

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

SEPT 2013

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REAL Work Continues Behind the Scenes

Our faithful board continued to meet monthly through the summer. We were very pleased to be joined by our two newest board members, Margot Allen and Shawn Merriman. All the bill paying, website updating, Facebook posting, policy development and planning has to continue whether the nice weather beckons or not.

A few "construction" projects have not begun, but that doesn't mean that the planning and negotiating behind the scenes has stopped for our Park and Pedal enclosure, the compost demonstration site and shelter, or the Evergreen Avenue signage.

The Evergreen Avenue interpretive panel has been designed by the very patient Linda Myers, and approved by the REAL Board and Evergreen Avenue Committee, who will be splitting the cost. The current stumbling block is obtaining higher resolution, quality photos of the native plants featured on the memorial pathway, which will be represented on the sign.

"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."
- Greek Proverb



Daisy and Peter Au taking a shift at REAL's bottle drive at The Beer Store, Smiths Falls August 9 and 10. The community contributed \$468.40 to REAL's environmental projects.

The Park and Pedal project has run into the busy season for the fencing company who is building the enclosure. But the canal lock-inspired bike rack prototype building by Kilmarnock Enterprises is ready to go.

The compost shelter is going to look great when you see it along the William St. side of the community garden. The design has been finalized, and it will be built with used materials, most of which have been set aside already. The size of the shelter exceeded the 10 by 10 foot limit and required a building permit, which is now in hand. Concrete footings will be required, and a portion of the cedar rail fence moved out to make space. So another Heritage Fence Building workshop is planned, as is another composting workshop. From there the building should progress quickly!

Thanks to Sue Brandum for stick handling the above three projects. It really takes time

(continued inside)



REAL Work Continues Behind the Scenes (cont'd)

and dedication to see these ideas through to fruition.

The REAL Community Garden was a little more “hands off” from the organizing end this year. Once we lined up gardeners for the eight plots and the Sharing Plot, we just let the gardeners go to it. Seasoned community gardener, David Hoffman, shares his thoughts in the following article.

REAL Community Gardeners 2013

*Sue Brandum, Bonita Lucas,
Nicole Ouston, Steve Maddock,
Michelle Dwyer, David Hoffman,
Kathryn & Gerald Sirvent,
Jamie Creighton*

Our fourth annual bottle drive took place August 9th and 10th, and we are busy lining up the caterer, venue and entertainment for our fall Local Foods Dinner and Murder Mystery evening, October 26 (see back page).

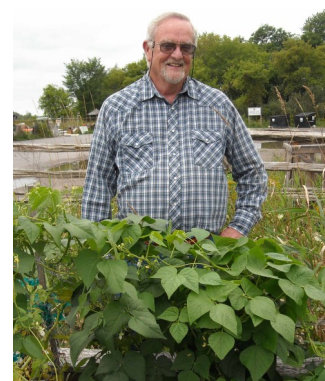
So while it might not look like we've been busy to outsiders, we certainly have, and will have lots to show for it by the time the snow flies.

Changeable Weather Affects REAL's Community Garden

By David Hoffman

Gardening at a plot in the REAL Community Garden certainly makes you aware of how summer weather varies from one year to the next.

This is my third year at the site and no one year has been like the next. My specialty is early crops: mesclun (traditionally a mix of chervil, arugula, and leafy lettuces), Italian parsley, radishes, and multiplier onions. Without exception, these have been successful, thanks to the rich, composted soil. Not so great the later, summer-developing veggies, which are much more affected by heat and drought or excessive rain, particularly in above-ground beds.



Most vulnerable to the vagaries of weather are the “Mediterranean” crops: aubergines (eggplants), tomatoes and peppers. First year, my Med crop was nearly perfect, as were the Scarlet Runner Pole Beans and yellow and green bush beans. Last year's brutal heat put great pressure on everything: tomatoes, except for the Tiny Tims, struggled; despite regular watering the fruit cracked and the yield was down. The pole beans were pathetic. My kale, sage and chili peppers loved the drier conditions, but the crop I wanted to harvest most was a little disappointing. Still, I've concluded too much heat is better than too much water.

