

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

25 Years of Environmental Action

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2015

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Community Builders Recognized at June 6 Victoria Park Ceremony

During a special outdoor ceremony alongside the Rideau Canal June 6, nine community members and veterans were recognized through the Evergreen Avenue project. Inscribed granite tribute stones had been installed the week before along the pathway in Victoria Park, and were marked with small Canadian flags. Just before the ceremony, a recently installed interpretive panel was unveiled at the west end of the path.



Shawn Merriman, Susan Brandum and Linda Myers by the new Evergreen panel.

The event date was chosen to coincide with Environment Week and the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and began with a Royal Canadian Legion Branch 95 Colour Party. Included in the program were touching addresses by SFDCI students Carlin Henneberry and Jared Hayes, about their experiences in the school's Lest We Forget program and their visits to European battle sites.

Dick Donaldson, Evergreen Co-Chair, and Barb Hicks gave brief tributes to veterans Omar Beckett, Alex Banford and Jack Rabb, REAL members Pat Foulkes, Carolyn Fraser, Larry Manson, as well as Roy Wilson and Bill and Dorothy Hudson.

Creation of the panel was coordinated by Susan Brandum, with Linda Myers doing the design work. Shawn Merriman ensured it was installed just in the nick of time for the ceremony. The panel was possible thanks to a donation by Tom Foulkes and his late wife Pat, which also covered the REAL sign and facelift to REAL's home base on William St.

Peter Au's concluding remarks highlighted the need to enlist new, younger people to join the Evergreen Committee of REAL to ensure this living memorial continues and the demonstration native plantings is maintained.

For more information about volunteering or sponsoring a memorial stone, contact Dick Donaldson at 613-283-3274 or Peter Au, 284-8338. The students' comments, the tributes, and a list of all the stones placed on Evergreen Avenue to date are all on our [website](#).



REAL Action Grant Reports Rolling In

Reports and photos from the eight \$250 REAL Action grants awarded last fall are rolling in. Our 25th anniversary celebrations, which included these grants, were funded by a generous donation by REAL supporter Tom Foulkes. So far we have heard from groups planting a pumpkin patch, expanding their school garden, improving their group home's garbage and recycling arrangements, and feeding their high school's winter field camp studying climate change. The remaining grantees have until the end of June to report back to us.



Top Left: Drummond Central School's pumpkin patch. The grant allowed them to purchase rain barrels and other supplies.

Left: SFDCI Food Program and Special Needs Class built some raised garlic beds for their existing community garden.

Above: Dinnertime at Carleton Place High School's Enviro Project environmental studies winter field camp.

Revamped Website Goes Live

Our long awaited revamped website was launched June 13th. Access it using the same address as before, www.REALaction.ca.

The new site will be more compatible with hand held devices, make photo manipulation simpler, and offer the possibility of plug ins for added features. Best of all, it can be updated more simply from any computer.

A big thank you to Web Designer Chris Woods of Purple Press who modified the design template and worked with Barb Hicks to get the existing website material brought over to the new system.

Please report any glitches you find, or information you would like to see, using the contact page. We are still putting on some finishing touches and welcome your input.

Waste and Recycle Information Day

REAL was given a rare opportunity to learn more about what happens to our garbage and recycling after it gets picked up.

Howard McCrae of TOPPS Environmental Solutions, the company that picks up the garbage at the REAL Deal, offered us a number of seats for a full-day tour of their facilities and those at Moose Creek on June 2. Most of the 30 people attending were municipal councillors or municipal staff. Sue Brandum, Barb Hicks and our new Renovations Manager, Steve Rawlings, were able to attend.

Our tour began at TOPPS' waste transfer station on Hwy 7 between Carleton Place and the Queensway, where we were issued hard hats and safety vests. TOPPS picks up garbage and recycling from a number of municipalities in Lanark County, but not Smiths Falls.

The current strategy is to get people putting all their recycling in one container without sorting, so that ultimately more is captured. TOPPS uses two-sided trucks, one side for recycling, one side for garbage, so they only have to send one truck down the same road.

