

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Making a REAL Difference for 30 Years

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2019

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Environmental Awards

Several individuals and businesses were recognized for making an environmental difference at a canal-side ceremony on Saturday, June 8.

Michele and John Dunfield were recognized for living a near-zero-waste lifestyle. This Kemptville family of three produces just a small Mason jar's worth of waste every two weeks. Michele gave an inspired talk at the North Grenville Sustainability Fair in April, and the couple have freely offered their advice to others. [See Inside Ottawa Valley story.](#)



The Dunfield Family receiving their award from Peter Au.

Heather Mitchell-Adams, the new owner of the bulk food store Modern Thymes, was commended for reducing waste in the store. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own containers for their purchases, and there is a jar bank if people arrive without one. She has also participated in a seed exchange and commuter challenge in recent months.

Sharon and David Brown, former owners of Modern Thymes on Russell Street, were recognized for their promotion of REAL events over the years, advocacy for local food and other green endeavours, such as the skate exchange.

Sandra Jones was responsible for introducing local children to nature photography. She offered a March Break workshop for grades 3 to 6 students in preparation for this year's Paddlefest photo contest, and later offered four sessions at Duncan J. Schouler Elementary School.



Katie Hoffman presenting an award to Heather Mitchell-Adams.

Congratulations everyone!

Community Builders Honoured on Evergreen Avenue

Seven new granite stones were dedicated at the annual Evergreen Avenue dedication ceremony June 8. The inscribed stones along the Victoria park pathway are placed in memory of veterans and community builders by their families or other organizations. Each family was given the opportunity to provide a verbal tribute to those being honoured. Those assembled were very interested to hear the life stories of those being recognized, and what made them special.

The stone inscriptions are as follows, with links to the texts of the verbal tributes [on our website](#).

In Memory of [George & Phyllis Lemay](#) / The Lemay Family

[Raymond Healey](#) / Proud contributor to our community

[Marty & Bob Dales](#) / Their Community was a part of the family

[James Bobier](#) / Welder

[Len & Isobell Curran](#) / WWII Veteran Lovingly Remembered

[Lyle Gibson](#) & Family / Hockey

In Loving Memory of [Doug Kilpatrick](#) / Teacher and Historian

The list of stones placed since 2000 and their relative locations will be updated soon.



The plaque on Evergreen Avenue that describes the significance of the native plantings there.



We had an excellent turnout to this years potluck dinner and AGM. Many guests came to hear our guest speaker, Nathaniel Morris, a cannabis expert, describe how hemp could be used to combat climate change.

REAL's Board of Directors

Jane Anderson
Peter Au
Tony Cote
Barb Hicks
Katie Hoffman
Donna McKenna
Gloria Pavey
Karen Schecter
Mercedes Steedman

If you are interested in joining the team, contact [Katie](#).

Meet New Director Mercedes Steedman

Mercedes joined REAL Board in May 2019. She is relatively new to the Perth area, having lived in Gatineau for several years, but having spent most of her working life in Northern Ontario. As a labour historian, Mercedes has taught at the universities in Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury and served many related organizations such as the Canadian Association of University Teacher (CAUT), the Ontario Heritage Board, and the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre (SEAC).

Mercedes was part of a group of community activists that enlisted Environmental Defence Canada to challenge the reports of two major Sudbury mining companies that were greenwashing the human and environmental risks of mining in the region.

Mercedes is looking forward to working with REAL on environmental issues of concern to people living in the Perth and Smiths Falls area, and has already volunteered to work on recycling education and looking at volunteer coordination.

REAL Members Recognized

Donna McKenna was awarded a honorary life membership in REAL at our AGM June 26. Her certificate read that she was being recognized for “exemplary consistent and dedicated volunteer commitment to environmental protection in our community”. Donna joined the REAL board in 2011 after learning about REAL from her daughter, Marla, who worked for us as a summer student. Donna plays a major role in the REAL Deal, our gardening projects, the local foods dinner, is secretary to the board and much more. Congratulations Donna, very well-deserved!

