

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Town Square Grand Opening

The Grand Opening of the Town Square at 77 Beckwith St. N., Smiths Falls took place July 28 with a fun community celebration complete with speeches, music and theatre presentations, clowning, face painting, refreshments and beautiful weather. Many people contributed to making this great community space. It is wonderful that the vision of Pat and Tom Foulkes for a bandstand has come to life. The Foulkes were active REAL members, and supported many REAL projects over the years. The square features interlocking brick paths, benches, a pebble mosaic and gardens.



The Town Square grand opening July 28 with the bandstand in the background and the pebble mosaic installed to honour those affected by domestic violence in the foreground.

Within Town Square are the two pollinator gardens planted by REAL in 2021 as part of our Depave Paradise project. Volunteers helped physically remove Daniel St. pavement to make way for green space. A sign was installed describing Depave. The inclusion of some native trees had to be delayed until the paths and pavilion were in place. The Town of Smiths Falls helped by planting the mountain ash, basswood, white birch clump and hemlock this June. Also added this year was a sign, similar to the one used in the monarch gardens in front of the REAL Deal, indicating the gardens' Monarch Waystation status. REAL's Monarch team maintains the gardens we planted downtown, as well as those at 85 William Street.



REAL has Monarch Waystation status for our gardens downtown and at the REAL Deal.



Una Pugh—Volunteer Extraordinaire

It's not for money, It's not for fame
 It's not for any personal fame,
 It's just for love of fellow man,
 It's just to lend a helping hand.
 It's just to give a tithe of self,
 That's something you can't buy with wealth.
 It's not for medals won with pride
 It's for that feeling deep inside.
 It's that reward down in your heart,
 That feeling that you have been a part
 Of helping others far and near
 That makes you be a volunteer.

This poem is a favourite of Una Pugh.

Una has been volunteering ever since she can remember. Six days out of seven, she is busy helping other people and organizations, including REAL.

This spring Una was presented with a June Callwood Award by Hospice Palliative Care Ontario. The award is given to acknowledge and thank outstanding hospice volunteers. Una has volunteered with Lanark County Home support for 37 years, visiting and supporting palliative care and other patients in their homes or hospital two days a week.

Other volunteer involvements have included running the Anglican Church nursery on Sunday mornings for 20 years, helping with the church's community dinners before COVID, and being a Brownie leader. She also knits – a lot. Una manages to knit 100 pairs of mitts - has each year for four years - for school children here in Smiths Falls. She has already knit 77 pairs and plans to deliver them in October.

We are especially fortunate to have Una volunteering for REAL. She started at the REAL Reuse Centre back in the early 90's, and still volunteers on Saturday mornings at the REAL Deal store in smalls, sorting and pricing donations. She enjoys presenting children in the store with a stuffed animal if she has the chance. She has been a dedicated REAL member, attending most Annual General Meetings, and in the mid 2000s was recognized as a Honorary Member of REAL. When asked why she volunteers for REAL, she says



Una, who is 89 years young, still volunteers at the REAL Deal on Saturday mornings.

she enjoys herself when she is at the store. Friends and neighbours know she is associated with the store and give her donations to bring when she comes.

All this activity would be too much for many people, but Una is 89 years young. She came to Canada from Yorkshire, England in 1959. Not many people can say they have great great grandchildren, but she has two (along with 7 great grandchildren, 12 grandchildren and 7 children!)

REAL is very fortunate to have Una in our corner - literally. Please drop by the back of the store some Saturday morning to say "hi" to Una.

REAL Deal News—15 Years at 85 William Street

15th Anniversary Celebrations. This year marked 15 years for the REAL Deal at this William St. location. (We operated for one year before that at a Lombard St. location). So we set aside the week of August 23 to 26 to celebrate. On Saturday we offered refreshments to customers, and Dr. Marina Quattrocchi offered a qigong demonstration in the garden. Through the week we offered a 25% discount on store sales (vintage and antiques excepted). Customers were keen to take advantage of the discount and the store experienced excellent sales that week.

Metroland Gives Back. Our thanks to Metroland media for providing a free colour ad for the anniversary week in the Smiths Falls Record News. Through their Metroland Gives Back program there will be an additional three advertising spots allocated to us before the end of the year.

Unusual Year for Sales and Donations. While donations and sales have picked up in recent weeks, it has been an unusual year, as in early summer donations and sales were much slower than usual. The reasons are not clear, but the slowdown in donations is not unique to the REAL Deal. People have many choices when they are unloading used goods, including selling the goods themselves through Marketplace, Kijiji and the like, so that is probably a factor. To an outsider, the store inventory was still substantial, so there is still plenty to buy. Perhaps the economy is factor in reduced sales. Early in the season people are busy with their yards, gardens and other outdoor activities, so store traffic can be slower because of that.

