

How are those Renovations Going?

We have faced many challenges over the past two months preparing 85 William St. to be our new REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre.

The front area where there are two offices and a washroom was fixed up very quickly with the hard work and generosity of Pat and Tom Foulkes, Brenda King, Barb Ellis, Darlene Porpealia, Una Pugh, Kirk Everett, Josh VanAlstine, Cathryn Davidson and Barb Hicks. The ceiling, walls and floor were painted and new blinds installed - what an improvement!

On a snowy Saturday, March 1, we moved all of our belongings from our temporary office at the former SFDCI. This was complicated by a water pipe bursting in the room the day before we moved. But we persevered, and Ron Toop led a crew of Jeff Young, Ryan and Roger Morrison, and Chris Grant to move everything over. High school students Ben Donaldson, Paul Hicks, Simo Krsmanovic and, Dischaine Thompson, helped by Sue Brandum and Barb Hicks, moved everything to the right spots, and tarped the remainder to keep out drywall and concrete dust.

Renovations of the store area are being overseen by Dave Pringle. He and his crew have repaired a railing, cleaned the oil from the floor, drywalled the walls to cover the insulation, painted the hard to reach spots, and built a fire-proof enclosure around the oil tank. Many thanks to our corporate member, Rideau Home Hardware, for supplying the necessary building supplies at cost. Next up is a new customer entrance, and completion of some electrical work.

The wooden ceiling beam over the loft turned out to be weaker than originally thought. This weakness, along with the heavy snow buildup on the roof, meant that as a safety precaution, we were not to occupy the building until the beam was replaced. This put the renovations and REAL office work inside on hold for three weeks. We were very relieved work began again on March 31.

REAL Needs You now More than Ever!

Many more volunteer hours are required before we can reopen the store.

We will be looking for help to finish the wall painting and floor cleanup. Our remaining furniture will have to be moved from storage, and some of the shelving will need to be cleaned and painted. Then we will need to set up the store. Once the snow melts, various outside cleanup jobs will need to be done: fence removal, painting, tree planting etc.

(continued inside)

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If labour isn't for you, note that cash flow is a constant challenge, so cash donations are always welcome as well.

If you are currently on our e-mail list and receiving "REAL Notices", you will be notified when we set our work days. If you are not on our list but would like to help, please leave a message at 283-9500 so we can contact you.

Store Opening Late May or June

Our REAL Deal Steering Committee of Susan Brandum, Barb Hicks, Dawn Quinn and Halina Shannon are in the process of hiring a Store Manager and establishing some new procedures. Once the store is set up, we will be appealing to REAL members and personal contacts for donations to stock the store before opening. We will have to be very selective of the goods we accept. We only want quality items we are sure we can resell; we don't want to incur waste disposal costs to get rid of junk. Initial store hours will be on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, with a target opening date of late May or June. The REAL Deal is a major undertaking for REAL; if you value this service, please consider helping to move this along in some way.

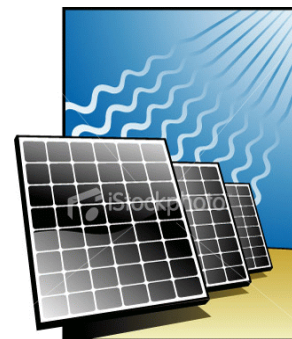
Homes, The Environment and Renewable Energy

by Ron Toop

Chris Weissflog delivered plenty of practical and financial information on reducing your home's carbon footprint in his February 21 presentation at the Rideau Canal Museum. Chris has hands-on experience in construction and, specifically, with the installation of renewable energy systems. The presentation was jointly sponsored by REAL's Climate Action Change Team and the Rideau Canal Museum, and geared to the local area. An audience of about 55 attended, including representatives of the town and the local papers.

The information Chris presented in his power-point presentation was rooted both in his research into the efficiency of renewable energies and the cost of installing the systems in this area. He provided the homeowner with the means to compare the long-term costs of conventional and renewable energies, for most renewable energy systems require rather large one-time startup costs, while the savings come a few years in the future. In all probability, the costs of conventional energy – natural gas, heating oil, and propane – will climb, so the long-term savings from renewable energy systems may come even more quickly than we can now foresee. In his analysis, Chris covered passive solar, solar air heating, solar pool heating, solar domestic water heating, wood and pellets, geothermal heating, and wind power.

Before deciding on changes, Chris recommended the homeowner have an energy audit to determine basic energy needs and take the inexpensive steps to reduce energy loss and improve the efficiency



of the home. Based on this analysis of need and a survey of the potential of the particular site, the owner can then decide on what renewable energy system best fits these needs.

