

JULY 2008

REAL Deal Open for Business

On Thursday, June 19 the REAL Deal store opened for sales. That first weekend, Thursday through Saturday, saw 95 visitors to the store and \$600 worth of sales, so we are off to a great start.

George Ward, Store Manager, and Tom Martin received many positive comments from customers that they liked the look of the store, that it was good stuff and not junk, and that they were impressed with the selection.



Photo by Stacey Roy, courtesy of EMC

The store began accepting donations of materials May 23 on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays to ensure there was an inventory. Now there is a wide variety of lighting, furniture, renovation materials, small household items, toys and games, and books. George and Tom inspect the incoming goods and reserve the right to turn down anything that is not suitable i.e. broken, dirty, missing pieces, not sellable etc. At the

moment there is a demand for dressers and wardrobes, so if you have one you would like to unload, now is the time!

The REAL Deal accepts a wide range of clean, reusable, working and intact items but does not accept the following household items or construction materials:

Household items: large appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners; children's car seats, baby gates, cribs or walkers; gas powered appliances such as lawnmowers; halogen floor lamps; electronics such as TVs, computers, DVD players, VCRs, stereos; pressboard furniture; large metal desks; clothing; sports and exercise equipment older than 3 years; hardcover books including encyclopedias.

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Construction materials: Toilets that are not 6 L or less; cracked porcelain; wired in lighting; broken or unframed glass; broken mirrors; hazardous wastes such as propane tanks, paints and related finishes, cleaning compounds and related products; used or wet insulation; painted lumber.

If you prefer to check before you come, please call the store at (613) 283-7999. Be prepared to leave a message Sunday through Wednesday.

Wish List

The great thing about running a reuse business is that when you need something for the store, you just have to wish for it and it comes in the door (at least it seems that way sometimes!) This was demonstrated repeatedly in the old store. So far it has worked for the garden hose. So here goes. The store could use: shelving of any kind, a fairly plain bathroom mirror, bathroom towel racks, a set of kitchen scales for weighing small items, upright carts with wheels (like a serving cart but heavier duty), a very narrow pamphlet rack, and a metal sign hanger that mounts perpendicular to a wall.

Thanks to our Volunteers!

Getting the REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre ready for opening was a big, big job. We sincerely appreciate all the help we have had cleaning, painting, moving, installing, stringing phone wire and so on - we truly could not have done it without the cheerful assistance of these people:



Cleaning and Painting: Tom and Pat Foulkes, Brenda King, Una Pugh, Cathryn and Dan Davidson, Barb Ellis, Josh Van Alstine, Kirk Everett, Darlene Porpealia, Lynne Evans, Beth Graham, Karen Schecter, Barb Hicks

The Katimavik Gang led by Amanda Ammon: Sandrine, Meghan, Alex, Sarah, Marie Phillipe, Sherri Lynn, Elise, Lindsay, Simon

Movers: Larry Manson, Ron Toop, Jeff Young, Chris Grant, James Grant, Ryan Morrison, Roger Morrison and students: Ben Donaldson, Paul Hicks, Simo Krsmanovic, Dischaine Thompson

Inside the Store: Brenda King, Deb Samler

Handy People: Kirk Everett, Chris Oliver, Dan Davidson

Great Outdoors: Dan, Cathryn, Heather and Peter Davidson; Lyle, Sue Brandum, Angela Northfield, Jocelyn Rait, Barb Ellis, Barb Hicks, Lynne and Robin Fraser

Our Steering Committee: Halina Shannon, Dawn Quinn, Diane Pearen, Sue Brandum, Barb Hicks

Operating the store, having a physical space, and all our other REAL projects means we have an ongoing need for volunteers of all descriptions. Please get in touch if you would like to be involved. As part of our Trillium funding, we are developing a Volunteer Program, which will help us manage this very important resource, and make good matches between people and tasks. Volunteers will be required to complete an application form, and depending on the position, may be required to pass various screens, such as providing references and a Criminal Reference Check. (Application forms are available on the website or at the REAL Deal.