On the bright side, we have had several very nice donations of high quality used windows from Healey's Glass, and the windows are excellent sellers. We also received quite a few books that did not sell at the Friends of the Library sale in June.

Summer Student Funding. We were disappointed that our application for HRSDC funding for two summer staff was not approved, but again, this was the case for many non-profits. REAL felt we would need the extra hands with volunteers and staff taking vacations, so hired Jonathan Drummond, who

worked for us the past two summers. In addition to sorting and pricing incoming donations, he handled tool library transactions, helped in the yard when needed, and did some watering and other tasks that came up. See Jon's farewell on page 6.

Yard Staff. There have been several new faces in the yard, many of whom came to us through the local OnTrac Employment Resource Centre. You may have encountered Shawn, Noah, Marshall, Bill, Andrew and Morgan, some of whom have already done their placements. We thank everyone for their help filling in while regulars Tim, Jim and Arnold were away, over what was yet another incredibly hot summer. Chester was often asked to fill in outside as well.



Some REAL people on the Saturday of our 15th anniversary celebration:
Back row: Dan Cunningham, Jon Drummond, Andrew Theriault, Tim Saunders. Front row: Cynthia Code, Barb Hicks, Bev Frizzell, Jim MacPherson, Chester Tarkowski, and Donna McKenna.

Promotions. Promotions this summer included best selling authors, furniture, windows, dolls, bowls and a 25% off sale for students. Our challenge is to keep the goods moving, so that sometimes means giving things away for free. Be sure to check the free section outside when you come. We are also freeing more wall art than we have in the past because we get so much of it. We have a larger than usual collection of Christmas paraphernalia, so watch for that merchandise to come out in October. The fall decorations are already out, and the Halloween items won't be far behind. As always, keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for upcoming promotions.

Pet Friendly Smiths Falls

The REAL Deal store has joined the Pet Friendly Smiths Falls program initiated by the Town of Smiths Falls this summer. On the town's website is a list and map of 22 various businesses that have agreed that pets are welcome on their premises. (Note that in the case of restaurants, this applies to patios only). A decal was provided to businesses participating as well as a supply of black bandanas to present to the first pets coming in. (Sorry, we have given all of ours out already!) The REAL Deal has welcomed pets for many years now, mostly because we did not want to have pets having to wait in hot cars in the summer while their owners shopped.



The program includes a sample policy that suggests some specifications such as the pets must be vaccinated, well-behaved and on a leash, and the owners must clean up any pet waste accidents. In the case of the REAL Deal, we do allow pets in arms or carriers also, we just can't have pets moving about on their own causing tripping hazards or making other customers nervous. While we are on the topic, if you walk your pet on our property or tie them to a tree while you shop, you are also responsible for scooping any poop that results! And finally, the manager reserves the right to ask that any pet be removed from the premises if it becomes disruptive.

Making the Ewaste Depot Work

Providing a depot for used electronics is an important part of REAL's services as well as a money maker for our little non-profit. We are paid by the weight for the materials collected. Please help us make this work more smoothly by noting these guidelines.

- Any local householder may bring materials regardless of where they live, but organizations wanting to donate large loads should inquire elsewhere.
- Donations should be made during store hours: Wed through Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm
- Please do not come onto the property outside of those times. The gate is a signal not a challenge.
- You do not need to tell us you are leaving materials provided you know they are accepted.
- Leave materials along the wall or alongside the bin. Do not leave appliances in front of the bin doors even if someone else has done so!
- No scavenging in the bin is permitted. We are trying to keep the bin locked more often so you won't be tempted. Remember, people expect their contributions to be recycled responsibly, and we make money from it, so if you take it you are stealing.
- Electric appliances are now accepted, so anything with a plug is OK with a few notable exceptions:
- No vacuum cleaners, large appliances (stoves, dishwashers etc.), or appliances containing coolant (dehumidifiers, water coolers, air conditioners, mini fridges) are accepted.
- Please, no projection TVs over 50 pounds; we do not have the equipment to move them safely.
- Do not leave other junk or garbage.



What's wrong with this picture? Please do not place electronic waste in front of the bin doors, as then it has to be moved twice!

Please ask, [email us](#), or see our website if you need clarification.

Evergreen Dedication Coming Up

REAL's Evergreen Avenue Committee will be hosting a Memorial Stone Dedication on Sunday, September 17. Evergreen Avenue began in 2000 as both a living memorial and a community beautification environmental project in Victoria Park. It honours veterans, peacekeepers, residents and families of the Smiths Falls area with dedication stones along a shaded walkway featuring native trees and shrubs.

