

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2011

Inside this issue:

<i>Tracy Thomson - New Manager</i>	2
<i>Toilets, Bathtubs, Windows and Infant Items</i>	2
<i>REAL Deal Volunteers</i>	3
<i>Thank You to Our Customers</i>	3
<i>Summer Student on Board</i>	3
<i>Junk Art for the REAL Deal</i>	3
<i>First time at a REAL Pitch In</i>	4
<i>Community Garden Thank You's</i>	4
<i>Status of ecoEnergy Home Energy Audit Program</i>	5
<i>Well Aware</i>	5
<i>Rain Barrels</i>	5
<i>AGM Special Presentations</i>	5
<i>Rideau Volunteer Windup</i>	6
<i>Welcome New Members</i>	6
<i>In REAL Life</i>	7

REAL'S New Community Garden a Thing of Beauty by J. David Hoffman



The REAL community garden, located north-east of the REAL Deal store, was expanded and greatly improved this spring. Started in the summer of 2010 with four straw-bale plots, the garden now boasts eight beautiful, deep, cedar-board, permanent raised plots, constructed by Michael Worger Carpentry. The “super soil” bought for the beds is amazingly productive and should provide a great gardening experience for participants.

REAL's objectives are to: provide space for planting for groups who do not have their own suitable space; encourage the

production of healthy, local, organic food; provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about gardening; demonstrate effective garden practices to site visitors; and test the viability of community gardening in Smiths Falls.

This year's successful applicants for a plot are: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth (SFDCY), REAL, Smiths Falls Community Health Centre, Chimo Elementary School, Steven Maddock, J. David Hoffman, Kryna Pohl.

A cooperative gardening experience is already in the making. Plants and seeds have been traded among participants; and potatoes and pole beans, to be shared among all, have been planted in the common area in the centre of the plot layout. Now the enthusiastic gardeners need good weather to bring home the crops!

Cedar Rail Fence Workshop

Over 70 people responded to the notice of the Rideau Volunteers Heritage Cedar Rail Fence workshop. Twenty hardy souls came out in the rain May 14 to learn fence building techniques from Scott Dobson and Eugene Fytche, and erected two types of fences along sides of the Community Garden. A second workshop will be held June 25, and a third later in the summer, to accommodate those on the waiting list. The group will extend the existing fence and demonstrate another type. A big thank you to Smiths Farm Equipment for providing the fencing wire.



Tracy Thomson Takes Over as Manager



You may have noticed a change at the helm of the REAL Deal Reuse Store. Tracy Thomson has taken over as Store Manager. Ian McLeish, our friendly-faced manager that most of you had come to know, had an unfortunate injury to his knee and could not continue his work at the store.

Tracy came to us last October as a volunteer on Wednesdays and Fridays. She showed her passion for reducing waste by pricing donations, and quickly proved her knowledge by identifying the “better” used items from the typical everyday household goods we receive.

REAL needed to find someone quickly who could step into Ian’s shoes and Tracy seemed the perfect fit. She was already familiar with the daily operations, had product knowledge, had a great rapport with the other volunteers and staff, and had proven her commitment to our cause. In addition, she was immediately available! Tracy has moved easily into her role as the new Manager of the REAL Deal Reuse Store.

Tracy is relatively new to Smiths Falls, having moved here from Ottawa about a year ago after "discovering" it when she helped a friend relocate here. In touring the many reuse stores in the area, she realized a desire to work with second-hand goods at a non-profit organization, and the REAL Deal Store seemed to be the perfect environment. Her passion for "things that are unusual and interesting" led her to the REAL Deal specifically, as well as her “love of stuff” and her desire to keep quality usable items out of landfill. Tracy now coaches some of the other volunteers on the uniqueness and value of the better quality goods they come across. Tracy’s volunteer experiences with organizations such as the Humane Society of Ottawa and the CNIB will serve her well in REAL.

Welcome Tracy!

Clarification: Toilets, Bathtubs, Windows and Infant Items



The REAL Deal store can only accept quality used items that we can resell and therefore keep out of the landfill. We are not finding buyers for certain items, so please note the following changes.