Witness the current summer. Wet enough to produce great beans, cabbages, and celery, but lousy for the tomatoes, (my) chili peppers and the piddly little eggplants that yearned for hot, dry days with just the right amount of water.

All of us gardeners are learning: some have come to appreciate what too close planting can do to yield; some have seen the takeover of the huge squash and zucchini plants, especially in wet conditions. Only those like myself and a few others who have enclosed their plots in chicken wire have escaped the ravages of the groundhog that has run amok among the tender greens—especially the bush beans in the somewhat neglected Stone Soup Sharing Garden.

Despite some setbacks, all of us would agree, I am sure, that the opportunity REAL has provided for those without gardens at home to enjoy the pleasures of tilling the soil is tremendous. We had new participants this year and I'm sure there will be new ones next year as well. My advice: get your application in early; work your plot as early in the season as the soil permits; and enjoy the ever-changing bounty of your own little spread.

Invasive Species Threaten Ontario's Biodiversity

Invasive species are becoming a major threat to Ontario's biodiversity. Species introduced to our ecosystems can take over, killing native species and leading to species at risk, disrupting food webs, destroying habitat and introducing parasites and disease. The damage caused is usually irreversible.

The repercussions on humans are significant as well. There are economic impacts on fisheries, forestry and agriculture, and damage to water intakes, such as with the zebra mussel. Activities like boating and swimming can be affected, and property values reduced. Some species are even dangerous to human health, such as the giant hogweed, whose sap causes painful blisters, and even temporary or permanent blindness if it comes in contact with an eye.

Species become exotic or alien when they move outside their native region, but are called invasive species if they disrupt ecosystems. The introduction of a species can be a result of human activities, either intentionally or unintentionally, for example through ship ballast. But once here, these species are dispersed by natural means: water, wind or animals and humans. Which means there are things we can all do to prevent their spread or slow it down.

Ontario's Ministry of Resources has these tips for individuals:

- Gardening? Plant native species.
- Going camping? Don't transport firewood. Buy it locally; leave what you don't use there.
- Going fishing? Don't empty your bait bucket in or near water – it's against the law.
- Going boating? Wash your boat before you move to another lake or river.
- Going hiking? Clean visible mud, plants and seeds from your boots and other equipment.
- Have a fish pet that is no longer wanted? Don't release it into the wild and don't flush dead fish down the toilet. Put them in the garbage or compost.
- Have a turtle or other small reptile pet that is no longer wanted? Don't release it into the wild.
- Travelling? Don't take plants, plant parts, seeds or fruit across borders.

We have heard or read about many invasive species in the news: the zebra mussel, sea lamprey, Asian carp, purple loosestrife, Norway maple, emerald ash borer, Eurasian milfoil and giant hogweed, but there are many others. To see a quick list of common invasive species see http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Biodiversity/2ColumnSubPage/STDPDOD_085427.html. You can click on each to get the full story of how it was introduced, its impact and what you can do about it.

For more information on invasive plant species and gardening, see http://www.ontarionature.org/discover/resources/PDFs/id_guides/natural_invaders.pdf. The number of common garden plants that are potential problems is surprising. For example, periwinkle and gout weed, while acceptable for use as groundcover, should be well contained so they do not spread to natural habitats.

Ontario has an Invasive Species Awareness Program so the public can learn to identify and avoid spreading invasive species. They also operate a Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, and allow people to report a Sighting online.



