

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2013

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Doors Open Smiths Falls

For the first time, REAL participated in Doors Open Smiths Falls, to show off our REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre. Nineteen local sites, from churches to museums to the Town Council Chambers, were open to visitors on Sunday, June 9th. This year's event was an unqualified success, as 2906 visits were recorded across Smiths Falls, an increase of 745 over the previous year. The Gallipeau Centre and Larry Hart Laundry Service together accounted for 920 of those visits. Everyone felt very fortunate that June 9th turned out to be a sunny day in what seemed like weeks of rain.



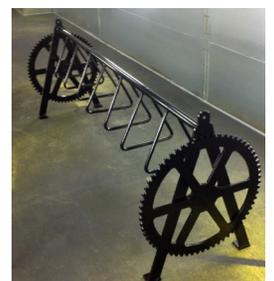
Our mission was to point out to visitors the Environment Centre features we have in place and our plans for the future. Key messages were that the REAL Deal Store is but one feature of the Environment Centre, and the Environment Centre is but one of the many projects this 24-year-old organization is involved in. Fifty people came by and were given a mini tour, which ended in the REAL Deal Store. A very large snapping turtle made an appearance and stayed in the tall grass right beside our tour route for many hours, so everyone had a chance to see this impressive creature close up.

The REAL Deal store was open for the occasion and another 30 people came by just to shop, many of whom had not had the opportunity to see the store before this day. Displays about the Environment Centre, the first five years of the REAL Deal, a photo display of REAL activities, and some "before pictures" of the building were available as well.

This year's Doors Open theme was "Cultural Expressions". Art, music and theatre presentations were featured throughout the community. REAL gathered a number of examples of repurposed and upcycled items to demonstrate that old or even unusable things can be turned into something beautiful and useful. An old baby jogger repurposed into a garden caddy by REAL volunteer Jon Fisk, was snapped up right *(continued inside)*

Park 'n Pedal Bike Rack

A prototype bike-rack, generously designed and produced for REAL at no charge by Kilmarnock enterprises, incorporates the Rideau Canal "crabs" at either end. The rack will be within the Park 'n Pedal bike enclosure to be built later this summer, as described in our last issue. People registering with REAL will be able to park their bikes in the locked enclosure for when they come into town to bike and leave their cars at the REAL Deal.



Doors Open (continued)

away. Our thanks to Joanne French, Bonita Lucas, Brenda King and Nancy Simpson for lending us their treasures for display.

In the wrapup meeting, the participating site representatives also discussed the potential of creating more kid-friendly activities to encourage more families to come out. The event encourages people to be a tourist in their hometown, and is a real community pride builder. However, a large proportion of the visitors come from neighbouring communities and much further away so it was good exposure for REAL. Fifty-seven Ontario communities put on Doors Open, each choosing their own day (or entire weekend) between May and October, and offering all activities free of charge. Each community pays a fee to Heritage Ontario to cover administration and advertising

costs. One welcome addition to services provided was the website, <http://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/Events/Smiths-Falls.aspx> where all the sites featured are listed, as well as some photos. Lynne Clifford-Ward, Cultural Planner for the town, did a great job of coordinating all the bits and pieces to pull this off.

We appreciate all the many volunteer hours that go into preparing for and staffing an event like this. From the store, thanks to Tracy Thomson, Don Harvey, Sara Thompson, Bonita Lucas, Jon Fisk and Eddie Lockett for coming in on their day off. Una Pugh, Joanne French, Alec and Jocelyn Rait and Brenda King were our greeters, and Donna McKenna, Larry Manson, Sue Brandum and Barb Hicks were the tour guides.

***Butt Out!* by David Hoffman**

Unless cigarette smoking drops to zero, we're in for years of the damaging effects of butts littering our streets and sidewalks. Ironically, bans on smoking inside have had a perverse result: more butts are thrown outside, to be swept away in heavy rain down our storm sewers and into our waterways.

It is estimated that worldwide roughly 1.7 billion pounds are flicked, one at a time, on our sidewalks, beaches, nature trails, gardens, and other public places in a year. And, while we've made some progress with recyclables like plastic bottles and cans, cigarettes remain the most littered item in the world. Worst of all is the disgusting practice—ask anyone who's worked in REAL's Pitch In cleanup of our own environment—of dumping entire car ashtrays onto parking lots and roadsides. The resulting stinking pile of tobacco and filters—that's hydrogen cyanide gas you can still smell—with their trapped tars and other noxious gases then leach into our water. Fish, birds, and other animals mistake cigarette filters for food and are poisoned. Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, not cotton, and they can take more than a decade to degrade. In fresh water, a butt takes 12 months to break down.

