

JULY 2010

REAL Becomes a Charity

REAL is very pleased to have been granted full charitable status by Revenue Canada. We were notified in May of our new charitable number, effective February 1 2010, which coincides with the beginning of our fiscal year.

In the past only a portion of REAL's activities were considered charitable. These activities were part of the Rideau Environment Trust, set up in 1990 shortly after REAL's establishment. We were able to issue receipts for summer camps, tree planting and public education projects.

Now we can issue charitable tax receipts for money donated to any projects within REAL, or in the case of general donations, use the money on any of REAL's projects. This will simplify our internal bookkeeping. We will also be reimbursed a greater portion of our HST payments. Charitable status will open up more possibilities for applying for funding to foundations, many of which specify an organization must be charitable

It is also a great relief to us as a lot of effort went into this application over the past two and a half years. We had to document everything REAL has done and might like to do in the future, so that Revenue Canada could ensure REAL is charitable. We were initially turned down, but after some further clarification, the status was granted. Many thanks to Linda Tranter of the Lanark Leeds & Grenville Legal Clinic for her guidance through this process.

Now we are in the process of requesting a merger of the Trust and REAL, and transferring the assets of the Trust to REAL. There will be an agreement in place to ensure those assets are spent on the same charitable purpose specified in the trust. For example, Evergreen Avenue donations will continue to be spent on Evergreen. And money currently held in the trust will continue to be spent on public education projects, such as workshops or this newsletter. Eventually we will ask for revocation of the charitable status for the Trust.

This is a major accomplishment for REAL as Revenue Canada does not give out charitable numbers easily. We can now describe ourselves as a charity, not simply a non-profit organization. Hopefully, this will make the challenge of fund-raising just a little bit easier.

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More New Faces on the REAL Team

We are pleased to welcome some new faces to the REAL team.

First, REAL welcomes Michael Cain, the latest Katimavik youth to do a work placement with us. Mike, who comes from Toronto, will be busy at the Club for Youth on Monday through Wednesday, and at the REAL Deal Thursdays and Fridays. Mike began his placement June 3, and will be with us until late July. Mike appreciates the opportunity Katimavik has given him to travel. The group arrived from Lethbridge, Alberta and will be heading to Burnaby, BC. next.

Andre Drapeau has been hired through the Canada Summer Jobs Program for eight weeks. André comes from near Franktown and attended Notre Dame high school in Carleton Place. Andre brings with him customer service and recycling experience gained from running a home-based computer repair business. He was also able to collect old computers and reuse them or recycle them through local facilities. In October 2009 he received the Mississippi Valley Naturalists 2009 Cliff Bennett Nature Award. This past year Andre completed the first year of an Earth Resources Technician program at Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay ON, and will be attending Algonquin College in the fall.

Rideau Volunteers



Several new volunteers have started recently. Cynthia Johnson will be helping with the gardening and the REAL Deal store on Fridays, and Chris Thompson is now a regular at the store. Lori Anne and Sarah Holyer, a mother-daughter duo, will be working in the REAL Deal Store, where Sarah will be earning some of her community service hours required for secondary school graduation. Thanks to her Dad, Tony, who helped out at the yard sale.

REAL Welcomes New Board Member

At REAL's Annual General Meeting on June 16, the membership elected a new Board of Directors, including new member Scott Lumsden, who will bring our board to a full complement of seven. Scott responded to a notice we had placed in the EMC and several non-profit and environmental electronic message boards looking for "energetic, experienced people who have some time and energy to join the REAL Board of Directors and help protect our local environment."

Scott lives in Beckwith Township, and has spent over 25 years in the Information Technology industry as a Project Manager, and Software Development Manager, primarily with Nortel. Scott enjoys the outdoors whether it is skiing, running, or playing golf. Scott came to REAL after realizing apathy wasn't going to make any of the monumental environmental issues of today improve. REAL's very successful back-to-basics, grassroots approach, with an eye on the big picture, inspired Scott to make a contribution, and he looks forward to working with the REAL team and the greater community it serves.

