

REAL *update*

for members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

Celebrating 20 Years of Environmental Achievement

S E P T E M B E R 2009

Trillium Funds Building Improvements

Some physical improvements to the REAL Deal building will be happening over the next year thanks to a community grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The \$15,000 awarded will be used to make a number of changes that will improve the energy efficiency, comfort, and safety of 85 William St. W.

THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

The first renovations will be to replace the three large single pane windows in the store area, add an awning to the customer door, and upgrade the plumbing. The windows will improve energy efficiency and comfort in the store. The awning will be some

protection from the elements for customers, draw attention to the entrance, and double as a sign surface, as the store logo will be screened onto it. The plumbing changes will be the addition of a kitchen sink, laundry tubs and an outside tap. The laundry tub will be a welcome addition as we will be better able to clean larger items, the kitchen sink will be used by staff and volunteers for their refreshments, and the outside tap will be used mostly for gardening. (After we use the water from the rain barrel, of course!)

Other renovations to be undertaken with this funding are to improve the sealing around the three garage doors, to level the floor in the loft storage area to improve safety, and replace windows in the office area to improve energy efficiency.

The grants became public August 4. Over \$1.3 million was awarded to non-profit organizations in the Quinte, Kingston and Rideau area. REAL has twelve months in which to do the renovations.

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Staffing Changes

Goodbye.....

Jeanna Willows finished her summer term with us August 22 and has returned to her third year studies at Ryerson. Jeanna helped out in the REAL Deal store, organized store promotions and performed other REAL tasks during her eight weeks with us. Her position was made possible through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Good luck back at university Jeanna - you're halfway there!

Wayne Tetreault's last day with us was September 4. Wayne began a full-time Job Creation Position as Environment Centre Planner with us in November. When that position concluded in May he continued to work ten hours a week in the Environment Centre handling the ecoENERGY and Well Aware calls, as well as some bookkeeping duties. His office experience with REAL was an asset in finding full-time bookkeeping work with an area lumber company. We'll miss Wayne's computer skills in the office, too!

Welcome Back....

Julie Ingram has agreed to return to the Environment Centre to pick up where Wayne left off. Julie began with REAL in the fall of 2007 as an Algonquin coop student, and was very involved in the limited income retrofit program. Back then we were using the staff room of the former SFDCI while we looked for a new REAL Deal location. Julie continued to work with us when her work term ended, up until November 2008. So she is very familiar with the store, the Well Aware and ecoENERGY programs. Julie can be reached at (613) 283-9500 Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Cathryn Davidson is no stranger to REAL either. She and Dan and their four children were one of the earliest families in REAL. She has volunteered frequently in many capacities with REAL and other organizations, and has recently

agreed to join the REAL Board of Directors. We are thrilled to have such a committed and experienced board member join us—Cathryn was on the board back in the early 90's as well!

Welcome to ...

We are also pleased to welcome our new Volunteer Co-ordinator, Lynn Preston, to REAL. The position was made possible through a grant from the Trillium Foundation, awarded to the Rideau Canal Museum (RCM) and REAL in partnership. Lynn will be working for both organizations to manage their volunteer programs, including recruiting and training new volunteers

Lynn has worked many years at local conservation authorities. Recently she has become familiar with the area served by REAL through her work in developing strategic watershed management plans. Lynn will be using her environmental background and experience in working with the public to ignite the community's desire to learn about and protect the cultural and natural resources of the area.

Lynn resides in Carp with her husband and daughter. She's often seen on either the softball or soccer field or slipping by on some silent creek in her canoe. Lynn will be working out of REAL's Environment Centre office Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and can be reached at (613) 283-9500 or at lynn@realdealstore.ca.

... and the latest Katimavik Gang

The latest Katimavik group has arrived. These young people from across Canada will be in Smiths Falls until November 20, when they will be heading to Burnaby and Lethbridge.

The theme for this session is "Eco-citizenship and Active Living". As a work partner, REAL will be having Felix-Antoine Boily Audet, from Quebec City, work in the REAL Deal store Thursdays and Fridays. So drop in and say hi!

Raised Box Garden at the REAL Deal

by Tammy MacKenzie

The REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre had a bit of land staked off in front of the building for a garden, which last summer was found to have a serious disadvantage: it is low-lying and borders a very wet meadow. Moist soil is great for flowers and vegetables, but constantly waterlogged earth is an altogether different story! A dense gravel and clay layer about four inches below the surface meant that water would pool and continue to saturate the soil in the area even if it was mounded.

