

APRIL 2007

The DEAL with The REAL DEAL

The REAL DEAL has had to close temporarily, but will be back this summer.

REAL received notice that we needed to vacate the 72 Lombard Street property by March 15 on February 15. It took a huge effort but Halina Shannan, Store Manager, managed to do just that. A sale of all items in the store began immediately. An auction sale was quickly organized thanks to the assistance of the Joynt Family. Volunteers organized smaller items into boxes in preparation for the sale on Saturday, March 3. Attendance wasn't great, but we managed to clear out many items from the store and the garages. Many items went for as low as \$1; total sales were about \$800.

In the meantime, Susan Brandum and the REAL Board were scrambling to find suitable space to move to, or failing that, temporary office space and storage space. Chris Saumure and Sons came to our assistance once again with the offer of some office space at 2 Gould Street, the former SFDCl. The Town of Smiths Falls is allowing us the use of two offices in the Public Works building at the end of Johnston Street, the same space we formerly occupied as the Reuse Centre. Stored there are shelving and some office furniture, chairs and tables that will be required once we reopen The REAL DEAL.

Finding homes for all of the remaining store items was difficult. While some things could be recycled, ie. scrap metal and books, much of it had to be taken to landfill at considerable cost to REAL. Some of the computers were taken away

to be stripped down, but others will end up in landfill as well. Despite our best efforts to find a better option, we simply could not afford the \$20 per monitor, or \$0.54 per pound required to send the computer parts to a responsible recycling company. We were disappointed that we had to part with so much of our inventory, but we simply could not find cheap, adequate storage space on such short notice.

We are very grateful for the many hours put in by volunteers and work crew to make this happen on such short notice.

So for now, REAL has office space, where Halina will be working, and Joe Greer will finish off his contract with us. We are not accepting donations of used items at all currently. We hope to be able to find suitable space so that we can start amassing an inventory of items with which to open the new store. These donations will be screened very carefully and picked up by
(continued inside)

Inside this Issue

What s Next for the REAL Deal?	2
Katimavik Presents to Local Youth	2
Power Down Surpasses Expectations	3
Energy Efficiency Assessment Program ..	4
Kill a Watt Meters Get Results	5
Computer Recycles	6
Community Gardens	6
Inconvenient Truth Inspires Community .	7
Volunteers Ready to Pitch In	7
In REAL Life	8

staff, and will be better quality items. If you have other donations to make, please hang on to them just a while longer, and we will be happy to consider them when we reopen.

What's Next for the REAL DEAL?

REAL has a very solid lead on a new REAL Deal location. However, we need to ensure there are no serious impediments to that site before making an official announcement. We can tell you that this building is located in Smiths Falls in a visible location, has space for offices, a large sale area and a fenced yard. And it requires some cleanup work to make it usable. If all goes well, we would be able to begin operations by July. If not, it is back to the drawing board!

The REAL Deal Steering Committee and the REAL Board met on Wednesday, March 28 for some frank discussion on the future of the REAL Deal. While the move from 72 Lombard came earlier than expected, this has provided a good opportunity for us to reassess operations and determine what we can improve in this next incarnation.

In reviewing the Business Plan generated by Andrea Swain in the spring of 2005 for an expanded Reuse Centre, it appears that we are on track. The store had sales of \$18,500, which is what similar operations had in their first year. Challenges such as unwanted dumping at the facility outside of hours, the importance of a suitable facility, and obtaining startup funding were all as predicted, and not a surprise.

Some of the areas that we want to work on:

- " Emphasize the service to the community aspect over the store aspect.
- " Continue to be a hub of environmental activity in the community.
- " Be more selective of what we take so that we don't get stuck with items nobody wants: outdated computers, large manually operated TVs, oversize desks, chipboard furniture, certain books.

