

# REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

APR 2013

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## ***REAL and Town Introduce Park 'n Pedal***

This spring REAL and the Town of Smiths Falls are partnering to introduce a novel program to make it easier to get people out of their cars and onto their bicycles.

Park 'n Pedal focuses on individuals who live too far from town to bike in to Smiths Falls easily. It will give them the option of biking in Smiths Falls for fun or exercise, to get to and from work or school, or to accomplish various errands in town. People will be able to park their cars on REAL's property, where there is ample free parking, while they get around by bike.

REAL will have a high quality, secure bicycle rack located on the REAL Deal site at 85 William St. W. The rack will be in a highly visible, lit location, in a secure, roofless enclosure. Only people registered for Park 'n Pedal will have access to the locked enclosure. The person would leave their own bicycle locked in the enclosure, and may choose to lock their bike to the bike rack as well. When they want to cycle in town, they can drive into town, leave their car parked at the REAL Deal, unlock their bike, go about their business, and then return the bike to the enclosure. There is no cost to the cyclist for this service.

It has long been a goal of REAL to establish a Park 'n Pedal on its William Street site. It is just one of the many features planned for an Environment Centre that demonstrates practical environmental solutions to the public. Cycling instead of driving reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves air quality for us all.

Jamie Schoular, community ambassador for Smiths Falls, is working on behalf of the Town to promote Park 'n Pedal. "It makes perfect sense that smaller communities such as ours embrace the growing movement towards becoming more accessible to cyclists. The recently completed (Town of Smiths Falls) [Pedestrian Linkages Study](#) recognizes the need for the town to provide for the inclusion of cyclists on roads and trails in and around our municipality."

The bike rack, being manufactured and donated by Kilmarnock Enterprise, should be in place by the end of April, at which point there will be a formal launch. The enclosure will be built later. Additional bike racks will be available outside the enclosure for residents shopping at the REAL Deal, tending their gardens, or visiting the Environment Centre.

REAL requires registration by anyone interested in participating in Park 'n Pedal. Some additional information is available on REAL's website, [www.REALaction.ca](http://www.REALaction.ca) under the Greenspaces tab. To register, or for more information, please contact Susan Brandum, at [sbrandum@cogeo.ca](mailto:sbrandum@cogeo.ca), or leave a message at the Environment Centre, (613) 283-9500.



### *Get to Know the Board of Directors*

A recent addition to our website has been some background on our Board of Directors, as well as Ken Graham, Smiths Falls Town Council Liaison to REAL, and Susan Brandum, Environmental Projects Manager and REAL Deal Executive Director. As we have never “formally” introduced either Sue or Donna McKenna, a Board Director, we thought we would include them in this issue. To see all the bios, please see our [website](#) under the “About Us” tab. We will eventually be adding staff members, too.

**Donna McKenna, Board of Directors.** Donna McKenna joined the Board in 2011. Donna has volunteered and worked in the delivery of social programs in this community, and now works in the North Leeds area for Community and Primary Healthcare as a Coordinator for Community Support Services for Seniors and Disabled Adults.



Donna developed her connection with nature and gardening growing up on a small dairy farm in the area. She, husband Peter, and three children continued the family farm until 2007 raising Dexter cattle, chickens and turkeys. Donna is committed to growing and preserving her family's food: "I know everything about how this was grown". Donna decided to join the REAL Board after her daughter Marla was a summer student with the organization. "It was such a positive and great learning experience for Marla working with the staff and volunteers at REAL that I wanted to give something back to them. I have always been interested in preserving our environment and believe that the work that REAL does to ensure a positive footprint in our community is something that I want to be a part of."

**Susan Brandum, Environmental Projects Manager and Executive Director of the REAL Deal.** Susan Brandum moved to Port Elmsley from Toronto in 1996 looking for a lifestyle change. Sue instigated the LLGreen project (Lanark Leeds Green Community) for REAL, which encompassed Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Counties and was the umbrella for many hands-on programs for individuals, including Pesticide Free Naturally, the Green Home Visit, the mall storefront, and later the Well Aware and ecoENERGY home retrofit programs. Sue led the planning, development and opening of the REAL Deal Reuse Store, and today is its Executive Director.



Sue has served on the Board of the Friends of the Tay Watershed (FoTW) and on the Greening of Perth Committee, and has taken particular pleasure in discovering and bringing to light evidence of the original Tay Canal that runs behind her house. Sue enjoys her pets, bird-watching, splitting wood and reading, and says she is "proud to be called an environmentalist".