At Green Community Canada's (GCC) AGM on June 24, several GC member organizations were awarded Resilience Awards for reaching a milestone in longevity, including REAL for reaching 30 years. [Ecosource](#) in Peel has been around for 40 years! In addition, Peter Au, Barb Hicks, Karen Schecter and Alan Leonard were recognized for their many years of service.



New board member, Mercedes Steedman.

Jane Anderson and Gloria Pavey have also joined the board—we will introduce them in our next issue!



Donna McKenna receiving her Honorary Membership at our recent AGM from Board Member Karen Schecter.

REAL Deal News

The REAL Deal Store is a beehive of activity these days with many changes in our operation, new people in the mix, and changes on the property.

The transition to Sunday and extended hours was very smooth and we've had good traffic during those times. We are pleased to have lots of new customers from across the region, as well as many local folks who have either not heard of us or have just not been able to make it in until now. We even have some new regulars who are in frequently because they keep coming across great finds for their homes.

Yard staff are working on culling and organizing the dome in preparation for a major job of spreading additional gravel on the dome floor to address flooding issues. By the time you read this new racking will be installed in the window "cage" which will keep the windows safer and make them more easily accessible. Some shelving in the free shed should help keep things neater. A "garden centre" has been established in the area between the coverall and the back of the store, which will free the area in front of the dome for receiving and assessing large donations. Some larger brush in the ditch along William Street was cleared to avoid potential traffic accidents. We are also working on cutting the grass over our septic tank, and will need to tackle some of the vegetation that has taken hold along the south wall.



We welcome Aira Sarmiento and Jesse Moore for the summer, and Randy Jones, (above) who is new yard staff.

REAL was pleased that our application to Summer Jobs Canada was accepted, and we have been able to hire two young people for nine weeks each.

Aira Sarmiento is an Biology Student at University of Ottawa. She volunteered at the REAL Deal last summer so was already familiar with our operation. So far she has been working inside the store, helping with pricing, organizing, and cashier relief. She is also involved in the youth organization Ocean Bridge, which promotes ocean literacy and encourages youth to take on projects in their home communities.

Jesse Moore will be entering Grade 12 at SFDCl this fall. He will be helping in the yard with receiving and organizing donations, doing some outdoor chores and participating in some of the changes happening in the yard and dome. He enjoys organizing and being outdoors, so has come to the right place!

Randy Jones joined the yard staff following the retirement of Don Harvey, and will be working two days a week. He likes to be busy, rarely stays still, and has already reorganized several areas "out back". He is retired from 33 years with local auto dealerships. He enjoys traveling, hunting, fishing and relaxing by the pool.

Monarch Garden Looking Good

The demonstration monarch butterfly garden in front of the REAL Deal is coming along nicely. No butterflies yet, but we realize this is a work in progress!

An enthusiastic team got to work shortly after our January meeting where members brainstormed potential projects to mark REAL's 30th anniversary year. This group aims to provide critical habitat for the at-risk monarch butterflies: milkweed host plants for breeding stage, and other colourful native nectar plants for feeding. The garden will also provide habitat for other pollinators: other butterfly species, birds, bees, and insects. Our project will be a visual attraction to visitors and a lasting support to butterfly population – a fitting REAL legacy project.

[See our website](#) for photos of the garden's development.

Our thanks to Klass Vandermeer, Donna McKenna and Tony Cote for starting some seeds for us, to the Fletcher Wildlife Garden for the donations of plants, to Landscape Products Depot for their help, and to everyone who purchased a rain barrel to provide funds to get started.



A late June view of the monarch garden with the flagstone paths, rocks scavenged from the property and some of the plants in place.

REAL sees this as a demonstration project – we encourage others to take action in their own yards to encourage pollinators of all kinds. In short, you need to plant both host plants and nectar plants. Host plants are where butterflies lay their eggs for the next generation and are the exclusive food source for the developing caterpillars. To attract monarch butterflies, you should plant at least two species of milkweed native to your area. Other butterfly species have their own favourite host plants.