- " Have more consistent, regular culling of inventory to remove what won't sell.
- " Maintain the free store. While it occupies considerable human resources, it is very much appreciated by our visitors. It is suggested that if we charged a very small fee for items we would actually move more of them, as some people don't like handouts. The manager has made a policy of putting more valuable items, which we would previously have given away, in the store itself.
- " Pay more attention to customer service.
- " Find a workable transportation arrangement.
- " Make someone responsible for collecting items left or low cost at the end of auction or garage sales to keep up inventory of higher end items.
- " Keep marketing the concept of accepting / reselling construction and renovation materials.
- " Develop a more consistent, effective volunteer base.
- " Investigate support from social service agencies.
- " Create an Assistant to the Manager position (not Assistant Manager).
- " Seek ways of obtaining salary dollars so we may maintain motivated staff.

We still feel that the concept of the REAL Deal is workable: that we can continue to be a waste reduction service, be a hub of environmental activity and source of environmental information in our community, and provide employment and volunteer opportunities. The challenge is to make the operation sustainable, and we are optimistic we can still make that happen.

Katimavik Presents to Local Youth

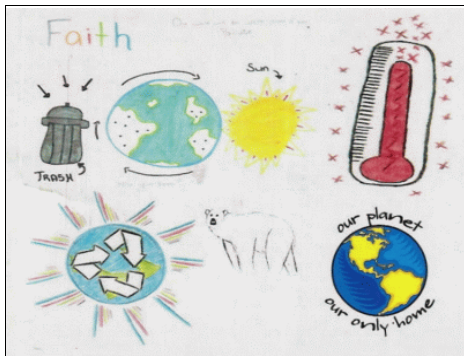
Katimavik participants and youth from the Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth and SFDCI Environmental Club put their Sustainable Consumption project into action this past month. The project addressed the role of youth and consumerism in climate change with a skit, fashion show and post cards. Presentations were made to some senior SFDCI students and Grade

6, 7, and 8 Duncan J. Schouler students on Wed. March 28.

The fashion show of used clothing used items from Jewels, The Salvation Army Thrift Store, and Dawn s Closet. The outfits were modelled and the audience asked to guess how much they cost. The message was that clothes don t have to be new, or major brands, or from major retailers to look good.

The skit they wrote and performed followed a teenage girl on a shopping expedition and touched on issues of engine idling, excess bag use, buying used items and limiting car use.

Postcards designed by Kai Snelter were distributed to the audience. The cards have a fun design on



the front and 10 Things You Can Do on the back. Students were asked to check off on the card the actions they had taken, and drop it off at their school or the public library, to be entered into a prize draw. Also available were copies of

Consume This - Buying that Matters", a booklet produced by the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention. The group will be making them available in other locations as well.

Plans are also in the works to produce either bumper stickers or window decals with the slogan Our Planet - Our Only Home .

At SFDCI, the presentation was followed by a slide show and a trivia challenge put on by the school s resident environmental club, then a screening of the global warming documentary

An Inconvenient Truth. Another round of presentations is planned for June.

Thanks to the adult advisors Shelley Hagan, Colleen Muldoon, Alexius Asselin, Beth Graham and Peter Au and prize donors: Premier Cinema, Lesters Restaurant, Dawn s Closet and Brenda King.

Power Down Surpasses Expectations

The Power Down project recently completed by REAL in collaboration with the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC) was a great success. The project was designed to assist residents - particularly those with low incomes - to conserve electricity and develop a conservation ethic in the Town of Smiths Falls and throughout Lanark County. Funding was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Energy s Community Conservation Initiatives Program.

This was a two part project. Part one was a series of eight workshops for the general public to increase their awareness of renewable energy systems and electricity conservation strategies in four rural communities across Lanark County. Four workshops were offered on net metering/renewable energy and four on general electricity conservation. Workshop participants were encouraged to take home one or more energy conservation device along with how-to information.

The goal of 200 participants was far exceeded with 722 people participating. The solar power, wind power and Net Metering workshops attracted 531 people; and the electricity conservation and Smart Meters workshops attracted 191 people. People came from far and wide, in some cases driving over an hour to attend the workshops. Two of the larger workshops were attended by 166 and 225 people respectively. This is an unprecedented turnout for this type of event in this area. We even had to turn 25 people away from the first workshop offered at the REAL Deal due to lack of space. Several workshops were standing room only.