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### *Deconstruction Crew Experiment*



A deconstruction project is being pursued to test whether it would be worthwhile for the REAL Deal. Sue Brandum was approached by the Madawaska Mississippi Land Trust about removing architectural elements from an old house and property, north of Pakenham. The property will become part of the High Lonesome nature preserve. Retrieving fixtures and trims from buildings being renovated or demolished is something that has been envisioned for the REAL Deal, but this was the first opportunity to try it out. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Alan Leonard, energy auditor, Don Harvey and Russell Tye braved the cold, lack of electricity, and no running water to see what they could do. The crew ended up with some nice doors, trim, bits of furniture and a very nice banister, which will be sold either through the REAL Deal or other dealers.

## *We're the Solar Capital of Ontario*

All around the landscape of the Rideau and Mississippi watersheds, people are noticing the solar farms. With most of these roughly in the 100-acre size, these solar farms are impressive to see first hand.

These commercial scale solar farms are a result of the provincial government's direction to increase renewable energy and what is called "distributed" power – or power that is generated from many small sources distributed around a region, rather than from a few very large centralized sources. These solar farms have a built capacity of about 10 MW, in comparison with built capacity of the Darlington Nuclear Power Station which is 3,500 MW.



*One of Recurrent Energy's Ontario solar farms*

There has been much media attention on the wind farm component of Ontario's renewable energy program, but, of the 92 renewable energy projects that have received approval to date in the province, only 18 are wind. It's not likely that Eastern Ontario will see many wind farms since this region is not considered a wind resource. (See the [Ontario Renewable Energy Atlas](#) that shows wind and water potential in the province. )

There are six bioenergy projects. By far the majority, 68 projects, are solar. Of those, about half, or 35, are in Eastern Ontario, and half again, 16 projects, are in Lanark and Leeds and Grenville counties. According to a past president of the Canadian Solar Industries Association, we are the "solar capital of Ontario." The [Ontario Solar Energy Map](#) shows why.

These solar farms are being constructed mainly by large companies that were incented to build in Ontario through the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) program, which pays the investors a higher rate for their electricity produced than other so-called "conventional" producers receive. This program has benefitted local landowners who lease their acreage for the farms, and has touched just about every family in the region with jobs. On a recent visit to one of the solar farm sites, Angela Gulley-Northfield and I saw about 75 employees at work.

REAL is contracted to do the residential well monitoring component of Recurrent Energy's six projects in Drummond North Elmsley and Rideau Lakes townships. Our expertise in Well Aware brought us to the company's attention, but we are also pleased that through the process we are able to continue the good work of Well Aware and advise our neighbours on how best to protect their wells and our common groundwater.

The rates these projects receive have also caused controversy since they are suspected of being the main cause of increasing electricity bills. But Canada and Ontario have a long history, and current practice, of subsidizing ALL energy supplies including oil, gas, and nuclear.

Solar PV ground mounted projects of 10 MW received 64.2 cents/kWh at the launch of the program. Those rates are now down to 44.5 cents/kWh, and are expected to drop further as the industry develops. Various research has shown that in terms of the consumers' electricity bills, only a small portion is a result of renewable energy and conservation. Gord Miller, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, found that in 2010, [0.4 cents of the 13 cent cost of electricity went to conservation and renewables](#). And, in an evaluation of Ontario Energy Board data, the Pembina Institute found that since 2006 just about [half of your bill adjustments went to support nuclear power](#).

In very short order, solar has become a part of our landscape, and a part of our energy mix, just as the many water mills were in this region 200 years ago.

For more on Ontario's renewable energy projects, and specific projects, go online to [Ministry of Environment Renewable Energy Projects](#).



## *Composting Gets Another Nudge by REAL*

It has been many years since backyard composting was promoted in Smiths Falls and Lanark County. Some of you may remember REAL's program where individuals received composting training, so they could assist their neighbours with any composting difficulties. Participants were given a YIMBY (Yes, In My Backyard!) certificate. REAL hosted a number of how-to workshops and had summer students promoting composting door to door. But the time has come to give the local composting movement a little nudge. Thanks to a generous and prefer-to-remain-anonymous donation, REAL plans to raise awareness of backyard composting in Spring 2013 by contracting the work to some knowledgeable associates.