Indirect effects on us all are not trivial either. The presence of cigarette ends downgrades a public area fast. Sidewalks look shabby and butt litter induces more litter. And we all pay for this in additional costs of sidewalk and street cleaning, storm sewer cleaning and filter replacement.

So, what can we do about this problem?

- Quit smoking, of course, but that is a longer term answer
- Support non-smoking campaigns
- Pressure governments to regulate cigarette litter as toxic waste
- Promote the use of canisters and fireproof pocket/purse ashtrays
- Install outdoor ashtrays in commercial areas
- Fine butt tossers as they do in Edmonton
- Work to stop storm sewer runoff
- Design a program to collect and dispose of cigarette butts. (REAL would like to hear from partners willing to undertake such an approach.)

Solutions exist. It's time to solve the problem!



Getting the Most from Your Car's Air Conditioning

First and foremost, please remember that car air conditioning does cost you fuel. The amount varies between 5% and 20% depending on a range of factors. Using air conditioning indiscriminately costs you fuel and money and results in more emissions. So how can you use your air conditioning more effectively?



Most references focus on the windows-down vs. air conditioning controversy. Most sources agree that at highway speeds, air conditioning costs you less in fuel than rolled down windows due to the wind drag factor. At slower speeds, in the city and in traffic, rolling your windows down is the better way to go. As your speed increases, the amount of drag on the vehicle increases exponentially. For example, when your vehicle is traveling at a speed of 70 miles per hour (112.7 kilometers per hour), there's actually four times more force on the vehicle than when you're cruising around at 35 miles per hour (56.3 kilometers per hour). So the cut-off point is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 40 miles per hour (64.4 kilometers per hour). That is, above that speed, use the A/C if you require cooling, but at less than 40 mph, roll down the windows.

Here are some other ways to make better use of your air conditioning. The best list of tips I found came from News Canada, all of which are included here:

- When returning to a hot car, roll down the windows, put on your fan and let some of the hot air blow out before turning on the air conditioning.
- Turn off your air conditioning once the vehicle is cool, or try running it for just a few minutes out of every ten. This is called pulsing.
- Use your air conditioning only when you really need it. Try the fan at the coolest setting first.
- Adjust the thermostat so you are cool enough, but not cold. Optimum temperature is about 23 degrees C.
- Use the recirculate option. It keeps cooling the same air in the vehicle, instead of introducing fresher but hotter air from outside, so you use less energy. Check your owner's manual for details.
- At lower speeds in town or in the suburbs, leave your window down and sunroof open to keep cool.
- Avoid parking in direct sunlight. Look for shade and, at home, park in the garage if you have one.
- Turn off the A/C and open the windows if you are in a parked car, waiting. (And don't idle your engine either!)
- Before leaving your car, lower your windows an inch or two to reduce the heat buildup.
- Use a sun screen on your windshield to reduce heat entering your parked car.
- Properly maintain your air conditioning system, preferably annually.
- Next time you purchase a vehicle, look for an air conditioning system with an "econo" mode or smart controls.

Pitch In

Another successful Pitch In has wrapped up. As always, we had great community participation from individuals, groups and schools. Together the 228 participants collected 171 bags of garbage and 49 bags of recyclables from across Smiths Falls during the two weeks April 20 – May 5. New groups to the mix this year were the Leos (a youth group associated with the Lions) and the Zen Dragon Martial Arts and Fitness Centre gang.



The two week event kicked off with a cleanup blitz of Fergusson and Ferrara Drives April 20. A small but dedicated group managed to gather 29 bags of garbage and 2 of recyclables at that site alone. True to tradition the weather was terrible, but we had a new weather experience – hail! The biggest haul award goes to the SFDCI students who collected 35 bags of garbage and 12 bags of recycling in their neighbourhood.

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Pitch In (continued)

Our appreciation goes out to Bonita Lucas for agreeing to coordinate the event, along with the rest of the Pitch In team: Brenda King, Cathryn Davidson and Barb Hicks.