A total of 1677 energy conservation items were distributed, exceeding the target of 785 devices.

It is estimated that over 900 of these items were installed by the program or by homeowners/tenants. Devices distributed were CFL light bulbs, pipe wrap, faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, and outdoor timers. Over 3,600 pieces of literature were distributed as well.



Part two of the project targeted basic energy conservation retrofits in social housing units owned and managed by the Mills Community Support Corporation, a non-profit organization based in Almonte. The units all had electric hot water heaters and many had electric baseboard heat. Rent is geared to income and all tenants were low income. As a result, 14 low income units had energy audits and had energy conservation devices installed.

As a followup, phone back evaluations will be conducted with some of the workshop attendees to determine what percentage of the items they picked up for free at workshop have been installed.

If you missed the workshops, a number of online resources are available and are listed on our website www.REALaction.ca. Thanks to Jeff Kohl, of the OHCC and Sue Brandum, for making Power Down a reality.

Energy Efficiency Assistance Program

REAL/LL Green is pleased to bring this innovative, pilot program to Lanark, Leeds and Grenville to help our most needy citizens reduce their electricity demand and bill

We know in this region that we have people who have no heat in the winter, or who cannot pay their electricity bills. This program is designed to reduce the electricity used by people who live in a privately owned house, who pay their own electricity bills and who are income eligible.

It is also designed to reduce our demand on Ontario's strained electricity system and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity production.

This is a program of the Ontario government, The Ontario Power Authority and Green Communities Canada, of which REAL/LL Green is a member.

Nine Green Community members across Ontario are participating in this pilot to bring efficiency to 1100 homes. Our goal in the pilot is to save 100 MW of electricity, or enough to power 33,000 houses. The program has an ultimate goal of developing savings of 1,300 megawatts of electricity over the next several years, or enough electricity to supply 500,000 homes.

This pilot program will give low-income homeowners and tenants the tools they need to make more effective energy decisions, while at the same time putting money back into the pockets of those who need it most.

Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Pilot

In our part of the pilot, we will do audits and basic measures in 40 houses in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. We will then do extensive retrofits in 29 of those 40, including such measures as changing our refrigerators and adding insulation and air sealing.

The pilot program includes program eligibility screening, an energy audit, installation of energy-efficient measures (at no charge to the resident or homeowner), education and outreach, and monitoring and verification.

Participants may receive (free of charge) the installation of these basic energy-efficient measures:

- " Replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- " Replacing or upgrading lighting fixtures
- " Installing low-flow showerheads
- " Providing indoor clotheslines
- " Using water heater blankets and hot water pipe insulation

In old, drafty, and less energy-efficient houses, program participants may be eligible to receive these extended energy-efficient measures:

- " Lighting controls
- " Occupancy sensors
- " Ceiling fans
- " Refrigerators
- " Furnace filter cleaning or replacement
- " Water heater repair or replacement
- " Caulking, draft-proofing and insulation
- " Repair of broken windows or exterior doors
- " Air conditioning tune-ups or fans

Eligibility. Priority is given to those with electric heat. Only a limited number of households heated with other fuels can be served, and only with improvements that save electricity.

You may be eligible if:

- " You pay your own electricity bill.
- " You live in a privately owned house (not owned by social services).
- " Your household benefits from one of the following programs: Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Allowance for Seniors,



Allowance for the Survivor, National Child Benefit Supplement, or your total household income does not exceed the following limits: 1 occupant \$32,000; 2 occupants \$34,500; 3 occupants \$37,000; 4 occupants \$39,500; 5 occupants \$42,000; 6 occupants \$44,500; Add \$2,500 per additional occupant.

How to Apply. Contact your social service worker or contact Halina Shannan at REAL at 613-283-7999 or take the application off our website and return it to us by fax, mail or drop it into our temporary office at the western entrance at 2 Gould St. in Smiths Falls (the old SFDCI). Apply now as the pilot program only runs until August.