Currently the plans are to establish a composter demonstration site adjacent to the Community Garden at the Environment Centre. Pallet, wire fencing and other styles of compost enclosures will be built from used materials, and some purchased and donated composters will be on display as well. A series of composter building and compost user workshops will be offered. New written materials will be produced for distribution, and some inexpensive and effective purchased composters will be sourced and available for purchase by the public.

If you want to give composting another try, or try it for the first time, please watch for the workshop dates. And if you have completely given up on backyard composting, and would like to donate your composter to REAL, let us know. We could use it in our demonstration or potentially find it a new home. If you are in town or close by, we may be able to arrange for pickup.

### *Summer Environmental Events*

Be sure to take in some of the many spring and summer events in our region. REAL is firming up our plans to be involved in some of them. Here are some that are not mentioned in "[In REAL Life](#)" on page 7.

#### [North Grenville Sustainability Fair](#)

Sunday, April 28th from 11am to 3pm.  
North Grenville Municipal Centre

#### [Smiths Falls Home and Living Show](#)

Friday to Sun, May 3 to 5  
Smiths Falls Memorial Community Centre

#### [4th Annual Merrickville eco-Fair](#)

Saturday, May 11 from 10am to 3 pm

#### [Healthy Living Festival in Smiths Falls](#)

Sat. June 22 from 10 am -5 pm

#### [Rideau Rural Routes Festival](#)

July 20 and 21, Smiths Falls



### *Doors Open Smiths Falls*

For the first time, the REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre will be participating in [Doors Open Smith Falls](#). This year's event takes place Sunday, June 9th, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. About 15 local sites will be open to the public for guided or self-guided tours. As a result, the REAL Deal store will also be open that day. If you would like to hear more about the store and the various Environment Centre features, please drop by that day, and tell your friends!

### *Rain Barrel Truckload Sale*

Order your barrel online, then bring your receipt and \$55 cash to the Smiths Falls Town Hall between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sat. May 11 to pick up your rain barrel. No residency requirement. See [RainBarrel.ca](#).

This is a partnership between the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation and the Town of Smiths Falls. REAL will have rain barrels for sale later in the season, and those proceeds will stay with REAL.

## *Reusing at REAL Deal*

At REAL and the REAL Deal we try our hardest to reuse materials in our store and organization operations. Through our almost five years of operation at the William St. location, we have been able to utilize a wide assortment of used items.

**Furniture.** We have not purchased any new items of furniture or shelving for the office or store. Everything we have was either donated used, although in a very few cases, we paid for a used item. As better pieces of shelving have come in, we have upgraded and put the older pieces up for sale. So now our shelving collection is more functional. If something comes in that we can put to good use, we do!

**Special Donations.** We were very fortunate to get some glass-front cabinets courtesy of the Smith Falls Railway Museum. One metal, glass-fronted cabinet, originally used for our silent auction, was scrounged from the end of the driveway garbage of a closing business. One set of metal book shelves came from the Smiths Falls Public Library. Two donated glass shelving units are used to display some of the nicer, collectible glassware. The distinctive rose and burgundy counters were a donation from the Smiths Falls Community Hospital. One piece is still being used to demarcate our manager's office, but the piece used at the cash was replaced by donated green kitchen counters, which are more effective. We recently purchased second-hand from Zellers a few items, including standup signs, a rack with hooks (now in the hardware area), a rolling staircase and a handcart.



**Office Equipment.** We have used both purchased and donated printers, including a Brother printer which came from the Art of Being Green committee. We have our print and toner cartridges refilled by a Perth company. All but one of our phones came to us used. The cash register came second hand from a golf pro shop. The store's digital camera is donated, as are any small lamps we are using. We do buy the occasional print cartridge, as well as paper, but many of the smaller items like pens, staplers, paper clips and labels are scavenged from donations.

**Kitchen and Washrooms.** The kitchen counter and cabinets were removed from the 72 Lombard St. store location before it was demolished, and reinstalled here. All the cutlery, mugs, dishes, dish towels, towels, and small appliances (even the mini fridge) came to us used. We did end up buying the laundry tub, as we did not have a suitable one in stock when the plumber came. Any mirrors, towel racks or hooks that we installed were donations. We often make use of partial containers of hand soap, cleaners, silver cleaner, SOS pads and so on.

