

# REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

*25 Years of Environmental Action*

**Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)**

**DEC 2014**

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2014 is a milestone year for REAL. The inaugural meeting of a group to encourage individuals to take local environmental action took place October 31, 1989 at the home of Peter Au. REAL has been active for 25 years now, with an impressive range and number of community projects. Thanks to the generous support of Tom Foulkes, our board was able to choose three special projects to celebrate this anniversary: screening an environmental film, the production of our first video, and awarding REAL action grants.

## **Promotional Video**

REAL now has a promotional video! Up until this year, REAL hadn't had the time or resources to put together a video to showcase what REAL is about. We were very fortunate to enlist the services of Roger and Liane Sands at [Arranel Studios](#), who knit the "nuggets" we needed to convey our collection of historical photos into a five minute message. The video was screened for the first time as a short preceding "Watermark" so we could take advantage of the big screen and a captive audience. The video can be accessed through [our website](#), [Facebook page](#), or directly through [YouTube](#). Be sure to leave your comments! Our sincere thanks to Roger and Liane for contributing their time and expertise to this project, and for becoming our latest corporate members.

## **Free Screening of Watermark Documentary**

Forty three people came out for a special free screening of the documentary "Watermark" at the Station Theatre October 30<sup>th</sup>. The film featured some truly amazing footage of water use from all over the world. If you were unable to attend, you can get a sense of the film from the [trailer](#) or from a [video](#) that describes how some of the amazing views were obtained via drone helicopter outfitted with a camera. A few people stayed afterwards to share their impressions. The discussion included comments about the scale shown by the film, how some scenes look unreal, the agricultural use of water, how we don't recognize how water rich we are in Ontario in Canada, and that we are destined to repeat the water management mistakes made elsewhere in the world. While admission was free, donors contributions totaled about \$275. Thanks to Karen Schecter for organizing the screening using her [Film Night International](#) connections, Kyle White for being our volunteer projectionist, and the Station Theatre for discounted use of their wonderful facility.

*(Cont'd page 2)*



## *Happy Birthday to Us! (Cont'd)*



### **REAL Action Grants**

REAL has been fortunate to have been able to fund its activities through a variety of means, but we know it isn't always easy. We believe that people can make a real environmental difference by taking small actions in their own backyards, and that sometimes it takes a little cash to get an idea off the ground. We were delighted to be able to turn the tables and become a funder ourselves, by offering \$250 REAL Action grants to non-profit community groups for projects benefiting the local environment. Groups had until October 3 to submit proposals. The winners were announced at REAL's annual Local Foods Harvest Dinner October 18.

Several projects had a gardening and local food theme. Grants went to:

- The Drummond Central School Parent Council for rain barrels and tools for their Pumpkin Patch Project.
- The SFDCI Food Program and Special Needs Class for raised garlic beds in their community garden
- The Lanark Highlands Youth Centre for a freezer to preserve produce grown in their community garden.

Other projects were on a reducing waste theme. REAL awarded grants to:

- YAK Youth Services, Perth, to support their Green Volunteer Program.
- The SFDCI Environmental Club for their water bottle filling station, and
- Community Support Services Perth, for an in house recycling program .

Other winners received funding towards larger projects:

- SADV Women's Monument Committee, Perth, to plant a tree at a monument to honour women who have been victims of violence,
- TYPS Youth Centre, Almonte, for their Parks and Garden Program, and
- Carleton Place High School Enviro Project for their winter field camp, where students will study climate change.

REAL is pleased to help make these projects a reality, and congratulates these community groups for their environmental initiatives.

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### ***Jason Takerer Joins REAL Board***

The REAL Recruitment Committee is pleased to welcome our latest addition to the REAL Board of Directors. Jason Takerer has engaged in environmental advocacy for a number of years on a professional level and in his private life. He holds a Masters Degree in Sustainable Energy Policy, and in the past did energy audits for Clean Nova Scotia. He first heard of REAL in 1999 and considers it an "early adopter". He is looking forward to contributing "towards the development of a more resilient community in light of current and emerging adverse environmental impacts at a local level." Jason is currently building a home in Drummond North Elmsley, and works in Ottawa in National Research Council Housing Programs.

Jason brings the REAL board to a full complement of seven members. The Board is looking forward to working with Jason, and putting his knowledge and experience to use to benefit our organization.

Bios of current REAL members and staff can be found at <http://www.realaction.ca/board%20bios.htm>.

## ***Municipal Candidates Take Positions on Climate Change***

A survey taken by the Lanark Climate Action Network (L-CAN) showed there was wide support among municipal candidates for the idea that climate change is an urgent issue and that local municipalities can and should address it. L-CAN received responses from 48 of the 112 candidates running in Lanark Highlands, Tay Valley, Perth, Drummond North Elmsley, Carleton Place, Mississippi Mills, Beckwith, Montague and Smiths Falls.



