

REAL *update*

For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

DECEMBER 2010

Prelude to Christmas

Benefit Concert by the
**Central Band of the
Canadian Forces**

Wed. Dec. 8, 2010, 7 p.m.
SFDCI, Smiths Falls



Tickets \$10 at:
The Kiosk - Modern Thymes
The REAL Deal
Perth or Smiths Falls Legion

call 283-9819 or
see www.REALaction.ca

Use LEDs to Reduce Lighting Expense

If you're trying to reduce your electricity usage, take a closer look at your Christmas lighting - it might be time to consider LEDs.

The City of Red Deer website suggests "Replacing incandescent house lights with LED lights can reduce your holiday energy consumption by up to 95 per cent. For a residence operating six strings of old Christmas lights for six hours a day, the monthly energy cost will be approximately \$27. Replacing those old lights with the same number of LEDs will only cost 47 cents for the entire month."

(continued inside)

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Of course, the energy use depends on whether you are using mini lights, the larger strawberry shaped lights, or even spotlights. The energy use per string of Christmas lights should be printed on the box. A 100-bulb string of mini lights uses about 40 watts. A 25-bulb string of larger 5-watt bulbs draws about 125 watts. Here is an online calculator to help you determine what your current lights are using <http://www.christmaslightsanddecorations.com/energy-cost-calculator.aspx>.

LED – or light emitting diode – lights have become a popular option for both indoor and outdoor use. They are much more energy efficient, more durable and safer.

LED lights use about one-tenth the energy of traditional lights, partly because they don't require the colour filters used in other lights. They are more durable.



Their solid cases make them less prone to breakage, and they last about 10 years, about 20 times longer than incandescents. The bulbs actually fade out before they give up altogether, and one bulb going out does not affect the entire string. Finally, LED lights produce less heat, so there is less fire risk if they are close to flammable materials, such as dry trees, wrapping paper or other decorations. They truly are an environmentally friendly alternative.

If you tried LED lights before and didn't like them, it might be time to look again. They are now available in a greater range of colours, are brighter, and are available in blinking versions. The colours are clearer, without the yellowish tinge of incandescent bulbs. Many of the pre-lit artificial trees are using LED lights as well.

What to do with your old lights? Good question. Metal recyclers will take them for the copper in the wire, paying more for cleaned wire than if the lights are left in. We get many old-style strings dumped at the REAL Deal Reuse Store. But we don't want to resell the larger incandescent bulbs back into the market because we don't want people to be wasting their money and electricity. We are reselling the smaller incandescent lights for now, but we will likely not in the near future.

Some cities and businesses are offering a Christmas lighting exchange, providing LED lights or a coupon or discount for LED lights in exchange for older, incandescent strings, to encourage people to switch over and to take the old lights off the market. You may recall a Christmas light exchange REAL hosted at the old Lombard St. location in 2006, a project of the Ontario Power Authority.

But if LED lights are not in the plans for you for this year, there are still other ways you can reduce your electricity use. Cut down on the number of strings of lights you use, sometimes less is more. Limit the hours you use your lights - do you really need to light the Christmas tree when no one is in the room? -- or leave your outdoor lights on past 10 p.m.? Make it easy by using timers for your outdoor and indoor lighting.

Reducing your Christmas lighting energy use is helpful, but remember, to make serious dents in your energy bill, consider your use of electric heating and hot water. And in terms of appliances, your fridge and air conditioner are two of your biggest power consumers.

To really determine your own electricity usage, borrow a Kill-A-Watt meter. REAL has provided meters for loan from the libraries in Smiths Falls, Perth and Almonte. You can use these meters to measure electricity usage by any device or appliance except those that are hard-wired such as hot water heaters and stoves.

Local Foods Harvest Dinner

Our Local Foods Harvest Dinner held Oct. 30 at Lombardy Hall was truly a “dinner with a difference”. We successfully celebrated and showcased local foods, and raised over \$1,000 for REAL in the process. Kieth Drummond, our caterer, went the extra mile to ensure local suppliers provided virtually all of the foods in the roast beef dinner.

Janet Duncan, a renowned local organic farmer, was the guest speaker. Janet’s address brought the value of local food home to the guests, and she challenged us all to commit to purchasing \$10 worth of local food per week.

Buying local is one of the fastest growing trends in Canada and with good reason. Food consumers want to know where their food comes from, get to know the people who are producing it and know that it is produced in clean and healthy conditions – for themselves and for the natural environment.

They also want to know they aren’t adding unnecessarily to their carbon and environmental footprints by buying salad greens shipped 3600 kilometers from California, or apples from China, or chicken and eggs from factory farms.