Bathtubs and Toilets. Sorry, we are no longer accepting bathtubs or toilets, unless they are in excellent condition or are of a rare variety (such as claw foot tubs, etc.).

Windows. The REAL Deal does not accept modern single pane, aluminum or broken windows. We do accept old wooden-framed windows in good condition.

Infant Items. We no longer accept infant items of any kind. Many items donated were in fact turning up on recall lists. Selling such items is against the law, and we cannot afford to dispose of them on behalf of the public.

If you are still unsure about these items, please contact the store at (613) 283-7999 or e-mail the manager: tracy@realdealstore.ca.

REAL Deal Volunteers

Since our last newsletter we have been fortunate to have added a number of new volunteers to our team. Nancy Berthiaume and her dad, Paul, have been a whirlwind of activity, doing everything from pricing smalls to running the cash to fixing the “fixables”. Honourable mention also goes out to Nancy’s husband, Bill, for lending his handyman

expertise to some in-store repair projects. Matt Daye came to us in the spring and has proven a tremendous help on Saturdays to the guys in the yard, Don and Ed. Barb Ellis gives us a couple hours of her time when she can.

would not function without the day-to-day commitment of our wonderful team of dedicated volunteers. Thanks go out to ALL of you!

The Real Deal Reuse Store

Thank You to Our Customers

A great big thank you to the customers who come in regularly to shop for household goods and reno materials. The patronage of these folks is incredibly important to us: Delores, Bernie, Richard, Carnie, Mike and Joe, Marianne, Kerry, Joan and some whose names we don’t yet know...thank you, thank you, thank you!!



Summer Student on Board

Marla McKenna will be REAL's summer student this year. Marla will be working on REAL's Take It Back Directory; working in the store receiving, sorting, pricing and helping customers; developing environmental displays and special sales events; arranging more of the Repurposing and Cedar Rail Fence building Workshops; and various other tasks.

Marla is studying photography at Concordia, so we're likely to also have her take some photos for us! She is a graduate of St. John Catholic High School, has worked at Shoppers Drug Mart, Wallack's Art Store and Lombard Glen Golf Course, and has volunteered for the Relay for Life and Stewart Park Festival among other organizations. Welcome Marla!

Junk Art for the REAL Deal Exterior



Courtesy of the Record News EMC

An installation of junk art will be mounted on the exterior of the REAL Deal by this fall. A donor couple, who wish to remain anonymous, have provided a

\$5,000 donation with the stipulation it be used for an art project for that wall and that Val Hudson be the artist for the project.

It was Val who came up with the junk art concept. Four doors and four window frames, each creating an image put together with assorted cast off materials, will be on the north wall of the REAL Deal, to the right of the customer doors. Ceramic tiles will link those images with a community art piece to the left of the customer doors. The community art piece will allow members of the public to add their personal items to the junk wall, under Val's supervision. The junk

used will echo the purpose of the REAL Deal, which is to make better use of materials that might otherwise be discarded and wind up in landfills. And it will be an attractive addition to the Smiths Falls townscape.

The exterior of the REAL Deal already has a colourful mural of an environmental scene in five panels created by the SFDCI Art Club under the direction of Pam Craig. It was mounted in December of last year courtesy of Kilmarnock Enterprises.

Val also intends to promote junk art within the town by organizing a junk art sculpture contest.

First time at a REAL Pitch In, by J.David.Hoffman

This was my first official participation in a REAL Pitch In. How satisfying to see the look of the town after we were finished! It was very difficult to find a dry day within the two week period April 18 - May 1, and even the following week was very wet. Although at 1118 participants, fewer town folk were involved than last year, we managed to collect more material: 249 bags of garbage and 53 bags of recyclables. Hard work overcame the effects of the weather. Still, we could have used more help as there were spots around Smiths Falls that Pitch In could not get to.



The volunteers included six area schools and 18 community groups. Schools accounted for at least 800 in the total number of participants. The stable of regular volunteers were joined by some new families and individuals this year. (For the full list of participants see: www.realaction.ca/pitchin.)