**Miscellaneous.** The trailer used to store furniture behind the store was purchased used. The trailer sign at the road was donated by Dairy Queen. Some green curtains that an interior design store customer decided against, are used on the wooden loft railings. The fabric vertical blinds that hide the hydro panel behind the cash were a donation. Most of the wood used in building the community garden plots were saw mill ends. The fence rails were all previously used, and we are using a plastic truck liner for an herb container garden. And, of course, the five artistic panels created by Val Hudson, on the exterior, were from various junked items. The yellow shopping baskets that came from the local Giant Tiger store during their recent expansion have been particularly welcome.

**The Building.** You could even say that our building is reused or at least repurposed. "The Clarke Building" was originally a cement batch plant, then electrical parts business, and then was used by the Town of Smiths Falls Public Works department to maintain vehicles and equipment before REAL began renovations in 2007.

Making use of use of donated second-hand items shows that REAL is "walking the walk" or "practicing what we preach". It gives us a lot of satisfaction, and is a way to stretch our earned and donated dollars even further. Staff and volunteers often joke that if we need something, we just need to wish for it, and soon it will come in – and it often does!

### *Real Deal Store News*

**3rd Annual Second Chance Art Show and Sale.** Our annual Second Chance Art Show took place in partnership with Coffee Culture this year. REAL Deal Store Manager, Tracy Thomson, selected about two dozen of the more valuable used art items from the REAL Deal store to be displayed on the walls of Coffee Culture, at Russell and Beckwith Streets, Friday and Saturday, March 22nd and 23rd. Most of the pieces were framed paintings, including several Kiersted prints, but some sculptures, mirrors, a wooden bowl and antique heater were included in the collection. The display was well-received, so Coffee Culture representative, Maria Christodoulou, offered to continue the show until Saturday, March 30.



While not all the items sold, it was certainly a worthwhile partnership, as clearly there are still people out there who are unaware of what the REAL Deal Store has to offer. Our appreciation to Coffee Culture for partnering with us on this event. Their coffee shop was a more suitable backdrop for the works of art than the REAL Deal front office, where we held the sale the past two years.

**Hunting for Hardware – Little Stuff Counts!** Please keep the REAL Deal in mind when you are doing renovations, downsizing, or cleaning out your garage or workshop. In addition to the large items we take such as doors, countertops, paneling and sinks, we will gladly accept the other little odds and ends necessary for these projects. Many of our customers peruse our hardware department regularly looking for interesting finds and specialty items, often no longer readily available in hardware stores, to complete their own handyman projects. Packaged or not, we take plumbing, electrical and woodworking bits and pieces, as well as picture hanging materials, furniture protectors, floor registers, drapery supplies and tools. If you thought you needed it, chances are someone else will too!

**David Grant Moves On.** Time to say goodbye to yet another valued volunteer. David Grant has been with us since April last year when we were doing a Pitch In inspired cleanup of our own site. He enjoyed the experience and so continued to come in two or three days a week when he could work it around his hours at 2012 Recycling. We wish him well in his move to Almonte, and know he will find some interesting volunteer opportunities there as well!



**Smalls Vols Needed.** Volunteers come and go and we are always on the lookout for new blood. Currently the need is greatest in the “smalls” department, where volunteers are required to sort and price incoming donations. Even a few hours per week would be helpful, as we are coming into our busier season, when so many of our donations come in. All potential volunteers need to complete a volunteer application so that we can get to know you better and find the role that is good fit for you. Ask at the cash or [print one from our website](#).



**Chinese Students Visit REAL Deal.** Thirty Chinese students, ages nine to 14, visited the REAL Deal Store on February 23. The group were in town visiting from Smiths Falls sister city, Xiangyang, in Hubei province, China. They were billeted with local families while participating in a winter camp, Feb. 17 – 27. Their visit included skating, snowshoeing at Foley Mountain, and a sleepover at the Canadian Museum of Nature. The stop at the REAL Deal was to show volunteers in action, and the kids took the opportunity to shop for souvenirs and gifts for their families and host families.

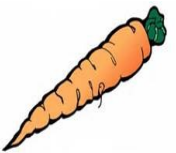


*In REAL Life*

**Thanks to everyone who sent in their membership renewals** and the many donations that accompanied them. It really helps! If you aren't sure of your membership status, contact Carolyn Fraser at [ifraser10@cogeco.ca](mailto:ifraser10@cogeco.ca) OR 283-6858. [New members are always welcome](#) – see the back page for fees.



