

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

A P R I L 2020

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COVID-19 Adjustments

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated many changes in the world, including the REAL world. Here's a quick run down on what we know as of April 4.

The REAL Deal Store – The board decided it was prudent to close the REAL Deal Reuse Store effective March 18 for at least three weeks. In the meantime the Ontario government declared that non-essential services must close. Check our website and Facebook pages for updates. You can hear our message / leave a message at (613) 283-7999, or email us at info@REALaction.ca if you have questions. Please do not leave items at the gate, we will really appreciate your donations when we reopen.

Home Energy Audits – Our Registered Energy Advisor (REA), Alan Leonard, has temporarily suspended home energy audits, as have other Green Communities Canada members. It is expected that Enbridge will be extending the deadline for post audits to be completed. Contact Alan for more: (613) 864-3099 or alanleonard9@gmail.com.

Community Garden Plots – All 12 plots have been allocated. Community gardens have been lumped in with recreational pursuits as banned activities, but we hope the restriction will be lifted in time for gardening to proceed. Katie Hoffman is in charge of the registrations: (613) 983-3360 or ktthoffman@cogeco.ca.

Radon Meters – Radon meter lending is temporarily suspended. Contact Katie (see above) for arrangements when it becomes safe to continue. We also have a meter in the Perth area that can be picked up / dropped off with Tony Cote.

Pitch In Smiths Falls – To date there has been no official word from Pitch-In Canada, but REAL feels it would be unsafe for our local April 25 to May 9 community litter cleanup to go ahead.

Sustainable North Grenville Fair, April 19 – The SNG team announced March 30 that the event will not be going ahead. The event usually attracts about 1000 people. The Sustainability Team and Alan Leonard were going to share a booth there.

Rain Barrel and Mushroom Compost Sale, May 9 – we are hoping this will go ahead as it is outdoors and we can practice appropriate social distancing. At the very least, if you order a barrel and cannot get it that day, we can hang onto it for you until you can pick it up. See more details on the back page of this newsletter.

continued inside...



COVID Adjustments (continued)

Bea Johnson May 28 – Bea's schedule has changed, but she hopes to be in the area in the summer, so let's consider her zero waste talk postponed not cancelled.

REAL Board – Our REAL Board was able to hold its March 16 board meeting by Skype. Work on various other REAL projects is continuing in the background. We sincerely hope we will be able to resume our usual activities soon. Stay safe!

Other Upcoming Events

We are hopeful that the following events will proceed as planned:

Evergreen Dedication – Sat. June. 6, 11:00 a.m.

Rideau Canal Heritage Show – June 6, 1 p.m.

AGM Wednesday, June 17 (tentative)

Paddlefest - Sat. June 13, 10 am. – 3 p.m.

Local Foods Dinner—Sat. Oct. 17, Legion

Please check our website and Facebook closer to the time. Better yet, [sign up for our mailing list](#) to get reminders in your inbox.

EcoFriendly Product for Deicing Available at REAL Deal

Eco-IceGrip is a new product that the REAL Deal Store has been selling on consignment since February. When applied to packed snow and ice, it is an effective environmentally friendly alternative to salt. And it is locally made! Staff have used it at the store with great results.

The material is sold by the bag and looks somewhat like brown woodchips 5-20 mm in length. They are very light and can be spread by hand or spreader. It provides good traction for pedestrians and is also safe for pet paws.

Their promotional materials say: "Eco-IceGrip's traction chips are abundant and renewable. Low in salt, they are pH neutral, noncorrosive to metal and concrete, carpets, flooring, footwear or clothing". And unlike salt, it will not contaminate surface or groundwater.

There has been increasing concern about the effects of road salt on the environment. As salt dissolves, the chloride enters waterways through leaching and runoff. Eventually the concentrations become toxic to aquatic plant and animal life, and affect drinking water quality. Many jurisdictions are searching for inexpensive, effective alternatives to salt. You can help by using alternatives to salt on your own property. (See the [Feb. 2012](#) issue of the REAL Update for more.)

Ecolce is cheaper than road salt, sand or gravel because there is less need for multiple applications. One application can be effective for up to six days at temperatures down to -37°C. At winter's end, the chips can be left to biodegrade, or gathered and used for compost, or mulch, or burned in furnaces.