Chris provided tools in his charts and graphs that have helped me decide what next step I can take to improve the efficiency of our older stone farm house. The audience feedback was also very positive; many expressed an interest in attending more in depth sessions, so REAL hopes to make that possible later this year.

Extensive notes from the presentation and a list of useful web links on renewable energy are available on REAL's website from the Climate Change in Our Community page. A few printed copies are also available.

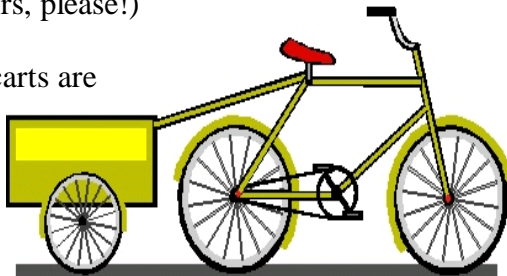
Community Bike Carts are Coming

by Alexis Asselin

Members of REAL's Climate Change Action Team (CCAT) have launched a project that will provide bike carts (those are the ones that you pull behind your bike, not to be confused with trailers that carry bikes!) to Smiths Falls. In the process, we will train interested youth in general bicycle and cart building and maintenance.

Two local handy and skilled people, Kirk Everett and Bob Taylor, have agreed to share their time and skills in building the first bike carts and mentoring the youth. Construction will begin once the snow melts. The carts will be easily attached to a wide range of bicycles using a removable or fixed hitch. With a carrying capacity expected to be around 150-250 lbs., they will allow people to do groceries, errands you would otherwise have to do in a car and move bulky items (but not too bulky - no refrigerators, please!)

Once the carts are built, they will be housed around town in



locations where we expect they will get the most use. A high-density neighbourhood where many people express an interest would be ideal. A backyard, a garage, an accessible public space like the REAL Deal Store's new location are all possibilities. Suggest one!

Community members, school groups, non-profits, churches and others will all be welcome to use the bike carts in exchange for some as yet undetermined token (small fee, commitment to help maintain the carts, donation of parts, tools or space, etc.). We will also be exploring using the carts to provide services such as grocery delivery for decreased mobility community members, and for cooperative moving, as well as producing more bike carts for sale if there is

interest.

The goals of the Community Bike Cart Project are to build an alternative way to meet community needs, challenge car culture, encourage the sharing of resources and skills across generations and to help in the fight against climate change.

We are actively seeking recycled, scavenged and new materials to work with. Donations of EMT conduit, plywood, assorted lumber, broken hockey sticks, nuts and bolts and other assorted construction materials and tools are needed.

Your feedback and participation are welcome! Whether you are interested in shaping the project, learning skills, using the bike carts, offering resources or getting more information please contact Alexis Asselin at lelorax@gmail.com or come to the next CCAT meeting on May 14.

What Do Icicles Tell Us?

by Ken Zarichansky

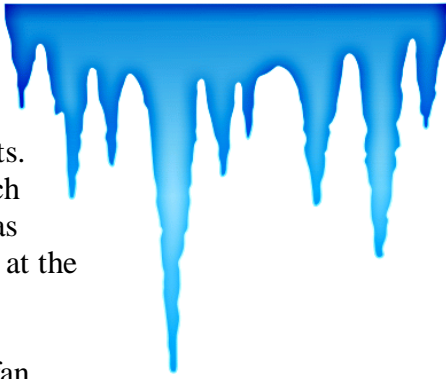
If you have icicles hanging off your roof, you might be thinking you need an ice guard or heater cables. But it really is worth your while to look more deeply into the problem.

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), icicles hanging off the roof are a likely sign that warm air is leaking from the heated living space into the attic. The warm air rises against the roof deck, heating the underside of the deck and causing the bottom layer of snow on the roof to melt. The melt water then runs down the roof to the eave where it drips off the edge of the roof, forming icicles.

Warm, moist air from your heated living space can leak into the attic from many sources, including:

1. Cracks around the plumbing vent stack at the ceiling
2. Ceiling light fixtures, especially surface

mounts, pot lights, can lights and other recess mounts.



3. Attic hatch frame leaks as well as leaks at the attic hatches themselves
4. Exhaust fan openings that are unsealed around the fan housing
5. Any ducts in the attic that are unsealed and not insulated including exhaust fan ducting
6. Exhaust fans that do not have any ductwork and exhaust directly into the attic
7. Un-insulated knee walls and knee walls that have no vapour barrier
8. Dropped ceilings that do not have a secure vapour barrier and are not insulated
9. The area adjacent to external chimneys at the ceiling
10. The framework around internal chimneys.