Our findings have been passed on to the Town of Smiths Falls. Maybe some additional waste containers would be one less excuse for the litterbugs in our community! REAL's own Pitch In spring cleanup of our Environment Centre site was also planned for May 5. The usual bad weather resulted, but we did get a few things off our list. Thanks to Jocelyn and Alec Rait, Bonita Lucas, and Larry Manson for coming out that day, as well as the extra tasks taken on by the guys in receiving, and Barb and Sue for pulling it together.

Many thanks to the staff at Winmar, a property restoration company with a branch in Smiths Falls, for providing a barbecue lunch at the REAL Deal on May 5 to thank the Pitch-In volunteers. Their initiative is much appreciated!

REAL AGM

The REAL Board is very pleased to officially welcome two new board members. Shawn Merriman and Margot Allen were officially voted in at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wed. June 19th. Shawn and Margot have been attending our monthly Monday night board meetings for several months now, so they both know what to expect. So now we are up to a full complement of seven. The other board members are Peter Au, Barb Hicks, Larry Manson, Donna McKenna and Karen Schecter. The group will determine executive positions at the July meeting.



Due to declining attendance at our AGM's, we decided to take a lighter approach, and planned a potluck dinner in the Poonamalie Room of the Community Health Centre, and watched some humorous environmental videos. Members had already received our annual report in February along with their membership renewals. We plan the AGM for the third Wednesday of June each year, so we can officially accept the Financial Statements prepared by Don Ross of Ross and Cooke, Chartered Accountants. All members are invited to our AGM and are entitled to vote, so please plan to attend next year – your input is important to us!

Meet Our Newest Board Members

You may know Shawn Merriman as the Chief Building Official for the Township of Drummond-North Elmsley. He has also run trucking businesses and been a contractor in the past. Shawn was attracted to our organization because he feels REAL "is a unique and valuable resource to the community at large in Eastern Ontario," and feels local governments could be doing a lot more to protect the environment. Shawn was instrumental in getting REAL involved in the baseline water sampling it is doing for properties adjacent to planned solar farms. Shawn lives on a 50 acre property on a lake near Elgin, and has two sons.



Margot Allen has been a REAL member for several years now. She has been an environmentalist her whole adult life, and holds a master degree in microbiology. She has spent about 10 years volunteering with Friends of the Earth in Quebec City, researching and preparing presentations for Environmental Hearings. But along the way she has helped out many other environmental organizations when she could, and is currently involved in both Merrickville Goes Green, the Merrickville and District Historical Society, and the "Save the Andrewsville Bridge" campaign. Margot and her husband live on a 40 acre farm where she enjoys organic vegetable growing. Margot has three grown children and several grandchildren she travels to visit.



Volunteer News

A number of volunteers were recognized at the store May 4 for National Volunteer Week. Seven received certificates recognizing their years of service to the REAL Deal Store: David Grant (1), Heather Warren (1), Sara Thompson (1), Eddie Lockett (2), Bonita Lucas (3), Ed Crawford (3), and Don Harvey (3). Eddie, Heather and Sara were also awarded their "REAL: Making a REAL Difference" golf shirts. And three volunteers received certificates for their years of service to REAL: Una Pugh (15 years), Sue Brandum (17 years) and Brenda King (24 years.) REAL began in 1989 so Brenda is an original!

We welcome several new volunteers who have already settled into their new roles. Doug McGregor has been working in receiving and in the yard, along with Russell, Eddie and Don, and is a big help when any outdoor work is required. Jon Fisk is a welcome addition to the smalls department, where he sorts and prices incoming donations. He enjoys testing appliances, determining how things work, and has a good eye for the more unusual and valuable items that come in. Greg Watters is going to be taking over some of the yard maintenance duties, mowing and trimming the front yard, garden area, and getting the septic bed vegetation under control. It's always great to have some new faces and new skills brought into the mix at the store.

We were shocked and saddened to learn that Dan Davidson, a long-time REAL volunteer, passed away suddenly May 23rd. Dan was a true gem of a volunteer, as he gave so freely of his time and talents in so many ways. Whether it be serving on the board, taking lead roles in events like the bottle drive and the shoreline diver cleanup, solving our many computer issues, mowing the lawn, building and fixing (what couldn't he build or fix?), hurrying over with a key if we were locked out, there was nothing that Dan did not do with a smile and a positive attitude. And we know that he went beyond the call of duty for many other organizations, including the Smiths Falls Community Theatre, the Knights of Columbus, his church, and St. Francis and St. James schools where he taught. We are honoured that he chose to spend so much of his time with us. Dan was one of a kind and will be sorely missed.