The board is very pleased that Scott has taken the plunge and will help us oversee the activities of this busy organization. But the Board Recruitment Committee's job isn't over! Some other board members have taken their turn as directors and would like to move on to other interests, so we are still looking for additional members. In particular, we would like to find someone to take on the Treasurer's role, so Carolyn Fraser can retire!

If you are connected to the community, are familiar with current and emerging environmental issues, and are motivated to do something about them, join a group of like-minded people to make a REAL difference. A detailed description of this volunteer position is on our website www.REALaction.ca.

Boatloads show up for trip up the river

Sunday, June 20, saw two voyageur canoe boat loads of volunteers enjoying the sun, the fun and the history of the Rideau Canal.

The Rideau Volunteers were out in full force learning about how our past has shaped today's Rideau Canal, how people's activities have changed the natural environment of the canal and how some species of animals, plants and birds are now at risk of extinction.

Having two of the region's best wildlife biologists, Stew Hamill and Simon Lunn, in the voyageur canoes helped participants recognize what a jewel this swale, right in our own backyard, really is.

Participants learned how a lock works from right inside one. After lunch, participants were treated to a tour of the Rideau Canal when they learned about the history of the canal and how Colonel By and his men toiled, sometimes at the cost of life and limb, to create this World Heritage site.

The purpose of the day was to encourage people to help make a difference in their community by volunteering for either REAL or the Rideau Canal Museum. We've managed to gain new recruits and are pleased they want to help with these longstanding organizations in Smiths Falls.

More outings are planned for potential Rideau Volunteers. On Sunday August 22nd, we're planning a bus trip to Jones' Falls. Here we'll learn about whispering dams, why the blacksmith was such an important person in history and how the natural environment is impacted by human activity.

If you are a current volunteer and would like to attend our tour, or if you know of someone who would like to volunteer with either organization in the upcoming months, contact Lynn Preston, Volunteer Co-ordinator at lynn@realdealstore.ca or at 613 283-9500.

HELP WANTED

REAL is organizing two fall events, and needs your talents for the teams!

FALL DINNER. Following the success of our 20th anniversary dinner in 2009, we are planning a fall local foods dinner, catered by Kieth Drummond, tentatively Saturday, October 30, 2010.

BAND CONCERT. The Central Band of the Canadian Forces will be back for a Christmas concert on a Wednesday evening, as early as late November.

This is a great opportunity to participate in a project with a finite time commitment. If you enjoy planning fundraising events, please join us by getting in touch with Lynn (see above), as soon as possible. "Many hands make light work."

Green Liquid Refreshments

We've had four **Green Liquid Refreshments** evenings now at Coffee Culture. From four to eight participants come to the coffee shop on Russell Street for some free-flowing environmental discussion. If you'd like to spend some informal time with some green-minded people, we meet the third Monday of the month. Our next session will be Monday, July 19. Everyone in the community is welcome. There is an official Green Drinks group meeting in Perth as well, at the Crown and Thistle, 71 Foster Street, the first Tuesday of the month at 5:30, if that works better for you.



Communal Garden Takes Shape

Many people passing by the REAL Deal along William Street have been curious about the straw bales. It's a communal garden that uses straw bales to form the raised bed sides. Soil is in the centre, and four groups each have a plot to plant as they choose.

It is part of REAL's vision for the Environment Centre to have a community garden, where we would provide plots for people who do not have their own suitable spaces to garden. But many attempts in Smiths Falls have faltered due to difficulties in finding suitable space, securing funding, enlisting a champion, and finding enough people confirming they wanted the service. REAL felt we had an ideal space to offer at 85 William St. W., as it is open, roughly level, sunny, with tap water available and it is within walking distance to town. So we felt it was time to pursue the garden concept further.

In late April, Susan Brandum called a meeting of the interested parties, who agreed a communal garden would be doable. The group would work together collectively to build the gardens, but give each group their own space. Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), The Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth (SFDCY), the Link and REAL each have a 3.5' x 20 foot area planted with vegetables and herbs, from plants or seeds. We are hoping it will attract interest and make others aware of the possibilities. If so, there is room to add more plots for 2011.

