

REAL *update*

For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League

SEPTEMBER 2010



Local Foods Harvest Dinner

Saturday, October 30th, 2010
Social 5 - 6 p.m., Dinner 6 p.m.
Lombardy Hall, Hwy 15 S.

Roast beef buffet dinner
featuring local foods
by the Roosteraunt Catering
\$25 per person Cash Bar

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Available at:

- The Roosteraunt, Lombard St.
- The Kiosk, County Fair Mall
- The REAL Deal, 85 William St. W.
 - Or by calling 283-0824

- Celebrate local foods
- Support REAL
- Meet some local food producers
- Enjoy an evening with friends



Grants Still Available for Renovations

Despite the sudden withdrawal of the federal government from the ecoENERGY for Homes grant program, the Ontario government is still providing grants.

If you're planning renovations this fall, now is the perfect time to get an energy audit. Ontario grants are expected to conclude in March, 2011, giving you enough time to get the first audit, do the work, have the second verifying audit and be finished in time to claim the grants. Grants are available for insulation, air sealing, furnaces, wood stoves, low-flow toilets, windows, and other items. To find out more go to Ontario Home Energy Savings.

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We're also pleased to announce that Alan Leonard, our auditor, will soon be certified to audit Multiple Unit Buildings and Multiple Unit Residential Buildings. Alan is also qualified to do small commercial and institutional buildings of under approx. 6,000 sq ft. This can be very useful for non-profits which don't necessarily know where to begin to save on their energy costs and to apply for funds for energy retrofits.

For more information, call REAL at 613-283-9500.

Few Well Aware Visits Still Available

Once again, our Well Aware home visits – or Guided Self-Assessments – have quickly gotten booked up this season. But, we still have a few left. Said one recent recipient, "This is such a valuable program Although I have lived with a household well for over 40 years, I learned more than I ever knew in the 2 plus hours you spent with me here. You will be encouraged to know that I have already taken action on some of your recommendations."

If you'd like to grab one of the few remaining visits, call REAL at 613-283-9500. The Ministry of Environment has cut funding to the program this year, with a further cut planned for next year. So, while the visit is free, we are asking for a \$20-25 donation to help offset some of our costs. However, since REAL is now a charity, you can receive a tax receipt for your donation.



Jones Falls a REAL Learning Event

New and nearly new volunteers got together in a big yellow bus on Sunday, Aug. 22 for a trip to Jones Falls, a lockstation on the Rideau Waterway. New volunteers attended to learn about the possibilities volunteering with REAL and the Rideau Canal Museum. They and the nearly new volunteers learned about the link between cultural and natural heritage. Those in attendance were treated to a demonstration by a real blacksmith working the irons and telling tales of the past. The group experienced the Whispering Dam where voices over 100 feet away can be heard due to the shape and height of the structure. The light lunch and bus transportation were free to the participants. New recruits will soon be helping REAL and RCM achieve their goals of cultural and environmental protection and promotion.



Rideau Volunteers on the Web

Thanks to a new volunteer, Nancy Berthiaume, Rideau Volunteers has a presence on the web. The Rideau Volunteer pages includes a list of volunteer positions, information on each of the two organizations (REAL and the Rideau Canal Museum), and new and upcoming events. Soon, job descriptions will be posted as well.

You can access the pages by clicking on the Rideau Volunteers logo on REAL site.

Volunteer Fair a Hit

On Wednesday, September 8, area residents were given the opportunity to learn about volunteer opportunities at a Volunteer Fair. Over 20 Smiths Falls area community groups were on hand at the Smiths Falls Community Centre Arena to recruit new volunteers for their organization. Many potential volunteers took in the displays and talked to representatives from the groups. These connections are a good start to ensuring appropriate matches are made between the volunteers' interests and needs and each organizations' activities. Ideally each organization has attracted some new blood to help it fulfill its goals.



The event was organized by Lynn Preston of the Rideau Volunteers, Pat Foulkes, a REAL member and a Friend of the Library, and Margo Loughren, from the Town of Smiths Falls Community Services. The evening session coincided with the annual Fall Open House that features information and registration for fall and winter activities.