As well, they want to support their neighbours and the local economy. Here in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville we have a wealth of nutritious, tasty food to choose from and more than 160 local producers and outlets. There is virtually nothing that isn’t produced locally from meats, to vegetables, to dairy, to beans, to fruits to prepared foods.

This local foods dinner successfully built on the success of REAL’s 20th Anniversary dinner held in 2009. Attendance was up, and we feel it is a successful approach that could work well another year.

Thanks to everyone who made this evening possible.

- The ticket outlets: The Roosteraunt, the Kiosk, River Guild Fine Crafts and the REAL Deal.;
- Robert and Shannon Miller of Miller Bay Farms, who displayed their produce and generously donated the proceeds of its sale to REAL;
- Lombardy Agricultural Society and Westminster Presbyterian Church;
- Raffle Prize Donors: Brenda King, Coffee Culture, Debbie Kok of Creekside Country Market, Garden Market, Film Night International, Katimavik, Miller Bay Farm, Roosteraunt, Spotlight on the Rideau, and Triple A Farms;
- The hardworking dinner committee and REAL volunteers: Sue Brandum, Cathryn and Dan Davidson, Barb Hicks, Beth Graham, Ken Graham, John Joynt Brenda King, Larry Manson and Heather McLenaghan.



Patricia Wins TVC Award

Congratulations to Patricia Larkin of Nature Works Learning, who took home top prize in the Business category at the third Tri-Valley Conservation (TVC) Awards Gala held October 20. The award winners came from across the Rideau Valley, Mississippi Valley and South Nation watersheds. Patricia Larkin has worked with REAL for the past three years as a Well Aware Outreach Coordinator, and serves on the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee.

Patricia started her environmental education business by hosting students and teachers at her own property. Since then she has created programming to include Gemmill Park in Almonte and Source Water Protection education for Grade 8 students.

REAL Deal in Christmas Mode

The REAL Deal is in full Christmas mode and there's a good chance we will completely sell out of our Christmas stock this year. If you're thinking of donating unused Christmas decorations, now is the time to bring them in.

We're very much looking forward to our first Repurposing Workshop on Friday, Nov. 26. If it goes as we hope, it will become a regular feature of the REAL Deal, helping more people appreciate the uses and value of previously loved goods.

Customers, staff, volunteers and Board are welcome to drop in for some Christmas cheer anytime on Thursday, December 23. Coffee and hot chocolate - served in a free mug! - and goodies are on the menu.

Note that our popular Make a Deal Days will be reverting to the last Friday of the month. Those are the days you are welcome to bargain with the manager for a reduced price on any store item. As our Christmas bonus to you, there will be two Make a Deal Days in December: Friday the 3rd and Friday the 24th.

REAL DEAL Holiday Hours

Thurs. Dec. 23 - 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

All are invited to drop in and share some Christmas cheer: hot chocolate, treats, and a free mug!



Fri. Dec. 24 - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sat. Dec. 25 - Sat. Jan. 1 - Closed

Thurs. Jan. 6 - regular hours resume

Rideau Volunteers Attracts Newcomers

It's that time of year to look back on accomplishments and this year has certainly been a success for the Rideau Volunteers, a partnership between the Rideau Canal Museum (RCM) and REAL. Lynn Preston has been Volunteer Coordinator for the project since April 2009, thanks to funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

From October 2009 to October 2010 the program has recruited 24 new volunteers, most of whom have been working at the REAL DEAL Store. The Volunteer Fair, held in conjunction with the Friends of the Smiths Falls Public Library and the Town of Smiths Falls this past September, attracted at least four more volunteers. In this calendar year alone volunteers contributed 2500 hours of their time.

Recruiting efforts have included visiting local high schools and attending local interest group meetings. The program has held two training events this past summer in conjunction with the RCM. One included a tour of the RCM and a voyageur canoe tour of the swale, while the other was a bus tour to Jones Falls to learn about the historical and cultural implications of the canal. The Rideau Volunteers program has a regular column in the local EMC, sends out press releases for major events, and has a website.

Upcoming events include November and February re-purposing workshops, and a heritage fence building workshop in May. A brochure and display for recruiting volunteers is coming. A Volunteer Recognition Program is being established to track and recognize volunteer contributions at important milestones.

REAL's challenge will be to keep these good things happening when the funding ends in May 2011. We are currently investigating ways to maintain the program. This could be done using a dedicated volunteer coordinator, or by securing additional funding to extend and enhance what Lynn has already accomplished.

Celebration for Two Super Volunteers

Both Debra Thompson and Don Harvey have completed one full year of volunteering at the REAL Deal.