RAIN BARREL SALES

Rainbarrel.ca model: \$55

Arbor Environmental model
arriving soon

made from recycled food grade
barrels with fittings included
(tap, overflow hose etc.)

Available at the REAL Deal Store
85 William St. W.
(613) 283-7999
All proceeds to REAL

Home Composting

On June 22, a home composting workshop led by Cheryl Nash attracted twelve participants. During the indoor portion, composting basics were covered. The second portion took place outdoors looking at actual compost piles. Many of the people present had already tried composting, and were interested in the solutions Cheryl suggested for some of the difficulties they had experienced. If you missed this one, another composting session is planned for September.

REAL is building a compost demonstration site that will show off various styles of backyard composters including multiple bins, a tumbler, leaf mould, and a conventional style. The working composters will be used by the Community Garden and will be sheltered from excessive sun under a living rooftop that extends to a cottage style facade that will showcase some of the reusable materials available from the REAL Deal. Watch for this as we construct it over the summer.

REAL Deal Store News

June 2013 marks the fifth anniversary of the REAL Deal Reuse Store at 85 William St. W. We've come a long way! The numbers shown here are impressive even to us. And REAL is accomplishing what was intended with this social enterprise: 1) to divert good materials from landfill 2) to generate revenue for REAL and its other environmental projects and 3) to offer good volunteer opportunities that can provide work and life training skills.

Sales have increased steadily over the five years as predicted. We are drawing donors and customers from across the region, and every week brings some new "first-time customers". But what is truly gratifying are the many positive comments we receive from donors and customers. Here are just a few:

- * *A superb store with an environmental benefit It's a win-win for all. The REAL Deal has the perfect name. Bravo. Keep up the great work. What a delight! – E. Peabody*
- * *Some great deals! Like going to the dump and finding treasures! Will be back for sure!—D. Moffatt*
- * *Great store. Very organized and neat, easy to find stuff. Also good prices keep me coming back and saving more stuff out of the dump.—Brad*
- * *Every weekend I have to stop by to check out what's new. Always find a great deal, another thought for a craft, or a redo. ...Great stuff. Thanks!—Lynn Buffam*
- * *I have been visiting quite a few thrift stores this summer in Ottawa and surrounding area. The REAL Deal is by far my favourite.—K. Fletcher. Ottawa*
- * *When I drive down the street past the REAL store my car just turns in by itself. – George*

As part of CTV Day at Victoria Park June 20, Dawn Quinn was part of a live interview with Leanne Cusack about the many second hand treasure stores in Smiths Falls. A serving cart, drop leaf table and wood turned lamps from the REAL Deal were on-camera to show the unique finds that can be had by shopping used.

What Goes Around Comes Around

REAL Deal Smalls volunteer, Brenda King, had an interesting surprise when she sorted through an incoming donation June 20. A hand painted wooden window box she had done in 1999 and signed had made its way back into the store. Her son made the box from some wood scraps he had picked up from his part time job at Gemmell's Garden Centre, and Brenda painted a water scene from her imagination including loons, herons and vegetation on all four sides. After filling it with red geraniums she put it in Trinity United Church's Time, Treasures and Talents auction. Brenda and her mother were flabbergasted when the bidding reached \$50, and even more surprised when it sold for \$80. The daughter of the woman who purchased it liked it so much that Brenda later agreed to do a similar

box, in exchange for a donation to Trinity. But it was the original that made it back into her hands 14 years later. The original owner is now deceased, so it is not clear where the planter has been. But it is still in very good shape and quite usable. Brenda is going to take it to her cottage for a visit, and it may be incorporated into REAL's upcoming composting demonstration shelter.



REAL DEAL BY THE NUMBERS

Each year, **35 volunteers** invest **4,500 hours** to receive **45,000 kilograms of goods** from **1,700 donors** and to sort, clean, repair, price, display and sell **33,000 KILOGRAMS** of goods to **7,800 CUSTOMERS**.

In other words, the REAL Deal has about **10,000 visitors** a year, and in the **5 YEARS** since opening in **2008** has diverted more than **140,000 KILOGRAMS – OR 140 TONNES** - of good materials from landfill.