Money is tight in a non-profit organization with a lot on the go, so purchasing landscaping materials to build a raised garden was not a justifiable option, and, in the end, would not serve to promote the ideal of re-use and recycle. With that in mind I ventured to the back of the store where various construction and renovation materials are kept, and found just what I needed: a fair number of 2" x 2" lengths of wood about 3 feet long (no paint or stain!), and a small pile of gravel.



The ground was prepped by digging out the good top soil, and then the lengths of wood were stacked and secured with stakes along the outer sides. The resulting boxes were filled in with 6 inches of gravel, covered with the previously removed soil and mushroom compost, and a thick layer of newspaper 2-3 inches below the surface. The gravel would keep water from wicking up into the raised soil and saturating it, and the newspaper would keep it from drying out too fast and help prevent weeds from rooting.

Three raised boxes were built in this fashion, with a glass pane in one so that the layering can be seen, and a sign posted explaining how the beds were built. Another round bed was built with stones found at the edge of the parking area: a nice, more natural and permanent alternative to wood.



I brought tomato and pumpkin plants from home, Sue Brandum contributed some potatoes, and the Garden Market kindly donated hot and bell peppers, and a variety of flowers.

The garden was put in quite late - the latter half of July - and the weather was cool and wet, but other than the tomatoes, which have done poorly all over, our garden has thrived! We have not watered through the warm, dry weather that finally arrived, and weeding has been minimal - low growing wild purslane took hold but was left to provide surface shelter (helping to retain moisture) and because it is a great vegetable in it's own right, tasty and a source of vitamins A, C, E and omega-3 fatty acids.

The potatoes are lush, the peppers burgeoning, and the flowers blooming. And it was all done with recycled materials at hand!



Book Now for ecoENERGY Well Aware Well in Hand

Cool falls nights signal the increase in calls for ecoENERGY assessments, as homeowners seek to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. As of the first week of September, visits by Alan Leonard, our licensed energy advisor, are being booked for late October. Remember, you must have the ecoENERGY assessment done before the contractors begin their work in order to be eligible for the provincial and federal rebates. Homeowners have 18 months after the initial assessment to have the work done, and with the ecoENERGY program scheduled to end in March 2011, that window of opportunity will be shortened the longer you wait to book.



We had a great response to the Well Aware REAL Actions column in the EMC August 6. Consequently, Angela Northfield, our certified water guide, is fully booked to do Well Aware visits through the fall. If you haven't made contact with the Environment Centre, please do so. A list of interested well owners will be helpful if we get the opportunity to extend the program. In the meantime, we will be happy to answer any questions you have about your well or septic system and provide a Well Aware kit even if we cannot schedule a guided visit.

For information on either ecoENERGY or Well Aware programs, contact Julie Ingram in the Environment Centre Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings. Feel free to leave a message at 283-9500 outside of those hours, indicating a daytime and evening phone number.

Missed and missing money in the community of Smiths Falls

REAL will host a Lunch 'n Learn for Smiths Falls town and business leaders to learn about how a focus on cutting household energy costs (missing money) can bring money into the community (missed money).

Don Eaton, a lead national EGH and ecoEnergy trainer, and former Executive Director of the Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence, will address community leaders at the luncheon.

In the evening, Don will join REAL's Alan Leonard for a public event at which residents are invited to bring all their tough and perplexing household energy questions and problems.

To RSVP for the luncheon, send an email to sbrandum@cogeco.ca. The public evening session will begin at 7 p.m. at the Rideau Canal Museum auditorium on Monday, October 26.

Home Energy Costs in the Average Ontario Home

Purpose	Percentage	Dollars
Space Heating	57-62	1140-1240
Hot Water	20-21	400-420
Appliances	12-13	240-260
Lighting	4-5	80-100
Cooling	0-7	0-200

Source: Ontario Ministry of Energy

Avoiding PVC in School Supplies
from the Environmental Defence Fund

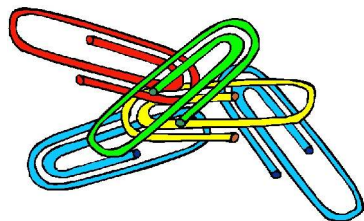
PVC (polyvinyl chloride), also known as vinyl, contains chemicals that can cause a range of adverse health effects, including developmental disorders and damage to the liver, central nervous, respiratory and reproductive systems.