Rain Barrel Fundraiser a Great Success

The Monarch Garden group worked with rainbarrel.ca, a Hamilton company, to promote online orders of barrels for a one day sale Saturday, May 11. We ordered in 30 additional barrels in case people did not hear about the sale in time to preorder, and sure enough, with those sales and preorders, we had sold close to 100 barrels by early June. Customers could choose the colour of barrel, as well as order extra accessories or replacement parts. Proceeds from those sales were directed to establishing our monarch garden. We felt that water conservation for gardening was a nice match and good timing for this particular garden project.

Rain barrels will continue to be available through the REAL Deal store for \$55 plus tax (a total of \$62.15), payable in cash only, while supplies last.

Nectar plants are food for fully-developed butterflies. Choose a variety of early, mid and late season bloomers to provide food throughout the season, and group plantings so there are masses of colour,

Please [see our webpage](#) or do your own google search to learn more about the garden qualities to consider for attracting butterflies. We have listed some [more butterfly resources](#) on our website.

We will be adding some mulch, edging, pea stone, another feature (possibly seating), a couple of trees, and eventually some signage – possibly official Waystation status. The monarch team is considering some sort of ribbon-cutting monarch garden party type opening later in the summer. But please feel free to drop by anytime to see how things are progressing!

Pedalling at Paddlefest June 1

A fun time was had by visitors to and organizers of REAL's booth at Rideau Paddlefest on Sat. June 1 at Lower Reach Park. REAL was at the festival with a display on alternatives to plastics and a blender bike, and REAL volunteer, Aira, was right beside us representing [Ocean Bridge](#) and including a kayak made from plastic bottles.

Our plastic display was to demonstrate some of the helpful products available to consumers who want to reduce their use of plastics in the home: silicone bowl covers, mesh produce bags, reusable water bottles or coffee mugs, beeswax wraps, paper or stainless steel straws, tote bags and the list goes on. Visitors were invited to put their name in for a draw on a basket of samples of these products. Peggy Atkins was the lucky winner from the 26 names entered.

The blender bike was a big hit! It was borrowed from the Rideau Lakes Public Library, Elgin Branch for the event. People could choose from four smoothie flavours. The ingredients are added to a blender carafe which is placed on the front of the stationary bike. Then the person pedals to blend the smoothie, and enjoys sampling the healthy treat. The literature claims that making the smoothie burns 10 calories. We had 45 adults and 39 children either talk to us about the bike, or actually make a smoothie.

Thanks to volunteers Kathy and John Deutekom, Mia and Neil Rowlands and Iris Allard for their assistance, as well as to Katie Hoffman, Aira Sarmiento, Donna McKenna and Barb Hicks their planning, setup and takedown. And thanks to the Paddlefest organizers for inviting us!

Beeswax Wraps—Alternative to Plastic Wrap

Beeswax wraps are beeswax infused pieces of fabric that you can use to wrap food over and over again instead of plastic wrap. Just wipe or wash with cool water in between uses. You can purchase them online, or have fun making them yourself. Many people recommend adding ingredients to the beeswax to increase stickiness (so it will cling like plastic wrap), be more pliable, and have anti-microbial properties. Donna McKenna recommends adding pine resin and jojoba oil to the mix. She brushes it on the fabric circles with a paintbrush, then puts it in the oven on tin foil at 200 degrees for five minutes or so.



Aira test-driving the blender bike at the REAL Deal the day before Paddlefest.



Peggy Atkins won the basket of alternatives to plastic products put together by Donna McKenna.

In REAL Life

REAL Action Grants. Two \$500 grants were awarded this spring. Community Living Lanark County will use the funds to expand their "Garden of Peace" at their day program site. Friends of Lanark County will use their funds to promote the use of native plants. One initiative was a native plant sale in Fallbrook on June 1.

Radon Meter. REAL now has two radon meters available to lend to interested residents. Of the 25 persons borrowing the meter so far, two have found radon in excess of established levels, and will be pursuing further testing. Katie Hoffman looks after the lending; she can be reached at (613) 983-3360 or kthoffman@cogeco.ca. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has received funding to undertake additional radon awareness over the next two year. This area of Ontario is known to have higher than average levels of radon so it is well worth having your home checked.

