

REAL

Annual Report

Feb. 1, 2018 to Jan. 31, 2019

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

REAL is pleased to present this summary of our past year. We have our ongoing projects for which we have become known: Pitch-In Smiths Falls and home energy assessments, for example. This year's initiatives included offering radon meters for lending, public presentations, and approaching restaurants about plastic straw use. New projects allow us to react to events going on in our community and the world, and being able to take an initiative from idea stage onwards is very rewarding. The REAL Deal continues to occupy much of our resources. But the store and the site are a focus for other activities such as the community garden and e-waste collection, and is an opportunity to interact with the public, so it all contributes to the big picture.

Continuing these environmental initiatives requires human resources. We have some very dedicated people, particularly our working board, but their time and energy has its limits. REAL urgently needs more people to lend a hand. In particular, we would encourage you to join a project team so that the board can concentrate on the bigger picture. If you are unable to volunteer, we would welcome your participation in other ways, such as being a member, supporting the store, or participating in events. Together we can make a REAL difference.



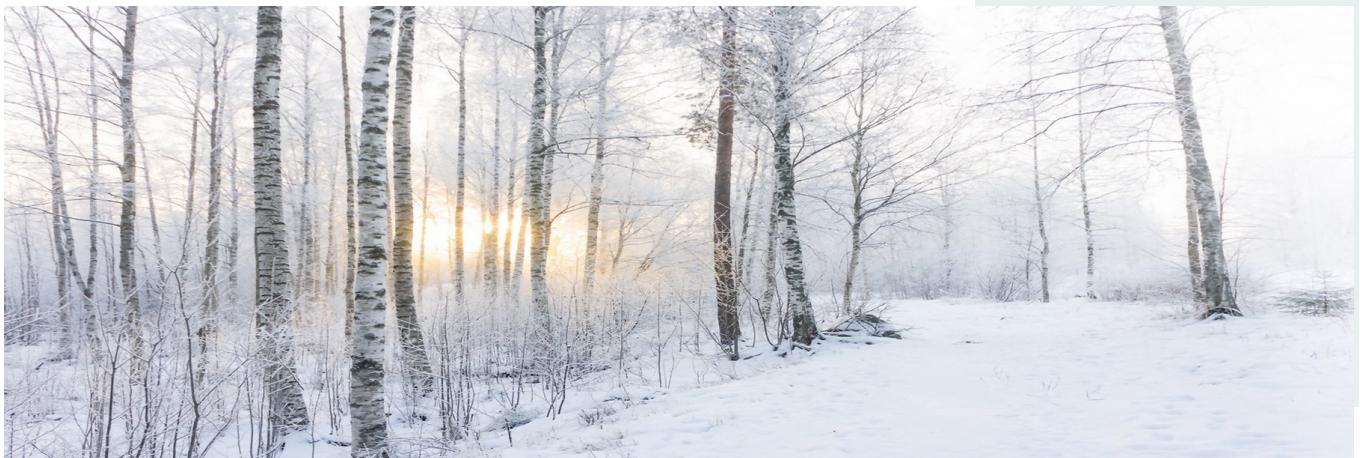
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

THE
REAL DEAL
STORE
AND ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

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

Store Open
Thurs.—Sat.
10 a.m.—4 p.m.
and seasonally
Sun. 12—4

www.REALaction.ca



THE REAL DEAL STORE

The REAL Deal Reuse Store continues to make a big dent in the amount of waste generated by local residents. By accepting gently used household and renovation materials we have diverted 42,000 kgs of materials from local landfills, and given some great deals to 10,000 area residents.

The end of life electronics continue to pour in, generating over \$6000 in income, and ensuring old computers, televisions and stereo systems are recycled responsibly in Ontario. The store continues to accept additional materials not accepted in municipal recycling programs, and has added used writing instruments to the list. We also lend dishware to anyone planning a large event so that they can avoid using disposables.

Sunday afternoon hours were in effect from May 6 until October 14. Renovations Manager Don Mathewson moved on in June, and In Store Manager Shelley Wills retired in the fall. We welcomed a new Store Manager to the team in November. Dan Cunningham will be responsible for the smooth operations of the store inside and out. A REAL Deal Committee was initiated to solicit broader input on store operations.

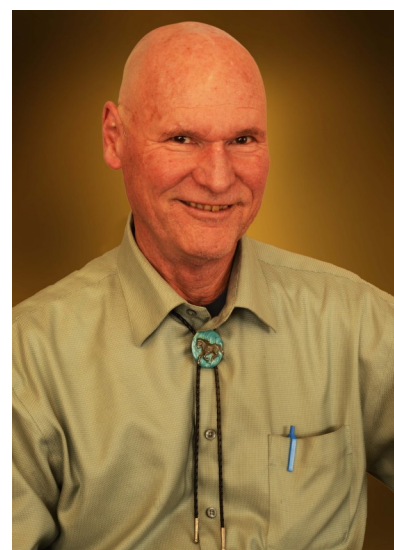
The REAL Deal operates with a combination of paid part time staff, volunteers and placements. This summer two of our yard staff, Don Harvey and Tim Dupras, graduated from volunteer to paid part-time staff, and were joined by new hire Matt Benoit. Heather Warren and Tiffany Carol are being paid for their cashier hours. Regular volunteers include Nancy Andison, Ed Crawford, Heather Jones, Brenda King, Judy Mundy, Diane Pearen, Una Pugh, Barb Hicks and Donna McKenna. However, many others too numerous to mention have helped at the store through work placements, subsidized programs or for special projects. We sincerely appreciate everyone's contributions, and always have room for more volunteers.