Thirty-seven of the respondents said climate change is an urgent issue. Only one said climate change isn't an issue at all, either globally or locally. Several said it should be a high priority with one respondent calling climate change "the defining issue of our time." Many agreed climate change is not only a local environmental issue, but also a local health challenge.

Thirty-five respondents agreed Lanark County and its lower-tier municipalities have a role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions with 29 agreeing to support the creation of Climate Advisory Committees in their own municipalities or at the Lanark County level.

Transition Perth, one of the group of local organizations undertaking the survey, has posted the detailed results on their website at [transitionperth.ca](http://transitionperth.ca).

The other endorsers of the L-CAN survey are ecoPerth, Friends of the Tay Watershed Association, Louis Gaudreau (Plant Manager, OMYA Canada), Lanark County Stewardship Council, Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, National Farmers Union-Lanark Local 310, Perth and District Federation of University Women, Paula Stewart (Medical Officer of Health for Leeds, Grenville and Lanark), The Seventh Generation Initiative, and REAL.

The survey was organized so that voters would know which candidates were taking climate change effects on our community seriously. But now that the elected candidates have taken office, L-CAN will be following up to ensure those comments are translated into action.

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## ***Don't Give Up on Composting This Winter!***



The whole composting process really slows down over the winter months, often completely freezing up, but that doesn't mean you have to stop adding fresh materials to your composting unit. Ideally you have stockpiled a few bags of leaves and can add some of these with each input of food scraps. You will be thankful you continued to layer the browns and the greens when spring comes.

Don't bother about adding water to the compost over the winter. In fact, you may want to put a tarp or a roof over your compost. You should consider chopping your compost input up a little finer (two inch pieces) than you would in warmer weather. Turning the heap in the winter is not advisable – let the heat build up in the centre. Building the heap bigger, and blocking it in can help keep your compost warm and active longer.

You may want to collect your scraps in a large container by the back door to minimize trips out to your compost pile. If you've got the space, consider putting excess fruit and vegetable scraps in a plastic tub in the freezer and add them to your composter in the spring.

For more info on Home Composting year-round, pick up a handout from the information rack located near the cash at the REAL Deal.

### Energy East Update

TransCanada PipeLines (TCPL) has filed its Energy East application with the National Energy Board (NEB), effectively triggering the next round of activity. Here's a brief summary of locally relevant activities:

Nov. 17 – [Sustainable North Grenville \(SNG\)](#) showed the film “White Water, Black Gold” which describes the impact of the tar sands on water resources.

Nov. 18 – TCPL held Open House at the North Grenville municipal hall in Kemptville.



### Part Two Ontario Energy Board Energy East Consultation and Review

The OEB is planning its next round of community consultations beginning in Jan. REAL submitted comments to the OEB's Part One which can be read at [REAL's Energy East page](#). All the submissions to the OEB Part One can be found on the [oebenergyeast resource page](#).

TCPL's application can be found at the [National Energy Board site](#).

The [Council of Canadians](#) is continuing its campaign against all pipelines shipping bitumen out of the tar sands and 350.org is mobilizing a petition to have the NEB include climate change in its review of the Energy East proposal, not something the NEB currently plans to include.

In the longer-term, SNG will engage the North Grenville Municipal Council, resurrecting the 2013 request that council look more closely into the issue of risk to our water source, livelihoods and ecology. SNG will also approach OEB in its own second phase of public consultations on Energy East.

### Reflections Back on REAL's Beginnings By Peter Au



REAL's formation was catalyzed by the inspiring talks of two well-known environmentalists, Robert Bateman and David Suzuki.

In late October 1989, Ron Stewart and I were at a conference of the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario in the Ottawa Convention Centre. Ron attended both the Bateman and Suzuki sessions, and we were together in the session by Suzuki. The ballroom was filled to capacity. The talk was on the Environment, about how to think globally and act locally, with stories of how some people took actions to address some of the environmental problems. We were inspired to act.

On October 31, Hallowe'en night, ten people met to further discuss the idea of forming an action-oriented environmental organization. A public meeting with 75 attendees was held November 19 during Waste Reduction Week in Trinity United Church, with full endorsement to form a group. REAL was officially launched on November 22 with seven standing committees. The first directors who are still residents here include: Barb Hicks, Michael Clifflen, Ron Stewart, and myself.

Our initial meetings always included short concurrent action-oriented workshops. We began by promoting Christmas tree recycling in Smiths Falls, and by enlisting new volunteers to help staff the monthly recycling depots that began with area churches.