This year four recipients will be recognized: John Halpin, Hal Botham, Clayton Holbrook and Jack Traynor. Descriptions of the four men will be included on REAL's website, where you can also see a listing of all the granite stones that have been placed along the path in Victoria Park since this program began. Details on three of the community builders are included here.

Jack Traynor. Jack was raised in the Perth area but his working life brought him to Smiths Falls where he was employed with Pepsi for many years and was a big part of public relations of the local bottler. Jack was a hockey fan and served as a director of minor hockey locally for years. Jack was a gregarious individual who made friends with everyone. He worked in the car sales business for many years and his strong connection to the community made him a popular stop for the car buyers who knew him. Jack was a former Trustee with the Catholic School Board of Eastern Ontario and then served as a Town Councillor for the Town of Smiths Falls. He and his wife Evelyn raised their family in Smiths Falls. Jack was also an active member of the Smiths Falls Rotary Club bringing his enthusiasm and energy to the table. Jack exemplified "Service Above Self".

Clayton Holbrook. Clayton has strong roots in the community, having being raised on a farm and having long career with Canadian Pacific Express & Transport. At the time of his passing, Clayton was the longest serving Smiths Falls Rotarian with over 60 years of service to the community. He was always one of the doers at the Club who was there to lend a hand where and when possible. His smile was infectious and he had countless friends and acquaintances through his life and Rotarian Service.

Clayton was a regular worker at the Rotary fairs and functions as well as a frequent volunteer at Rotary Bingo. Clayton exemplified "Service Above Self".

Hal Botham. Hal Botham was a well-known broadcaster for more than 40 years. Most of his time as a broadcaster was here in Smiths Falls at CJET 630AM and CFMO 101.1 FM.

Hal lived his life to the fullest. He was either at an event helping out or at a meeting to help plan an event.

Hal was "The Morning Mayor." A name our former Town Mayor Tom Ashwell called him. Hal did the morning show and many people welcomed him in to their homes to find out the latest news, weather, sports and everything local in Smiths Falls and area.

Hal loved to tell a joke. He enjoyed talking about the good people in our area and what they were up to. Quite often he would invite people in to the studio with him to tell their story or sing their song.

Hal enjoyed flight. He built model airplanes and kites. He shared his knowledge and interest in flight by speaking at schools and teaching the "theory of flight" to our local air cadets. When he had time and the weather was good, he would be out flying one of his planes or kites.

Hal passed away suddenly on April 1, 1997, the night before he turned 61 years old.

Hal loved to tell the stories of the good people in our area. He was one of the good ones too and we continue to remember him and tell his story.

John Halpin. A description of John, a WW 2 veteran, will be on our website after the dedication.

The dedication will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17 at the Smiths Falls Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Sinclair's Pack a Lot Into a Small Space

Thanks to Craig and Beth Sinclair for hosting a tour of their naturalized Smiths Falls garden Sept. 6. Over the last three years they have created a spectacular example of biodiversity on their suburban lot beside TR Leger School.

Craig noticed that 70% of the trees and plants in Smiths Falls were non-native and set out to create a forest of native trees, shrubs and plants that provide food for people and animals, as well as habitat for wildlife. A few differences between their property and typical yards: no grass, a pond that supports the fish even through the winter, a forest feel in the front and side yards with the space planted right out to the curb, densely planted trees (three per square metre) and a densely planted backyard of fruits, herbs and plants that benefit particular wildlife species. No watering is required except in the first year when plants are being established, and he uses no pesticides.



Craig Sinclair describing how the first 1.5 metres from the curb are perennial pollinator plants, and the next metre is for native fruit bearing shrubs.

To create the forest environment he started with a cardboard base of multiple dump trucks of wood chips, included logs from his and his neighbours trees, and has left several brush piles for wildlife. The plants he tried to source locally (such as from the Ferguson Forest Centre), and has rescued plants from other sites, and grown half of what he has from seed. A few he has secured through mail order. The result is over 50 tree species, and at least 10 kinds of fruits. He also has a nursery of about 75 seedlings he gives away to others hoping to establish more native species in their yards. There is a lot going on in small space!



A little pond is just steps away from the Sinclairs front door.

Craig and Beth wrote about their Food Forest in the [February 2022 REAL Update](#). And their story was featured prominently in ["Our Shared Garden"](#) in the May/June issue of Canadian Geographic. For a list of the trees, shrubs and flowers they have planted, see [Craig's Reddit post](#).

Some REAL board members and Karl Grenke, Planner for the Town of Smiths Falls attended this particular tour. (Some other Town staff had planned to come but were called away.) REAL is interested in pursuing some other tree planting projects, possibly in partnership with the Town of Smiths Falls, and are looking at possible sites and themes, such as a fruit forest or a mini urban forest. The Sinclairs' garden gave us lots of food for thought!