Kill a Watt Meters Get Results!

by Barb Hicks

Last summer I borrowed a Kill a Watt meter from the Smiths Falls Public Library to see how much energy it was costing us to run our very old chest freezer. It was at least 20 years old, inherited with the house, and I suspected it wasn't up to snuff. The meter showed me that it was costing about \$82 a year to run the freezer. Just as I suspected! So I began the long process of convincing my husband we would be better off replacing it with an Energy Star model. I finally convinced him, but we couldn't find an Energy Star freezer in the size we needed locally (shelving had been built around the old freezer), but we did find a 12.8 cu ft. model that was estimated to consume 362 kWh a year.

Thanks to the Cold Shoulder program I was able to dispose of the old freezer safely, easily and cheaply. We did the hard part of getting the freezer out of our house, because some doors had to be removed. But we just called Cold Shoulder with our Hydro One account number and postal code, and they arranged for a third party to come and pick it up. Hydro One is doing this to encourage people to get rid of old inefficient appliances that drain power from the grid. It accepts fridges, freezers and room air conditioners.

To dispose of the freezer ourselves we would have had to transport it to our local landfill site, pay a dumping charge of \$5 and an extra \$20 fee to have the freon removed. With Cold Shoulder, it didn't cost us a thing, and we got a nifty free gift pack of a canvas bag, two fluorescent lights, a time and some energy conservation literature.



Again I borrowed a Kill a Watt meter from the library and determined that our new freezer was using a fraction of the energy, what would amount to 307 kWh or \$15 a year to run. That's an energy savings of \$67 a year!

Next on the list is to replace our twenty year old gas lawn mower. I've heard that over an hour it emits the same amount of common air pollutants as driving a car for almost 600 kilometres!

In Eastern Ontario, Cold Shoulder can be reached at 1-866-910-2483. Kill a Watt meters are available for rent for \$5 from the Smiths Falls Public Library, 283-2911.

Computer Recyclers

From time to time REAL is asked what people can do with their outdated computers. REAL is currently unable to accept computers, in any condition. You may wish to check out Computer Recyclers in Ottawa. They charge about \$20 a monitor. The company consolidates loads of used equipment and components at its West End Ottawa facility for shipment to an Ontario end-of-life electronic recycling facility. This ensures the good parts, metals and toxic materials are stripped out and the monitors are not shipped to

China or Africa. Here is what one satisfied customer had to say:

*Hi Sue,
I just wanted to let you know that my husband and I took two monitors, a CPU, and several keyboards to Computer Recyclers yesterday and were very pleased with the whole experience. My husband is retired from the military and therefore qualified for their reduced rate of 50 cents per pound, and we only had to pay \$32.00 for everything. It helped that they don't charge for CPU's - a nice surprise. The two men working there were very personable and more than willing to answer our questions. I also found their website quite informative. Thanks very much for referring me to them!
Sincerely, Carol Fortune*

Computer Recyclers can be reached at (613) 723-3135, or see their website: computerrecyclersottawa.com.

Community Gardens

The Smiths Falls Horticultural Society (SFHS) would like to establish a community garden in our area. The garden would contain individual garden plots about 15 by 20 feet which would be available to residents who do not have suitable space for their own garden. Ideally the property would be about an acre in size, be within the Town of Smiths Falls, easily accessible to people without transportation, have suitable soil and have water available. The group has had discussions with the Town of Smiths Falls, the Beautification Committee of the Township of Rideau Lakes and the Township of Montague. The challenge is to find an appropriate spot!

Skills and Initiatives, in collaboration with REAL member Chris Turnbull, worked towards establishing a community garden in downtown Smiths Falls back in 2001-2002. We wish the Horticultural Society the best in this pursuit because we recognize the many benefits of such a program.

If you would like to be involved in this project, or know of a suitable property, please contact Charles McLenaghan at (613) 283-1470. For more details, see their newsletter at www.town.smiths-falls.on.ca/WhatsNew/SFHS_News_Mar07.pdf. The SFHS is a reciprocal member of REAL, meaning we exchange memberships and information but with no membership fee.