Volunteers discovered that, in addition to general littering, dumping is still a problem, especially of building materials, for example, behind the Curling Club, and at the Railway Station Theatre. Cigarette butts and fast food litter are everywhere. Personally, I found it hard to love my fellow man while I was picking up the coffee cups, cigarette wrappers, and cardboard food containers cast aside along the roadway - on my beat from Old Sly's Road to the train tracks. For weeks after, I found myself having a peek to see if the pristine roadside I was so proud of when I finished was still litter-free.

Community Garden Thank You's

The REAL Community Garden Steering Committee are most grateful to the contributions of so many who have really put the community into our community garden.

This year, financial support has come from ecoPerth, the Community Health Centre, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Walmart-Evergreen Green Grant program. The Walmart-Evergreen funding covered the soil, gravel and support wood costs, and will provide for signage.

The slab wood was donated by Tim Kirkham of Maberly. (We are still contemplating what to do with the remaining 17 inch pieces.)

We consulted several people for drainage advice: Angela Northfield, Brian Impey and Philip Burns, and for now are going to see if a low tech solution solves our big-puddle-after-a-big-rain problem. Philip Burns also generously provided a load of wood chips for the courtyard area.

Lots of volunteer labour was used to move soil and gravel, lay down cloth, spread straw and bark mulch, and deal with the wood and bark scraps. Special thanks to Skills Link who twice managed to deal with what looked like a big big job in record time, as well as the Smiths Falls and District Club

for Youth. Members of the Steering Committee, Cathryn and Dan Davidson, Don Harvey, and Greg, Paul and David Hicks all lent a hand at crucial moments.

Seeds and seedlings were donated by Annabelle Twilley, Cheryl Nash, Eric Stewart and Sarah Mackenzie of Hollyhock Grange, Barb Hicks and the Community Health Centre. Betty Davis, of REAL, stepped in to plan and plant REAL's plot.

All of this was capably pulled together by a Steering Committee of Mona Wynn (Community Health Centre), Cheryl Nash (ecoPerth), Terry Graydon (Horticultural Technician), and Susan Brandum and Barb Hicks from REAL.

Thank you everyone! The garden season has only just begun, but we are off to a great start, and know there will be many more developments with community members to thank by the fall.

Status of ecoENERGY Home Energy Audit Program



REAL has received formal notice that the very successful ecoENERGY home energy audit program will continue for one more year. We are keeping a list of interested clients, and will get back to them as soon as we have enough detail to proceed.

With the pressures of ever-increasing energy costs and peak oil, and the fact that Canada is the Number 1 emitter of greenhouse gases/capita, we have everything to gain by making our housing stock more energy efficient. We would hope at a minimum that the federal government would extend their commitment over two years

In the interim, REAL has revised its offerings to help homeowners get a handle on their energy costs. Clients can access any of these services right now, as long as they are not expecting any grants.

We now offer the following tax free programs.

1. Full Energy Audit – includes blower door test and full report - \$350. Ontario provides a \$150 rebate on the cost of the audit for a net cost of \$200
2. Walk-through Blower Door/air leakage test – \$200
3. Add-on Walk-through Infrared Thermography during Energy Audit – \$115
4. Full Infrared Thermography Assessment and Report – \$495

For more information, see www.reaction.ca/ecoENERGY.htm



Well Aware will be back in 2011, with 30 visits available to area residents. If you would like to know more about your well and septic system, call now to book your free, confidential, non regulatory guided self assessment of your property. Leave a message at the Environment Centre, (613) 283-9500.

Rain Barrels



REAL has two styles of rain barrel for sale this year. The Arbour rain barrel is the customer favourite we have stocked many years now. It holds about 200 L, is made from recycled food grade grey plastic (no terra cotta this year) and costs \$89 plus HST. New this year is a big, white, cubic rain tote that holds a whopping 1000 L. It sells for \$175 plus GST. Both are retrofitted with taps, overflow hoses and mosquito protection. The 1000 L model in particular is in short supply, so please double check with the store before heading over: (613) 283-7999. For more on the benefits of rain barrels, consult our website www.reaction.ca/rainbarrels.htm.

