we had a record year for banding common terns. 340 terns were banded on sites maintained and monitored on the main U.S. channel. This project, started in 1999, is performed under the leadership of Dr. Lee Harper in partnership with TILT.

Have a great winter.