Some New Faces

REAL is pleased to introduce George Ward, our new REAL Deal Store Manager. George will manage the store three days a week. A tall order, because he will be in charge of the day to day store operations and making our “business with a mission” a success. George is also President of the Smiths Falls Railway Museum, and has been very active with that organization since 1999. So he is well acquainted with the nature of non-profit organizations, working on a shoe-string budget, dealing with the public, and managing Ontario Works and other volunteers. His retail experience comes from his work at Eagle Comics, and he has a background in security. George will be assisted by Tom Martin, and will be responsible for training and supervising any part-time staff or volunteers.

We also welcome to the REAL team, Lynne Evans, our newest Board member. Lynne is a retired language and information technology teacher with a multitude of volunteer involvements, including a Portland area service club, the Good Box Food Program and Portland United Church, to name a few. Her interests include music, the arts and boating on the Big Rideau Lake. She and her husband formerly resided in Smiths Falls, and now make their home in Portland. Her family has always been environmentally conscious, and she looks forward to being more actively involved in environmental issues. Lynne joined our Board in April of this year.

Let's Hear it for Service Clubs

Two local service clubs, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 85 and the Smiths Falls Civitans Club each provided a \$500 donation towards the REAL Deal. This money will be used towards additional building improvements that are required for energy efficiency, safety and function.

The Great Outdoors at the REAL Deal

We have been taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the three acre site of the REAL Deal, starting with the planting of 50 seedlings.

Forty maple, oak, pine and spruce seedlings obtained through the ecoPerth Spring Plant Sale have been planted near the front of the store in an area bounded by the fence and several rusty shovels. Thanks to Lyle and to the Davidson family for their assistance.

To the side of the building and along a fenceline, Sue has planted ten butternut seedlings from the RVCA Butternut Tree Recovery Program. The butternut population in North America has been decimated by the butternut canker, and the program aims to reestablish the trees. The RVCA will be checking with us through the years on their progress, although some losses are expected. Mats and tree guards were provided to better the seedlings' chances.

Volunteers are planning a native garden at the front of the building where there was a dog house and enclosure. Ian Fraser pruned the lower limbs of the tree there, and the Town of Smiths Falls supplied a picnic table. It's a nice shady place for staff and volunteers to take their breaks. Soon the space will be rototilled and topsoil added. The group is looking to scrounge shade tolerant native plants for the spot; planting day is set for the morning of July 4.

The community garden will take some more thought, as the open area between the front of the building and William Street is very wet. We were also mulling over the best way to deal with a very fat ground hog who lived by the septic bed, but he seems to have moved on.

The site borders the swale on its west side. We plan to take advantage of that in the coming years. Possibilities include a nature trail, picnic spot, boardwalk, non-motorized boat access or a voyageur canoe launch point.

Elva Corless Named Director Emerita



A special tribute was made to Elva Corless at REAL's Annual General Meeting June 18. Elva has been a long time advocate for environment and a key community builder in our area.

Elva was a pioneer of the recycling movement here in Smiths Falls. She instigated a monthly recycling depot in 1979 and involved the Interchurch Women's Group and volunteers to keep it going until the blue box program began. Her efforts earned her the Community Spotlight feature in REAL's very first newsletter in February 1990.

Elva was a founding member of REAL in 1989, a director of REAL since 1990, and served as its president from 1997 to 2000. Within REAL, she was a key organizer for the Reuse Centre, and involved in Waste Reduction Week and Pitch-In projects, to name a few.

Her other environmental activities include serving on the Public Liaison Committee for the Waste Management Master Plan Study for Smiths Falls area and Lanark County in the early nineties, being recognized by the Recycling Council of Ontario, and being a member of the County of Lanark Environmental Action Network (CLEAN).