At the transfer site, the recyclables and garbage are offloaded, somewhat sorted, and the material moved on within 24 hours, unlike traditional facilities. Most of the process happens inside the building, as the goal is to not make it obvious what is happening at the site. Both types of material are taken to Moose Creek, so the tour group boarded a coach bus to that facility east of Ottawa to see what happens next.



Steve Rawlings and Sue Brandum

The Lafleche facility in Moose Creek is the largest and most modern waste handling facility in Eastern Ontario. It handles garbage, recyclables, compost, and e-waste from three transfer facilities: the one we visited in Beckwith, as well as two in Belleville and Russell, who collect from smaller municipalities in Eastern Ontario.

Brian Kingford, President of Lafleche, met us in the boardroom and gave a fascinating account of what goes on at the facility. After a complimentary hot lunch, we boarded the bus to tour the 500 acre property. All the materials collected remain at the facility only temporarily.

The recyclables are shipped to a facility in St. Hubert, Quebec, where a combination of automated and people "pickers" sort it. Tires are sent to a neighbouring facility that grinds them up for animal barn mats.

The garbage is put into specially designed "BioReactor cells", a technology that encourage rain and snowmelt to percolate through the garbage. The leachate is captured and processed in a sophisticated waste water treatment plant. The methane gases are captured and burned to produce electricity that is fed back into the grid through Ontario's FIT program. The cell contents will have decomposed within about 15 years and will be ready to be mined for their materials. A conventional landfill might not have full decomposition for 50 years.

About 25% of the material coming into the site is compostables. These are processed in concrete channels in an indoor facility. By adding dry bulking material (e.g. wood chips), turning it over, and closely monitoring the temperature, it becomes compost in a very fast 21 days. It is sold to area farmers in one tonne lots.

The e-waste is amassed in a building: the larger items on pallets, the smaller things in giant cardboard crates. OES advises where to send that particular shipment based on volume. Frequently the e-waste goes to Oshawa to be dismantled.

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Repurposing Fun at the REAL Deal

Two mosaic flower pot workshops held at the REAL Deal April 25 and May 2 were popular and a lot of fun. Artist Carol Richardson demonstrated how to use old china and ceramic plates to liven up plain terracotta plant pots. Participants were given all the supplies needed to complete their project, including the grout needed to finish the project once the glue used to affix the late fragments had dried. The plant pots and dishes used all came from the REAL Deal.

Our sincere appreciation to Carol for donating her expertise and artistry to these workshops. Thanks, too, to Daisy Au, Leann Merriman, and Shannon and Barb Hicks for the advance “smashing party” to prepare materials for the second workshop.

REAL is interested in promoting repurposing projects as a way to reuse materials, particularly those that can be supplied from the REAL Deal. Plentiful items like mason jars, tiles, glassware, trays, fan blades and hardware are a few examples. The REAL Deal has offered workshops in the past, encourages customers to bring us photos, and has binders of repurposing ideas for inspiration.

A workshop on stained glass window mosaics is being considered for the fall. Due to space limitations, the process would be outlined and the attendees would practice skills by making a smaller stained glass suncatcher project in a picture frame.



Also in the works is a repurposing ideas display. We would take over the REAL Deal’s “outer office” for a week to feature projects that ordinary folks have created with used materials. Hopefully this would inspire visitors to undertake their own projects, and gauge what sorts of small projects could be the focus of future workshops.

If the mosaic window workshop or repurposing display interest you, please contact us by email or leave your name at the REAL Deal cash.

Moose Creek Tour (continued)

The company is always looking for other ways of handling components of the waste stream and new, improved ways of doing things. Lafleche is interested in processing mattresses: separating the fabric, wood frames and metal springs. They would like to find a way of dealing with lumber in the waste stream. Lafleche plans additional heat extraction from the power generation to raise organic vegetables or tilapia fish, and to place solar cells on top of their finished garbage cells.

The company has even bought a falcon and trained an employee as falconer to keep the gulls circling the garbage under control. The falcon attacks the gulls, but is not permitted to consume them. The gulls know what might happen and take off whenever they see the falcon transport van approaching.

Thanks to TOPPS for arranging this fascinating day. It was Howard McCrae of TOPPS who donated the three bins REAL is using out back of the store for its own garbage and scrap metal, following an introduction by Shawn Merriman.