Three bag sizes were being offered, and they were selling well from the moment they were put out near the customer entrance. The snow and ice season is winding down, but hopefully you can give it a try next winter! Read more at <https://ecoicegrip.ca/>.



Lions Recycle for Sight

Your family's used eyeglasses could be helping some of the millions of people in developing nations who do not have access to corrective lenses. The Lions Recycle for Sight program picks up used glasses from various collection points, processes them in a central facility, and then distributes them to Lions Club or other missions travelling to over 70 countries.



It is estimated that one in four children cannot see well enough to learn to read without glasses, and that by age 40, 90% of adults experience a decrease in the ability to read print and need eyeglasses. Without glasses these people would fail to reach their economic and educational potential.

While many of the collection points are optical stores and optometrists, in some communities, recycling centres, churches, legions, funeral homes, seniors centres and schools may host a collection box, so make use of one close to you.

Locally, you can drop your used glasses at the Smiths Falls Optometrists office in the 91 Cornelia St. W. complex. There are cardboard collection boxes on the waiting room window sill, but if you have lots, just hand them to the front counter staff. The program accepts new and used reading, single vision, bifocal, children's, safety, and both prescription and non-prescription sunglasses (clip-ons and glasses). Glasses may consist of glasses in frames, frames only, or uncut

lenses. They do not use frame parts, and cannot disinfect the cases, so please do not include those.

Local Lions Club volunteers pick the glasses up periodically and ship them to the Canadian Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centre (CLERC) in Calgary, Alberta. There volunteers prepare the eyeglasses for distribution by sorting, cleaning and classifying each pair by prescription. Almost two hundred clients - missions, Lions Club missions, optometrists and other organizations - place their orders with the centre, and distribute the donated eyeglasses, free of charge, to needy people throughout the world. Their website reports that by the end of December 2019 the Canadian Centre had sent 5,594,803 glasses on overseas missions to 70 countries in Africa, Central America, South America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Check out this short video on the [CLERC website](#) that shows their facility.

So don't throw those glasses out. Donating your used eyeglasses is another great way to recycle and help people who need it!



Look for this collection box at collection sites. Single vision, bifocal, children, safety, and prescription or non prescription sunglasses are accepted. Do not include frame parts

REAL Deal News

Temporary Shutdown. Our store is temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The board made the difficult decision March 16, so Wednesday the 18th was our first day closed, with the plan to remain closed for at least three weeks. On March 23 the provincial government announced that non-essential services must close for two weeks, and then later extended it by one week. This takes us to about the point we hoped to reopen, so we will just have to wait and see if that restriction is lifted. Sorry, no one is at the store regularly to accept donations at the moment. We are checking messages on the phone line (613) 283-7999 regularly, or you could also email us. In either case, please provide a phone number where you can be reached.



Sales Strong. Up until the closure, we were experiencing impressive sales given the time of year. We had budgeted for a sales increase over this fiscal year, but this temporary closure will make that a challenge.

Recycle Bins. We are working on a new arrangement for accepting “hard to recycle” materials. The table near the customer entrance is being modified to accept blue bins which will be used to collect batteries, print and toner cartridges, mercury thermostats, milk bags, used writing instruments and a new item, coffee capsules. The coffee capsules will be shipped to Terracycle, a company that specializes in “recycling the non-recyclable”. We hope this will keep that area of the store neater, and make it clearer to visitors what goes where.

Gate and Open Hours. We have acquired new open flags that will be displayed at William Street when the store is open. We are still locking the gate when we are not there, but we occasionally need to unlock the gate when we are doing something else in the building (like a board meeting) or on the property (like gardening.) Please do not assume we are open for business. We are constantly amazed that as soon as the gate is open, cars start pulling in!

REAL Deal by the Numbers
for 2019 (Feb. 1, 2019 to Jan. 31, 2020)

Materials Donated	57,184 kg.
Materials Sold	43,080 kg.

Top Five Donor Municipalities (by weight)

Smiths Falls	47%
Rideau Lakes	25%
Montague	6%
DNE	5%
Perth	4%

Top Five Buyer Municipalities (by weight)

Smiths Falls	38%
Rideau Lakes	13%
Montague	7%
DNE	7%
Perth	6%

7% of the buyers came from outside Lanark, Leeds and Grenville.