Elva has been the recipient of many awards including, Smiths Falls Citizen of the Year in 1991 and the Canada 125 Medal in 1993.

Apart from REAL, Elva is very involved in Trinity United Church. She is a founder of Interchurch Women, the Friday Prayer group and the Peal for Peace Movement in town. Elva shares her time and talent generously. She is well known for her Elva-bits, the donuts she regularly produces for various events and fundraising activities.

In appreciation of all her efforts on behalf of the environment, and the example she has set for all of us in REAL, Elva was named Director Emerita of REAL. REAL's president, Barb Hicks, presented Elva with bouquet, and a framed photo of Elva with the flowers will be given as a memento of the occasion.

Elva, look what you started!

Idle Free Signs

A newer version of our Idle Free Zone sign is now available. These metal signs are 12" wide x 18" high on a white background with a red and black lettering and graphic.

We have been giving the signs free of charge to schools that are interested, but are charging \$15 for others. If you know of an establishment that could use one, let us know - we'll try to sell them one. The signs were purchased with remaining funds from a grant from the Helen McCrae Peacock Foundation.



Phantom Power Suckers

We all have appliances in our homes that use energy whether we are using the appliance or not. Phantom power or vampire power can account for 3% to almost 10% of an individual home's electricity use. In the video "Think, Act, Believe", Ontario's Chief Conservation Officer, Peter Love, used the interesting analogy of a dripping tap. You wouldn't stand for a dripping tap in your house because it wastes water. Energy "drips" from our homes, too. But just because you can't see it doesn't mean it isn't wasting money, straining the power grid, and contributing to climate change.

A typical Canadian home has 20 or more electric devices such as computers, microwave ovens and cable TV devices that use electricity even when turned off, consuming between 44 and 59 watts of standby power annually.

Chargers should be unplugged when not in use, as they continue to draw power even when the device to be charged is not plugged in. Laptops, cell phones, digital cameras, hand held games and battery chargers are examples of "wall warts. Another solution is to put all your chargers on a power strip, and turn off the strip when the charging is done.

Turn off the lights and look for things that glow in the dark. External clock displays and panel display LEDs tell you there is some power running into that device, that maybe isn't needed. How about those clocks on microwave ovens - do you even pay attention to that clock? Remote control sensors and communications between a base unit and a portable unit (as in a portable phone) all take power.

For standby power suckers, a power strip is a good solution. Say you have a TV, DVD player and VCR all plugged into the strip. Just turn off the strip when you are done and sleep well knowing the aren't consuming energy unnecessarily. Use a power strip for your

computer system, too. You should also make a habit of turning off your monitor when you walk away, and investigate the sleep / hibernate feature.



There are specialized (and more expensive) power strips out there that can stop the idle current drawn from your outlets when electronics aren't in use, without you having to turn it off and on. Another device is out there to turn off the peripherals to your computer when the computer is shut down.

Governments are getting into the act. Standby power buttons are about to become illegal on TVs and DVD players sold in Britain. In Canada, the federal Ministry of Natural Resources supports the "1 watt Initiative" of the International Energy Agency, which urges a 1 watt standby power limit on consumer appliances. A typical Canadian household would save \$35 if all their appliances used 1 watt or less in standby mode.

If you want to get a better feel for what your appliances are consuming, borrow a Kill a Watt meter from the Perth, Almonte or Smiths Falls library. Call the libraries directly, and/or take a look at REAL's website. You can also buy similar devices in hardware stores for about \$25 if you prefer to own.

Pitch In Smiths Falls Attracts 1047

It was a record-breaking year for Pitch-In Smiths Falls, with a whopping 1047 participants, including 14 community groups, 6 schools, 25 families and various individuals. Together they collected 209 bags of garbage and 35 bags of recyclables from our parks and roadways. Kudos to Brenda King for pulling it all together, and her team, Isobel Conlin, Jeannie Walton and Barb Ellis.

