

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

FEBRUARY 2011

Inside this issue:

[REAL Deal News & Oddities](#) 2

[Drag-A-Bag](#) 3

[Styrofoam Recycling](#) 3

[Lug-A-Mug](#) 3

[Smiths Falls Presentation](#) 4

[Prelude to Christmas Concert a Hit](#) 4

[In Real Life](#) 5

[Lifetime Award to Una Pugh](#) 6

[REAL Welcomes Leah](#) 6

[A Valentine's Story](#) 7

[Last of the Katimaviks](#) 7

[REAL Deal Staff](#) 8

[Rideau Volunteers Wanted](#) 8



Our New Look

REAL felt it was time for a fresh look for the newsletter. Nancy Berthiaume has come up with a more attractive and readable format that will work for both print and electronic versions. We are still tinkering with it, so if you have comments or even submissions for the next issue, please send them by March 15 to Barb Hicks, (613) 283-9966 or dhicks11@cogeco.ca.

Nancy is currently wintering in Texas, but through the wonders of technology will format the newsletter, dispersing the work load of newsletter production (Nancy is also responsible for the layout of the 2010 Annual Report which many of you will be receiving with your membership renewal request.).

In time we hope to make it possible for those who are

reading the newsletter electronically to skip directly to the stories they would like to read.

We will continue to provide a print version of the newsletter for our "snail mail" and corporate members. and to pass out at the store, outlets and at special events. A PDF version of the REAL Update and past issues can be found on REAL's website <http://www.realaction.ca/newsletter.htm>.

REAL Deal News



Once again, the REAL Deal was the place to go for Christmas decorations. The store was successful in moving most of the Christmas items that we had collected over the past year. The trees, decorations, lights, stockings, candles - you name it - sold well from the day they were put out in November. Just a few boxes had to be packed up in January. But we fully expect to have a huge stock again by November, as Christmas items come in year round as people downsize and their tastes change.

The shrinking of the Christmas collection, and a winter slowdown in donations, gave staff a chance to get the upstairs storage area more organized. Seasonal items (e.g. fall and Easter), over-stocked goods (like books and puzzles) and furniture inventory are stored up there until we need them.

We held our first of what will become a regular offering - a Repurposing Workshop. Twice as many people signed up as we could accommodate, so we are already planning

(continued inside)

REAL Deal News

more. The idea is to bring in some of our regular customers and volunteers, who know how to repurpose items for other use, and have them teach people wanting to

know more. Turn a lamp into a bird feeder, bifold doors into attractive shelves, coffee tables into benches, old lamps into new. Watch for announcements for the next workshops. Volunteers also enjoyed a potluck lunch on December 17, and an Open House for customers, members and volunteers took place December 23rd.

Thankfully, most residents were good about not leaving donations for us over the period December 24 to January 5th, when we were closed.

However, there were some potentially useful mattresses that got snowed on and had to be discarded. Please tell everyone you know that we love donations of good quality used items, but only during store hours. Materials that get "dumped" often end up damaged and have to be landfilled. Given that the REAL Deal has to pay for disposal,

we lose two times - in lost revenue from the potential sales and in higher expenses to pay for garbage. Donations have recently started up again in full force, perhaps because people are doing some post-Christmas clean-up of their homes, which is keeping the volunteer sorters hopping.

In February, watch for a sale on chairs of all kinds, and of course, any Valentine's Day themed treasures. You can find out about store promotions from the trailer sign by the road, the REAL Deal page on the website or call the store at 283-7999 and watch the EMC Classifieds. If there is something you have your eye on, please note our "Make a Deal Days". We listened to our customers, and moved Make a Deal Friday back to the last Friday of the month. On those days, you are free to bargain with the manager for a lower price on any item on the floor. But please establish the deal before you arrive at the cash to reduce any confusion or waiting.

Note, especially to out of town visitors: the Abbott St. Bridge will be closed for construction until May 31. So please plan an alternate route for coming to and from the store.

REAL Deal Oddities

You likely know to check the REAL Deal for small appliances, housewares, toys, renovation supplies, furniture and books. But maybe you've never thought to check the store for these (sometimes hard to find) items.

- Craft supplies - Winter might be the time to tackle some craft projects. We have odds and ends of craft supplies like ribbon and lace (for making Valentine's), patterns, wood cut outs etc. We are also well-stocked with potpourri at the moment.
- Microwave oven glass turntable platters - Find them near the appliances.
- Glass lids for casserole dishes - Maybe you've broken one and didn't think it could be replaced. Lids are a good way of retaining heat and reducing your need for foil or plastic wrap.
- Pet items - Cages, leashes, feeding dishes, etc.
- Picture frames - A never ending supply, many only \$0.25.
- Free stuff - some stuff just doesn't sell, or we get too much of it. But it might be just what you need. Most of it is on the tables outside the customer entrance, but there is a small area inside as well

If you can't see what you are looking for, please ask. If we don't have it, we would be happy to add your request to our Wish Book. Things have a habit of showing up just after someone has asked for it, and staff would like to be able to let you know if it comes in.