REAL Deal News

The REAL Deal is expanding its operation to serve our customers better, to take better advantage of the large quantity of renovation materials out there that could be reused, and to improve the profitability of the store.

Megadome. One key component of this plan is a Megadome coverall for the backyard. This domed structure will make it possible to accept and store more renovation materials. This is a major investment for REAL, and it will be financed in part by some sponsors for the large bricks that form its base or for the arch supports. We thank Tom Foulkes for his donation to kick start the process! Ends will be added once finances allow.

Because the building sits on Parks Canada land, and a corner of it is on the floodplain, our application needed to be reviewed by Parks Canada, the RVCA and the Town of Smiths Falls. By the time you read this newsletter it should be full speed ahead! Thanks to President Shawn Merriman for negotiating a great price, and for negotiating the permit process. The green colour was chosen to not interfere with the view from the swale. Thanks to “the guys” for all the moving of materials that was necessary to clear space for the coverall. The sale of the foundation stone from last summer’s 140 Elmsley St. tearout help create some space too!

Store Wide 50% Off Sale. Our annual 50% off sale ran for two weeks, May 14 – 23, and was a great success. The store had impressive sales each day, and we moved lots of materials, which will make room for donations over the busy summer season.

Where to Bring Donations. If your donation is small, come in through the customer door and bring it to a staff member’s attention. But don’t run away before you tell us where you are from! We track weights of goods by municipality. If your donation is large and you need help unloading, please proceed to the back gate.

Volunteers. There are many changes on the volunteer front. On the cash you will see Nancy Berthiaume, Heather Warren, Judy Mundy, or maybe even the Manager, Tracy Thomson. Our recently hired summer student, Jane Ford, will be taking a turn as well.

Arthur Janes’ paid position has ended, as well as Chance Lockett’s Ontario Works placement with REAL. Both continue to volunteer while they search for paid employment—we appreciate their dedication! Some Ontario Works placements will be starting soon. Jeremy Takerer, son of board member Jason Takerer, is volunteering with us one half day a week for the summer.

REAL Retreat Connects REAL People

REAL staff, volunteers, board, and key supporters had an opportunity to mingle at a mini-retreat the evening of Earth Day, April 22. The group met at Tay River Reflections just outside Perth, where they enjoyed the beautiful setting and a buffet dinner. Sadly, it was too rainy to use the trails around the property.

REAL has done brief retreats before to help the Board connect and re-examine REAL priorities with the assistance of a facilitator. But this time the plan was to just relax and get to know one another. Oddly enough, some of these important players in our organizations had not met before, so that was worthwhile in itself.



Expansion Plans: Meet our New Manager of Renovation Materials

REAL has embarked on its expansion plans for its REAL Deal Reuse Store.

Please introduce yourselves to Steve Rawlings, our new Manager of Renovation Materials, when you're next in the store. Steve was most recently the owner and operator of Roto-Static Cleaning Services in Smiths Falls. But before becoming an entrepreneur, Steve had 25 years experience in construction management and supervision. He is a licensed carpenter and has worked with many of the trades in the region. Welcome Steve!

Having Steve on board will allow us to expand the renovation materials department, to do so many of the things that we have long discussed and wished for (such as building strong relations with contractors) and have just not had the resources to do, including expanding our hours.

Expanded Hours for the REAL Deal. During April and May we conducted a customer survey to determine what additional hours people would like the REAL Deal to be open. Our current hours are Thurs., Fri., and Sat. from 10 am to 4 pm. We received an impressive 285 responses, half from customers who are signed up on our REAL Deal Facebook page, and half from customers coming through the store. Interestingly, the end result of the two groups was basically the same. Customers have clearly told us they want longer hours on Friday evening, want us to open on Sunday afternoon and want us to open an additional day, Wednesday.

Because the REAL Deal is so dependent on volunteers, we cannot easily add hours or days. We will first be extending hours on Friday evening to 6 pm and will be open Sunday afternoons from 12 to 4 pm. Watch Facebook and local media for announcements of specific dates.