REAL Deal Cottage Day

Brenda King, long time REAL volunteer and REAL Deal "smalls" enthusiast, shared her cottage with store staff and volunteers on August 17. The gang enjoyed some fun in the water and sun, some yummy food and each other's company in a beautiful lakeside setting. Thanks, Brenda, for making this volunteer appreciation event possible.

Canada World Youth Team at REAL

REAL and The REAL Deal are very pleased to have two participants from the Perth Canada World Youth (CWY) project on board for the next couple of months. Erin Rennie, from Vancouver, and Gaby (Karla) Duarte from Honduras, the partner country this year.

Erin is a political science graduate who worked for the BC Liberal government before joining the CWY project. Gaby will be studying medicine when she finishes the project.

We've managed to keep these very capable and hard workers busy so far, developing a brochure on the news about plastic toxins in Canadians' bodies (we'll have it available soon), going to witness the passing of the Idle-Free bylaw in Perth wearing REAL's t-shirts, developing a youth environmental project with the Smiths Falls District Club for Youth where they spend one day a week, helping with the Volunteer Fair and the Fall Harvest Dinner, developing a project for 350.org day on Oct. 10, -- and all of that is on the Wednesdays of the week. They're also spending two days a week working in the REAL Deal.



REAL Deal Specials and Requests

As the REAL Deal Reuse Store goes into its fourth year, it is proving to be a huge community success. In fact, just about too successful. We have struggled all summer and continue to struggle to accept and store all the worthy donations that people want to give us.

Effective storage upstairs will soon be ready. We had first to make the floor safe and secure, and then erect solid, steel shelving. We bought one carport tent for the back area, providing additional shelter for furniture that can't get wet. The removal of the oil tank has provided a little additional storage space for small items. And, we're still working on getting a proper shelter built for the windows and doors.

But, even with all this additional storage, we're still full to the rafters. So, we're asking donors to hold onto their planned donations of large items -- like stuffed chairs, couches, and tables -- for a month or so, until we've sold some of our inventory. And, with people switching to flat screen TVs, we've added entertainment units to our "do not accept" list.



However, we're in need of screen doors, bird cages, single beds, mixing bowls and other baking and canning supplies.

Our special sales for the month of September are 50% off small kitchen appliances such as coffee makers, toasters, toaster ovens, griddles, sandwich makers, etc. and 50% off sinks for those bathroom and kitchen renovations.

Bottle Drive Nets \$600

REAL's first ever bottle drive the weekend of July 23 and 24 was a very rewarding one! Just over \$600 was collected for REAL's environmental projects. About a dozen volunteers took two hour shifts at the Beer Store on a very hot Friday and Saturday. People returning their empty alcohol beverage containers to the store were asked if they would like to donate them to their local environmental organization, REAL, and thankfully many did. The volunteers would then sort the returns and take them into the store for cash. The Saturday 10 - 12 shift turned out to be the most profitable. Thanks to volunteer feedback, we have several ideas to improve our results next year. Our sincere appreciation to the staff of The Beer Store for making this possible and the public who contributed to this fundraiser. We couldn't have done it without our stellar volunteers. Special thanks to Dan Davidson and Peter Au for their very capable organization of the event.



Christmas Band Concert

A Christmas concert by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces is still in the works, but we cannot confirm a date for you, other than it will be a Wednesday evening in late November or early December. The organizers will have to hit the ground running on this one, so please contact Peter Au, 284-8338 if you can provide any assistance.



Communal Garden Gets A (Green) Thumbs Up

Our communal garden “experiment” has been growing well! If you’ve come by the REAL Deal you will see that the four plots have been very productive, helped no doubt by the great soil mix we started with.

The youth from Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth have really enjoyed spending time at the garden, as well as sampling the produce! REAL Deal staff and volunteers have already been enjoying the cherry tomatoes, basil, broccoli, green beans, various peppers and radishes in the “REAL Veggie Patch”. Tomatoes appear to have been the most rewarding crop of the four groups involved. A highlight of the summer was the “Veggies and You” workshop held at the Community Health Centre (see story below).



No major insect, pest, vandalism or drought difficulties have surfaced. We have had some water pooling on the north side of the plots after a heavy rain. And it is possible that some tomato plants were either getting too much moisture or need to be more spread out. It doesn't look like the straw bale forms will be usable a second year, other than as compost. But nothing that the garden teams can't handle.