Canada recently announced that it will set limits on phthalates in vinyl toys and products such as teething rings and rattles. However, the limits do not affect children's school supplies and other phthalate-containing PVC products used or worn by children.

The good news is there are lots of school supplies that don't use PVC.

The US-based Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) has a handy printout guide to help you choose safer, PVC-free supplies: www.environmentaldefence.ca/reports/PVC_free_2009.html It provides guidelines for art supplies, backpacks, clothing, lunch boxes and foodwrap, three-ring binders, notebooks and paperclips. But you can follow this general advice:

- Look for non-plastic products whenever possible
- Steer clear of products labelled with the words "vinyl" on the packaging (e.g., vinyl 3-ring binders)
- Don't purchase products with the #3 recycling symbol, or with the letters "V" or "PVC" underneath the recycling symbol (remember that bad news comes in #3's, don't buy PVC)
- Call or email the manufacturer or retailer and ask what type of plastic their product is made of if you are uncertain - you have a right to know.



25 Cent
Fall Yard
Sale



Sat., October 3
10 am. - 3 p.m.
REAL Deal
85 William St., Smiths Falls

Hundreds of items priced at
just a quarter!
(And a few at .50
and \$1.00, too)

Biking and Walking Get a Thumbs Up

Ontario Healthy communities reported these interesting facts from Go for Green 2004 in their Spring Summer newsletter:

- 82% of Canadians want to walk more
- 66% want to bike more
- 70% agreed that if they had a bike lane taking them to their workplace in less than 30 minutes, they would definitely use it
- 80% support government spending on bike lanes and paths in their communities
- 66% of Canadians live within a 30 minute walk of a routine destination and 80% are within a 30 minute cycle
- 25% of all trips are 1 mile or less but 75% of these trips are made by car.

REAL Deal Haves and Have Nots

The store always has a bountiful supply of mugs, glasses, baskets, kitchen utensils, coffee maker pots and candleware. If you don't see exactly what you need, please ask, as we may have it stashed away.

There has been a demand in the store for shelving units, bathroom vanities (sink with counter and cupboard), and kitchenette/dinette sets (tables and chairs).

The store itself needs a sturdy, wide and several-shelves- tall book case to use in the store. It would really help to keep the books, CDs, cassettes and DVDs we have for sale tidier and easier to browse. Almost any condition is acceptable!

Please give the store a call at 283-7999 if you have any of the above items to donate.

REAL Deal Promotions

Our "Only Five Months Left Till Christmas" Sale on July 25 only made a dent in our stash of used Christmas decorations, baking tins and tableware. But like the spring yard sale, it did attract a number of customers who had never been to the REAL Deal before. So in-store sales were better than average that day. Thanks to our summer student, Jeanna, for getting that event together. Watch for the Christmas items to be on display again, starting in November.

We also did a "Moving Back to School" promotion to feature the great deals we have for students setting up an apartment: furniture, small appliances and kitchenware. Advise anyone you know who is setting up a new place on a budget to take a look at our store.

A "25 Cent Sale" will take place October 3, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., outside the REAL Deal, weather permitting. (See box on previous page.)

Get Your Tickets for Anniversary Dinner

Our anniversary celebration dinner is fast approaching, and some of you haven't bought your tickets yet!

We're very excited about this dinner, to be held Saturday, October 17th, because 1) there's going to be a delicious buffet roast dinner catered by the Roosteraunt 2) the menu (see below) will feature local foods wherever possible. Most menu items, right down to the pickles, will be foods grown and produced locally and 3) it will be fun to see past and present REAL supporters all together in one room (Lombardy Hall to be exact) for some socializing and reminiscing and 4) we only turn 20 once!

Tickets are just \$25. This is a break-even proposition, not a fundraiser - we just want the pleasure of your presence! So don't delay - give Barb a call at 283-9966 or e-mail her at dhicks11@cogeco.ca to get your tickets.

Menu

- Tomato Juice (Homemade)
- Red or white Ontario wine

Salads

- Chef Salad • Cole Slaw

Entrée

- Roast beef • Mashed Potatoes
- Cauliflower/Broccoli Casserole
- Glazed Carrots • Turnips

Garnishes

- Homemade Dinner Rolls
- Pickle/Cheese tray • Horse radish

Dessert

- Apple Pie (with cheese)
- Raspberry Pie • Carrot Cake
- Coffee and Tea

Earth Overshoot Day

Some day about mid September will be Earth Overshoot Day - the day we start living beyond our ecological means.

