

REAL *update*

For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

F E B R U A R Y 2006

The REAL DEAL is Open for Business

After 15 years of operating a small, free Reuse Centre, and many months of preparation, we have now moved into spacious new quarters at 72 Lombard Street., Smiths Falls to open The REAL DEAL Store and Environment Centre.



The REAL DEAL Store will sell quality reusable household goods, furniture, building supplies and home improvement materials.

Goods for sale in The REAL DEAL store are donated by private individuals, contractors, building supply stores, and demolition crews. Retailers can donate end-of-line, scratch-and-dent, discontinued inventory and customer returns and avoid the cost of returning them to the manufacturers. To donate, or inquire about donating any of the above materials, or others, call 283-7999. We may even be able to pick it up.

All these contributions will keep these goods out of landfill and put them to good use. Materials will be sold at 50-80% off new. Funds raised

through the sale of these materials will provide a consistent source of funding to support REAL s many other environmental projects and to create jobs and good volunteer opportunities.

The REAL DEAL Store began receiving materials on February 1, and will open for business February 13.

This project could not be undertaken without the generous support of many people and organizations in our community. To single out just a few organizations, we wish to thank: Guy Saumure and Sons, The Town of Smiths Falls, Parks Canada, Lanark County, the Trillium Foundation, Valley Heartland, RANA International, Canadian Tire, Avis Car Rental, Wills Transfer, I-WasteNot, Pakrat PC s, Dawn s Closet and Jody s and Maggie s Second Hand Store.

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Welcome to Halina Shannan

Halina Shannan started as our REAL DEAL Store Manager on January 30. Within the first couple of days she had her office set up and functioning, had arranged volunteers from Ontario Works to get the store area set up, and opened for receiving on February 1.

Halina is used to the busy pace of a non-profit. She most recently worked as the Climate Change Co-ordinator for the Rideau Roundtable but, before that, was Executive Director of the Volunteer Bureau of Lanark County for eight years. While there, she established and was co-ordinator of the Lanark Transportation Association which provides transportation for community members to services, medical appointments, etc.

Halina comes from London but has lived in this community for 34 years in the same house, a log house that she and her former partner tore down, rebuilt and frequently added to. She is certainly used to using a hammer and crowbar, having demolished five large barns, rebuilt others and built a new one. She also ran her own business, manufacturing and selling crafts for 15 years while raising three children and raising organic animals, chickens and fruit. She has one teenage dog. She is a lifelong volunteer.

On the day The REAL DEAL opened, Halina was heard saying There s nothing as handsome as a man with a truck.

REAL DEAL Needs

If you have, or know of anyone who may have any of the following and would like to contribute them to helping make The REAL DEAL Store operational, it would be greatly appreciated:

- "Dollies (furniture and others)
- "6-10 grocery carts
- "Large weigh scale - weigh up to 100 lbs.
- "Bifold doors

- "Display cases, magazine and display racks
- "A counter or countertop
- "Shop Vac, hand tools, plastic snow shovel
- "Industrial brooms, dustpans
- "Phone cords
- "Laser Printer
- "Bar fridge
- "Coat rack
- "Other store and/or office related materials that are still good and no longer needed, and that you might think appropriate for our use.

REAL DEAL
Store and Environment Centre
Opening Celebration

Saturday, February 25, 2006
11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Ribbon Cutting
Brief Presentations
Refreshments
Opening Specials

Where people invest in the environment,
the community and the economy.

72 Lombard Street
across from The Beer Store The
283-7999

Local Groups Ask Good Questions

Four local environmental groups cooperated to submit a letter to area newspapers during the recent election campaign. The letter was signed by representatives of ecoPerth, Rideau Roundtable, Friends of the Tay Watershed and REAL.

Dear Editor:

There is an increasing understanding that a healthy economy and a healthy environment are

NOT mutually exclusive: in fact, you can't have one without the other. Yet so far in the election campaign we have heard little on the environmental side. Many pressing global issues, such as climate change, air and water quality, and waste impact us directly in Lanark, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington (LFLA) and can mean local solutions and local benefits. We offer a few questions to ask of our local candidates.