Reconsidering Garden Annuals

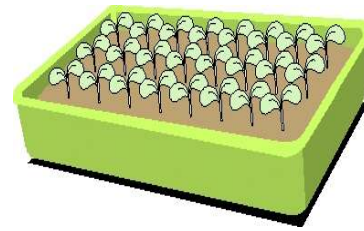
Gardeners like to think we are doing an eco-friendly thing by planting flowers. But the unfortunate reality is that absolutely everything we do has an impact on the environment.

I was alarmed when attending a native plant workshop this spring to learn of the evils of buying bedding annuals. OK, so it's not exactly evil, but something you should probably consider if you really want to reduce your ecological footprint.

So what's wrong with annuals? First of all, what we buy here in large establishments is frequently grown in Southern Ontario in massive greenhouses, consuming large quantities of water and energy for heat and light. There is a good chance the plants were grown in peat. Was the peat from a sustainably managed peat bog? Not likely and hard to know for sure. Bet it is planted in a plastic pot, made from oil. Chemical fertilizers were likely used. The phosphate contained in the fertilizer was likely trucked all the way from Saskatchewan. The final product, those pretty flowers, were trucked here, using fossil fuel and spewing greenhouse gases all the way, a process repeated when you likely drove to buy the plants. What's a gardener to do?

Use annuals more judiciously. Plan ahead and use those splashes of instant colour where you really need them. And consider other ways to green your gardening. Seed your own plants. Buy from local nurseries. Switch over to perennials so you won't need to buy so much next year. Trade perennials with friends to get more variety. Learn about gardening with native plants. Think about growing more food instead of ornamentals. Avoid chemical fertilizers and use manure or compost instead. Start collecting kitchen and garden waste to produce your own compost. Find out how to go pesticide free. Install a rain barrel and investigate other ways to reduce the water you require, such as using drought tolerant plants, mulching and not

watering in the heat of the day. And make sure the plastic pots and flats get reused or recycled .



Note: Many garden centres accept the plastic pots and trays sold with their plants for recycling. You may also want to check with small, local operations that can reuse them.

Hang your Pants, Stop the Plants

At REAL we're not afraid to air our dirty laundry! The t-shirts hung at the REAL Deal were our way of saying yes to clotheslines. Hanging your laundry instead of using a dryer will drastically reduce your energy use and reduce your contribution to climate change. Dryers account for 6 -10% of our residential energy use, and each produces an average of 840 kg. of carbon dioxide a year. If everyone "hung their pants", we would need fewer power plants - coal-burning, nuclear or other!

On hot days, avoiding the dryer reduces the heat buildup in your house, reducing your need for fans and air conditioning, also saving energy.



The Climate Change Action Team (CCAT) has prepared a brief handout on the use of clotheslines, available at the REAL Deal.

The Secret History of the War on Cancer

“The Secret History of the War on Cancer”, a book by Devra Davis, is a real eye-opener and wakeup call. It looks at cancer prevention, and how much of the research on cancer causing materials has been downplayed, ignored and deliberately kept from benefiting the public. Some of the stories are quite alarming. It has been well-known in some industries that certain chemicals are cancer causing in their workers, yet the industry leaders keep it quiet in order to serve their own interests. The tobacco industry has gone to great lengths to sow the seed of doubt that smoking does not cause lung cancer. Many jurisdictions, particularly England, hesitated to put the Pap smear, a diagnostic test for cervical cancer, into widespread use because of reluctance by private practitioners. Other cancer causing agents discussed are asbestos, benzene, vinyl chloride, lead, chemicals in personal care products, mammography and CT scans.

The author, Devra Davis, is the Director of the Centre for Environmental Oncology at the University of Pittsburg Cancer Institute. She has assembled a great collection of references to studies and retells real life situations that leave you shaking your head, wondering what else we are not being told. It reinforces my belief that people need to be more careful of guarding their own health, because you can't count on knowledge of the dangers of a substance being translated into action. Progress on treating cancer has been impressive, but perhaps it is time to use the knowledge that is already out there for preventing cancers in the first place.