Crucial to pulling this together quickly was the generous funding of an anonymous family foundation that has been supporting community gardens in area communities. This allowed the group to pay for the grading and landscaping materials. The Link provided some hoses and wheelbarrows from a previous garden project and REAL provided the watering barrels and some hose and tools from store donations. Each group was responsible for securing their own plants and seeds, but we were fortunate to have many donated. Special thanks to Sarah

Mackenzie and Eric Stewart of Hollyhock Grange for sharing their plants and expertise with the SFDCY and BBBS, and also to Jill Dunkley, Cheryl Nash, Diane Pearen's neighbour, and Jocelyn and Alec Rait for plants.

Apart from the groups doing the gardening, many others were involved either in the idea stage or physically getting the garden ready. Ray Elgersma and Mona Wynn from the Community Health Centre; Jeet Aathukorale, who was the contracted Cultural Development Coordinator with the Town of Smiths Falls; Jeannie Dagley, Chris Canning and Cassandra Thompson all pitched in. Barbara Thornhill from the Salvation Army shared ideas with us and successfully arranged for four wood form raised plots on the site of their church for families to use. Very special thanks to Terry Graydon for her persistence and really getting her hands dirty with details of this project, and to Cheryl Nash of ecoPerth for her expertise and liaison with the funder.

REAL's plot was planted June 7th and is being tended by Cynthia Johnston, Don Harvey, Debra Thompson and Barb Hicks. The produce will provide some healthy snack options for volunteers in the REAL Deal store. We have already enjoyed some cherry tomatoes and broccoli.

We are excited to see the beds planted, and realize there may be many challenges to come over the garden season. But that's all part of the gardening experience.



Why Raised Straw Bale Beds?

Raised beds were chosen partly for accessibility. Not as much bending is required, so they are helpful for the mobility-impaired, gardeners can reach to the centre of the bed and hand tools are sufficient. However, we also wanted to

eliminate any concerns over soil contamination. Parks Canada is investigating one small site further back on the property, and the results are not final. We did our own sampling of the garden area two seasons ago and the metals came back well within provincial and federal limits for food production. But to eliminate any possibility of plants taking up dissolved materials, once we levelled the area we laid down three inches of coarse gravel and landscaping fabric before building the walls and filling the beds in with trucked-in triple mix top soil (soil, peat and composted manure).

We chose straw bales because they are easy to build with. They are tied together using stakes and twine to help maintain their structure. The straw will compost from the inside of the bed, and could last two seasons, although we are counting on just one. Already grass and mushrooms are growing on the bales, which was expected and shouldn't be a problem. We are planning to spread some bark mulch around the beds to avoid muddy situations and weeds.

If there is sufficient interest and we can find the funds, in 2011 we plan to construct the mirror of the existing bed setup so there would be a sort of courtyard in the centre. Ideally we could also demonstrate some container gardening there.

To see some photos of the process, see the REAL website, at http://www.realaction.ca/communal_garden.htm.

Purpose of the Communal Garden *(from the Communal Garden guidelines)*

- Provide space for planting for groups who do not have their own suitable space.
- Encourage the production of healthy, local, organic food.
- Provide an opportunity for the participants to experience and learn more about gardening.
- Provide a healthy, sociable activity for participants, especially youth.
- Share materials, labour and knowledge.
- Demonstrate effective garden practices to the

public visiting the site.

- Test the viability of communal or community gardening in Smiths Falls.

Gemmell's Recycles Plant Containers

Last year Gemmell's Garden Centre returned 8,000 lbs of plant container material to the manufacturer to be reused and recycled. The material represents the garden pots and flats that customers have returned to the Centre. Clearly Rob Gemmell and staff feel this is something that needs to be done. The local business makes a little bit of money for the plastic, but it doesn't come anywhere close to covering the costs. Gemmell's must have its staff sort and pack the materials and then there are shipping costs to consider.

Sorting the plastics into #2, #5 and #6 types is tricky, and it must be done properly as the whole shipment can be rejected if there is more than 3% contamination with other materials. As well, the labels and any pots made in China must be separated out.