*Giant Hog Weed. Photo: Wikipedia
This plant has been found in five eastern Ontario counties, and resembles overgrown Queen Anne's Lace. Its sap can cause painful blisters.*

Cedar Rail Fence Building Workshop Sept 14



REAL is hosting its fifth Cedar Rail Fence Building Workshop with Scott Dobson on Saturday, September 14th, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. on the REAL Deal site, 85 William St. W., Smiths Falls. The fence section closest to William St. must be moved to accommodate our new compost demonstration site, so this will be an opportunity to rebuild a sheep fence, and replace two other short sections in another fencing style. Participants should dress for the weather, have appropriate footwear and work gloves, and bring their own wire cutters if possible. Cost is \$35. Registrants should pack a lunch, and REAL will supply some snacks and beverages. Pre-registration is a must, as space is limited to 20 people. Contact sbrandum@cogeco.ca or call 613-283-9500.

COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

Saturday, Sept. 21

10a.m.- noon

REAL's Environment Centre
85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

Learn how to: choose or build your own composter, collect your kitchen and garden waste, avoid problems, maintain your compost, use it in your garden, compost in winter and more!

Cost: \$10. Some subsidized spaces available.

Preregistration appreciated:
Cheryl@ecoperth.on.ca or
(613)283-9500



Home Energy Audits Can Save You Money

With the colder weather approaching, many of us may be thinking of ways to make our homes more energy efficient and save money in the process.

REAL continues to offer several home energy audit services to help you determine where your house might be losing energy and what would be the best way to reduce your energy costs. Our Certified Energy Auditor, Alan Leonard, has over 25 years of experience in construction and renovation, and seven years of experience in home energy auditing. He will tell you what is best for you and the environment, and unlike other operations, is not trying to sell you anything else.



REAL can offer you a full home energy audit, a walk-through blower door/air leakage test, a full infrared thermography assessment and report, or walk-through infrared thermography during a full home audit. The full home audit takes from 2 to 4 hours to complete. The auditor will take measurements throughout the house, investigate insulation levels and conduct blower door tests. The blower door is a large fan set up in the main doorway that depressurizes, or draws air out of the house. It tells you exactly where the air leakage is occurring in your house, and how many air changes your house is getting. One full house air change every three hours is healthy. More details are available on our website.

To arrange an appointment, please call (613) 283-9500 and leave a message, or e-mail [Susan Brandum](mailto:Susan.Brandum).

***Toxic Chemicals Found in Everyday Cosmetics* by Julia Comerford**

Moisturizers, conditioners, hairspray, foundation, mascara, lipstick....Chances are you've used at least one of these products today and thought nothing of it. But once that moisturizer sinks in, it takes a journey through the blood stream, carrying all the chemicals it may contain with it. Since the chemical revolutions of the late 20th-21st century, cosmetics have become riddled with toxic chemicals that the average consumer unknowingly slathers onto their body. The high cost for beauty comes in the form of serious illnesses and environmental harm.



All of the chemicals listed below can cause a variety of detrimental side-effects. They are known to be endocrine-disruptors, harmful to organs, and are known or suspected carcinogens. These chemicals can not only cause lasting damage in the human body, but they can also be harmful to fish and wildlife when they are continually washed into the water.



The simplest way to avoid these harmful beauty buys is to take a quick scan of the ingredients: keep a lookout for these particularly nasty names next time you look at the ingredients of your go-to personal care products.

- BHA and BHT
- Dibutyl Phthalate
- Parfum (Fragrance)
- Formaldehyde-Releasing Preservatives
- (DMDM hydantoin, diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea, methenamine and quarternium-15)
- Petrolatum
- Siloxanes (ending in "-siloxane" or "-methicone")
- Sodium Laureth Sulfate
- Parabens (Methylparaben, Ethyl-Butyl-)
- Triclosan

For more information, check out these great resources, and pick up some literature at the REAL Deal:

- David Suzuki Foundation: ["The Dirty Dozen" \(Pocket Shopper's Guide\)](#)
- [GoodGuide.com](#) (catalogues a variety of consumer goods, including personal care items, and gives them a health, environmental, and societal impact rating based on scientific research)
- Death By Rubber Duck (insightful book that delves deeply into toxic chemicals in common items)

Local retailers of natural beauty products:

[Modern Thymes](#) Health
And Bulk Foods
11 Russell St E,
Smiths Falls ON
(613) 283-3612