We very much appreciate goods donated to the REAL Deal but PLEASE do not dump items after hours.

Thursdays / Fridays 9 - 4:30 and
Saturdays 9 - 4 ONLY!

In REAL Life

The DVD collection “Planet Earth” was donated to the Smiths Falls Public Library by REAL, in memory of Ed Martin. This impressive nature documentary is lent as a five disc set.

Look for REAL at the **Art of Being Green** Festival in Lanark Village this **July 12 and 13**. Volunteers from the Climate Change Action Team will be speaking to drivers about idling at the Abbot St. lock crossing during the Smiths Falls **Chocolate and Railway Festival**, either July 19 or 20. Contact Peter if you would like to help: 284-8338 or peter00au@gmail.com.

If you missed the AGM on June 18, please pick up a copy of **REAL's Annual Report for Feb. 1, 2007 to Jan. 31, 2008** from the brochure racks at the REAL Deal. Thanks to Karen Schecter for the new easy-on-the-eyes format.

We are still seeking **another person to join the REAL Board**. Our directors tend to be “hands on” people. They meet once a month and average about another meeting a month on other committees or projects. If you are keen to volunteer in this way or know of someone who might be, contact Barb at 283-9966 or dhicks11@cogeco.ca.

The **Katimavik** gang were a big help on Saturday, **April 26 at the REAL Deal**. They painted, cleaned, removed litter and so on. That group of participants has moved on, and a new group will be coming to town late September. We hope we will have one young person to do their work placement with us at the REAL Deal.

The second **Lanark Local Flavour Food-Finding Guide** is out. The guide provides a list and map of Lanark Farm Gate Sales and Farmers' Markets, as well as a handy chart of when specific fruits and vegetables are in season locally. For more on the Lanark Local Flavour Campaign, see www.ecoPerth.on.ca or contact Cheryl Nash at (613) 268-2907.

Heather Davidson will be our **Summer Jobs Canada** student at the REAL Deal this July and August, after she returns from her volunteer stint in Swaziland.

Buy local produce at the Smiths Falls Farmer's Market 8 until 1 p.m. Saturdays until October 25. Produce and plants as well as wood crafts and metal work are available in the By the Falls parking lot on Main St. W. (next to the movie theatre).

Helpful Websites

It's summer, so here are some short eco-themed videos for your entertainment.

- See David Suzuki the garden gnome battling pesticides
www.davidsuzuki.org:80/NatureChallenge/GardenContest/gnomevideo.asp
- Song about high gas prices, with words so you can sing along
weblogs.newsday.com/news/opinion/walthandelsman/blog/2008/05/animation_high_gas_price.shtml
- Graphic portrayal of our climate change contributions as black balloons.
<http://www.climateprotect.org:80/ah12>.

If you have found a website to be a particularly helpful source of information on an environmental issue, please submit it to the REAL Update.

Membership Reminder

We still have some members who have not sent in their renewal fees. If you haven't sent in your payment yet, please put it on your "to do" list. REAL needs and appreciates your support, and quick renewal frees up our volunteer time for other environmental projects. Memberships are \$15, \$20 for families and \$5 for students. For more information contact Carolyn Fraser at (613) 283-6858 or fraser@superaje.com. And don't forget to provide an accurate e-mail address so we can keep you in the loop with REAL Notices.

Next Issue

Submissions for the September issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by August 15, 2008 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

REAL

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LLGreen

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REAL Deal Store & Environment Centre

85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

(across from Railway Museum)

Store open Thursdays and Fridays, 9 - 4:30,

Saturdays 9 - 4.

Phone: (613) 283-7999

For Well Aware Visits, ecoENERGY audits, or other programs,

Phone: (613) 283-9500