Drag-A-Bag

You've no doubt discovered that most local retailers are now charging a few cents for plastic bags. Make a point of taking your own plastic or reusable fabric bags whenever you're out and about. Be sure to return the emptied bags to your car so you'll never be



caught without! Or look for lightweight bags that you can keep in your pocket or purse. You may find the reusable bags hold more, are easier to pack, are easier on your hands, or can be put over your shoulder. Using one cloth reusable bag can save up to 6 plastic bags a week or 288 bags a year

Styrofoam Recycling



New industrial technology from Japan may make it possible for more styrofoam to be recycled in Canada. Very few communities accept styrofoam in their recycling programs. In North America, only about 10% of styrofoam gets recycled. Generally, polystyrene (styrofoam is the trademarked name) goes directly to landfill, where it doesn't break down. When burned, it releases toxic gases.

Styrofoam is a petroleum product, made from a natural gas liquid. It's worth about \$2,400 a tonne, and is used mainly for insulation and packaging.

In Japan, most styrofoam is chopped up and melted into "planks", reprocessed into granules and made into a variety of plastic products. A block of the waste Styrofoam is worth \$350 a tonne.

Edmonton and other cities in Alberta are studying the technology to see if the Japanese Electrothermal Densifier would be practical in Alberta. It is estimated that Edmonton alone could keep six such recycling machines busy. Styrofoam makes up about six per cent of the total waste stream, about ten bags a year from the average household. The suggestion would be to ship the planks of recycled styrofoam back to Japan for sale.

One reason that styrofoam recycling is uncommon in North America is it's low weight per volume: About 5% of the product is polystyrene, and the rest is air, so transporting it anywhere is costly. However, there are examples of companies that make it into insulated panels for construction, a company that converts it to pellets for picture frames, car bumpers and plastic brackets, and a company in Vancouver that uses chipped styrofoam in beanbag chairs. But generally it is not a closed loop process, that is, the styrofoam is not made into new styrofoam.

Lug-A-Mug

Take a mug when you are going to events (like meetings, conferences, school) that use plastic, paper or foam cups. You'll reduce waste and save the host of the event the cost of disposables. Many take out establishments will fill your mug if you ask. Some will even provide a discount. (Tim Horton's give a 10 cent discount for using your own mug!) Think of all the waste you will avoid. A two cup a day habit per weekday comes to 520 cups per year. And face it, most things taste better from a real mug. You could probably get them to fill it up with water so you can

avoid those pesky plastic water bottles too!

Need more mugs? Visit Mugs R Us at 85 William St. W. Ceramic mugs are just .25, and they have a good selection of break-resistant commuter mugs, too. If you're on a budget, there are usually lots in the free pile, as well!

If you find a local restaurant that will provide a discount to fill your own mug, let us know and we'll publish their name here.



Smiths Falls Presentation Highlights Economic Contribution



Sustainable funding is something every non-profit organization dreams of, and REAL is no exception.

Five years ago the Town of Smiths Falls agreed to provide \$1.50 per capita to REAL to support of the REAL Deal Store, which was just getting established. That \$13,500 per year made a big difference in the store's development, which is demonstrated by the REAL Deal's 75% growth in sales.

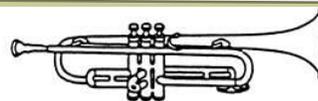
On January 17, REAL made a presentation to Council asking that the Town renew its support for REAL, at the same \$1.50 per capita rate for four years, and make those funds available to the whole of the organization.

REAL's presentation provided an update on REAL's progress and emphasized the role REAL has played in the economic activity of the region. REAL as an organization

employs 7 part-time staff who spend their income locally. REAL has invested \$30,000 dollars in improvements to the 85 William St. facility, using a variety of local contractors for the work. The store has diverted 75,000 kilos from landfills, which at a disposal rate of \$110 a tonne, amounts to over \$8,000 in savings for area municipalities. Home energy audits done in Smiths Falls alone have resulted in \$70,000 worth of home energy efficiency grants, and stimulated \$200,000 worth of economic activity. Regionally, they brought in \$470,000 in grants and stimulated \$1.3M in economic activity. Both the ecoENERGY and the Well Aware programs have resulted in business for area contractors. In addition, virtually all of REAL's annual budget of \$175,000 is spent on local stores and services.