In January 1990, we were granted provincial incorporation. The objects of incorporation were to increase public environmental awareness, undertake achievable projects, encourage schools and general public to participate



### ***Peter Au Reflects Back on REAL's Beginnings (Cont'd)***

in environmental activities, network with other groups, recognize local environmental accomplishments, and raise funds to facilitate the work of the organization.

Thanks to the efforts of Ron Stewart, we had a membership of 114 by January 1990. We held a Think Tank on water March 20 to capture new ideas and find ways to move forward. That May we had our first Pitch-In Week and shoreline planting in Lower Reach Park. In June, we had our first two-day Environment Fair, and sixteen trees were planted in the Plant-A-Tree, Create-A Park project at Lower Reach. The first REAL auction was held in September 1990. We also applied for charitable status, and formed the Rideau Environmental Trust to accept donations for our tree planting and public education activities.

Much was undertaken and achieved in the first years due to the efforts of many dedicated members and volunteers. This marked the beginning of REAL.

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### ***Harvest Dinner Raises \$6,000***

Another successful locals food dinner is under our belts (in more ways than one!) REAL is very pleased to have raised over \$6,000 for REAL's environmental work in our community. The Harvest Dinner and Murder Mystery evening held October 18 at the Smiths Falls Curling and Squash Club was sold out a week in advance, exceeding our expectations. Our sincere thanks to Joanne Edwards, our chef, for producing such a delicious meal from foods grown close to home, predominantly in Lanark and Leeds Counties. Volunteer performers from the Smiths Falls Community Theatre entertained us with a murder mystery with an Elvis convention theme – thank you to all the Elvis's and Priscillas! Donna McKenna and her family were responsible for coordinating the attractive silent auction, which contributed a whopping \$1700 to our fundraising total.

REAL is grateful for the overwhelming support of our sponsors, silent auction donors, and the dinner goers who supported us with ticket sales and purchases at the auction. You can find the evening's menu, silent auction donors on our website, and our sponsors listed in this newsletter.

Wayne Cavanagh from Jack 92.3 FM was our very experienced Master of Ceremonies. And our student volunteers from SFDCI's Specialist High Skills Major in Hospitality program were run off their feet prepping vegetables, serving appetizers, clearing tables and washing dishes. Their hard work was very much appreciated. Thank you, too, to Modern Thymes, Impression Printing and Man Ling Restaurant for their contributions.



REAL organizers and volunteers included: Margot Allen, Peter and Daisy Au, Susan Brandum, Pam Craig, Barb Hicks, Ken Graham, John Joynt, Brenda King, Bonita Lucas, Donna McKenna and Family, Leann Merriman, Shawn Merriman, Karen Schecter and Joyce Smith. The group has already made some decisions regarding next year's event, tentatively October 17, 2015, so mark your calendars!

This "dinner with a difference" is more than a fundraiser. It is REAL's contribution to supporting and promoting local food growers. We encourage everyone to make an extra effort to buy local food. And don't give up now that the colder weather has begun – many producers still have produce for sale at their gate, at farmer's markets or through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) agreements. Many non-perishable products such as sunflower seed oil or maple syrup are available year-round. Find out more through [www.lanarklocalflavour.ca](http://www.lanarklocalflavour.ca) for Lanark County or [FAB Local Flavours](http://FAB Local Flavours) in Leeds and Grenville Counties. We also have some of the 2014 Lanark Local Flavours guides at the REAL Deal.

**REAL Deal News**

Wow! We had some very impressive sales days in October when we had our annual 50% off sale. The store was really hopping and the parking at a premium. We were pleased by the quantity of stock that moved those weeks, from small to large, and from newer items to things that had been languishing at the store.

REAL volunteers and staff are preparing for winter, ensuring things are secured and covered in the yard in particular. Snow and ice pose special challenges “out back”, and you may recall we had to close the yard altogether last winter as it was just too dangerous to move around out there. We will keep the yard open as long as possible, so customers can access the selection of building materials and other outdoor items kept there.

Some directional signage is being created to improve traffic flow outside, as well as for the fenced Park ‘n Pedal enclosure. Linda Meyers will also be doing some interpretive signage inside the store for the solar wall being installed this winter.

We started putting Christmas goods out in October. You may think that was rushing the season, but if you saw the mass of seasonal merchandise we collect throughout the year, you would understand! Make a point of seeing what you can buy used before buying new. The REAL Deal is still accepting Christmas donations and will do so all year. However, if you have large items like trees or large outdoor decorations, please get them to us sooner rather than later so we can get them into someone else’s hands before Christmas. We are reluctant to accept large out of season donations of any kind due to our limited space.

