



SEPTEMBER 2021

# RIVER TALK



**RIVER SAFETY . ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS . COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Our thanks to TIA member and friend, John N. Street,  
for providing many of the images used in River Talk each month.

# Table Of Contents

Your Favourite River Photo.....	Page 3
President's Message.....	Page 4
Editor's Message.....	Page 5
TIA TIP of the Month....	Page 6
Environmental Sponsor Spotlight- Fireplaces Unlimited.....	Page 7
In Case You Were Wondering.....	Page 8
Environmental Spotlight- The Round Goby.....	Page 9
Environmental Awareness- River Clean Up.....	Page 10
Friends of TIA- Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.....	Page 11
Noteworthy News I.....	Page 12
Noteworthy News II.....	Page 13
Water Levels Update.....	Page 14
Did You Know.....	Page 15
A Gentle Reminder.....	Page 16
TIA's Annual General Meeting Winners.....	Page 17
TIA Admiral Sponsors.....	Page 18
TIA Admiral Sponsors.....	Page 19
Back Cover Photo.....	Page 20



August 15th  
sunrise near  
Endymion  
Island.

Photo  
submitted by  
TIA  
Member  
Glennis  
Newton



Do You Have A Favourite **River Photo** that brings back  
a special moment or memory?

If so, please share it with **TIA**

You can email it to us at: [thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com)

*"What's the TIA River Talk these days?" asked the Heron to the  
Turtle. Photo courtesy of TIA President, Peter Fitton*





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Fitton

The Eagles have landed - a warm welcome to our American friends that have now returned and are back with us on the river!



Welcome to September and my favourite time on the river – a month for refocusing our energies. A time signaling the beginning of autumn in our hemisphere. The full moon that happens nearest the fall equinox (Sept 22, 2021) always takes on the name “Harvest Moon”. Other Moon names for this month highlight how September is the transitional period between summer and fall: Autumn Moon (Cree); Falling Leaves Moon (Ojibwe); Leaves Turning Moon (Anishinaabe); Moon of Brown Leaves (Lakota); and Yellow Leaf Moon (Assiniboine).

**CLICK HERE** to learn more.

COVID-19 continues as a historical event and how we coped, and how we continue to manage under safe health protocols, will be a discussion for my remaining lifetime. Now is the time for continued support to one another as we re-build our routines under the new normal.

But do not throw caution to the wind. As the fourth wave of this nasty pandemic threatens our society, we need to remain well informed on how the vaccines were developed and what holds for the near future. **CLICK HERE** to view a webinar presented by Dr. Kevin Stinson, Infection Control Practitioner at St. Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener, ON.

To promote TIA's Environmental Awareness mission and to further enhance the beauty of the river TIA held its second annual “Trash Free River Clean Up Day” on August 7. More than 30 community volunteers collected 2.5 full truckloads of garbage. Thank you to the organizers and participants – read more in this issue of River Talk.

We are sad to see the departure of Annabel Cowan, our Environmental Ambassador and summer co-op student. Over her four-month term with us Annabel had a tremendous impact on TIA by fostering community relationships with Environmental focused organizations, researching topics, organizing events, and building a framework for TIA's environmental platform – thank you Annabel!

Your Board is now headed into fall discussions on how to grow our organization and further develop programming to benefit our membership and the river community. I invite you to send me your ideas or comments to assist TIA with continuous improvement - email to **[thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com)**

Everyone take care and stay safe!





# FROM THE EDITOR

Allison Burchell-Robinson

Here I am writing from the island. Over dinner recently with good friends, one commented “I was beginning to wonder if we would all ever gather again”. We didn’t all gather again. I am alone on my island this year, a sad transition but I view it as a new experience, one from which to learn and grow. Consider the satisfaction when, on our own, we solve a problem(s)

My border crossing was easy. As Orm Murphy points out in his article, having the necessary paperwork did indeed clear the way. ArriveCAN may have been tedious and slow to complete but it did provide the required information. An acquaintance selected for random COVID testing after clearing customs reported that having registered before for SwitchHealth.ca put her at the top of the line. Worth checking out.