REAL is also grateful that the Township of Drummond North-Elmsley has renewed its support to REAL in the amount of \$1,000 per year. Their contribution will be an example to the other neighbouring municipalities our team will be approaching for support in the near future.

Prelude to Christmas Concert a Hit

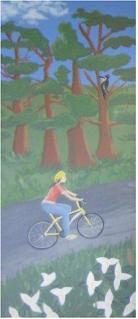


A good time was had by all at the "Prelude to Christmas" concert by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces on December 8. The band entertained a full house of more than 250 people, including a large contingent of 585 Rideau Squadron Air Cadets, with one of their most entertaining concerts in recent memory. The concert included seasonal favourites, several vocal selections, a bagpiper, and several guest conductors. The

band enjoyed a display of stories and memorabilia from the 12 concerts they have performed for us since 1995. The live auction by John Joynt of the Sens tickets (thanks to Larry and Carol Manson) tickets and John McDermott tickets (courtesy of Performance Printing), added to the evening. A lucky member of the audience won the raffle of a framed sunset water colour by one of our original REAL Board members, Mike Clifflen. Proceeds from the evening reached \$4,000. Thanks to

our patrons, sponsors, stars and the audience for their generous contributions. Special thanks to our concert volunteers, and the organizing committee: Peter Au, Megan Blay, Cathryn Davidson, Betty Davis, Pat Foulkes, Barb Hicks, John Joynt, Brenda King and, Larry Manson. Next year's concert has already been booked for December 7th, 2011.

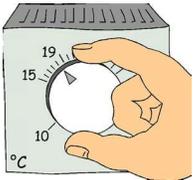
In REAL Life



If you haven't come by the REAL Deal to look at the mural, you really should. The **SFDCI art students completed the five painted panels** this fall, and Peter Au, Ken Graham, Barb Hicks and Karen Schecter added the sealant to protect the mural from the elements. Kilmarnock Enterprises graciously performed the installation on December 20, just in time for Christmas. Thanks to Pat and Tom Foulkes for their inspiration and support. If the REAL Deal is not on your route, a photo is currently on our home page, www.REALaction.ca. We will be acknowledging the hard work of the students on a plaque inside the store.



REAL is entering the **Friends of the Library Trivia Challenge** fundraiser once again. The REAL Action Team will flex their brains the afternoon of Sunday, February 13 at the Legion and have some fun for a good cause.



Wear a fun (or ugly?) sweater for the **World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Sweater Day**. The WWF is calling on Canadians to turn down their thermostats for the day and wear a sweater instead. If every Canadian turned down their thermostat by two degrees in the winter, 2.2 megatonnes of carbon dioxide could be saved per year -the equivalent of taking about 350,000 cars off the road. And it saves you money, too!



Be sure to mark Saturday, July 23 on your calendar for **REAL's golf tournament at Lombard Glen**. If you would like to participate or help out, please contact Larry Manson at (613) 283-7743, cala@ripnet.com.



Are you a Twitterer? A Tweeter? A person who follows Twitter? Scott Lumsden has got **REAL set up in Twitter land**. Tell anyone who is a fan of the sport - maybe we can create some more interest in REAL from the younger set.

<http://www>

- Search or browse **Good Guide** for over 65,000 food, toys, personal care and household products to see how they rate for their health, environmental and social impacts. <http://www.goodguide.com>.
- No more excuses! If you are a Smiths Falls resident, it is all there in words and photos what you can and can't recycle using your **new yellow box** and your **old blue box**. Go to this page <http://www.smithsfalls.ca/departments.cfm?departmentid=42>. to see the entire document or print yellow or blue box summaries.
- Are you doing all you can to **conserve water** in your home? See Green Calgary's factsheet http://www.greencalgary.org/images/uploads/File/IndoorWaterUse_GC.pdf to see if you've missed something.
- The **Animals Save the Planet** is a collection of 11 silly animal cartoon clips with quick environmental messages. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42HLOxVZAYo>

Lifetime Member Award Presented to Una Pugh

REAL was pleased to honour Una Pugh as a REAL lifetime member in recognition of her years of volunteer service. Una was presented with a certificate and flowers in front of the audience assembled for the December concert.

Una came to REAL around 1992. That summer some students had started a Reuse Centre, which we wanted to continue with Saturday morning volunteers, and so Una was enlisted by Elva Corless. Una was a regular at the little centre on Beckwith St. N, near the old high school. She enjoyed interacting with the customers there and later, when that free exchange service developed into the REAL Deal Store in 2006, she was right there.

Una enjoys sorting through the incoming donations, and can often be heard exclaiming over

some treasure she's found. She is affectionately known as Grandma by the volunteers and staff, who enjoy her sunny disposition.

But Una has been helpful to REAL in many ways, having almost perfect attendance for the annual meetings, arriving at most gatherings with some baking in hand, and participating in other REAL activities such as Pitch In.