Later in the fall decisions will need to be made on whether to install additional plots for the 2012 garden season and how to fund the project. We are very appreciative of the generous funding from an anonymous family foundation that kick-started this year's communal garden. REAL would still welcome a volunteer to champion the communal garden. If you as an individual, family or community group would be interested, please contact us as soon as possible. Next year we will likely try raised wooden beds.

See some photos of the garden construction at http://www.reaction.ca/communal_garden.

Veggies and You

About twenty people involved in the communal garden project, primarily youth, gathered at the Community Health Centre (CHC) one afternoon in late August for some lessons on making use of the vegetables grown in their gardens. Since many of our garden participants were new to gardening, the garden committee felt some additional instruction would be beneficial.



The group learned how to tell when to harvest their vegetables and store them, and sampled some fresh herbs. Then the group divided into teams to get cooking! Fresh tomato salsa, tomato sauce, stuffed peppers and wilted swiss chard were on the menu. Everyone got to sample the results and take home a container of tomato sauce. Participants enjoyed cooking in the CHC's wonderful new kitchen, and had ideas for other possible food information sessions.

Our thanks to Mona Wynn, Community Health Promotor, Jana Plaunt, Dietician, and Megan Burns, Student Dietician, for planning and running the workshop. We also appreciate the assistance of Cheryl Nash, of ecoPerth, and Sarah Mackenzie and Eric Stewart of Hollyhock Grange for providing locally grown produce.

REAL Board Ready for 2001-2012

As is tradition, our REAL Board of Directors was established at our Annual General Meeting in June. At the August Board meeting, the directors agreed on the executive positions and the composition of some important committees.

Betty Davis, a new volunteer, is seriously considering occupying the vacancy on the Board, and may even be able to take on the Treasurer's role. Betty has already tackled our long overdue privacy policy. We'll introduce Betty more fully in our December issue and formalize the changeover. But we are very happy to have her on board - literally and figuratively!

Please feel free to contact board members with any questions, comments or concerns. The board meets the second Monday of the month, 7 p.m. at the REAL Deal. (Our October meeting, however, will be held Oct. 18)

Barb Hicks, President

283-9966 dhicks11@cogeco.ca

Larry Manson, Vice-President

283-7743 cala@ripnet.com

Karen Schecter, Secretary

283-4604 schecter@vianet.ca

Carolyn Fraser, Treasurer

283-6858 fraser@superaje.com

Peter Au

284-8338 peter00au@gmail.com

Cathryn Davidson

283-9819 cnddavidson@cogeco.ca

Scott Lumsden

257-2206 IT_ProjectManager@live.ca

Executive Committee: Barb Hicks, Larry Manson, Karen Schecter, Carolyn Fraser

Other REAL members are welcome to join the following committees:

Finance Committee: Barb Hicks, Sue Brandum, Karen Schecter, Betty Davis

Communications Committee: Barb Hicks, Sue Brandum, Scott Lumsden, Betty Davis

Membership: Carolyn Fraser, Betty Davis

Volunteer Milestones

Welcome to Dan.Murphy, who is going to provide some muscle in REAL Deal receiving. To Nancy Berthiaume, who will also be working with Rideau Canal Museum

Goodbye to Cynthia Johnson and Chris, both REAL Deal volunteers who are heading back to school this month. Andre Drapeau, our summer student, has gone back to school as well.

Welcome back to Karen Durocher, who was off sick part of the summer.

Thanks again and again to REAL Deal regulars: Deborah Thompson, Ed Crawford, Una Pugh, Brenda King, Bonita Lucas and Dan Davidson.

And let's not forget the volunteers who work behind the scenes: Ron and Libby Toop for their help editing the newsletter, Heather McLenaghan for her design work, Bonita for her work on the Facebook and Rideau.Reuses, Kirk Everett for repair services, and anyone we've forgotten....

Rideau.Reuses.com

Take advantage of our free online waste exchange service! Create an account and post items you would like to find, or items you have to give away. (You can also post items you would be willing to sell for less than \$99.) A few of the more unusual or valuable items at the REAL Deal will be posted here as well.

Take a look at the Recyclopedia while you are there. And drop us a line if you know of other businesses or organizations that should be included.



Perth Passes Anti-Idling Bylaw

Perth Town Council did the right thing by adopting a controversial anti-idling by-law on August 31. Most councillors supported the bylaw in principle, but had issues with the enforcement or wording.