The Good Doctors Medical Clinic in Mallorytown is a Walk-in Clinic where walk-ins are welcome but you can make an appointment on line to schedule a visit with or a phone call from the doctor. Do check out their website which can also be accessed from the Mallorytown Pharmacy. Good news is they treat Americans. There is a nominal fee of \$50.00 for Americans but in this COVID period, that fee has been waived. Visits can be scheduled during the week but phone calls from the doctor are also available on weekends. I was impressed.

As you will see when reading further our River Clean Up exceeded our expectations and will prove the seed from which further Clean Ups will continue and expand. Janet Smith-Staples and Annabel Cowan provide more details later on in River Talk. This month we have to say goodbye to our Environmental Ambassador, our first ever summer intern. The experiment and the experience was a smashing success. Annabel, you have left a gigantic footprint to fill for those who come after you. I know you expected to learn much this summer but the Board learned much from you. Thank you!

Our Thousand Island Association friend this issue is the **Minna Anthony Common Nature Center** located on Wellesley Island. TIA expects to have a booth at the 42nd Annual Autumn Festival on October 9, 2021 border crossings permitted. Stop in to say hello to Ken White





PHOTO COURTESY OF TIA  
MEMBER AND FRIEND  
JOHN N. STREET

# TAKE THE FIRST STEP TODAY TOWARDS A TIA MEMBERSHIP

SCAN OUR QR CODE

Or visit our website at

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



## A TIA TIP

There is nothing more relaxing than an evening bonfire, but before you strike the match, be sure to check with your local municipality about any current burn bans or required burn permits.



# ENVIRONMENTAL Business Spotlight

Annabel Cowan - TIA Environmental Ambassador



Over the past decade **Fireplaces Unlimited** has seen many changes in their products in respect to efficiency and cleaner burning technologies. For example, in 2020, new requirements for gas burning products were introduced so that all new gas units now have a form of electronic ignition – meaning the pilot light comes on only when the unit is turned on. Older gas units had the pilot light running constantly unless manually turned off, resulting in excessive and unnecessary fuel consumption. Changes in burner designs, materials used in the refractories and glass, fan technology and heat exchanger design changes have also helped to improve overall efficiency of gas fireplaces.

The industry has also seen a big surge in the electric fireplace market as these units are 100% efficient when operating and can provide comfortable zone heating.

Michelle, manager of **Fireplaces Unlimited's** Brockville location, says that in her industry it can be challenging to operate with green business practices – the products they install are large, come with much packaging and are shipped from all over North America. Her business works to reduce their environmental impact by recycling as much of their materials as possible, using energy efficient equipment heating and cooling for their showrooms and LED lighting installed wherever possible. Logistical scheduling is also used to reduce travel between customers which in turn reduces fuel costs while also saving time and resources!



**Fireplaces Unlimited** is celebrating their 41st year of operation as of this summer. While green initiatives are relatively new to the hearth industry, Michelle says customers are more educated about efficiency standards and with our government mandating stronger environmental targets over the next decade, Fireplaces Unlimited plans to continue to adapt to the changes.

Thank you to Michelle for taking the time to talk with us! Check out Fireplaces Unlimited by **CLICKING HERE** for any of your heating and/or cooling needs.





# In Case You Were Wondering

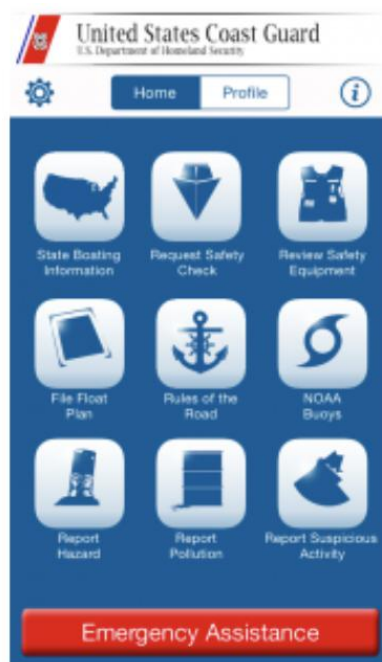
Dave McWilliam and Alec Turner

Getting ready for a boat ride? Make sure to download the Wavve Boating app by [CLICKING HERE](#) (subscription required after free trial period) and the Discover Boating Safety app by [CLICKING HERE](#) on your smartphone.