The plastic goes directly to a pot manufacturer in Brampton that cleans it, grinds it down and incorporates it into new plastic products.



The containers and flats that contained plants purchased from Gemmell's are reused right at the Gemmell's nursery. Customer are free to take pots or deposit pots in the designated area. The garden centre is located on Highway 15, about 3 km n. of Smiths Falls.

Other Options

- Many garden centres will accept greenhouse containers for reuse or recycling. The trick is to actually remember to do it before the garden centre closes for the season! For example, the Andress Independent Grocer

accepted their pots back for recycling, but they have already wound down for the season. Garden Market and Patrice's Independent Grocer (Almonte) also are in a similar situation. The Carleton Place Nursery will take client's plant pots.

- Use the containers yourself to start your plants for next year.
- Ask if your friends, small market operations or youth groups could use them for next year.
- If you need additional pots, Gemmell's (see above) welcomes you to their collection. REAL has some under the free table just outside the store you are welcome to as well.
- Consider biodegradable pots that can be planted directly into the ground where they will break down.
- Broken plastic and clay pots are fine in the garbage.
- If the containers are not marked with a recycling number, do not put them in your blue box or bag for recycling. Virtually all local municipalities will accept plastics 1 and 2, and most will accept other numbers, but check to be sure.
- Few if any facilities accept styrofoam containers for recycling, so they should be avoided wherever possible.
- Clay pots and ceramic pots are not recyclable either, but someone would gladly reuse them.
- If you have other garden supplies to unload, consider donating any tools, hand tools, tomato cages, watering cans etc. to the REAL Deal for use in the communal garden or resale.

Sorry, the REAL Deal Does Not Accept...

- Clothing of any Kind.
- Draperies and Bedding
- Encyclopedias and Hard Cover Text Books.
- Most Electronics
- Large Appliances, Working or Not.

Bringing us these items costs REAL time and money. We sincerely appreciate donations made during store hours ONLY. We are open Thursday to Saturday, 10 - 4 p.m.

Free Check-Ups for your Well

The popular Well Aware program is returning for another season, offering rural homeowners in Lanark, Leeds & Grenville counties a free, confidential and non-regulatory well check-up conducted by a certified Water Guide. Well Aware encourages Ontario's residential well owners to protect their wells and our common groundwater supplies.

During a well check-up visit, a guide spends up to two hours with the homeowner teaching them how to identify and address potential risks to their water supply. The visits are also a great one-on-one opportunity for homeowners to raise specific questions and concerns they may have about their water quality. After the visit, the



homeowner is mailed a complete report containing all observations and recommendations for their well and property.

To date, more than 300 homeowners in the region have taken advantage of the program. This year, funding support has been reduced so REAL is only able to offer a very limited number of visits, so book your visit soon.

Well Aware is a project of Green Communities Canada and (GCC) is delivered locally by REAL, a GCC member. Funding support is provided by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Technical support is provided by the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario. Well Aware is endorsed by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Conservation Ontario, and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (Ontario branch). For more information or to book a visit, call the Environmental Centre at (613) 283-9500 or drop by the REAL Deal Reuse Store.

In REAL Life

Many thanks to **Hugh Campbell of the Brockville Climate Action Group (BCAG) for donating the gas BBQ and propane tank to us,** and to Dan Davidson for its pickup and delivery. It is nice to offer the REAL Deal volunteers a BBQ lunch every now and then to say thank you and to keep their energy up!



And thanks to our Store Manager, **Ian McLeish, for donating the lawn mower, Kirk Everett for his repair service, and Cathryn and Dan Davidson**

for keeping the grass at the REAL Deal under control.

Don't forget to **set aside some beer and liquor bottles (glass or plastic) and cans for REAL's bottle drive.** Volunteers will be collecting them outside of The Beer Store in Smiths Falls **Friday July 23 and Saturday July 24,** from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. both days. Call Peter at 284-8338 if you can volunteer a couple of hours for this.

A group of **students at SFDCI,** under the direction of teacher Pam Craig, have made great progress on the **five painted panels** that will spruce up the outside of the REAL Deal. Finishing touches will be made in September, and should be mounted to the left of the customer entrance before the snow flies.