Inconvenient Truth Inspires Community

This winter, REAL planned a series of events to stimulate community interest and action on climate change using the Al Gore documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth". In collaboration with local churches and youth groups, citizens were given the opportunity to view and discuss the film.

The first screening was to community leaders at the Rideau Canal Museum on January 16. It was clear that those in attendance reacted strongly to the film, were well aware of individual actions that could be taken, and were inspired to do more to combat global warming. That was followed by four public showings of "An Inconvenient Truth" documentary to 150 people, and private showings and discussion to another 110 people.

A forum on February 28 in the SFDCI featured four panelists and small group discussion on potential solutions for our community. Dawn Quinn, Councillor for the Town of Smiths Falls, Jeff Kohl, of ecoPerth and Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, Rev. Peter Woods of Trinity United Church and Susan Brandum, of REAL and LLGreen each gave brief presentations. Then the attendees broke into smaller groups to discuss potential solutions in the areas of Transportation, Waste & Consumerism, Green Spaces & Natural Areas, and Food. Many good suggestions were generated; we need to choose a few that are achievable in our community.

Eighteen people expressed a willingness to participate in a steering committee to plan actions on climate change, and will have their first meeting on April 10. It is not too late to get involved! Contact Peter Au at (623) 284-8338 or aaapeterau@cogeco.ca.

Volunteers Ready to Pitch-In



Spring is the time when the snow melts, the days get longer ... and the garbage reappears. Don't you want to do something about it? Pitch-In Smiths Falls will be back this April 23 and May 5. Hundreds of residents, on their own or as part of a community group, business or school will be picking up litter in public locations. Join us! If you haven't already registered, please call 283-4416 or 284-0066 as REAL is coordinating locations. We would particularly like to hear from people who could work in their own neighbourhoods. Garbage bags will be supplied.

Residents can also join forces to finish the remaining trouble spots on Saturday, May 5 between 9 and 11:30. Just meet at the Smiths Falls Legion, Main Street or at Lower Reach Park near the bandshell. Wearing gloves is recommended!

We are grateful for the continued support of Tim Hortons, Scotiabank, Giant Tiger, Canadian Tire and Pitch-in Canada.

In REAL Life

The REAL Action Team placed third in the **February 11 Trivia Challenge** organized by the Friends of the Smiths Falls and District Public Library fundraiser. Thanks to our team: Carolyn Fraser, Barb Hicks, Ken Graham, Tom Graham, Doug Kilpatrick, Brenda King, Carolyn and Simon Lunn and Larry Manson.

Welcome to our two newest corporate members, **Rideau Home Hardware Building Centre** of Smiths Falls, and **Silver Fern Contracting** of Lanark. Please support these businesses as they have been supportive of REAL.

Show your support for REAL with a snazzy two-toned blue fleece vest. Vests are embroidered with **Making a REAL Difference**. We still have mens sizes medium and large available for \$25. Call Barb at 283-9966 if you d like one.

Mushroom Compost will be back this **Victoria Day Weekend** at the corner of William and Cornelia. This is a joint project of the Rotary Club and REAL. Why not preorder and have it delivered? And if you can help us bag the stuff, we could really use you. Watch for details in local media or see the website.

What costs \$15 and means a lot to REAL? **Your REAL membership!** Your membership shows support for environmental efforts in our community *and* helps pay the bills. Please renew promptly, so we can continue to keep the good things happening. Contact Frank Roy at 264-8856 or froy@ripnet.com.

We were very annoyed that a pallet of 300 **compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL s)** that were to be distributed free to residents, were removed from the REAL Deal while we were preparing for the move. If you know anything about this, or if someone tries to sell you a CFL for a too-good-to-be-true price, please let us know.

Next Issue

Submissions for the June issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by May 15, 2007 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

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LLGreen

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E-mail: hshanman@realdealstore.ca

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 - 4:00

The REAL DEAL Environment Centre

To Book Well Aware Visits, or to find out more about our Idle-Free and Tire Pressure campaigns or Recyclopedia,
Phone: (613) 283-9500