The Wavve Boating app provides navigational information that you can tailor to your boat, locate your friends on the water, mark your favourite spots and “lay tracks” so you can see where you have been before.

The Discover Boating Safety app has information about the key rules, guidelines and best practices that will help you and your family stay safe on the water. Most content in the app is easily accessible whether or not you have access to the internet when you’re on the water.”

If you are in American waters, perhaps you would like to download the USCG Boating Safety App. This official U.S. Coast Guard app gives you 24/7 access to the most commonly requested information and resources for the recreational boating public. Download it by [CLICKING HERE](#)



# ENVIRONMENTAL Spotlight

Stuart Arnett



The Round Goby is a small, bottom-dwelling invasive fish. Native to the Black and Caspian seas in eastern Europe, it was first found in North America in 1990 in the St. Clair River north of Windsor, Ontario. Researchers believe the fish was brought to North America in the ballast water of ships from Europe. The Round Goby can spread fast due to its ability to spawn up to 3 times a season and produce upwards of 5000 eggs.

Round goby prefer waters with rocky and sandy bottoms. They feed aggressively on insects and other small organisms found on lake and river bottoms. Adult round goby eat large quantities of zebra and quagga mussels, and occasionally small fish and fish eggs.

Their eating habits along with their reproductive capabilities have the potential to harm the sport fish populations as they compete for food and by eating the eggs and young.

Scientists also believe that the Round Goby is linked to outbreaks of botulism type E in Great Lakes fish and fish-eating birds. The disease is caused by a toxin that may be passed from zebra mussels, to goby, to birds, resulting in large die-offs of fish and birds.



It is however important to be able to distinguish between our native fish - the Sculpin and the Round Goby. There are several differences however the easiest two are that the Round Goby has a distinct black dot on its dorsal fin whereas the Sculpin does not and the Round Goby has a fused single scallop looking Pelvic Fin whereas the Sculpin has two separate Pelvic Fins.

If you've seen a round goby or other invasive species in the wild, please contact the toll-free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or [CLICK HERE](#) to visit Ontario's Invasive Species Awareness Program to report a sighting.



# ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Janet Smith-Staples - Environmental Chair



A Big Thanks goes out to 32 volunteers who spent their Saturday morning with us and collected over 25 bags of garbage - roughly 2.5 truck loads full - and found a myriad of objects including lawn chairs, a bicycle, shoes, 1/2 buried socks, many cigarette butts, plastic water bottles, blue Styrofoam, fencing, tires, shotgun casings and more... It was evident everyone worked hard digging, sorting, and hauling out these discarded items that have polluted our beautiful region.



Volunteer groups covered 6 different areas, and I believe it was an eye-opening experience for most and I for one, will forever look down and pick up before I look out and admire. It was also great to meet more of our community members, to be united in our tasks, and to leave the areas in better shape than we found them.

It really was team work at its best with Dave McWilliam, our point person at Grays Beach, with Stuart Arnett providing transportation and clean up on Grenadier Island, with Alec Turner for loading his truck FULL of trash and taking it to the dump, and with Terry & Gretchen Bambrick for loading their van FULL of trash and making another trip to the dump, and with Barrie (Huck) Kay for helping scout areas that were in need of our help and for all the hard work he and his crew did on Club Island!

A special thanks to Annabel Cowan, TIA's first intern & Environmental Ambassador, whose organizational skills, attention to the many details, and ability to 'get the word out' through her media push, helped make the event a success!

If you missed this one, don't worry because we plan on organizing a few more Trash Free River Clean-up days throughout next summer starting as early as the spring when areas are less overgrown. In the meantime, the environmental committee will stay busy bringing you important information on our wildlife and how we can remain good stewards of the land and river.

See you on the River.