1. At the recent meeting of Kyoto partners in Montreal, the global consensus was strongly in support of strengthening and broadening the Kyoto accord for the post 2012 period. Do you believe that climate change is happening and that it is caused largely by human contributions? Where do you and your party stand with respect to the Kyoto accord, and other actions Canada should take to tackle the issue of climate change?

2. The residents, businesses and just about everyone in LFLA are in an energy crisis, in oil, natural gas, propane, electricity and, if this carries on, in wood. Yet, there is no large, national effort to help us achieve the 25% reduction we know that we are capable of. How would you bring in a national energy conservation program and increase R&D and implementation of renewable energy in LFLA? We are trying to develop a program in Lanark County to assist low-income residents with reducing their energy use. What will you do to help us?

3. At least half of LFLA voters, and half of all Canadian voters, will not get the representative they want on Jan. 23. It doesn't matter what political stripe one is, the first-past-the-post system is not working for Canadians, nor is it working for the environment. So far, we haven't heard anything about this in this election. Yet, in all likelihood, we will have another minority parliament that Canadians want you to make work. What will you do in the next government to make democratic reform a priority?

4. Environmental footprints are a very useful tool for looking at how our household, business or societal lifestyle impact on the ecosystems that support us. We are looking for politicians to be leaders and set an example, and that is done in part through action - by "walking the talk". In the last few years, what actions or lifestyle changes have you or your family taken to reduce their environmental footprint?

Ask your favorite candidate to respond to these and other environmental questions. The more we can raise these issues, the sooner we can take action.

Sustaining Funding from Smiths Falls

The REAL Board was ecstatic to learn that the Town of Smiths Falls will be providing our organization with sustaining funding. At the Smiths Falls Committee of the Whole meeting December 12, 2005, council members unanimously agreed to provide consistent and steady funding of \$13,500 per year over 5 years. This is based on a rate of \$1.50 per each of the Town's 9,000 residents. Council passed the by-law a week later.

This is an enormous success. In fact, it may be the first time in Canada that a small municipality has decided to so support its environmental organization. Other organizations and supporters were quick to congratulate REAL on hearing the news. This decision says that taking care of the environment is as important to the well-being of our citizens as are such fundamentals as jobs, education and health, and that it is worthy of support. This marks a turning point, not only for REAL and Smiths Falls, but also for the environmental movement in Canada.

It has long been a goal of REAL to have sustaining funding. Sustaining funds can be used by an organization to sustain itself and to pursue a range of projects, as opposed to project funding which is allocated to specific projects and frequently does not include administration and management costs. Of the whole non-profit

sector, environmental organizations suffer in particular from a lack of sustaining funding.

The time seemed right for REAL to approach Council with the announcement of the federal gas-tax rebate funds to municipalities under the New Deal for Cities and Communities, administered by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). These funds are specifically earmarked for environmental infrastructure. Smiths Falls is to receive about \$1.5 million in gas-tax revenue over the next five years and, if it's continued, nearly \$600,000 annually thereafter. It is anticipated that council will allocate most of the gas tax rebate towards a new \$18-million water treatment plant.

Ken Graham, Town council's liaison to REAL, provided valuable advice on timing and how to approach Council. Councillors were unanimously supportive of the request, which Sue Brandum presented to them.

A letter of agreement between the Town of Smiths Falls and REAL will ensure accountability between the two parties and with the AMO guidelines. This year REAL will be using the funding to support The REAL DEAL Store and Environment Centre, but this does not mean it will be spent right away. The funds will be used to cover any shortfall in the first year's operations, to leverage funding from other sources, and to support day-to-day operations that are not covered by other project funding.

Kudos to Sue Brandum and Ken Graham for taking the initiative, and to Smiths Falls Town Council for being so supportive of REAL and for putting Smiths Falls on the map as an innovative leader. REAL is approaching neighbouring municipalities with a similar request.