Parting Words from Jon Drummond

I've had a terrific time working at the REAL Deal Store over the past three summers. It has been a great experience in regard to both the work environment itself as well as the skills I've learned during my time there. REAL is a wonderful opportunity for high-schoolers looking for a first job that is truly unlike many others. I've met so many great people and I've learned so much from my time at REAL. As saddened as I am to leave, I am confident my time at the store has left me prepared as I go forward with university and eventually my career. Thank you so much to everyone I've worked with and I wish you all the best!

In REAL Life



August 12. REAL participated in two local events on Sat. Aug. 12. Jon Drummond, our summer student, represented REAL at the **Friends of the Tay Watershed (FoTW) annual Watershed Discovery Day**. Held in the Crystal Palace in Perth, our display featured the REAL Deal Store, our greening projects, and some greener gardening tips. We were pleased to hear that Jon fielded lots of questions about the Tool Library and volunteering. We were also represented at the **RMEO's Trainfest** that same day. Volunteers handed out vouchers good for 25% off purchases (that day only) to encourage visitors to make a stop across the road at the REAL Deal.



Community Garden Photos. One of our community gardeners, Virginia Toffanello, has taken some great photos of the garden this year. You can see some highlights [using this link](#). Note that these plots are for those gardeners exclusively, the produce is not available to the public. Let [Katie Hoffman](#) know if you are interested in a plot for next year. Cost is \$25.



The Monarch Garden Committee has recruited some new volunteers for the weekly gardening sessions. They welcome newcomers Joanne Constantine, Betty Couch and Donna Dale who have joined Mercedes Steedman, Beth Graham, Lori Nichols and Elizabeth Tucker. Marje Fletcher and Donna McKenna lead the garden group. Cynthia Code, a high school student, helped us out later in the summer, as well as working in smalls, to fulfill her community service hours.



School Trees. Thanks to Craig Sinclair and his family for looking after the 30 newly planted trees over the summer. This involved visiting the six schools every week or two. In one case water was not accessible and had to be brought in. All of the trees have survived and their care is now being passed over to each school.



REAL Tool Library. Be sure to check out what we have in our lending library if you need tools for your fall projects. See the website for a [list of what we have available](#); the first page is a summary. We are also looking for volunteers to handle the loans and returns for a few hours each week. Call Katie (613) 983-3360 or email ToolLibrary@REALaction.ca if you would like to find out more.



Silent Auction 2023. Plans are underway for our fourth annual online auction November 15—25. We have accumulated some great items for this fundraiser. We would really like to include some local products, crafts or services as well. If you have something to contribute please reach out to [Donna McKenna](#) by mid-October. What sets our auction apart is its affordability. The minimum bids and final prices are all very reasonable, so more people can participate and have fun with it! If you are curious, the 2022 auction results can still be viewed at 32auctions.com/REAL2022.



Home Energy Audits. Alan Leonard is back doing home energy assessments in our area. Contact him at alanleoard9@gmail.com. John Appleby will complete the post audits for clients who have had a pre audit by him, but will not be taking on any new clients. These assessments are necessary for homeowners to qualify for grants under the Home Efficiency Rebate Plus (HER+) program.

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

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www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

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

Open Wednesday
through Saturdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Ask about our
new Tool Library**

For Home Energy Audits,
contact Alan Leonard at:
alanleonard9@gmail.com

**Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram**

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Sustainable Gardening Tips for the Fall

1. Distribute completed compost on your garden to leave more room for the kitchen scraps you will collect in the winter.
2. Stockpile leaves for layering your compost.
3. Spread some leaves in garden beds, they will decompose by spring.
4. Go over leaves on your lawn with a mulching mower. The leaves add nutrients and provide some weed control.
5. Plant some bulbs, you'll be happy you did come spring. This is the time to plant garlic too!
6. Plant trees and shrubs, you may find some on sale this time of year.
7. Collect the seeds of your flowers and vegetables. Store them in a cool, dry place, then plant them in the spring.
8. Dispose of diseased or pest-ridden plants to reduce problems next year.
9. Take cuttings to grow indoors. For example, coleus, geraniums, and sweet potato vine will root easily in water.
10. Don't tidy up the garden too much. Leave perennials untrimmed to provide seedheads and places for little birds and creatures to shelter.
11. Winterize your rain barrel by draining it and storing it upside down.
12. Give you birdfeeders a good cleaning if you didn't in the spring.



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REAL
Difference**

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REAL
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Smiths Falls, ON
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Or bring to
The REAL Deal

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A charitable receipt for
income tax purposes will
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