In REAL Life

Julia Comerford, a recent SFDCI graduate, has been hired as our summer student in the REAL Deal Store thanks to a Canada Summer Jobs grant. Thank you to all the students who applied.



REAL has been at several community events this spring, including the North Grenville Sustainability Fair April 28, the Merrickville Goes Green Eco-Fair on May 11, and the Smiths Falls Home and Living Show May 3, 4 and 5th. Thanks Donna and Sue for taking these on!



Save Saturday October 26th for a REAL fundraiser: a local foods dinner and murder mystery performed by the Smiths Falls Community Theatre group. Details available soon. Please support this event, as there will be no Christmas concert fundraiser.

[REAL's "Cottage Day" has been set for Tues, July 13 at Brenda's cottage. All members and volunteers are welcome to join us for this fun in the sun day. Call Brenda 283-4416 for more.



Our thanks once again to Dan Andress of Andress' Your Independent Grocer and staff for making the "Customer Ask" a reality. During Environment Week, Friday May 30 – Sat. June 8, customers were asked if they would like to make a \$2 donation to their local environmental group.



Watch for a new Evergreen Avenue interpretive panel at Victoria Park late this summer. Sue Brandum and volunteer graphic designer Linda Myers have developed a 32 x 42 inch panel that will replace the kiosk placed in 2002. Evergreen Avenue is a memorial walkway dedicated to veterans, peacekeepers and others who have contributed to the Town of Smiths Falls. The panel emphasizes the benefits of the native trees and bushes used on the walkway.



Residents of some area municipalities have the opportunity to recycle even more items through their blue box program. If you live in Beckwith, Carleton Place Drummond/North Elmsley, Mississippi Mills and Montague, you can now place in your blue box plastics #1 -#7, tetra paks (juice boxes), gable tops (milk cartons) and spiral containers (frozen juice containers) See http://www.realaction.ca/pdfs/muni_recycling_jun13.pdf for more details.



2012 Recycling is the place to go with your used electronics, The REAL Deal does not accept them! Electronics are accepted at 2012 for free, and other appliances for a small fee. Please note their new Saturday hours. They are open Mon. to Fri, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturdays, 8 a.m. until noon, at 42 James Street, Smiths Falls. Phone 284-2424 or see www.tter.ca.



Our Community Garden, located on the REAL Deal site, also includes a Stone Soup sharing plot that anyone may access. Snack on a tomato or nibble on some herbs – it's there to share. But please don't interfere with any of the other plots. Thank you to David Hoffman and David Pringle for looking after the plot.

Thank you to all the people who have generously donated plants for the community garden: Paul Pospisil, Cathy Willoughby, Val Hudson and Adele Watson. Anything not used by those gardeners was offered to REAL Deal customers.



If you've been busy gardening, you may have some plastic pots and flats you don't need. Check where you purchased your garden supplies, as many will take the materials back for recycling. (Note that Styrofoam is generally NOT recyclable.) Or you may wish to give your pots to someone who gardens on a large scale. Cathy Willoughby, at 379 County Rd 17 (Jasper Rd.) is willing to take large pots or the square bottomed small pots for her operation.

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
613-283-9500
info@REALaction.ca

We're on the Web
www.REALaction.ca

Environmental
Projects Manager
Sue Brandum
613-267-2257
sbrandum@cogeco.ca

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 Sept. issue
by August 15, 2013 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Bottle Drive Fundraiser for REAL

**Fri. Aug. 9 and Sat. Aug. 10
outside The Beer Store, Smiths Falls**

**Call Karen at 283-4604
or schecter@vianet.ca**

**We need two volunteers for
each of these times→**



Friday

2 - 4

4 - 6

6 - 8

Saturday

10 -12

12- 2

2- 4

4 - 6

**We ask people if they'd like to
donate their empties, take them
from them, and cash them in.
It's easy! Volunteers must be at
least 19 years of age.**

Make a REAL Difference

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Make a Donation

I would like to make
a donation of

\$ _____

A charitable receipt for
income tax purposes will
be issued. To donate by
credit card, go to
www.Canadahelps.org.

Volunteer

I want to help

Become a Member

I would like to become a member

Individual membership \$15

Family membership \$20

Student membership \$5

Corporate membership \$50

Contact Information

Name

Street/RR Address

Town, Province

Postal Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Best time to reach me

Email address