# FRIENDS OF TIA FEATURING



## The Friends of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center



The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center is located on 600 acres within Wellesley Island State Park. It was founded on the principles of environmental conservation and education. Its goal is to continue this tradition by offering diverse programming designed to educate visitors about the natural world around them.

With over 9 miles of hiking trails, visitors can explore several ecosystems as they travel the varied landscapes of Wellesley Island State Park. Hike the shores of Eel Bay, grassy meadows, wetlands and forests, and the rocky outcrops leading to panoramic views at the cliffs above the Narrows. All trails are open dawn to dusk every day.



Veronica Hayes

*Inside the Nature Center, exhibits teach about wildlife and habitats guests encounter as they hike the park's trails. Children will love exploring the Wetland Discovery Room, which is full of books, live animal exhibits, games, and hands-on learning opportunities. The Nature Center is open year-round, excluding holidays and is ADA accessible*



Veronica Hayes

Each spring hundreds of school students visit the Nature Center while on field trips. Summer brings daily programming, canoe rides, guided hikes, arts and crafts, the Pollinator House and much more. In autumn, it is hard to find a prettier place than Wellesley Island when the leaves start to turn. Winter brings snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and the return of Bald Eagles.

The Friends of the Nature Center, Inc. works in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to provide the critical means and resources necessary to support the cherished educational programming. **Become a member of The Friends of the Nature Center** and support its mission to provide environmental education, encourage outdoor recreation, and inspire the community to develop an increased respect for the natural world.

The 42nd Annual Autumn Festival will be held Oct. 9, 2021. This family event includes many fun activities and games. Follow the Nature Center on **Facebook** to stay up to date on all events and programming.



# Noteworthy News

## CROSS BORDER COMMITTEE REPORT

Orm Murphy - TIA Board Member

August 9th was a big day for our American members crossing the Border. I have spoken with several members and have received generally positive comments about the crossing process.

I am told that Nancy King was at her border crossing first thing on August 9th morning and that she had a small lineup and a quick interview.

Barbie and Daniel Butts came across at Ivy Lea and joined a short line but were through in less than ½ an hour.

George and Ginger Nugent came across the Ivy Lea Bridge on Thursday in mid afternoon and joined a short line and were through in less than ½ an hour.

Allison Burchell-Robinson also came across on Thursday, and her wait and interview took less than ½ an hour.

Philip Britton brought his boat from Clayton and reported in at the Gananoque Marina. On Wednesday morning August 11th he had inputted in his ArriveCan app that he would arrive at 10:30 but he simply checked in by telephone as usual and was asked to confirm his Passport details and that he had a recent COVID test and certification of full vaccination. He was completed in 15 minutes. Meanwhile, his wife Joanne crossed at the Ivy Lea Bridge and she waited in line for 7 minutes and the interview was completed in 3 minutes.

It is reported that the officers of the Canadian Border Agency were polite and efficient. The ArriveCan app has clearly expedited matters and there is a positive attitude at the Border to expedite the crossing.

At the time of writing there is no word about permitting Canadians to access their properties by land or boat. There is significant criticism of the White House for not having coordinated with Canada the opening of the U.S. Border. We shall see!



Did you know that TIA will issue you a tax receipt for any donation over \$10? We also issue both Canadian and US Tax receipts. Learn More by [CLICKING HERE](#)

