

# REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2017

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## **Introducing our New Renovations Manager**

REAL is pleased to welcome Don Mathewson to the REAL Deal team!

Don has been a resident of Merrickville for 15 years, having moved from Kanata to escape the congestion of the city for the calm of village life.

Coming from several generations of tradespeople and contractors, Don has been involved in many facets of the construction industry. Working in both the retail and wholesale sales of construction products as well as managing construction projects primarily of door automation and door hardware, Don brings a wealth of knowledge in both construction materials and practices and has been heavily involved in many local projects including the security and camera systems at the new police HQ, as well as the Brockville Health Centre and the renovation of the Smiths Falls hospital.



Don is a strong believer in the reuse and repurposing of all things and feels that the landfill should be a last resort, not the convenient thing. He strives to leave as small a footprint on the planet as possible. Living in a compact energy efficient R2000 home, avoiding prepackaged foods and employing the village lifestyle of walking to do errands are some of the ways Don tries to minimize his environmental impact.

Exploring the villages and backroads of Eastern Ontario is a favourite pastime, as well as days spent on the St. Lawrence River.

Don has accepted the Renovations Manager position that has been vacant since Steve Rawlings left for medical reasons. REAL Deal Executive Director Susan Brandum has been covering those duties in between. Don started with REAL in May, and has been busy familiarizing himself with store operations. But soon he will be out and about talking to small local contractors about donating good quality reusable materials to the store.



## Other REAL Deal News

The Sunday afternoon hours, which were reinstated April 9, have been well received. The store will be open Sundays 12 – 4 until Christmas.

Unfortunately, our application for HRSDC funding to hire a summer student was unsuccessful this year. Most years we have been able to hire a student or two. We will be trying again next year.

Thanks to everyone who suggested names for our animatronic frog. Our highly sophisticated voting system has determined the frog's name will be Lily!



The store has been giving the monthly Silent Auction feature a rest. In that space you will find vintage and collectible items. Some items are under lock and key. Just ask if you would like to have a closer look.

## Not All Plastics Accepted in Smiths Falls Yellow Bins

Are you really sure that those plastic items you are throwing in with your recycling are accepted?

Plastics are a tricky, because there are so many different kinds. Most programs will not accept any form of plastic, including Smiths Falls. Vanessa Bernicky, Environmental Coordinator confirms that these items should not be going in your yellow bins:

- Tupperware or Rubbermaid-type containers and lids
- random plastic kitchenware
- plastic CD, VHS or tape cassette cases
- plastic film and plastic bags
- miscellaneous plastics such as toys, hangers and plant pots
- very small plastic pieces such as single serving creamers.
- large blue refundable water bottles

In some cases the above items may be picked up, but they are not being recycled. See the [waste calendar p. 29](#) or the [Yellow Box fact sheet](#) for what is acceptable in your yellow bin. If you don't live in Smiths Falls, check with your municipality to confirm what is and isn't acceptable in your recycling program.

## Another Delicious Annual General Meeting

There was lots to cover in our June 21 AGM. John Levatte of Parks Canada presented on Parks Canada's strategic plan, the Le Boat services that will be based in Smiths Falls, and preparations for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations. Another great meal was coordinated by Donna McKenna, and followed by delicious cricket flour cupcakes. In her summary of REAL's activities, Barb Hicks encouraged members to get involved and to talk to others about REAL – with more people we handle so many more environmental projects. The existing six board members were voted in for another term, but one vacancy remains.



Bruce and Gordon Healey receiving an award from Peter Au for Healey's Glass' regular donations of windows to the REAL Deal Store. Carolyn Crosby accepted an award on behalf of St. Luke's Catholic High School for integration of their community garden into their curriculum.



## REAL Community Garden Attracts New Gardeners and Volunteers

The REAL Community Garden is off to a good start this year. Many of the returning gardeners were interested in taking two plots each, which would have occupied all 11 free spaces. But the Steering Committee felt that in the interests of encouraging more people to experience gardening, we should open it up to newcomers. In the space of a week we had gardeners for the remaining spots, so we have seven returning and four new gardeners. Gardeners pay \$20 for the privilege of gardening at our site, and agree to certain guidelines laid out by the committee.

A full load of triple mix soil was delivered so that people could top up their beds, and we also supplied two bags of composted sheep manure per plot.

We have had a lot of very welcome, extra assistance from the gardeners and other REAL volunteers this year, which has been great. Nate Morris, who is new to the garden, volunteered to establish a yarrow border around the cedar fence perimeter. For now, he has planted along the William Street side. Besides being a colourful border, yarrow is an effective pest control, can be used as fertilizer and has medicinal uses.