New Faces at the Table

We are happy to have some new faces at our REAL table. Joining the Board are Larry Manson and Karen Schecter. They will be filling the vacancies left by Audrey Burchill and David Bethune, who are currently teaching in Kuwait. As well, long time member and keen volunteer Frank Roy, will be playing a major role on the membership committee.

Larry Manson has been affiliated with REAL since its very beginning. At that time he was a trustee on the Lanark County Board of Education. He has also taken many Saturday turns at the Reuse Centre, and looks forward to re-acquainting himself with the work of REAL.

He has been described as 'a community activist', having been involved in numerous community projects over his many years in Smiths Falls. He currently sits on the Board of Skills and Initiatives, which continues to search for suitable sources of ongoing funding. For fun, Larry enjoys curling, rowing on the Rideau, and serves in the music ministry at St. Anne's parish in Merrickville. He currently works for a small Hi-tech company in Kanata, and lives on a 100 acre parcel of land in Montague township.

Karen Schecter is known to most of us as the Head Librarian of the Smiths Falls Public Library. One of the original REAL members, Karen has been involved in newsletter and newspaper column writing, the community garage sale and volunteering wherever needed. Her organizational skills will be a big help to the REAL Board as she takes over as Secretary.

Frank Roy of Perth will take up duties on the membership committee as understudy to Barb Hicks. Frank is an engineer, now 15 years retired from Environment Canada and the Rideau Canal. During this period he has been an active volunteer with a wide range of interests in the community from Secretary-Treasurer of the Tay Valley Cross Country Ski Club, to similar duties with the Tay River Legal Defence Fund. As a

member of the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County, he contributed for a few years to the high school Envirothon project. Another activity has been to assist with judging at the annual Smiths Falls Science Fair. In 2003 he was honoured by the receipt of a REAL Certificate of Appreciation for his contributions.

Saving Money on Energy Workshop

by Heather McLenaghan

The January 24th energy workshop presently jointly by Rideau Roundtable and REAL at Trinity United Church, Smiths Falls, attracted 62 participants. Heather McLenaghan was there and provided this report.

I recently attended the workshop entitled 'Learn How to Save Money on Your Household Energy Bills'. Displays were set up with some excellent reading material relating to the evening's topic. Taking my seat, I noticed there was not an empty seat in the house. A wide range of individuals attended, from young adults to the young at heart. Jeff Kohl acted as emcee, and spoke about greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. He then introduced Susan Brandum. Susan explained how she would do a walk-through of every room in the home, describing how heat can be lost, and how to remedy some of the problems. For example, icicles on the outside of a home can signal warm, moist air leaking from the attic, in which case air sealing against the moisture and more insulation are required. Another interesting tidbit: a spider web can be a signal of a draft.

Interesting points were brought up in regards to current technology. Especially relevant is something called "phantom power". If you have an appliance with an indicator light that is always on, such as a DVD player, it is using power even when it's not powered on. Susan's suggestion was to have these types of appliances plugged in to a power bar that you can switch on

when need be. In addition, our computers tend to get left on, even when not in use. Computer monitors in general waste the most energy, even though it may seem fine because of a screen-saver or a "sleep" mode. To save energy and extend the life of computer equipment, it's best to turn it off.

Something I hadn't heard of before the seminar was the 'Kill-A-Watt' meter, which tests the amount of energy individual appliances use. REAL has made the 'Kill-A-Watt' Meter available through the Smiths Falls Public Library for those who wish to test their appliances.

Continuing the tour of the home, Susan brought us to the kitchen. She listed energy efficiency of common appliances, from most energy efficient (kettle and small appliances) to least efficient (the oven). By knowing this, you could opt to use your toaster oven instead of your regular oven. Also, an oven only requires 7 minutes to preheat, so you don't need to turn it on too soon. Susan also discussed having an Energuide for Houses energy evaluation done on your home (for a fee) to determine exact locations of heat loss and remedies for them. REAL can be contacted to find out about the service providers and the grants available to homeowners.