AGM Special Presentations

Three very special people were honoured with life-time memberships at our June 22 Annual General Meeting.

Carolyn Fraser has retired after twelve years as REAL Treasurer. This is a very time-consuming and demanding position that has grown in complexity over the years. But Carolyn was fantastic at ensuring the many details were looked after, responded quickly to anyone's request for assistance, and was extremely dedicated to ensuring the job was done properly. Carolyn continues to look after REAL Membership, and volunteers when she can to help with REAL special events.

Pat and Tom Foulkes are long time members and strong advocates for REAL. Tom served on the REAL Board from 2001 to 2007 and was instrumental in having the Town of Smiths Falls name a councilor as liaison to the REAL Board. He also serves as our one-man land use committee. Both Tom and Pat were great assets in renovating the current REAL Deal building. And Pat was a major player in last year's successful volunteer fair. We appreciate Pat and Tom's constructive comments on REAL's activities and development. Their generosity has been a boost to REAL in more ways than one.

The exemplary commitment and long term involvement of Pat, Tom and Carolyn have lent stability and credibility to REAL, and to many other organizations in our community.

Rideau Volunteer Windup



It really doesn't seem like Lynn Preston has been with us a full two years, but the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding for the Rideau Volunteers program has come to an end, and she is moving on.

Rideau Volunteers was designed to implement a volunteer management program for the two partners involved - the Rideau Environmental Action League and the Rideau Canal Museum (RCM). REAL appeared to have the benefit of Lynn for three days a week, but due to space limitations at the RCM, she was actually working with both organizations from her desk at the REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre. In REAL's case, the program was intended to implement the volunteer program that was developed by Kara Symbolic through a previous Trillium grant

It has been a great success! Both REAL's and RCM's volunteer base have more than doubled in the process, and the many activities sponsored by the program to recruit and train volunteers increased awareness of both organizations. REAL now has a process and precedent for recruiting, placing, evaluating, recognizing and retaining volunteers. Volunteers are crucial for any non-profit to attain its goals; REAL and other organizations simply could not exist without the diversity of people that contribute their time and skills to the projects that make that organization tick. This program will ensure that we make the most of this amazing resource - volunteers.

Everyone at REAL, and particularly the REAL Deal staff and volunteers, has really enjoyed Lynn's friendly presence. Hers has been the welcoming face to volunteers joining the organization over the past two years. Lynn is always quick with a smile, a joke or a laugh, and has the knack of putting everyone from any background at ease. Her environmental background as a professional planner with MVC and RVCA meant she was very aware of REAL's goals and the role volunteers play in that mission. As well, she established the groundwork that will allow us to continue a volunteer program with a minimum of effort. She truly will be missed.

In true REAL volunteer program form, a farewell lunch was held for Lynn on Friday, May 27th at the REAL Deal. The fabulous turnout was a testament to how Lynn touched so many people in REAL, RCM and the Town of Smiths Falls. Turns out Lynn enjoyed working with us, too! Lynn is going to enjoy the summer camping, coaching baseball, and relaxing by the pool before planning her next work experience.

While Rideau Volunteers has come to an end, both of RCM and REAL will be continuing their own volunteer programs. In REAL's case, we will be functioning with a Volunteer Coordinator while we seek new funding to continue to support the role. There is an ongoing need for volunteers of all stripes across the organization: from dusters, to small sorters, handy people, event organizers, and board members. If you have some time to contribute to REAL, give us a call at (613) 283-9500, and consult the Volunteers section of our website.

Welcome New Members

REAL has gained a number of new members over the past months. We are pleased to welcome the following individual members: Norm Hassell, Ann Curran and Jennie Versteeg. Both Dan Hawkins and Nancy Simpson have now become members in addition to being faithful volunteers. The Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, base in Portland, are our newest "Partner in the Future" member, a category reserved for non-profit organizations. Denny K's Car Care is our latest corporate member.