Adrian Sirett did some much needed weed trimming, and will continue to do so throughout the season. Helen Smith has planted the four foot square raised bed in front of the building, and Donna McKenna is looking after the small garden outside the entrance to the plots. Donna has also volunteered to maintain our Stone Soup Sharing Plot again this year. The plot is clearly labelled, and the produce there is available to the community. But the public is asked not to interfere with the other garden plots.

REAL member Philippe Lagarde has constructed a prototype raised bed in one of the triangular spaces created by the cedar rail fence. We want to see how that goes and possibly build others to maximize the garden space. Philippe has also helped with the mowing and has transplanted some of our butternut seedlings that were a little too close to our septic bed.

So far it has been a cold, wet spring, But no doubt the sun will eventually shine and yield some tasty, nutritious, locally grown food.

## Community Garden Permaculture

By Nate Morris

One of the first native plants to emerge from the soil around the community garden in the spring is called horsetail (*Equisetum*). It is considered a living fossil because it is all that remains of a class of plant from 100 million years ago. It resembles bamboo and can be sustainably harvested (wildcrafted) near water all over this region. It was once commonly used to polish tin pots. That's because the plant contains extraordinary amounts of silica, which acts as a micro abrasive to polish the metal. Permaculturists also love this plant for its silica. When horsetail is composted it makes a highly bioavailable source of silica for all the other plants in your garden to eat. Silica is one of the key building blocks in a healthy plant's structure. If a plant were a building, silica would be the steel beams keeping the structure upright. By providing this organic source of silica for your plants, you can increase yield as well as resilience to storm damage.

Because silica is primarily employed by plants during vegetative growth, it is best to provide this compost



early in the growing season. It can be made into a compost tea, fed to worms, or simply incorporated into the soil. As with all wildcrafting, remember to always do it responsibly. I like to leave at least ten plants behind for every one that I harvest. Young horsetail has a higher silica content than mature plants. Sustainability harvesting and composting these baby plants is a fun springtime activity for the whole family. It's also a great way to teach children about chemistry, plant biology, and sustainable agriculture.

## Does the REAL Deal Take....?

We are frequently asked if the REAL Deal Store will accept the items below. See how you do on this little quiz.

- 1) Unwanted computers and peripherals. Yes, we take used electronics for recycling.
- 2) Luggage. Yes, and if we can't sell it, we take it to another charity that can use it.
- 3) Toys. Generally no. If it is in great shape for an older child, maybe. We would be willing to put it on our free table, however.
- 4) Infant car seats. No, this is contrary to Health Canada regulations. We don't take cribs or strollers either.
- 5) Used paint. No, also against regulations. Check [regeneration.ca](http://regeneration.ca) for local businesses that will.
- 6) Used printer ink cartridges. Yes, we pass them on to the United Way, and they are eventually recycled.
- 7) Used fire extinguishers. No. Take them to your hazardous waste depot.
- 8) Working washers, driers, stoves, dishwashers or refrigerators. No, too big, never have. Try somewhere else!
- 9) Clothing. No, no, no. Please donate used clothing to charities that do want it, and save us the trip.
- 10) Jewellery. Yes. It is a popular item.
- 11) VHS movies. Yes, we still take these, and people still buy them.
- 12) Encyclopedia and textbooks. No. We take books but these particular books do not sell. They can be included in your home paper recycling.

If in doubt, check the website, email us, call 283-7999 or ask when you are in the store.

## Free Energy by Philippe Lagarde

Last month, I attended a congress for work at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa. I went early so that I could enjoy the complimentary breakfast. I had a full plate of sweet goodies. I sat down to enjoy them. I really had in mind to leave after breakfast and come back for the speakers. As I ate, I listened to the presentations of the sponsors out of politeness. When I was about to leave, I heard that a great keynote speaker was coming. Out of curiosity, I stayed. Michael Hyatt, who ranks as one of Canada's top entrepreneurs and a recipient of the *Top 40 Under 40* award, kept me on the edge of my seat for his entire presentation!

His talk was incredible and very inspiring. He clearly said that energy will be free in the future.



With data, he clearly showed that solar energy has never been so cheap to produce. Inspired by Elon Musk, the man that, "delivered the biggest advances in space, automotive, and energy industries," Michael Hyatt was really confident about the future. However, for Ontarians, it's still a bit unreal due to the high cost of hydro. The young entrepreneur demonstrated that changes happen all the time and often we don't see them coming.