Modern Thymes has graciously agreed to donate 10% of their sales to REAL on the last Friday of the month for June, July and August. The owners, Sharon and Dave Brown, do this throughout the year for selected charities. So make a note to visit Modern Thymes Health and Bulk Foods, 11 Russell St E., Smiths Falls on July 30 or August 27.



Thanks to everyone who helped out at the June 26 **Yard Sale at the REAL Deal.** We had a good day despite the pouring rain. Drop by during our **"Christmas in July" promotion July 22, 23, and 24** for great prices on Christmas decor.

April's Pitch-in surpassed last year's volunteer totals with 1397 people participating. Students from most of the local schools boosted this number, because, in fact, many of last year's volunteers were unable to help out, and fewer new volunteers came forward. **However, 214 bags of garbage, 26 bags of recyclables and lots of large junk was picked up by volunteers** and collected by Gary Bisonette and Town Staff. Thanks to Cathryn, Brenda and Barb for keeping this annual community feel-good project alive.

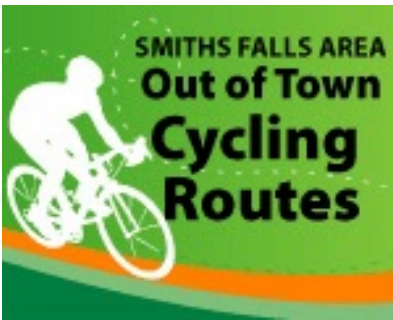
The first time **Earth Day fundraiser at Address Independent Grocer in April brought in \$650.** Customers were asked to donate a toonie at the cash to support the work of their local environmental organization during Earth Week. Thanks to Janice Ling, the Chimo students, and the Chinese Cultural Association for the two banners, Dan Address for his support, and Peter Au for pulling it all together.

The **2012 Recycling location in Carleton Place will be closing** effective June 26. However, you can still return most consumer electronics free of charge to their **Smiths Falls location** at 42 James Street (right hand / north end of building) **Wednesdays 9 -6 and Saturdays 9 - 4.** See www.tter.ca for details.

REAL provided input to the **Town of Smiths Falls Beckwith Street Reconstruction Project,** suggesting we plan ahead to ensure Beckwith St. and all of Smiths Falls be friendlier to active transportation, particularly walking and biking.

In February we listed the non-profit reuse stores in our area. Congratulations to **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County who opened a new Jewels store in Perth** on June 5. They

accept and sell gently used clothing and household items. The store is open Mon - Fri 9 - 5 and Saturdays 9 - 3 at 37B Foster St., Phone 326-0079.



Our map of **easy bike routes through the area surrounding Smiths Falls** is now complete. Find it on our website, or pick up a printed copy. The Town of

Smiths Falls published a map with in town routes on one side and our out of town routes on the other, that can be picked up wherever you find tourist information, or at the REAL Deal. Special thanks to Judy Snider for her work on the routes, and Heather McLenaghan our patient designer.

We were disappointed that the REAL Deal experienced **another break-in** the night of May 31. Besides the financial loss, this cost our staff and volunteers valuable time and energy. It truly is low to steal from a charity!

We were sorry to say **goodbye to Elva Corless, a founding member of REAL and the "Grandmother of Recycling"**, who has moved to Angus, ON with her daughter and son-in-law. REAL plans to place a engraved granite stone on Evergreen Avenue to honour the pioneering work Elva has done on environmental issues in our community, particularly waste reduction.

Helpful Websites

- Greenwashing is falsely promoting or exaggerating the eco-friendliness of a product. Take a quiz to see if you can tell the true from the false claims.
www.sinsofgreenwashing.org/games-tools/name-that-sin-game/
- Spending some time in the great outdoors this summer? Bone up on Poisonous Plants in

Canada <http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/pp/poison>

- What's all the fuss about BPA use in the lining of food cans? See www.toxicnation.ca/files/pdf/No%20Silver%20Lining%20BPA%20Report%20final.pdf

Next Issue

Submissions for the next issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by August 15, 2010 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

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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