We celebrated the occasion in fine style on Friday, November 12. Other store volunteers were invited over the lunch hour for subs, veggies and a fancy cake. Both Debra and Don were presented with certificates of recognition, a REAL Deal gift certificate, and an honorarium.

Debra works on the cash at the store three days a week. Don is now employed with us part-time but continues to put in additional volunteer hours, receiving goods and helping customers find renovations supplies.

Both Debra and Don are completely committed to the REAL Deal and love what they do. We in turn really appreciate all that they had done for us. Their friendliness and consistency are real assets to the store.

Betty Davis Accepts the REAL Challenge

Betty Davis has been officially added to REAL's Board of Directors.

Betty was raised in Smiths Falls and spent her career working with children with developmental and physical challenges, mostly in Toronto. She retired and returned to Smith Falls in 2009.

Betty is one serious genealogist - she currently has 70,000 names in her database. She also dabbles in cooking, Canadian literature and photography. Besides environmental protection, her volunteer interests are supporting seniors and new immigrants to the area.

Betty will soon be accepting another challenge when she takes over from Carolyn Fraser as Treasurer. Her experience in financial matters and on other boards will help round out REAL's team.

Other Volunteer News

Chris Connors-Wadden, our latest Katimavik participant, started work in mid September, and worked his last day at the REAL Deal on November 19th. Chris and the other members of the



team are excited to be heading off to Halifax for their next rotation. Chris enjoyed his two days a week stint with REAL, and say he will really miss the place and the people. He worked at the Heritage House Museum the other three days.

We are also pleased to welcome new store volunteers, Tracy Thomson and Shelley Reynolds. Tracey has been doing about two shifts a week in the "smalls" dept of the REAL Deal since October 6, and Shelley started at the REAL Deal on November 18.

But REAL has lots going on besides the store. Our thanks to David Hoffman, who has been writing the Rideau Volunteers column in the EMC for us, and for his participation in the Communications Committee. Megan Blay is a Brock University student doing a work term with the Town of Smiths Falls. She is truly versatile, having helped with the smalls, on the concert committee, and writing for the newsletter in her brief time with us.

REAL sincerely appreciates everyone's help, be it a regular commitment or a few hours here and there. Together we do make a difference!



New Recycling Program Coming to Smiths Falls by Megan Blay, Environmental Assistant, Town of Smiths Falls

After experiencing many shake-ups over the past few years, the Town of Smiths Falls has taken this as an opportunity for positive change – a new beginning. That being said, with the current waste management contract expiration fast approaching, we jumped at the chance to completely redesign the waste management program. This has allowed us to take another step in the right direction, towards a more sustainable community.

Here's what's changing beginning January 2011:

1. 3 Day Collection Schedule

All solid waste collections are moving to a 3-day schedule, Tuesday through Thursday, eliminating Friday collections and the use of a waste management vehicle that day.

2. New Recyclable Materials!

Many new materials have been added to our program including polycoat and aseptic packaging (gable end milk & juice cartons, drinking boxes, soup boxes, etc.), spiral-wound canisters and plastics numbered 1-7 (excluding plastic film/bags & styrofoam). These materials are especially significant as they are very bulky in both the garbage and landfill.

3. A Two Stream Recycling System

All residents will be provided with an additional bin in order to separate paper products (blue bin) and containers (yellow bin). Each week you will alternate which bin you set out. This change has allowed for reduced collection days, increased accepted material and will ultimately reduce our carbon footprint.

This is just the beginning as we plan to install recycling stations throughout the Town and have

ensured that we have the opportunity to implement a Green Bin (Organic Collection) program in 2012. We are currently diverting 25% of recyclables from the landfill through our blue bin program. With this new program we are aiming to increase this to 35% in the first year.

For more information, please contact Vanessa Bernicky, Environmental Coordinator, (613) 283-4124 ext. 1147 vbernicky@smithsfalls.ca.



Climate Change Clothesline

Area citizens joined the world in expressing their concerns about climate change by hanging T-shirts painted with a message on the Smiths Falls and Perth Climate Change Clotheslines at the farmers markets October 9.

REAL's Canada World Youth participants, Erin Rennie and Gaby Duarte, organized the events as a local contribution to the Global Work Party of 350.org. Events were begun organized all over the world.

Forty to fifty area residents came by the booths at either the Smiths Falls or Perth Farmers Markets to paint a T-shirt with an environmental message. Some people put a lot of thought into their messages, and the kids especially enjoyed painting on clothes!

350.org is an international campaign to build a movement to unite the world around solutions to

the climate crisis. It's called 350.org because, while scientists have shown that 350 parts per million CO₂ in the atmosphere is the safe limit for humanity, we are currently at 390 parts per million, and the level is still rising.