[Food Smiths:](#) The Good
Food Store
106 Wilson St W,
Perth ON
(613) 267-5409

[Louche Lily](#)
141 St. Lawrence St.
Merrickville ON
(613) 269-3333

[Diane's](#) Natural
Health Store
40 Sunset Blvd.
Perth ON
(613) 466-0639

Tune Your Ride Show Pedals into Smiths Falls

The storm that day could have knocked the power out, but it wouldn't have made any difference. North Bay's Matthew Hendry, in Smiths Falls for work, got a real kick out of peddling to produce power for the [Tune Your Ride](#) show August 22. Once the rain finally stopped that day, musicians and singers Jessica Moore, Abigail Lapell and Dana Sipos put on a fabulous concert for about 25 people and the boaters in Victoria Park. Tune Your Ride peddled from Toronto to Ottawa, and put on 10 concerts en route.



Summer Student Says Goodbye

I will be entering my freshman year at Dalhousie University in a few short weeks to study Urban Planning with a double major in Sustainability. Despite only being a young'n, I have been given the opportunity to work for The Rideau Environmental Action League this summer. My time spent here has truly been a rewarding experience, to say the least.



My job at The REAL Deal Store was primarily to be a cashier, but it turned out to be so much more. The REAL Deal can be a pretty busy place, so multitasking to the max is an ability that must quickly be adapted. We do more here than simply sell items; we also record how much waste has been diverted from the local landfills with each purchase. From behind the counter I have learned valuable lessons in multitasking, cooperation, and customer service—and I've seen plenty of wacky, one-of-a-kind items come through the cash along the way.

One day a week I worked in the REAL office, which has introduced me to the inner workings of a non-profit. I'm constantly amazed at how dedicated, passionate, and hard-working the volunteers are here. After seeing the countless successful projects being done around here, I was inspired to write about the toxic chemicals found in common cosmetics. I hope to promote healthier, genuinely natural products that are better for both our environment and ourselves.

I'm very sad to be saying goodbye to the best coworkers and customers ever, but thanks to them I have learned many life lessons to take with me on my journey. So, I'll set off with a vintage 1970's hair dryer (just one of the treasures found in the store), and a new-found confidence in the future. The REAL Deal has prepared me for REAL Life. I am forever grateful for this experience, thanks folks!

Note: Julia Comerford was hired under a Canada Summer Jobs grant. We wish her all the best at school.

REAL Deal Store News

The REAL Deal has had a fairly calm and stress-free summer. Donations were steady, beginning in the spring, but not so much we couldn't keep up. Staff and volunteers managed to work in some well-deserved holiday time, too. Much of this was thanks to our summer student, Julia, who handled the cash and filled in in other areas as needed. Sue Brandum, Executive Director, filled in while Store Manager, Tracy Thomson was away.

We reached the five year mark for the William Street location this year, and are celebrating with a 5th Anniversary Sale on Friday Sept. 13 and Saturday, Sept. 14, 10 am. to 4 p.m. Come in for some great deals: 50% off everything in the store! It's time to clear out some stuff as we are expecting a major donation.

The five-year mark is also a sign we need to re-evaluate where the store is headed in the future. We have been on the lookout for a way to have an updated Five Year Business Plan prepared for the REAL Deal, and have finally struck gold with Endeavour! (The REAL Deal operated for a year on Lombard Street, and we took a year to regroup before opening on William Street, so we have essentially been seven years in the making.)

[Endeavour Volunteer Consulting](#) is a Toronto-based organization that provides free management consulting to non-profit organizations that could not otherwise afford professional consulting. Their volunteers are skilled professionals and university students who work in teams to solve problems and provide recommendations to their client non-profits. After REAL submitted a proposal, and two REAL members took part in a phone interview, we were selected as a client. A 4-6 person team will begin working with us in mid-September to craft a business plan that will give our reuse store its direction for the coming years. The process is expected to take about six months.