There is a very good chance that REAL will receive funding for a **Summer Jobs Canada student position** for 8 weeks at 30 hours a week at minimum wage. Three of the days will be spent in the REAL Deal store. Priority will be given to post-secondary students, and a cover letter and resume must be supplied. Check our website for updates, or [email info@REALaction.ca](mailto:email_info@REALaction.ca).



**The eight plots at the REAL Community Garden on the REAL Deal site are now spoken for**, but we are keeping a waiting list in case plans change. Each of the gardeners pay a rental fee of \$20 and sign an agreement that lays out the expectations. The Stone Soup Sharing Plot will be in operation for community members who would like to sample the produce.



**Our fourth annual "Customer Ask" at Andress' Your Independent Grocer is planned for May 31 to June 8** to coincide with Canadian Environment Week. Cashiers will be asking customers if they would like to donate \$2 to their local environmental organization, REAL. Every penny collected in this way comes to REAL! Our sincere thanks to Dan Andress for making this possible.



A team of members, many of whom were involved in the annual band concert preparations, have been considering carefully our **options for a replacement fundraiser**. At the moment this is looking like a fall local foods dinner with another entertainment feature. So keep that in mind, and if you would like to help on the committee, contact Barb at 283-9966.

# AGM

REAL Members are invited to a **Potluck Dinner and Social on Wed. June 19**, location to be confirmed. We need to take about twenty minutes to conduct our Annual General Meeting business, but the main goal of the evening is to enjoy some unstructured social time. Please take this opportunity to mingle with some other REAL folk – some of our best ideas come from these conversations! Members will receive an invitation via email or Canada Post, as per usual.

- [The ZENN car \(Zero Emissions No Noise\)](#) is made in Quebec and costs about \$12,000. But you can only buy them in B.C. [www.youtube.com/embed/Ri2BG2qOvCg?feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/embed/Ri2BG2qOvCg?feature=player_detailpage).
- [101 environmental documentaries](#) are available for viewing online on Top Documentary Films, TDF, as well as documentaries on many other topics. [www.topdocumentaryfilms.com/category/environment/](http://www.topdocumentaryfilms.com/category/environment/).
- ["How tos" and photos of rain gardens](#), assembled by Green Communities Canada. [Www.raingardentour.ca/](http://www.raingardentour.ca/) See if you recognize any of the photos!
- [Scientists are suggesting more people become "demitarians"](#) – eating half as much meat as usual, in order to avoid severe environmental damage [www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/feb/18/halve-meat-consumption-scientists](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/feb/18/halve-meat-consumption-scientists).

<http://www>

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K7A 5A5  
613-283-9500  
info@REALaction.ca



Environmental  
Projects Manager  
Sue Brandum  
613-267-2257  
sbrandum@cogeco.ca

**REAL Deal Store &  
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.,  
Smiths Falls ON  
K7A 5A5  
613-283-7999

Store open Thurs, Fri, Sat  
10am—4pm

Well Aware, Energy Audits,  
RAIN or other programs

Phone: 613-283-9500

**REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment**



**PITCH-IN SMITHS FALLS  
APRIL 20 – MAY 5 2013**

Come join the fun with you fellow residents and  
community groups to clean up Smiths Falls

- Clean by yourself or with a group
- Clean up any time during Pitch-In
- Pick up your supplies at the REAL Deal Store
- Report back on what you have collected
- Pat yourself on the back for a job well done




**Special Group Effort Day**  
Sat. April 20 from 9 – 11:30  
To clean up Ferrara, Ferguson and Harold.  
Wear gloves, Bags will be provided  
Be safe & Have fun

**Let's all feel good about cleaning up  
our community**

If interested please give Bonita a call at  
613-283-1174      bjlucas@live.ca

Coordinated by the Rideau Environmental League      www.REALaction.ca

**Make a  
REAL  
Difference**

Please return this form to:  
REAL  
Box 1061  
Smiths Falls, ON  
K7A 5A5

Or bring to  
The REAL Deal

**Make a Donation**

I would like to make  
a donation of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

A charitable receipt for  
income tax purposes will  
be issued. To donate by  
credit card, go to  
[www.Canadahelps.org](http://www.Canadahelps.org).

**Volunteer**

I want to help

**Become a Member**

I would like to become a member

- Individual membership \$15
- Family membership \$20
- Student membership \$5
- Corporate membership \$50

**Contact Information**

Name .....

Street/RR Address .....

.....

Town, Province .....

Postal Code .....

Home Phone .....

Work Phone .....

Best time to reach me .....

Email address .....