One way to determine exactly where the leakage is occurring is to have a blower door test. This is a large fan, set up in the main door of the house, that pulls air out of the house. The auditor and the homeowner can tour the house as the fan is running, determining exactly where the air is coming through. A simple blower door test can be arranged through REAL's ecoENERGY auditors for about \$150. Or, if you choose to have an ecoENERGY audit to prepare to take advantage of the rebates, you will have a blower door test as part of that process. Cost of the first audit is generally \$350, less a rebate from the Ontario government of \$150. Cost of the 2nd audit is \$150. All costs add GST. Call REAL at 613-283-9500.

Ken Zarichansky is a newly certified ecoEnergy auditor and a member of REAL's Climate Change Action Team.

Energy Extravaganza Weekend

The last weekend in March saw several energy education events happening locally in Lombardy, Elizabethtown-Kitley and Lanark Village, and kept our resident energy "experts" hopping.

The Rideau Home Hardware Green Build and Alternative Energy Show was a two-day event at Lombardy Hall. Jim Ireton of Rideau Home Hardware, the sponsor, was very pleased with the turnout for their first event. One hundred people registered for the full day of seminars on Friday the 28th, and about 360 people attended the home show the next day. Among the presenters were Alan Leonard, a REAL ecoENERGY Auditor, and Susan Brandum, REAL's Environmental Projects Manager, on the ecoEnergy, Energy Star Products and energy efficiency incentive programs. REAL provided a Climate Change Display for Saturday, and had staff and volunteers on hand to answer questions, on the ecoENERGY program. Home Hardware, a corporate member of REAL, sold recycled plastic grocery bags for \$.99 at the door and plans to donate the proceeds to REAL.

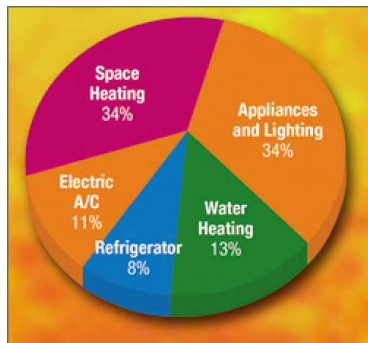
That same Saturday, the Environmental and Conservation Advisory Committee of Elizabethtown-Kitley held a workshop "Energy Conservation and the Environment: Making Informed Choices that Could Save you Money" at Meadowview School in Addison. The workshop featured information booths as well as three speakers. Norm Ruttan gave a very grounding presentation on the major forces facing us – climate change, peak oil, peak gas – and concluded that the only real solution is conservation. Ruttan's business iWasteNot is getting contracts all over the US for its online resource exchange systems (REAL's Rideau.Reuses.com is one of them) yet still very few in Canada. Chris Weissflog, of EcoGen Energy Inc. and our CCAT, presented on how to select and install appropriate renewable energy solutions in your home. Sue Brandum and Ken Zarichansky, a newly qualified ecoENERGY

assessor, were kept busy with the REAL display answering questions on home energy audits.

Meanwhile, on that Saturday, up in Lanark Village, Trish Larkin, one of REAL's Well Aware Water Guides, staffed a REAL booth at the Conservation Networking Fair, funded by the Ministry of Energy's Community Conservation Initiative, at Maple Grove School. Information and speakers were featured, including Alfred von Mirbach of ecoPerth and Ross Elliot of Homesol Building Solutions. The lunch featured foods produced in Lanark County.

And to top off this energy consciousness raising weekend, across the world citizens participated in Earth Hour, turning off their lights for one hour starting at 8 p.m. to declare their concern about climate change.

It's great to see the increase in public awareness of the need for conservation and energy efficiency. REAL made many helpful connections that weekend, and are expecting a spike in request for ecoENERGY audits as a result.



Hazardous Waste Reminder

A new report by Statistics Canada shows most Canadians are still putting toxic items such as expired medication, dead batteries and old paint in the trash in spite of the risks to human and environmental health. We hope you aren't one of them!

The Hazardous Waste Depot located off of McNeely Avenue in Carleton Place will be opening for the season on Saturdays July 7th to September 20th inclusive, 8 a.m until noon. It is accessible to Smiths Falls and Lanark County residents.