Top Five Sales Departments (by revenue)

Décor	17.9%
Furniture	12.7%
Housewares	12.6%
Hardware	7.7%
Yard and Garden	7.3%

These three departments were next in the ranking but almost equal:

Doors and Windows	6.8%
Sports and Leisure	6.7%
Renovations	6.4%

Ewaste Collected: 47 tonnes

Cash Donations at the Counter: \$576

Number of people making purchases:
13,425



Just a High Chair by Wendy Earl

Our journey to the REAL Deal involved only a high chair. Dan helped us with that and within a few minutes we were ready to be on our way.

Now, I know better than to go down the aisles to see what has arrived since I was last there, but go I did. At the far end of the china aisle, was a tall, white coffee pot with a picture of a tower on it. The caption said "Antwerp, Belgium". I noticed how attractive the set was: teapot, cream and sugar, five cups and saucers, and sandwich plates, all with pictures on them. Ten dollars was the price. But, off we went home to Merrickville.

As soon as we got home, I, of course, googled "Antwerp, Belgium, carillon tower" and lo and behold the picture that was on the pot popped up. Now who did I know, besides myself, that might be interested in carillons? Well, I had just completed a two year program of carillon studies through Carleton University, with the Dominion Carillonneur at the Peace Tower in Ottawa. Dr. Andrea McCrady had been my teacher for two years, and I thought if anyone knew someone who would appreciate the coffee set, it would be her. I sent her off a note describing the set, and asking if she knew someone who would like it. She immediately responded that a friend from Belgium, who had played the Antwerp carillon, was now in Lake Wales, Florida at the Bok Tower.

At that point, I called the REAL Deal and asked them to hold the coffee service for me, as I would be in Smiths Falls in a few days. They did that, and boxed it up, and the next time I was in the Falls I went around and picked it up. Then I arranged to meet Andrea to give her the set.

We decided to meet in Carleton Place for lunch at a small restaurant on Bridge Street. I landed into the cafe, pot in hand, for our lunch. I had decided if the pot was right, the whole set would be right. The table was so small we had to ask to have the vase and flower removed so we could set the pot down, and laughed and giggled while entertaining everyone around us.



This photo was taken to show off the table on Facebook Marketplace, not to highlight the tea set, but gives you an idea of what it looked like.

After lunch, we went to the car and I handed over the entire set, and we went on our separate ways home. I spent that trip planning my vacation to Florida as we would go there to deliver the tea set to Lake Wales. By the time I got home, Andrea was on the phone saying what a great surprise the coffee service was. All the pictures were from somewhere in Belgium, and since the carillon towers tend to be one of the main attractions in the market squares, she knew all the towers. More importantly, she had played many of them.

As of today, Andrea is trying to arrange travel for the coffee service to the GCNA (Guild of Carillonneurs in North America), where, some day it will be an item in a fundraising auction for that organization.

Stay tuned. The adventure begins.

COVID-19 and Climate Change—Lessons to be Learned?

COVID-19 has captured the world's attention, and rightly so, but it has put the climate change issue on the back burner. It has raised some interesting questions about how quickly governments can be spurred to action in some situations. There have been some environmental benefits to the pandemic that will be short-lived, and some lifestyle changes that may have a more lasting positive effect. The answers remain to be seen, but here are a few web references that are food for thought.

This post compares the response to COVID to the response to climate change, given that climate change could eventually cause more deaths. COVID became a problem relatively recently, and is fast moving situation; we've known about climate change for decades, but it is slow moving by comparison. COVID strategies are fairly clear, and a nation can choose its own direction. Climate change has a vast array of solutions, but you really need every nation pulling together to really make a difference. Read this [EcoWatch post](#).

This Los Angeles Times story wondered if “the unprecedented global mobilization to slow the pandemic might help pave the way for more dramatic climate action”, and asked eight experts what a coronavirus-like response to climate change would look like. [Read their thoughts here](#).