In REAL Life

'Tis the season for **Household Hazardous Waste depots** to wind down for the winter, at least for many municipalities. Please check your municipality's website for more complete details.



- **Lanark County** (participating municipalities: Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond-North Elmsley, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth and Smiths Falls) – residents may use the depot on Patterson Crescent in Carleton Place, Saturdays 8 - noon, only until Saturday, September 14
- **Lanark Highlands and Tay Valley Township** – the depot at the Lanark Highlands Middleville Waste Site is open until Monday, October 14
- **Rideau Lakes and Westport** – one more depot day, Saturday October 19, at the Portland Transfer Station
- **Leeds and Grenville**, including Gananoque and Prescott, but not Brockville: one more depot Saturday, September 28: South Grenville Patrol Garage in morning, North Grenville Patrol Garage in afternoon.



Also closing for the season is the **Smiths Falls Community Compost Site**, open Saturdays until the last Saturday in November, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The site on Highway 43 (east of Hillcrest Cemetery) accepts leaves, grass clippings and brush from Smiths Falls and Drummond-North Elmsley residents only.



New e-Waste Option in Perth. The Youth Action Kommittee of Perth & District (YAK) has partnered with Garbage Gofer and SHIFT Recycling to establish an [electronic waste depot in Perth](#). E-waste is accepted at their Youth Centre at 1 Sherbrooke Street E., in the old Perth Shoe factory during YAK's regular operating hours, Monday to Friday from 2:00 to 7:00pm. Yak will earn an amount per tonne of material collected for operating this service.



The Stone Soup Sharing Plot is for.... Sharing. Please feel free to sample any of the produce in this clearly marked plot of the REAL Community Garden. At the moment there are lots of plum tomatoes for the taking. There is also a nice variety of herbs available in the square grey container towards the back of the garden. Please do not interfere in any way with the other plots.

<http://www>

- **Meatless Mondays** <http://meatlessmonday.ca> is a movement that encourages people to not eat meat one day a week to reduce their impact on the environment. Green Calgary posts meatless recipes on [their Facebook page](#) every Monday. Another great source is the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, <http://www.saskpulse.com/recipes-nutrition/recipes>.
- Team up for the Planet. Eco-conscious tips from Equiterre for families dealing with a new round of **extra-curricular activities**. <http://equiterre.org/en/news/team-up-for-the-planet>
- **Reef Ball Green Burial System**. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/29/reef-ball-burial-coral-reef_n_3512600.html. What to do with crematory ashes? This company mixes them with concrete, and forms a ball which is sunk into the ocean to provide marine habitats in areas where natural reefs systems have been reduced.
- **Got a Tassimo or a Keurig?** Read a short bit on the "recyclability" of those little plastic pods that they use to make coffee and other tasty beverages. <http://www.treehugger.com/sustainable-product-design/even-recyclable-coffee-pods-arent.html>.

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Local Foods
**Harvest
Dinner**
and



A dinner with
a difference!

**Murder Mystery
Evening**

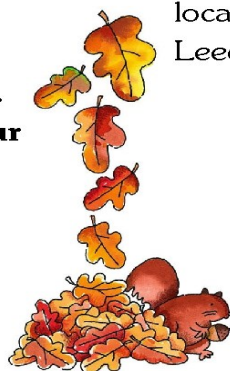


*with performers from the Smiths
Falls Community Theatre*

**Saturday
October 26, 2013**

at the Smiths Falls Curling and Squash Club
13 Old Sly's Rd, Smiths Falls

**Doors Open at 5:30 p.m.
Mystery and cocktail hour
with hors d'oeuvres
6:00 -7:00 p.m.
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
Cash Bar.**



Catered by Jo Edwards, of The
Cove Inn, Westport and featuring
local foods grown in Lanark and
Leeds.

**Tickets \$50 per person
Advance sales only
by cash or cheque**

available at the REAL Deal,
85 William St. W. or
call Barb (613) 283-9966

*Presented by the Rideau Environmental Action League
Proceeds to local environmental projects
www.REALaction.ca*

**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