Special events included our annual Second Chance Art Sale in March, a summer blowout sale in August, and a small celebration in June to mark the 10th year at the William Street location. We discontinued our monthly produce basket distribution to volunteers in June, but continue to have monthly lunches to celebrate birthdays. In December we had a Christmas dinner for REAL Deal personnel and board members.

We started using Facebook Marketplace to advertise some of our more unique or valuable items, and are happy with the attention it is getting. Google My Business has increased our market exposure as well.

Top Five Sales Departments (by revenue)

Decor	17%
Furniture	12%
Housewares	11%
Sports/Leisure	10%
Hardware	8%



Dan Cunningham was hired as the REAL Deal Store Manager in the fall.

Top Donor Municipalities (by weight)

Smiths Falls	39%
Rideau Lakes	15%
DNE	10%
Montague	5%
Merrickville-Wolford	5%

Long-Time Donor Recognized

REAL presented Tom Foulkes with a Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding financial and other support he has given REAL over the years.

Said Tom after the fall dinner, "REAL is a worthy cause in my mind. I have supported REAL as a director, worker, planner, organizer, and financially. The leadership and passion shown by the original members and their supporters has lead to many initiatives - blue boxes, Pitch In, Well Aware, the first strategic plan for Smiths Falls and the REAL Deal store... It is a privilege to help REAL and see the wise usage of these contributions for the betterment of our community (Lanark, Leeds and Grenville and beyond).

REAL Board of Directors (June 2018)

Barb Hicks— President

Peter Au—Vice President

Karen Schecter—
Treasurer

Donna McKenna—
Secretary

Katie Hoffman

Keely Maddock

Lorraine Allen

BEHIND THE SCENES

We were fortunate to enlist a new board member in 2018. Katie Hoffman, who is well known in the community for her many volunteer involvements joined the board at our June AGM. Jason Takerer resigned in June but will be available to help with projects as needed. Late in the year, Keeley Maddock resigned in her position as living and working in Kingston was making her participation more difficult. Due to a reorganization at the Town of Smiths Falls following the fall municipal election, our Town Council Liaison person Lorraine Allen was replaced by Nicole Dwyer. We are actively recruiting new board members.

A review and update of our REAL by law, last modified in 2006, is being undertaken to allow for up to 12 board members, and to bring the bylaws into line with new guidelines set out in the Ontario Non-Profit Act.

Our June AGM took the form of a potluck at the Smiths Falls Community Health Centre. February was our annual membership renewal campaign. Our membership includes 75 individual, family and associate members and 22 corporate members. In addition we exchange information with five other non-profit groups with whom we share common interests.

We disconnected one of our phone lines, 283-9500, to reduce expenses. Please use the store number, 283-7999, if you need to reach us about any REAL issue: energy, volunteering, the community garden, membership etc.

Municipalities are feeling the pinch like everyone else, and most required a very detailed application by any community groups or event wanting financial support. We are fortunate to receive contributions from Smiths Falls, Rideau Lakes, Montague, and Drummond-North Elmsley. In addition, the Town of Smith Falls allows us to use 85 William St. for our operations, and has provided physical assistance at times, for example, repaving the entrance to our parking lot.

REAL is planning some special projects for 2019 when we will celebrate REAL's 30th anniversary.



Katie Hoffman with some of the paper straws offered to Smiths Falls eateries.

Our Mission

To protect, preserve and enhance our environment for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations through advocacy, education, recognition and projects within Eastern Ontario.



REAL is developing a Compost Demonstration Site next to the Community Garden.

New Commemorative Stones on Evergreen Avenue

Russ Beach
Ian Fraser
Dave and Edna Good
Judge Donald Smith
Phyllis Warden, Rebecca and
Captain James Warden
Norma and Lorraine Whiten

REAL ACTION GRANTS

Applications for our third round of REAL Action Grants were accepted early in the year. Three groups were awarded \$250 to pursue their own environmental project. Winners included the Montague School Eco Club for a garden at their school, an SFDCI-Dene Community Student Exchange, and an Outdoor Education and Climate Change Summit for a class of SFDCI students.



SFDCI students learning from a Dene elder how to tan a moose hide.