The concept is that we are using nature in excess of what it can provide - using resources faster than they can regenerate and creating waste faster than it can be absorbed. We went into overshoot first in 1986. By 1996 Earth Overshoot Day fell in November, and the date has been getting progressively earlier every since. In 2008, Earth Overshoot Day was reached September 23.

This day is calculated by comparing our total Ecological Footprint to the biocapacity that nature can regenerate in that year. For more details see www.footprintnetwork.org.

In REAL Life

REAL welcomes new members! Annual fees are just \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. Corporate memberships are \$50 and include a number of businesses, service clubs and organizations supportive of environmental change in our community. Forms are available at the REAL Deal or on our website. Contact Carolyn Fraser if you have questions about your membership: 283-6858 or fraser@superaje.com.

Look for REAL on Facebook! We are new to this game, so we welcome suggestions from Facebook-savvy people for what we could be doing to make it more effective. And please tell your Facebook friends about us.

There was a draw for **Voyageur Canoe Tour tickets** at the July 18 birthday celebration in the park. The winners were Barb Byam and Amber Crowder, who enjoyed a tour through the locks and into the swale.

The **menus on our website,**

www.REALaction.ca have been reorganized to better reflect where REAL is focusing its efforts and highlight its major funders. Thanks to Chris Woods for volunteering to make the change.



Many thanks to **Gordon Major of the Dairy Queen on Lombard St., Smiths Falls** for his generous donation of the marquis sign. It was installed by the gate in late August and has already attracted the attention of many customers who hadn't known about us. It will allow us to feature store promotions or other REAL activities.

And thanks to the Rotary Club of Smiths Falls for allowing us to share in the profits from their annual **mushroom compost sale**. Bags left unsold after the Victoria Day Weekend sale have been for sale at the REAL Deal, and have generated \$386 for REAL. About 60 bags are left for \$5 or 5 or \$20. Drive into the gated area at the back of the store to load up.

Just a reminder that the **community compost site for residents of Smiths Falls and Drummond- North Elmsley** is open for the season. Hours are Saturdays 9 a.m. to 4 pm. until November 21. Only leaves, grass clippings and brush are accepted at the site on Hwy. 43, just east of Hillcrest Cemetery.

A reminder that we cannot accept electronics at the REAL Deal. If you are looking to dispose of computers or computer parts, or televisions, we suggest **Twenty Twelve Electronics Recycling** at 42 James St., Smiths Falls.

Phone (613) 253-3058,

Web: www.tter.ca.

Please note their hours have changed to Wed. 9 - 6 and Sat. 9 - 4.

Other electronics may be accepted for a fee by weight.



Drop by REAL's Environment Centre to **borrow a Kill a Watt Meter**. Use it to measure the electrical consumption of appliances that plug into a standard 120 VAC, three-prong electrical outlet, including the phantom loads of appliances that remain in standby mode. REAL also makes the devices available at the Almonte, Perth and Smiths Falls Public Libraries. It is advisable to call ahead to ensure one is available.

We've had a several new volunteers contact us about working in the REAL Deal Store, which is very encouraging. **We can always use volunteers for our other REAL activities as well.** Please contact Lynn at 283-9500 if you would like be involved. It would be helpful if you complete a volunteer application form as well. Print copies are available at the store, or from the website.

Helpful Websites

- A three minute video on the limited local food consumption and and self sufficiency of food production in Canada. www.eatrealeatlocal.ca/#/video.
- Since spring 2007, the Brockville Climate Action Group (BCAG) has been actively engaged in educating area residents on all aspects of climate change. Their monthly meetings feature speakers, and they have a

long list of interesting projects. See their website bcag.mybrockville.com/bcag

- Ecofont is designed to use up to 20% less ink than regular fonts, by using tiny circles inside the characters. You can download and use it for free: www.ecofont.eu/ecofont_en.html

Next Issue

Submissions for the next issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by October 15, 2009 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

REAL

E-mail: info@REALaction.ca

Mail: Box 1061, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 5A5

Web: www.REALaction.ca

Environmental Projects Manager

Phone: (613) 267-2257

E-mail: sbrandum@cogeco.ca

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 Visits, ecoENERGY audits,
or other programs,

Phone: (613) 283-9500