If you would like to join REAL, or can recommend membership to someone you know, please use the form on the print version of this newsletter, see our membership webpage: www.realaction.ca/membership.htm, use the tear off on the REAL brochure, or contact Carolyn Fraser, 293-9858 or fraser@superaje.com. All memberships are for one year, and can be paid by cash or cheque. Sorry, we aren't set up for credit card membership payments. However, if you wish to make a donation by credit card you may do so via CanadaHelps.org. Your charitable receipt will be e-mailed to you immediately.

In REAL Life

Thanks for George Yap, a Program Director of WaterCan and a Merrickville resident for thinking of us. In appreciation for his participation on the RBC Blue Water Panel, REAL received a \$2500 donation from the RBC Foundation in April. REAL will use this money for a Well Aware Community Forum for residents in the neighbourhood of proposed solar farms, Tues. June 28 6:30 at Lombardy Hall, Hwy 15 S.

Thank you to everyone across the community who contributed a twoonie to REAL (maybe even more than once?) at Andress Independent Grocer in Smiths Falls June 1 - 11. The fundraiser was timed to coincide with Canadian Environmental Week, and offered people the opportunity to donate to their local environmental organization, REAL. In total, \$1,700 was raised.

Many thanks to Reeve Bill Dobson and the Council of Montague Township for approving a \$500 contribution to the work of REAL. Larry Manson made a brief presentation about REAL to council at the June 7th meeting where the cheque was presented.

Check out our map of bike routes though the area surrounding Smiths Falls. Find it on our website <http://www.realaction.ca/cycling%20routes.html>

Don't forget to take your plastic greenhouse containers back to your garden centre before they close for the season. Most will take multi-paks, pots and flats for recycling. Garden Market, Gemmell's Garden Centre, and Andress Independent accept these materials. Only put them in your household recycling if they are clearly stamped with a number that your municipal program accepts. Styrofoam is not accepted at garden centres or in recycling programs, so avoid purchasing plants in styrofoam containers.



Recycleyourelectronics.ca is the website to look up recycling depots that accept used electronics for recycling. We cannot accept computers, VCRs, speakers and the like at the REAL Deal! In Smiths Falls, use Twenty Twelve Electronics Recycling at 42 James St. or the Staples store in the County Fair Mall. Many municipalities, including Rideau Lakes and Drummond North Elmsley, accept electronics for recycling at their landfill sites

Take advantage of REAL's free online waste exchange service. Log on to Rideau.Reuses.com, create an account, and post items you would like to find, or give away. You can also post items to sell for less than \$100. Post your garage sales, too!

<http://www>

- TVs account for 7.4% of Americans' total residential electricity usage. But now some high tech TVs have gone green. www.emagazine.com/magazine/flat-screens-gone-green
- Are you a novice gardener with not much room to grow? See "Thirteen tips for Veggie Virgins" axisoflogic.com/artman/publish/Article_62770.shtml
- Find out how Ontario ministries will be changing what they do to reduce the negative effects and take advantage of the positive effects of climate change. "Climate Ready: Ontario's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan" www.ene.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@ene/@resources/documents

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**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, Home Energy
Audits or other programs**
Phone: 613-283-9500



is pleased to invite you
to join us
for our first ever

GOLF TOURNAMENT



**Saturday July 23 at
Lombard Glen Golf & Country Club**

Registration begins at 11:30am
Shot-gun start at 1:00pm
Dinner at 6:30 (approximately)

18 holes of golf, cart, BBQ lunch,
Dinner - Just \$90
Golf only - \$60
Dinner only - \$35

Bring your cheque book and be
prepared to participate in our
Silent Auction.

For information or to register call:

Carol or Larry Manson - (613) 283-7743
or
REAL - (613) 283-9500
www.REALaction.ca

Speak to Carol or Larry about sponsorship
opportunities (613) 283-7743



Save up your empties (beer bottles or cans, glass or plastic wine and liquor bottles) and bring them to The Beer Store, Smiths Falls store the weekend of August 5 - 7. REAL volunteers will ask if you would like to donate your empties to REAL, and will take them off your hands so you can go directly to the purchase side of the store! Cathryn and Dan Davidson are looking after this one, so please get in touch if you can volunteer for a shift that weekend. Sorry, we can't use anyone under 19.

Call 283-9819 or e-mail cnndavidson@cogeco.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.

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