COMPOST SHELTER AND COMMUNITY GARDEN

REAL made headway on our long awaited compost demonstration site. The shed was placed next to the Community Garden in May, and was embellished with lattice, an old wood door scavenged from the yard, and some old tools. Four different styles of composters were placed and we began accepting contributions from our gardeners and board members to get things rolling. A volunteer built wire cribs on the end so we can stockpile leaves and coarser materials to layer with the compost. We intend to offer some composting workshops on site in 2019.

The 11 community garden plots were all rented for the season, and despite the exceptionally dry summer, our seasoned gardeners managed successfully grow a variety of produce. Thanks to a donation from the Merrickville District Community Health Centre we were able to purchase a load of triple mix top soil to top up the beds before planting. The Stone Soup sharing plot was available to anyone who wanted to sample herbs, tomatoes and kale grown there.

EVERGREEN AVENUE

The Evergreen Avenue Committee continues to maintain the shaded memorial walkway at Victoria Park. Their annual commemoration ceremony was postponed from June until September this year due to the construction along the Canal. At the ceremony, six new stones were dedicated to some special people within the Smiths Falls community. Their stories are on our website. Some of the native trees and shrubs were relocated as a result of the construction. They are described in an interpretive panel at the entrance to the walkway.

FUNDRAISING TO SUPPORT REAL

Dan Address made another **Customer Ask** possible May 28 to June 2 at Address' Your Independent Grocer. Over \$450 was raised from customers going through the cash, \$2 at a time.

October's **Local Foods Dinner** held at the Smiths Falls Legion was an unqualified success. Joanne Edwards prepared a delicious fall feast of local foods for the approximately 100 guests. Shannon Miller of Millers Bay Farm gave an inspiring address on local food in this community. The dinner and extensive silent auction raised about \$4500 for REAL's activities.



Giocoso Strings entertained at our Local Foods Dinner.

OTHER ENVIRONMENT CENTRE SERVICES

Home Energy Audits. REAL offers no pressure, environmentally inspired home energy audits to area residents for a fee. These audits are also needed prior to and following home energy upgrades in order to qualify for Enbridge Home Energy Conservation program rebates. The Enbridge program went through several changes over the year, starting out as \$1600 in rebates to homes heated by any method. Currently they offer up to \$5,000 in rebates for qualifying homes on Enbridge customers.

Kill a Watt Meters. These devices are used to measure the electricity usage of plugged in appliances, and can be borrowed from one of seven area libraries or the REAL Deal.

Radon Meters. Radon is a naturally occurring odourless gas that can accumulate in homes, and is strongly linked to lung cancer. Testing is the only way to tell if it is present. REAL has obtained a radon meter to lend to residents, (refundable deposit required). Anyone obtaining suspicious levels should follow up with a three month reading and seek professional help with remediation.

Rain Barrel Sales. Recycled food grade plastic rain barrels are available for purchase for \$55 plus tax. We sell about 30 each year.



Alan Leonard doing a blower door test as part of a home energy assessment.



Recycled rain barrels are available for \$55 plus tax.

Ways to Help REAL

- Become a Member
- Volunteer
- Join the Board
- Participate in Our Programs
- Support a Fundraiser
- Join our Email List
- Shop or Donate to the REAL Deal
- Share your Expertise
- Say Nice Things about Us in Public
- Acknowledge our Corporate Members and Supporting Municipalities
- Donate Dollars

Contributing to our Environmental Future

If the environment of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville is important to you, please consider supporting REAL, your local environmental organization, with a tax deductible donation.

Cheques can be mailed or dropped at the store. For credit card donations see our "Join" page on our website, REALaction.ca. You can also do an e-transfer to payments@REALaction.ca. To explore how you could include REAL in your estate planning, see our website under the "Donate" tab.

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

Our annual **Pitch In Smiths Falls** campaign over two weeks in April saw significant participation by community groups and individuals, and cleaned up a whole lot of litter that had accumulated over the winter.

REAL organized two free public presentations at the Smiths Falls Station Theatre. In May iconic canoeist, author, conservationist and explorer **Max Finkelstein** presented on the previous summer's Four Winds Voyageur Canoe Brigade, and in June, internationally famous botanist and author **Diana Beresford Kroeger** joined us for a screening of her documentary "Call of the Forest: The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees".

Enthusiastic volunteers took to the streets one day in August to deliver **paper straws** to 49 Smiths Falls food establishments, and suggest they avoid plastic straws in the future.

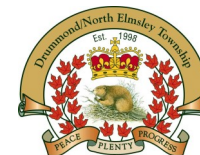
Alan Leonard, REAL's Registered Energy Advisor (REA) was on hand at the **Friends of the Tay Watershed Discovery Day** in Perth in August to answer questions about home energy audits, rain barrel use and the REAL Deal Store.

We actively communicate with the public through our website, newsletter, electronic notices and Facebook. The REAL Deal Store has a Facebook page and uses Facebook Marketplace. We also have two Facebook groups: "Smiths Falls, REAL Community Garden" and "Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)".

MAJOR FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS



Tom Foulkes



Pilkington Henniger



SMITHS FALLS
RISE AT THE FALLS

Charitable Trust