REAL truly appreciate Una's time because as often the case with volunteers, they have many other commitments. She also spends time supporting Seniors as a palliative care volunteer, and has a large extended family and a dog. Una is known for knitting anywhere anytime, and is an accomplished seamstress. We are glad she chooses to spend some of her volunteer hours with us. REAL appreciates her consistency, and



that she is willing to do so many different things. REAL has progressed because we have solid volunteers like Una backing us up.

Eight other REAL volunteers have been awarded lifetime memberships (also called Honorary memberships) over the years for their exemplary contributions to REAL. Founding members Peter Au, Ron Stewart, Elva Corless, Brenda King and Barb Hicks, as well as Susan Brandum have that distinction. Isobel Conlin, now deceased, and Rita Burtch were also given the honour.

REAL Welcomes Leah



Leah Lloyd will be working with REAL for three months on the Take it Back Directory. Leah has been hired under the YMCA Youth Eco Intern program, and will be with us Tuesdays through Saturdays until February 14th.

Leah lives with her family in Lanark Highlands, near Clayton. She has taken various college courses and

hopes to continue her education in graphic arts. In her free time she enjoys digital art, reading, interesting food, sleeping in and hanging out with her friends.

While working at the REAL Deal, she enjoys checking out the curiosities in the store and the regular canine visitors. Following her stint at REAL she will be doing some travelling in England and Holland.

A Valentine's Story

By Jenny Cressman, REAL's first Communications Committee Chair

When one becomes involved with a volunteer organization or makes a commitment to work on a project, it's impossible to say where it will lead or what impact it will have on one's life. I certainly had no idea how my life would be changed when I signed on as a founding board member for the Rideau Environmental Action League. Nor did I have a clue as to what was truly in store when I agreed to assist in creating a fund-raising calendar for the group.

We didn't raise a lot of money, as I recall, but we did produce a very nice little calendar on lovely brownish recycled paper. I was in charge of supplying complimentary copies to our supporters and, as we slid into the final days of December, I was determined to get one to each of our advertisers before the

new year rolled around and the calendar was REALLY needed.

The final advertiser to remain on my distribution list was Harvest Foodworks and my contact, Gordon Baker, was supposedly out of town, skiing with his family. I decided I'd leave him a nice phone message, and then slip a calendar under his door, thereby completing my task. However, when I called, he was home. I agreed to stop by to deliver the darn calendar. He invited me in for tea. Being a committed volunteer, I pursued the public relations opportunity, one could say.

Well, he was the only one I kissed that New Year's Eve. We've been together ever since, happily married for almost 18 years.

In the end, I wasn't involved with REAL for very long but it certainly had a profound impact on my life!

P.S. For anyone who recalls my sad departure from REAL, when Gord and I moved away from Smiths Falls, I still have the board's farewell, keep-in-touch gift – a cordless phone – and it still works. I use it in my reclaimed clothing store, reVIBE!



Last of the Katimaviks

Mel Ley has the distinction of being our last Katimavik Volunteer. The Katimavik program will be leaving Smiths Falls after a longer than usual stay of six years. We and the other work partners will truly miss their contributions and enthusiasm. Mel, who comes from Barrie, Ont, has been



helping out in the REAL Deal store on Thursdays and Fridays since December 9th. Mel is soon to become a vermicomposter expert, as she and another volunteer will be doing their 10 days billets at the Worm Factory in Westport. A closing presentation by the Katimavik group is planned for the end of February.

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
K7A 5A5
613-283-7999

Store open Thurs, Fri, Sat
10am—4pm

Well Aware, ecoENERGY
or other programs
Phone: 613-283-9500

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Meet the REAL Staff

REAL is very fortunate to have a number of part-time staff to support our activities. Over the years we have also offered many short-term contract positions, which are usually dependent on outside funding. For example, most summers we are able to hire a student.

- * Susan Brandum *REAL Deal Executive Director and Environmental Projects Manager*
- * Lynn Preston *Volunteer Coordinator*
- * Alan Leonard *Certified Energy Auditor*
- * Don Harvey *REAL Deal Reuse Store Assistant*
- * Ian McLeish *REAL Deal Store Manager*
- * Patricia Larkin *Well Aware Outreach Coordinator*
- * Angela Gulley-Northfield *Well Aware Water Guide*

HELP WANTED



REAL has a number of volunteer positions to fill, including: Property Manager, Repair Person, Fundraiser, Online Fundraiser, and IT Support. Click on the Rideau Volunteers' icon from REAL's site or contact Lynn Preston at (613) 283-9500 to find out more.

**Make a
REAL
Difference**

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

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Volunteer

I want to help

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.

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