## Vimy Soldiers Honoured

REAL's Evergreen Avenue Committee marked the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WW I Battle of Vimy Ridge with the commemoration of a monument in Victoria Park June 3. The new memorial was dedicated to the memory of Smiths Falls soldiers Frank Morrissey, Elton Megart, James McShane, Robert Henderson, Stanley Martin, and Harvey L. Horne. Karen Schecter represented the REAL Board of Directors at the ceremony. The stone is at the west end of the path, at the parking lot end. Thanks to Kinkaid Loney Monuments for their assistance.

## ***Clothes Drying Racks Offered***

Spring and summer are in the air and that gets us all thinking about sunshine and light breezes— which are of course nature's free energy that we all have access to and enjoy.

This spring REAL is celebrating this by giving away a limited number of clothes drying racks to help those who struggle with the cost of running expensive dryers. We are partnering with the Salvation Army in Smiths Falls and with Lanark County Social Services to identify families who require assistance keeping up with high energy bills. These agencies will be given a limited number of vouchers that they will hand out to families and individuals who have identified that they are interested in receiving and utilizing a clothes drying rack. The wooden racks come in two sizes, small for individuals or couples and large for families. They can be used indoors all year round and can be also used outdoors in the nice weather in spring, summer and fall.



REAL wants to promote air drying for many reasons including lowering energy costs, extending the life of your clothing, reducing our carbon footprint, and using our natural free energy. We hope we make a REAL difference to those who participate. We will be following up to see if the rack are being well-used, with a view to offering them in Leeds and Grenville as well.

## ***A Wet Year for Pitch-In Smiths Falls***

REAL's Pitch In team would like to thank all of the groups, individuals and schools who participated in Pitch In Smiths Falls this past April 22 to May 7. It was a very wet two weeks, and ditches were unusually full, so it took some dedication to find a time to pick up. Participation was down from previous years, but those who helped made a very noticeable dent in the amount of litter out there.

As promised, we did a draw from the report forms submitted by the participants. First prize was a lovely Tim Horton's gift basket, which went to Wilma Jordan (shown at right). Both the Mault Family team of "Don't Lose It, Reuse It" and long time participant Judy Snider were awarded \$10 REAL Deal gift certificates.



## Wild Parsnip Spraying to Go Ahead in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville

In our April issue we described how the Friends of Lanark County, a group of concerned residents, were lobbying to reverse the decision of area councillors to conduct roadside spraying against wild parsnip. While there are some exceptions, the spraying with the pesticide Clearview will go ahead on many county and municipal roads.

**Local Situation.** Individual Lanark County municipalities had the option to opt out of spraying the roads that they maintain in their jurisdiction. Tay



Valley, Mississippi Mills and Beckwith decided not to spray their roadsides this year, but County roads going through their townships will be sprayed. Lanark Highlands, Montague, and Drummond-North Elmsley agreed to the spraying on municipal roads within their townships.

Tay Valley requested permission to also opt out of spraying on county roads within their municipality, but lost the weighted vote by a very narrow margin.

**Spraying Program.** A list of particular stretches of Lanark County Roads to be sprayed is available on the [Lanark County website](#). Warning will be posted after spraying, but individual notices for residents on the spray route are not available. Spraying began on May 24 and will continue until June 30, weather permitting. Some of the weed control will be by boom spraying, and other locations will be spot sprayed. Periodic updates on the roads completed are [available online](#). Spraying is not to take place within 10 m of freshwater habitat, or on ditches maintained by the property owners. Sprayers are also turned off near mailboxes or if a person is nearby. If necessary, residents can report pesticide incidents such as a health reaction, or improper spraying near water or on a windy day to the Ministry of the Environment.

**Opting Out for Residents.** A few options were made available by the Public Works Committee of Lanark to residents who did not want their properties along Lanark County roads sprayed, with a May 18 application deadline;

- **Adopt-A-Road.** The existing litter control program was expanded this year to include weed management. The County will not spray roadsides that are adopted by groups of at least three citizens who agree to control the wild parsnip by other means.
- **No-Spray Agreements.** These are agreements between the County and a landowner who takes alternative vegetation control on the road allowance next to their land.
- **Request for No Spraying Due to Extenuating Circumstance.** This was to be used as a last resort, if the other two options weren't feasible, for example, serious health concerns for a family member, or a resident engaged in organic agriculture.

Leeds and Grenville is also using Clearview on these rural roadsides:

- All Counties roads within the municipalities of Athens, Front of Yonge, Leeds and Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
- Selected Township roads in the municipalities of Augusta, Elizabethtown Kitley, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, Front of Yonge, Leeds and Thousand Islands, Merrickville-Wolford and North Grenville.