Tracy Thomson will no longer be stretched so thin trying to cover all the departments. She will be able to focus more on all the other departments, including furniture, décor, art, small appliances, books, and her specialties: the vintage, collectors and silent auction.



Board members Barb Hicks and Karen Schechter. Karen was awarded an Honorary Membership in REAL at our AGM on June 17 at the Smiths Falls Community Health Centre. Attendees enjoyed a pot-luck dinner and heard about 2014 activities and priorities for the coming year.

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at the REAL Deal
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(613) 283-7999

In REAL Life

Stone Soup Sharing Plot. REAL has a sharing plot at the REAL Community Garden that is maintained by Donna McKenna. You are welcome to help yourself to any herbs or produce in that plot. But please don't touch what is in the other 11 rented plots.



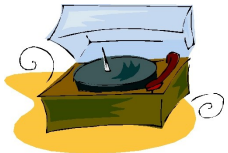
Another successful **Customer Ask at Address' YIG** took place June 1 – 7 to coincide with Environment Week. Cashiers asked customers if they would like to donate a toonie to their local environmental group, REAL. We raised \$726! Thanks to Dan Address and staff for making this annual event possible, and Donna McKenna for being the REAL organizer.



Our **e-waste collection bin** at the REAL Deal continues to be a popular destination for local residents looking to safely dispose of unwanted electronics, like TVs, stereos and computers. We are filling a bin every week or two, and our total tonnage for 2014 came to 45 tonnes. See [our website](#) or the [OES website](#) for a list of what is accepted.



Thanks to the schools, groups and individuals who participated in **Pitch In Smiths Falls, April 18 – May 2**. Smiths Falls looks a lot neater because these folks took the time to clean up the litter from public spaces. Thanks to our sponsors, Tim Horton's and Walmart, and to everyone who helped behind the scenes: Cathryn Davidson, Barb Hicks, Marla McKenna and Brenda King.



E-waste Drive. Look for an e-waste drive this fall. With the help of the Lions and Mills Community Support, we will be able to pick electronics up at people's homes. This will be a valuable option for moving those super-heavy big screen TVs and older style TV and stereo cabinet units.



Spring is a busy time for **community events**. Volunteers spoke to festival goers at the **North Grenville Sustainability Fair** April 26, talked about energy audits and the REAL Deal at the **Smiths Falls Home Show** May 2 and 3, promoted the REAL Deal at the **Merrickville Go Green Fair** May 9 and described volunteer opportunities at the **Volunteer Search** event held at SFDCI May 13. Thanks to Sue Brandum, Alan Leonard, Peter Au, Barb Hicks and especially Leann Merriman for their role in preparing for and staffing these events.



Our annual **Local Foods Harvest Dinner** will be taking place Saturday, October 17th at the Galipeau Centre. Bruce Enloe formerly of The Branch restaurant, Kemptville and Manager of the Two Rivers Food Hub will be preparing a delicious, locally sourced buffet dinner. Local beers and Ontario wines will be featured, and there will be an opportunity to tour the Two Rivers Food Hub facility. Watch the local media and our website as they become available.

<http://www>

- Amazing two-minute video of a murmuration of starlings viewed by two girls in a canoe on the River Shannon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRNqhi2ka9k>
- Fatbergs the length of Boeing 747s: Wet wipes and mess they cause in the Thames River. <http://news.nationalpost.com/health/waste-superbugs-and-fatbergs-can-you-handle-the-dirty-truth-about-wet-wipes>
- Where do junked containerships go? National Geographic story on the Bangladesh ship-breaking yards. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/05/shipbreakers/gwin-text>.

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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 Septem-
ber issue by Aug. 15, 2015 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Bottle Drive

Friday - Sunday, August 7 - 9
The Beer Store, Smiths Falls

Cans, beer bottles, wine
bottles, liquor bottles (glass
or plastic) and tetrapaks all
earn cash for REAL!



We ask customers outside The
Beer Store if they'd like to donate
their empties, and cash them in.
Volunteers must be at least 19.

Call Karen at 283-4604
or schechter@vianet.ca to
volunteer for two hours

We will also accept donations at
the REAL Deal beginning July 24.
Call if you have a large quantity.

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