Stopping Junk Mail with Red Dot

by Ron Toop

Stopping Canada Post from delivering unaddressed unsolicited advertising is easy. Simply place a sign on your mailbox requesting that no junk mail be left and leave a note for the carrier to take to the post office where your request will be noted and a red dot placed on your internal file.

Though Canada Post has had this program to reduce junk mail in place since 1997 very few Canadians know about it and only about 2% take advantage of it, according to a Canadian Press report by Michael Oliveira in February. In his report, Oliveira refers readers to a website, www.reddotcampaign.ca, set up by Beth Ringdahl with a two-step process for ending such delivery of junk mail. First, fill out a form you can download from Beth's site and leave it with a note for you mail carrier.

Before taking this step, however, you should consider some other facts. First, such advertising is a fast growing source of revenue for Canada Post. Second, the unsolicited mail you will not receive will also include local flyers from churches about church suppers, small businesses advertising new services, even some local non-profits putting out notices for special events. Third, most of this advertising is also on recyclable paper, so if you keep receiving such mail be certain to recycle it. And, fourth, the program will not reduce the advertising you receive with your local newspapers.

Pitch In Smiths Falls April 21 - May 3

Pick up litter in your neighbourhood or with a group, or join us on Sat. May 3 at the Legion or Lower Reach Park.

Call Brenda King, 283-4416, Jeannie Walton, 284-0499 or Barb Ellis, 284-0280.

Species at Risk in Eastern Ontario

On March 4 REAL and the Rideau Canal Museum co-hosted a presentation on Species at Risk. Heather Lunn, on contract with the Eastern Ontario Model Forest, gave an informative presentation on the 30 species in danger of disappearing from Eastern Ontario. The audience, especially the children, enjoyed meeting the black ratsnake Heather brought along.

The Species at Risk Program in Ontario is led by the Ministry of Natural Resources/Ontario Parks, and aims to recover and protect wild species: birds, plants, insects, reptiles, fish or mammals.

Ontario introduced a revamped Endangered Species Act in 2007, which besides identifying and protecting species at risk, has broader provisions for protecting both the species and their habitats, is more committed to species recovery, and has more support for groups and individuals who voluntarily participate in stewardship activities.

Private landowners are crucial to the survival of SAR because they control what happens on and to their land. In Eastern Ontario, 88% of the land is privately owned. Having a species at risk does not mean you cannot use your land, and there are some ways a landowner might benefit.

- **SAR Stewardship Fund.** In March 2007 Ontario announced an \$18 million, 4 year stewardship fund to support public stewardship activities. It is open to individuals and groups who undertake eligible protection and recovery activities.
- **Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP).** You may be eligible for a municipal property tax reduction if you have an endangered species on your property.
- **Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).** You may be eligible if you have at least 10 acres of forested land and an approved forest management plan.
- **Ecological Gifts.** Through a conservation

easement, you may qualify for a charitable tax receipt for preserving your land in its current state. You can also donate your land to the Nature Conservancy of Canada or a Land Trust and receipt a tax receipt of the market value of the land.

If you are not a landowner, you can also help Species at Risk by volunteering. For example, the Leeds Stewardship Council installs bald eagle nesting platforms and black ratsnake nesting boxes, and the RVCA needs volunteers for butternut tree surveys.

There have been some successes in species at risk management. The red shouldered hawk, whose population was declining with the decrease in large, undisturbed forested areas, was delisted in March 2007. The peregrine falcon, once endangered because pesticide use was causing a weakening of their eggshells, has been downlisted from endangered to threatened.

The Swale just west of Smiths Falls is home to two birds at risk, the Least Bittern (a smaller cousin of the common American Bittern), and the Black Tern (a cousin of the Common Tern). The Rideau Corridor is suitable habitat for Stinkpot and Blandings turtles and the Northern Ribbon and Black Rat snakes, but their occurrence in the Swale has not been confirmed.



Least Bittern - photo by Simon Lunn

If you would like to know more about Species at Risk in Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources website is a good place to start: www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/speciesatrisk.

Big Screen TV Rant

by Sue Brandum

Watch out for those big screen TVs -- they're power pigs. What they don't tell you in those nice labels stuck on the front is how much energy they use. But by November of this year, they will as they'll come under Energy Star labelling. If you're looking to cut how much you send Hydro One every month, perhaps you've upgraded your fridge and other appliances to Energy

Star, but you'll suffer a huge setback with a big screen.



Some big screens suck up to as much as twice the power of a new fridge (\$100/year). Generally, the smaller the screen the less power it consumes, and generally LCDs sap less than rear projection and plasma. But ask to see the specs when you're shopping.