The Home Efficiency Rebate Program (HER) is the new name for the Enbridge Home Energy Conservation Program now that Enbridge Gas and Union Gas have amalgamated. Natural gas customers can receive up to \$5,000 in rebates for making energy efficiency upgrades to their homes. The program requires an initial and final home energy audit, which REAL can arrange through our Registered Energy Advisor, Alan Leonard. Read more details, then contact [Alan](mailto:Alan@enbridge.com) at (613) 864-3099 to arrange your home energy assessment. [Read information sheet](#) and [see our website](#) for details.

FOTW Watershed Discovery Day. REAL will be represented at the this information day Saturday, August 17 at the Crystal Palace Perth, 8 a.m.- 1 p.m. Details are being worked out, but home energy assessments, rain barrels, the REAL Deal store and reducing your use of plastics are all possibilities. Come enjoy the Farmers Market and watershed-themed exhibits and activities for children and adults.

Customer Ask. Another successful Customer Ask was arranged thanks to Dan Andress of Andress' Your Independent Grocer June 16 – 22. Thanks to everyone who contributed a couple of bucks when they went through the cash. We raised \$810.

The **Composting Workshop** originally planned for June 22 has been rescheduled to Saturday, July 13 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. David Hinks, Master Gardener and Gardening Programs Coordinator for the Lanark County Food Bank, will be describing the basics of backyard composting, how to avoid problems, and how to use the finished product. Please pre-register with [Katie Hoffman](mailto:kthoffman@cogeco.ca) at (613) 983-3360. Cost is \$5, payable on the day of the workshop. The workshop will take place at our demonstration compost site, but we have a plan in case it rains.

Local Foods Dinner. Mark Saturday, October 19 on your calendar and plan to get a group of friends, family or co-workers for our annual fall feast! Joanne Edwards will be cooking up a spread of locally sourced foods, and the Smiths Falls Legion has been booked. This year's event will be extra special as we celebrate REAL's 30th anniversary. Yes, 30 years! A great meal, yummy appetizers, local beers, Ontario wines, some local musical entertainment and a really impressive silent auction make this an evening not to be missed. "Many hands make light work" as they say, so we would welcome your help on the organizing team, if you are so inclined. Contact Donna at (613) 283-2254 or andisondj@gmail.com. The first meeting is happening soon!

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Sat. Oct. 19, 2019

**RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

We're on the Web
www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.,
Smiths Falls ON
613-283-7999

Store open Thursdays
through Saturdays 10 –5
and until the fall,
Sundays 11- 4

For Home Energy Audits,
contact Alan Leonard
alanleonard9@gmail.com
or (613) 864-3099

Facebook Groups:
REAL Deal Store
REAL
Community Garden

Send contributions to the
September issue by August 15
to dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

The REAL Deal — More than Just a Reuse Store

Wish Book Record what you are looking for so we can call you if it comes in.	Radon Meter Lending Borrow a meter for two weeks to check radon levels in your home. Book ahead.	Dishware Lending Borrow plates, glasses, mugs, cutlery etc. for your next event and avoid disposables.
End of Life Electronics Drop off your old computers, televisions, cell phones etc. to be recycled.	Kill a Watt Meters Use this device to measure the electricity use of plug in appliances. Also at local libraries.	Helping Other Organizations We donate specific excess materials to other local non-profits.
Other Waste Materials We accept batteries, print and toner cartridges, scrap metal, used writing instruments, and milk bags.	Gardens We have a new monarch garden, plots for rent at our community garden and a native garden.	Compost Demonstration Site We have a shelter with several styles of compost-er for you to consider.
Rain Barrel Sales Conserve water in your yard. \$55 plus tax.	Kids Books are Free Located opposite our book nook.	Solar Wall Two panels on our south wall give us free supplementary heat.

**Ask at the store, call (613) 283-7999
or see www.REALaction.ca**

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