# Noteworthy News

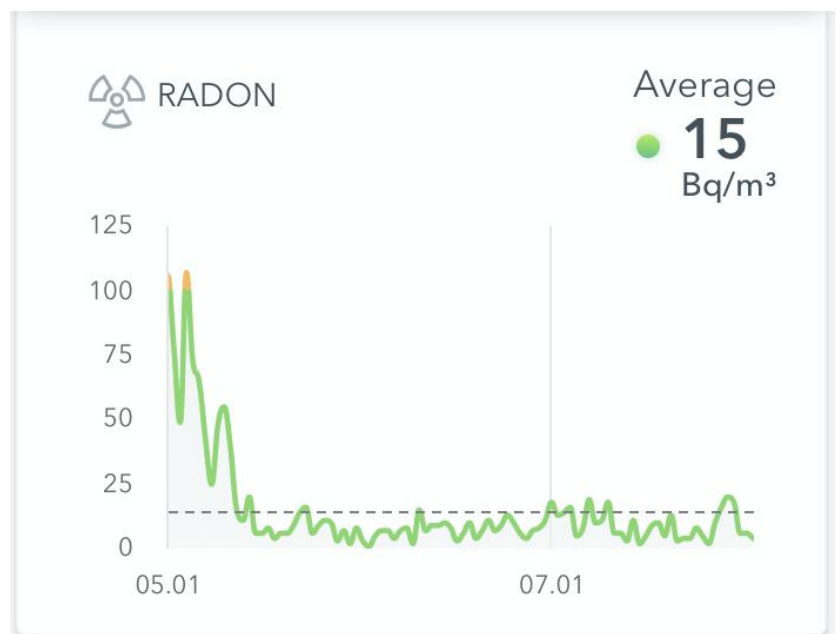
## Radon Mitigation Update

In our May edition of River Talk, we told you about the dangers of radon, a radioactive gas that is formed naturally by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water.

As a gas, radon is slowly released from the ground, from water, and even some building materials that contain very small amounts of uranium. The challenge with radon, much like carbon monoxide, is that it can not be detected by the senses. Radon is colourless, odourless and tasteless.

TIA Member, Mike Spies shared that the radon levels at his cottage on Howe Island were as high as 761 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>. As a point of reference, Health Canada states that, "Remedial measures should be undertaken in a dwelling whenever the average annual radon concentration exceeds 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> in the normal occupancy area." Mike reported that a Radon Mitigation system had been installed at the cottage and promised an update would follow. The good news, the system is working as designed and average radon levels between May 1 and August 1 are at a safe 15 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

Radon testing is easy, affordable and something everyone should consider. To learn more about radon, [CLICK HERE](#).



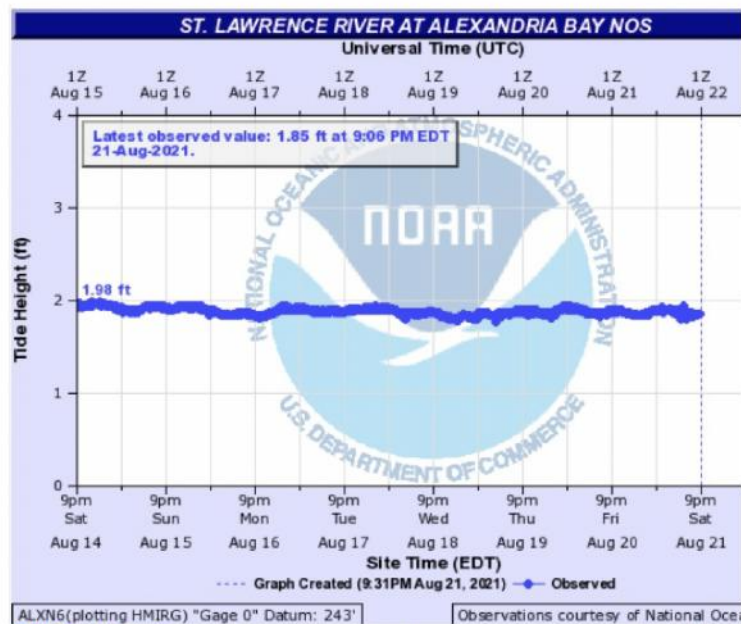
Help TIA grow our membership in 2021. Please renew today, and tell a friend or neighbour about the work we do. Buy your membership today by [CLICKING HERE](#)

# WATER LEVEL UPDATE

## Water Levels (SLR) – Slipping Below 2 feet (above Chart Datum)

TIA Water Levels Committee – Vince Barton & Ken White (8/21/21)

- For about 4 weeks, since July 20<sup>th</sup>, water levels have hovered around the 2 foot level.
- A return to dry conditions began to lower the level, then Tropical Storm Fred dumped a lot of rain into the southern half of the Lake Ontario Basin August 17-18.
- We should see a small bump up from Fred, but the falling seasonal trend continues.