Holding down the fort at the REAL Deal these days are paid staff Arthur Janes, Store Assistant, and Tracy Thomson, Store Manager, and volunteers, Ed Crawford, Jon Fisk, Don Harvey, Barb Hicks, Brenda King, Bonita Lucas, Chance Lockett, Nathan Matthews, Una Pugh and Heather Warren. We will be closing over Christmas to give everyone a bit of a break. Please check our holiday dates on this page to avoid unpleasant surprises.

As always, we welcome new volunteers of all kinds to keep the REAL Deal operating. A handy person would be a great catch for us, either on an on-going basis or on a per job basis. Please contact [Leann Merriman](#), 205-0818 (evenings) if you have some time to spare, or if you are in the store, ask to speak to Tracy.



Phil Meany has been preparing and stacking the 100 year old foundation stones recovered from the 140 Elmsley tearout. The stones will be of interest to landscapers or to masons for fireplaces, and are \$400 a pallet at the REAL Deal. Buyers should be prepared to transport the stones themselves.

**Holiday Season Dates**

REAL Deal closing for the season:  
Saturday, December 20, 2014 @ 4:00 p.m.

REAL Deal reopening:  
Friday, January 2, 2015 @ 10:00 a.m.

Silent Auction for December closes:  
Friday, December 19, 2014 @ 1:30 p.m.

Make a Deal Day for December:  
Friday, December 19, 2014

Join us for a Customer Appreciation Day:  
Sat., December 20, 2014 10:00 – 2:00 p.m.

*In REAL Life*

[Switch the Stat.](#) If you are replacing your old home heating thermostat, ensure it is recycled properly. Older style thermostats switches contain mercury, a potent neurotoxin. Thermostats collected go to a processing facility to be dismantled. The collection bucket is near the door.



EcoPerth hosted a SolarShare information night October 29th. 25 people heard about a possible investment solar co-op for individuals in Lanark County. To have a project built here, they would need to enlist 50 investors from Lanark. For more information, contact Bob Argue at [bob@ecoperth.on.ca](mailto:bob@ecoperth.on.ca).



REAL provided comments at the Smiths Falls Public Meeting, November 17, regarding a zoning amendment for the former Hershey plant. This could make it possible for an Ottawa entrepreneur to establish a pyrolysis facility that would produce diesel and other fuels by melting post-industrial plastics in a reactor. A written submission is being made as well. [See EMC story.](#)



We welcome new members Jim Middleton and Crystal Cannon, as well as [Arranel Studios.](#) Membership details are on our website, or by using the tear-off on our newly printed REAL brochures, available at the REAL Deal.



Take It Back

New volunteer Chris McGuire is researching and updating REAL's [Take it Back Directory.](#) Use this online directory to find businesses and organizations in the Rideau Mississippi region that Take Back used materials for reuse, recycling or proper disposal. If you have suggestions or have materials you've been wondering about, email Sue Brandum.



Shawn Pankow, Mayor-Elect of Smiths Falls, [demonstrated his TESLA,](#) an electric car, at the REAL Deal on Saturday, November 22, to about 100 people. Information on subsidies available for purchasing electric cars was also available. Visitors were encouraged to bring along a food donation for the Smiths Falls Food Bank. See some pics on the [REAL Deal Facebook page.](#)



HydroOne's Winter Weekday [Time-of-Use Price Periods](#) were effective November 1. Time to rethink when you run your dishwasher and do your laundry to manage electricity costs, reduce strain on the electrical system and help the environment. On-peak times are weekdays 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

<http://www>

- Chewing gum. It doesn't biodegrade and costs two to twenty times more than its retail price to clean up. <http://www.cbc.ca/asithappens/features/2014/11/06/chewing-gum-waste-documentary/>
- Take a quiz to learn if your home could be better prepared for flooding, high winds, snow/ice storms and wildfires that the weather extremes of climate change will bring. <http://weathergonewild.cbc.ca/>
- Another entertaining but thought-provoking video by the Story of Stuff's Annie Leonard on bottled water. Released in 2010 but worth repeating: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0)



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We're on the Web  
[www.REALaction.ca](http://www.REALaction.ca)

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Projects Manager  
Sue Brandum  
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**REAL Deal Store &  
Environment Centre**

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

Store open Thurs, Fri, Sat  
10am—4pm

Well Aware, Energy Audits,  
RAIN or other programs

Phone: 613-283-9500

Send contributions to February  
issue by Jan. 15, 2015 to  
dhicks11@cogeco.ca  
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

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

*Our sincere thanks  
to the supporters of  
our Harvest Dinner*

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**Contact Information**

Name .....

Street/RR Address .....

Town, Province .....

Postal Code .....

Home Phone .....

Work Phone .....

Best time to reach me .....

Email address .....