### Sunday Hours are Back at the REAL Deal !

**Now Open Sundays  
Noon to 4:00 p.m.**

**In addition to**

**Thursdays, Fridays  
and Saturdays  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

*In REAL Life*



**Bottle Drive August 25-26.** Start saving your empties for REAL. Volunteers will be posted outside The Beer Store, Smiths Falls to accept beer bottles, beer cans, wine and liquor bottles (glass or plastic) and wine boxes. REAL cashes them in and “keeps the change” If you can take a 2-3 hour shift on Friday or Saturday, please get in touch with Karen, 283-4604, who is coordinating the fundraiser.



**Paddlefest Crafts.** REAL’s contribution to this year’s Paddlefest on June 18 was a kids craft table. Kids had the choice of making one or more of seven nature or recycling crafts. Thanks to Kathleen Kryskow and Barb Hicks for pulling it together. Unfortunately, the day ended early due to a tornado warning.



**Native Garden.** Our native garden at the front of REAL’s building underwent some maintenance recently by Angela Northfield and Barb Hicks. Soon the plants will be labelled and the maps on the wall updated. Come take a look and see if you could incorporate some resilient native species into your own garden.



**October 21 Fall Dinner.** Keep that Saturday free for our annual Local Foods Harvest Dinner. This year’s event will be held at Lombardy Agricultural Hall. Expect great food, some musical entertainment, and a silent auction. Caterer to be announced shortly! Tickets typically available by September 1.



**Rentals.** Keep the REAL Deal in mind if you are hosting a large gathering and want to avoid using disposable dishware. We have plates, mugs, glassware and cutlery to rent at .18 an item. We just ask that you bring them back clean. We also have large quantities of bud vases and a coffee maker. Call ahead to 283-7999 so we can be sure someone familiar with the items is available to help you.



**Home Energy Conservation Program.** The province and Enbridge Gas are delivering an energy upgrade incentive program for oil, propane and wood home energy customers, as well as natural gas. Green Communities Canada, including REAL, will be delivery agents, as having a pre-energy audit will be a prerequisite for some upgrades. More details coming. For more, see [www.homeenergyconservation.ca](http://www.homeenergyconservation.ca).



- Have you heard of reducetarians? That’s a term used to refer to people who choose to eat less meat, but aren’t fully vegetarian or vegan. [This Market Watch piece](#) gives a quick rundown of the reasons that eating less meat may suit you.
- Environmental Defence Canada explains why they think [a deposit return system](#) is the way to improve Ontario’s recycling rates. Most provinces in Canada, except Ontario and Manitoba, already have a deposit return program for plastic bottles.
- [This little video](#) explains what the numbers inside the recycling symbol on plastic materials actually mean. Note 1 and 2 are recyclable in most programs, but products numbered 3 to 7 are not necessarily.

Box 1061  
Smiths Falls ON  
K7A 5A5  
613-283-9500  
info@REALaction.ca

We're on the Web  
www.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  
613-283-7999

Store open Thursdays  
through Saturdays 10 –4  
and Sundays 12 –4

**Community Garden,  
Energy Audits, RAIN or  
other programs**

Phone: 613-283-9500

Send contributions to the Sep-  
tember issue by August 15,  
2017 to dhicks11@cogeco.ca  
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

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

# RAIN BARRELS

from [rainbarrel.ca](http://rainbarrel.ca)



- Conserves water
- Saves money
- Reduces urban run-off
- Good for plants
- Easy - just place under a downspout
- Can be joined

✓ Sturdy 220 litre capacity  
 ✓ Recycled food grade barrels  
 ✓ Four foot overflow hose to divert overflow away from house  
 ✓ Grey or terracotta available.

**\$55 plus tax**

Fittings include: a filter basket, overflow and interconnectivity outlet, overflow hose, nipple and spigot. Fittings supplied at time of sale -you easily attach them yourself. Replacement parts available through rainbarrel.ca.



Limited number 1000L tanks available for \$175 plus tax.

Available at the REAL Deal Store  
Thurs - Sat 10-4, Sun 12 - 4  
(in the yard beyond coverall)  
**Sorry, cash only!**

### 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

#### Join our Email List

Use the green signup button on the bottom of our homepage.

#### Contact Information

Name .....

Street/RR Address .....

Town, Province .....

Postal Code .....

Home Phone .....

Work Phone .....

Best time to reach me .....

Email address .....