Why a clothesline? Clotheslines are just one way that people can save energy and reduce their contribution to climate change. Clothes driers can be real energy hogs, accounting for 6-10% of residential energy use, and 3.3% of residential CO₂ output. And reusing goods, such as the t-shirts that were painted, not only saves money but makes better use of earth's resources.

Some of the completed T-shirts are displayed on an energy-efficient, old-fashioned clothesline at the REAL Deal Store.

Erin and Gaby are now in the Honduras, Gaby's home country, completing the second phase of the CWY program.

Home Energy Audits Still Possible

There's still just enough time to get a home energy audit and take advantage of Ontario Home Energy grants if you can get the work completed before March 2011.

Of course, the audit alone is always available for people who want to understand how their house works, where heat and energy are being wasted and what actions you can take in your own house to keep more money in your own pocket. Contact REAL at 613-283-9500 for more information.

Golf Tournament Saturday, July 23, 2010 Lombard Glen



Save the date for REAL's first ever golf tournament. More details coming soon. from organizers Larry and Caroline Manson, (613) 283-7743, cala@ripnet.com.

Painted Scenes to be Installed Soon

The painted panels are complete! A group of SFDCI students, under the direction of Pam Craig, a Geography and Visual Arts teacher, have now completed the five panels that will spruce up the outside of the REAL Deal building.

The five one-meter by two-meter sheets of plywood form one continuous scene that reflects stages in environmental change. The students began the process last spring with some brainstorming with Peter Au and Ron Stewart, founding members of REAL, and Lynn Preston, our Volunteer Coordinator. A concept was developed that was approved both by the REAL Board and Smiths Falls Town Council, as the Town owns the building at 85 William St. W. The painting was about 95% done by the time last school year ended. Some of the students had graduated by that point, so it took a little more time to finish up this fall.

The idea to do something creative to the wall of the store began in early 2008, when REAL first moved into the building. A full mural was determined to be impractical. Pat and Tom Foulkes are to be credited for their persistence and support to make the project a reality.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to the students who gave up many after school hours to create this work of art, and Pam Craig for her leadership. A celebration is being planned.

The panels need to be sealed to avoid weather damage before they are mounted on the concrete wall. With luck they will be up by Christmas.

Thanks, Healey's Glass!

Healey's Glass has donated 51 various packaged locksets, that would have been discarded, to the REAL Deal. Thanks for thinking of us! Just a reminder, we do accept donations of goods from businesses, so please call 283-7199 to discuss.

In REAL Life

A concert by the **SFDCI Reunion Band** on Sunday, November 14 raised over \$600 for **Evergreen Avenue**. The **Rideau Voyageur Singers** were also part of the entertainment. A big thank you to the band and the concert goers for making this possible.

Have you been to **Green Liquid Refreshments** at Coffee Culture yet? Join us at the coffee shop on Russell Street the third Monday of the month for free-flowing environmental discussion. Our next session is Monday, December 20 at 7 p.m..

We're still collecting **print cartridges and cell phones** at the REAL Deal for recycling, but the collection boxes look different! Materials collected in the pale green **ThinkRecycle** boxes will be collected by Lombardy Public School.

Our communal garden has been renamed the **"REAL Community Garden" with a tag line "Growing Together"**. We are aiming to double the number of raised beds to eight for the 2011 gardening season. If you are a family or community group that wants to try gardening on the REAL Deal site, please contact Sue Brandum, 267-2257, sbrandum@cogeco.ca.

Six crafty people came to the **"Turning Junk to Jewels" Repurposing workshop** on Friday, Nov. 26. Demonstrators provided ideas and then turned the participants loose to see what they could create from items in the store. Some very creative lamps were the result! A session for six others is being scheduled.

Helpful Websites

- Pollution Probe's "Driving Electric: Understanding the Technology and Environmental Benefits" <http://www.pollutionprobe.org/PDFs/Driving%20Electric.pdf>, is a good start if you want to take advantage of Ontario's Electric Vehicle Incentive Program.

- WWF's Living Planet and Community has a better than average set of actions to green your lifestyle, describing why, how, and how much difference it will really make: community.wwf.ca/ActionList.cfm?&PageNo=1
- The Story of Electronics from the Story of Stuff.org people: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW_7i6T_H78

Next Issue

Submissions for the next issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by January 15, 2011 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

REAL

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Environmental Projects Manager

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REAL Deal Store & Environment Centre

85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

(across from Railway Museum)

Store open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Phone: (613) 283-7999

For Well Aware, ecoENERGY, or other programs,

Phone: (613) 283-9500