To understand current water levels and trends, click on the Water Levels Update video from AGM 2021



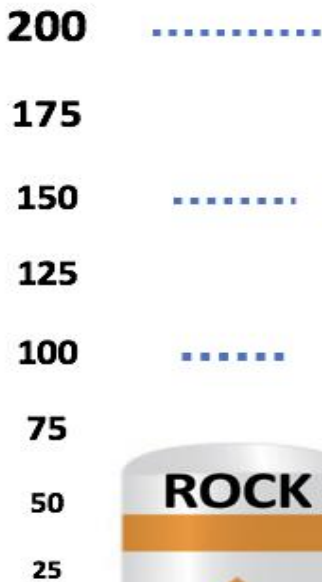
[Click Here](#) for the latest full size graphic of Alex Bay level buoy. (Note: Lake Ontario is 3" higher)



"Perfect river day. So wonderful to see our American neighbours back! Can't wait until we can visit state side again."

Photo and caption from TIA Member and Friend Patricia Cockerham





## Help Us Reach This Year's Goal Of 200 New TIA Members

Memberships Start At Just \$50 Per Year

**CLICK HERE TO BECOME A MEMBER**

**TIA's Flagship Program Is The Placement, Maintenance And Removal Of 200 Rock Markers Each Season**

### Did You Know....

**TIA** removes all **ROCK** markers each season and stores them on a number of private islands and at the Brockville Yacht Club?



After spending all summer in the river, the markers are coated in algae- it's hard work as shown in these photos and often done in less than desirable weather conditions.



With Labour Day Monday just around the corner, be sure to get as much river time in as possible. These photos, taken last winter by TIA member and friend Huck Kay, are a gentle reminder of things to come.



# Did You Miss TIA's AGM ?

Now you can view it online anytime !

Enjoy our Invited Speakers at your Leisure...



## **“Get Into the Green Scene” with Annabel Cowan**

Anna will take us along the path of “Getting into the Green Scene” by revealing what she has discovered, implemented and explored during her time with TIA this summer.



## **Take a Journey “Under the St. Lawrence” with Helen Cooper**

Helen Cooper discusses Rock Markers and then takes us under the St. Lawrence to a fascinating world unseen by many. For over 25 years Abucs scubA and the Brockville Adventure Centre have taken divers on underwater adventures. Now it's our turn !

Other Videos Feature ... Greetings from Dignitaries, TIA President's Message, Presentations on River Safety, Cross Border Issues, 2021 Water Levels and a Big TIA SHOUT OUT to TIA's Admiral Sponsors.

**CLICK HERE to View any of TIA's 2021 AGM 12 Feature Videos**

## **2021 Membership Drive Prize Winners**



**Our Grand Prize Winner of a  
Print “Fishing the 1000 Islands”  
by Wildlife Conservation Artist  
Stuart Arnett, AFC  
Is David Lawson of Island 6**

**Our 5 Runner Up Prize Winners of a book  
“Being a Bird in North America” by  
Conservation Biologist, Bird Expert and Author  
Robert Alvo are: A.J. Keilty, Bruce Mitchell,  
Kim MacLeod, Nattanya Hewitt & Ross Stewart**



**Congratulations to all our Lucky Prize Winners !!**

# TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



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# TIA Thanks Our ADMIRAL Sponsors



To learn more about any sponsor click on their logo



*"This fish was caught with lures around Rockland Island, and McDonald Island in Admiralty Group in July 2021. Iain is the step-son of Don Walli co-owner of Rockland Island with his brother Eric Walli.*

*Rockland Island was purchased in 1955 by Eric and Don's mother Edith Walli. Eric and his wife Ann Walli are in the background of the photo with Iain and Bentley with their catch from off Rockland Island"*

*Photo and story provided by Jill Singelton*

## Thousand Islands Association

Due to seasonality, varying water levels, vandalism and equipment failure, the Thousand Island Association 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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### TIA's Three Pillars

River Safety  
Environmental Awareness  
Community Support