All in all I thought the workshop was very practical. It offered many facts and easy-to-do fixes for anyone seeking to increase energy efficiency and save money on their homes and cars. Those who brought the ad from the EMC received a free compact fluorescent light bulb, which was a great bonus. Attendees also received a One-Tonne Challenge booklet and a checklist, offering them the chance to take the pledge. I for one will be turning my computer off at night and trying harder to remember those cloth shopping bags when going to the store.



Resolutions for a Greener Lifestyle

Looking for ways to be greener in 2006? Take the David Suzuki Foundation Nature Challenge. They Foundation lists 10 ways to make a difference and suggests you commit to three. You may be doing many of these things already - but pick some more!

1. Reduce home energy use by 10%. A more energy-efficient home will lower your utility bills and reduce your impact on the environment. Heating accounts for nearly 60 per cent of energy use in the average Canadian home.

2. Choose an energy-efficient home and appliances. R-2000 homes use 30 per cent less energy than standard homes. Modern appliances save more energy than older ones. New refrigerators, for example, use 40 per cent less energy than models made just 10 years ago.

3. Replace dangerous pesticides with alternatives. Small children and pets are especially vulnerable to the dangers of chemicals.

4. Eat meat-free meals one day a week. The production and processing of grains requires far less water and land than does meat.

5. Buy locally grown and produced food. Buying locally reduces greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants from food transportation. One study estimates that the average meal travels 2400 km (1500 miles) from the field to your table.

6. Choose a fuel-efficient vehicle. A typical SUV uses almost twice the fuel--and releases nearly twice the emissions--of a modern station wagon, although both seat the same number of passengers.

7. Walk, bike, carpool or take transit. Researchers in California found the air we breathe inside our cars can be up to 10 times more polluted than the air outside.

8. Choose a home close to work or school. A convenient place to live reduces the amount you drive, which means you'll lower your emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. You'll also have more time to spend on things you care about.

9. Support car-free alternatives. More alternatives to the car mean less pollution, gridlock and urban sprawl.

10. Learn more and share with family and friends. By working together we can inspire our elected leaders to incorporate environmental conservation into public policy. A healthier environment isn't possible unless we all get involved.

Read more at .davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge/.

Dishwasher vs. Hand Washing

The following is excerpted from E/The Environmental Magazine.

Dear EarthTalk:

Is it more environmentally friendly to hand-wash dishes or use a dishwasher? --*Jennifer Furnari, Sonora, CA*

Dishwashers are the way to go if you comply with two simple criteria. Run a dishwasher only when it's full, and don't rinse your dishes before putting them in the dishwasher. So says John Morrill of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, who also advises not using the dry cycle. The water used in most dishwashers is hot enough, he says, to evaporate quickly if the door is left open after the wash and rinse cycles are complete.

Scientists at the University of Bonn in Germany who studied the issue found that the dishwasher uses only half the energy, one-sixth of the water,

and less soap than hand-washing an identical set of dirty dishes. Even the most sparing and careful washers could not beat the modern dishwasher. The study also found that dishwashers excelled in cleanliness over hand washing.

Most dishwashers manufactured since 1994 use seven to 10 gallons of water per cycle, while older machines use eight to 15 gallons. Newer designs have also improved dishwasher efficiency immensely. Hot water can now be heated in the dishwasher itself, not in the household hot water heater.

New dishwashers that meet strict energy and water-saving efficiency standards can qualify for an Energy Star label. Qualifying newer models will save the average household about \$25 per year in energy costs.

Garbage Land Book Available

Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash is an unusual but interesting book that tells you more than you've ever thought there was to know about waste. It is a personal journey Elizabeth Royte, a science writer, has taken to discover what happens to the waste once it leaves her home in Brooklyn, New York. She visits everyone from the sanitation workers, to the scrap dealers, to the sewage plant manager and discusses all components of waste in a humorous and non-judgmental way. Royte keeps the tale moving and personal, but includes lots of eye opening information. REAL has adopted this book for the Smiths Falls Public Library.