The bylaw was promoted by ecoPerth and the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW). At their request, REAL sent a letter of support to Mayor Fenik and Council encouraging them to pass the bylaw.

This is not the first time an anti-idling bylaw has come before council. ecoPerth first began pushing for an anti-idling bylaw in 2001, and the CFUW lobbied council in 2006-007.

Idling is simply not necessary. Engines do not need to be warmed up before driving, and ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting an engine. An idling vehicle sends unnecessary pollutants into the air, contributing to smog, acid rain and climate

change. Deteriorating air quality directly affects the health of vulnerable populations: seniors, children and those with respiratory problems. And idling wastes gas, which costs drivers money.

For three years, REAL conducted an education program about idling and encouraged drivers stopped at the lock crossings in Smiths Falls and Merrickville to turn their vehicles off when waiting for the locks to change. We made some progress – most people would turn their vehicles off when we approached and asked them to. And



most learned in turning their vehicle off that it was not hard to do.

REAL had 30 Idle Free Zone aluminum signs made up, which struck a chord with many. Some of the signs are on the REAL Deal building, some were provided free to local schools, some were purchased by the Town of Smiths Falls, and others put up in Merrickville. Following a mention of the signs in the Green Communities Canada newsletter, we had requests from all over the country.

But, while public education on the futility of idling helps, most people do not continue with these good practices on their own. To achieve a genuine shift in habit, people need to know that society as a whole has said it is the wrong thing to do. Municipalities must pass anti-idling bylaws to get this firm message across.

The Town of Perth will undertake a six month public education campaign, with ecoPerth, CFUW and Canada World Youth (CWY) assisting. Enforcement will begin in July 2011. The fine will be minimal, just \$8.00, but no minimum idling time will be allowed. The bylaw will be enforced by the local parking authority on Town-owned property eg. parking lots, parking spaces and driveways. Some exceptions, for example for emergency vehicles, will apply.

REAL is encouraged that the Town of Perth is setting an example for other Lanark, Leeds and Grenville municipalities. Merrickville already has anti-idling rules. Could Smiths Falls be next?

In REAL Life

Many thanks to Cathryn and Dan Davidson for keeping the grass (and weeds) under control at the REAL Deal this summer. Unfortunately we are having mechanical difficulties with our mowers and need to find another one for next year's use. Contact Barb (283-9966 or dhicks11@cogeco.ca) if you can help.

Thanks to Sharon and Dave Brown at **Modern Thymes Health and Bulk Foods** for their support! They donated 10% of their sales from the last Friday of the summer months to REAL. A REAL display unit and handouts were available on those days for customers to become more familiar with our work.

The REAL Deal was the site of a **lunchtime BBQ Thurs. July 15**. Katimavik organized the food and cooked up burgers and hot dogs to say thank you to their work partners and billet families.

We're still trying to drum up interest for our **Green Liquid Refreshments** evenings at Coffee Culture. Join us at the coffee shop on Russell Street the third Monday of the month for some free-flowing environmental discussion. Our next session will be Monday, September 20 at 7 p.m.. Everyone in the community is welcome.

Treasure Hunting in Smiths Falls is a brochure listing the second hand stores in and around Smiths Falls. Of course, the REAL Deal is mentioned. Pick one up from the REAL Deal or where you find tourist information, for when you're in the mood for some shopping.

If summer was too hot for you to contemplate cycling, maybe the cooler fall weather will be more to your liking. Our map of **easy bike routes through the area surrounding Smiths Falls** is available in print or on our website. Get out and enjoy the fall colours and some active transportation!

Helpful Websites

- Green Calgary's explanation of the benefits of commercial car washes over home car washing.
<http://driveit.clickspace.com/message/1078484/1000448>
- The Story of Cosmetics 8 minute short film by the Story of Stuff people.
<http://storyofstuff.org/cosmetics/>
- Eco-Etiquette: Tips for Approaching Green

Topics

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/life/etiquette/313060/story.html>

- Are E-Mail Attachments Bad for the Environment?
<http://motherjones.com/blue-marble/2010/08/a-re-email-attachments-bad-environment>

Next Issue

Submissions for the next issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by November 15, 2010 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, ecoENERGY, or other programs,
Phone: (613) 283-9500