If you're stuck with a pig, here are some tips to help reduce your sense of being a hostage to Hydro: Turn the thing off - it's stunning how many people leave a television on and running, even when they're not in the room, or the house. Turn off the quick start function. It'll mean waiting a few extra seconds for the television to warm up, but it'll also mean saving a bunch of bucks. Turn down the LCD's backlight. TVophiles prefer it not so bright anyway. Turn on the power-saver mode. And use other settings to turn down the brightness, something you can also pay professional calibrators to do.

In REAL Life

The next meeting of the **Climate Change Action Team (CCAT)** is Wednesday, May 14 at 7 p.m. in the Town Council Lounge, 77 Beckwith St., Smiths Falls. Please contact Barb at (613) 283-9966 or dhicks11@cogeco.ca to confirm.

Our REAL Action team tied for second place in this year's **Friends of the Library Trivia Challenge** held February 10. Way to go, team!

REAL participated in the first **Social Justice Expo** held at Hanley Hall on February 23. Thanks to Julie Ingram for creating the display of the links to REAL's programs for the event, and to the Social Justice Committee at St. Francis de Sales for inviting us.

The Marsh Monitoring Program is looking for volunteers in the Smiths Falls area to survey birds and/or amphibians. Contact Julia Sutton, at sutton_julia78@yahoo.ca or (613) 236-2895.

Home Depot stores across Canada are now accepting **expired CFL's**. Look for a collection unit near the special services desk. CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, so this is preferable to disposing of them with your regular garbage.

The **Tay Rideau Food Bank** has an ongoing need for **plastic grocery bags**. If you have any to spare, drop them at the Food Bank, 93 Russell St. E. Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday 1 - 3 p.m. Reusing is preferable to recycling!

Join **North Grenville's 'Earth Day Celebration'** on Sunday April 20th at the Court House on Water Street, (just off Prescott St., downtown Kemptville) from 10 - 2pm. Chris Turnbull, who was involved in REAL's past Earth Day events, is one of the organisers. Reach her at (613) 258-7359.

Lanark Highlands **Art of Being Green** was selected as one of the **"Top 100 Ontario**

Festivals” at Festival and Events Ontario’s annual conference in February. This year’s event is July 12 and 13.

Our **“Rideau Tribute” DVD** continues to sell well. The collection of 175 photos of the Rideau by Simon Lunn is available In Smiths Falls at: the Rideau Canal Museum, Heritage House Museum, Dawn's Closet, Bham's Kiosk, and Everything We Love in Davidson’s Court; in Merrickville at Wood-n-Feathers; and in Perth at Kelly’s Flowers and Fine Things. DVDs are \$5, with all proceeds to REAL.

Kill-a-watt Meters are now available through three public libraries: **Almonte, Perth and Smiths Falls Public Library**. These devices can be borrowed at no charge and used to measure the electricity usage of your appliances.

Helpful Websites

- Watch how fast the world’s population is increasing, (6.6 billion!), oil is pumped, computers are produced and other interesting trivia at www.poodwaddle.com/worldclock.swf
- Take a quick survey to approximate the energy usage of your home computer system(s): www.ecosuperior.org/calculator.htm, a fellow Green Community in Thunder Bay.
- Take some fun quizzes on how green are your laundry, screen or bike habits at <http://sierraclub.org/howgreen/>. Thanks to the Brockville Climate Action Group for that one.

If you have found a website to be a particularly helpful source of information on an environmental issue, please submit it to the REAL Update.

Membership Reminder

Thank you to everyone who responded to our membership renewal drive. If you haven’t sent in your payment yet, please put it on your “to do” list. REAL needs and appreciates your support, and quick renewal frees up our volunteer time for other environmental projects.

Memberships are \$15, \$20 for families and \$5 for students. For more information contact Carolyn Fraser at (613) 283-6858 or fraser@superaje.com. And don’t forget to provide an accurate e-mail address so we can keep you in the loop with REAL Notices.

Next Issue

Submissions for the June issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by May 15, 2008 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

REAL

E-mail: info@REALaction.ca

Mail: Box 1061, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 5A5

Web: www.REALaction.ca

LLGreen

Phone: (613) 267-2257

E-mail: sbrandum@cogeco.ca

REAL Office

85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

(across from Railway Museum)

Phone: (613) 283-9500

Hours vary, call first.

The REAL DEAL Environment Centre

To book Well Aware Visits, or ecoENERGY

audits, or find out about other programs,

Phone: (613) 283-9500