In REAL Life

Kill a Watt Meters. Don't forget that we have meters available to measure the electricity consumed by various household appliances, thanks to Renewable Energy of Plum Hollow. The Kill a Watt meters can be borrowed from the Smiths Falls Public Library for 10 days for \$5. Borrowers will be asked to leave a post-dated

cheque for \$70, which will be returned when the device is returned to the library.

Trivia Challenge. Come cheer on the REAL trivia team on Sunday, February 19 at 1:30 p.m. at the Smiths Falls Legion. We have the team to beat, as we have placed first twice and second once in the past three years. Funds raised support activities of the Friends of the Library.

Band Concert. The Prelude to Christmas concert by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces on November 28 was a big hit. Well over 400 concert enjoyed the festive music in the SFDCI auditorium, and \$4600 was raised for our many projects.

Good Shorelines. A selection of the 200 photographs taken in the summer of 2002 as part of the Rideau River Steward project have been posted on the website. The photos, taken by Stew Hamill, are examples to others of how they can help maintain the health of the Rideau River, because the landowners have kept their shorelines as naturalized as possible and minimized human impact. See www.REALaction.ca/good_shoreline.htm.



Carpooling. Carpooling is a great option for minimizing your energy costs and reducing your output of greenhouse gases. Take a look at ecoPerth's service at www.ecoperth.on.ca, or the Biosphere Reserve's Ride Exchange at www.biosphere.reuses.com/ride if you are interested in the Brockville/Gananoque/Kingston corridor.

Toshiba and CompuSmart Discounts

Green Communities Canada (GCC), of which REAL is a member, has just negotiated a deal for deep price discounts on Toshiba's state-of-the-art, green laptop computer – the Tecra A3X and other laptop models and accessories of about 20 percent.

In addition, GCC has arranged access to educational discount pricing on 25,000 other computer and electronic products, software, accessories and peripherals through Toshiba's nation-wide sales and service partner CompuSmart. Discounts range up to 30 per cent off regular retail prices, depending on the item.

These discounts are available both to REAL and to REAL members.

Toshiba is long known for quality. Not so well known is Toshiba's leadership in efforts to tackle global warming through elimination of fluorocarbons and building environmentally conscious products. Products are designed to use fewer materials, consume less power, have lower chemical emissions, utilize green procurement and have a high level of end-of-life recyclability. Toshiba was the first manufacturer to implement the stringent EU directives for environmentally friendly electronic equipment.

If you are interested in finding out more about the discounted products and the ordering process, please contact Sue Brandum at 267-2257 or sbrandum@cogeco.ca.

Next Issue

Submissions for the April issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by March 15, 2006 or call Barb at 283-9966.

Announcements

Sun. Feb. 19, **8th Annual Trivia Challenge**, at the Smiths Falls Legion, 1:30 p.m. to benefit the Friends of the Smiths Falls Public Library. Cheer on our REAL DEAL team! Call Bunny, 283-1843.

Sat. Feb. 25, **REAL DEAL Grand Opening**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 72 Lombard Street. Opening specials all day. Call Peter, 284-8338.

Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:00 and Saturdays, 9:30 - 12, **REAL DEAL Free Store**, previously the Reuse Centre, at 72 Lombard Street. Free exchange of small household goods too good to throw away. Call Brenda, 283-4416.

1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9 - 12. **Plastics (#2 through #7) Recycling Depot** open to Drummond-North Elmsley and Perth residents, at Town Yard, Perth.

Membership Renewal and Rates

It's that time of year again. Please renew promptly and make the process as painless as possible for our Membership Committee. The fees are very reasonable: Individuals - \$15, Family - \$20, Students - \$5 and Corporate - \$50. If you are not already a member, please join us! Contact Frank Roy at 264-8856 or froy@perth.igs.net.

Contact Us

REAL

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