An interesting and likely short-lived environmental benefit of the pandemic is a noticeable drop in pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in China, Italy and the United States, as industrial activity, power generation, and transportation activity have lessened. [This NBC News story](#) gives some examples. [E-magazine](#) gives additional examples but doubts those benefits will last. For example, following the pandemic more people may be leery of catching viruses on public transit and may choose to drive their cars.

Others are more optimistic that some lessons will come from this pandemic that will help us deal with climate change. One notable lesson is that “if you wait until you can see the impact, it is too late to stop it.” Some changes might be a drop in business travel now that businesses see what can be accomplished remotely, a reduction in leisure travel, countries producing more of their own goods so they are less vulnerable to long supply chains, and more people working from home, all of which could reduce dependence on oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially. This [Yale Environment story](#) is a longer than the others but well worth a read

One last reference: if you're getting tired of washing your hands repeatedly, just be grateful. About 2.2 billion people in the world do not have safely managed water outlets, and do not have access to the most basic of measures to protect themselves from viruses, says [EcoWatch](#). COVID should remind us all that access to clean water is urgently needed to protect people from this and future pandemics.



An eerily empty Ottawa Airport during the COVID crisis. Will more people choose not to travel for business or pleasure?



More people have learned to use and appreciate video-conferencing.

In REAL Life

Membership Renewal. Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership this past couple of months, and special thanks to those of you who included a donation to REAL. Much appreciated! If you haven't renewed it is never too late! We accept credit card payments via PayPal, e-transfers to payments@realaction.ca, cash or cheque. See <https://www.realaction.ca/join/> for complete instructions.



Community Garden. We are delighted that all 12 of our community garden plots have been assigned to a mix of new and returning gardeners. Some clients from Lanark Community Programs are going to be looking after the lawn cutting, trimming, water barrel filling and the demonstration composters this season, under the direction of Shane Bowes-Shanks.



Municipal Contributions. REAL has been awarded community grants from two area municipalities. The Township of Rideau Lakes is providing \$1500 towards REAL's programs and the Town of Smiths Falls is supporting us with \$7500. The REAL Board voted to direct half of those amounts specifically to the REAL Deal.



Summer Hire. Our application to Summer Jobs Canada has gone in, but we won't know for a long time yet if we have been successful. Last year we got the OK for two, students, but most summers we are able to hire just one. So, if you know of a student who might enjoy the REAL Deal and other REAL duties this summer, watch our website, Facebook page and posters in the store starting in June and follow the instructions to the letter!



Shift Happens. Unfortunately, the third documentary in the series, "Chasing Ice", planned for March 14 had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation, as well as "Racing Extinction" on April 4. Watch the Biosphere Environmental Education [web-site](#) or [Facebook page](#) for confirmation of the remaining films, "A Plastic Ocean" on May 9.



Trivia Team Victorious! The REAL Action Team came in third at this February's Friends of the Library Trivia Challenge, after many years of less than stellar performance. Our thanks to these people for salvaging REAL's reputation: Bronwyn Woods and Chris Mathieson, Heather and Jason Takerer, Mikes Savelli, Judy Snider, Bill McLean, Kathy Deutekom and Dan Cunningham.



Plastic (and other) Bags. Yes, the REAL Deal Store would love to have your clean, usable plastic bags once we are open again. With stores charging for bags, and people saying no to plastic bags in favour of their own bags, the bags are harder to come by. We use them for customer purchases. We will also, of course, accept paper bags, paper tote bags or other forms of reusable bags. We know of two other non-profits in town who frequently run out as well, so we will share the wealth if we get too many. Just give them to whoever is on cash.

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 Wednesdays,
Thursdays, Fridays and
Saturdays 10 –5.
Closed Sundays.

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

Find us on:
Facebook, Twitter
and Instagram

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rain Barrel and Mushroom Compost Sale

May 9th, 9 to 4 at the REAL Deal



Mushroom Compost
Makes a Great Soil
Additive!

\$10 for a 30L bag

Proceeds to Trinity
United Church and REAL
No preordering needed!

Call 283-8956

Save Water and Treat Your
Plants with a Rain Barrel

\$55 and up

Proceeds to Monarch Garden
You must preorder online by
May 1 to ensure delivery

rainbarrel.ca/realdeal

Call 283-9966



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

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