

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

FEBRUARY 2021

Inside this issue:

[Goodbye Coffee Pods, Hello Pill Bottles / Crayons](#) 2

[Tom Foulkes REAL Contributions](#) 3

[REAL Deal News](#) 4

[Hard to Recycle Materials Accepted](#) 4

[Storing Your HHW](#) 5

[Ontario Yours to Protect](#) 5

[Ontario Legislation Weakens Conservation Authorities](#) 6

[In REAL Life](#) 7

[Depave Project Being Planned](#) 7

[J2S Energy Workshop](#) 8

REAL Plans Continue Behind the Scenes

The disruptions to REAL activities due to COVID continue – who would have guessed one year ago that this would still be such a major limiting factor to what we do?

- REAL Deal Store – closed for the second time. We did not reopen after the Christmas shutdown, and are still unsure if we will be able to open in February.
- Energy Audits – on hold again. Even when provincial rules would permit audits, Enbridge thought it better not to do them for a time.
- Radon meter lending – paused until at least late February.
- Energy Workshop by J2S – postponed from Jan. 13 and Feb. 17. Watch for a new date.

But that doesn't mean that all work has stopped. Many things are happening behind the scenes:



- Dan is at the store twice a week to check on the store, deal with messages, do some rearranging, get on top of some of the valuable item pricing. Tim comes in to look after snow removal.
- The REAL Deal Committee has met and is looking at enhancing our COVID procedures, among other things.
- Getting ready to accept more hard to recycle items and discontinue coffee pods.
- The Board continues to meet monthly by zoom.
- Financials are dealt with weekly and annual budget preparations have begun.
- Application made to HRSDC for summer students.
- February newsletter written and annual report ready for membership renewal.
- Making initial steps towards a 2021 Depave project.
- Wrapping up the Investment Readiness Program planning.
- Planning to replace REAL Deal sign by the road.
- Discussing our spring rain barrel sale.

We look forward to the reopening of the REAL Deal Store, and resuming our usual activities. Stay safe everyone!



Goodbye Coffee Pods

REAL has been interested in recycling since its beginnings in 1989. Volunteers happily pitched in to staff and expand the monthly recycling depots operated by the Interchurch Women from the Trinity United Church parking lot. We were delighted to see the Blue Box Program come to Smiths Falls in 1990.

But 30 years later, there are still useful materials out there for which there are no easy recycling options, or at least, for which curbside pickup is not an option.

We accept several “hard to recycle” materials now at the REAL Deal. Some work out and some don’t. Unfortunately, our foray into coffee pod recycling has come to an end. Coffee capsules, like those from Tassimo or Keurig machines, are a mix of materials, so cannot be put in your blue box as is. Typically they include a plastic or foil cup, a foil lid, and coffee grounds which could be composted, if it weren’t such a challenge to extricate. We discovered that Terracycle would accept used coffee capsules, provided we purchase their Terracycle cardboard collection box with prepaid shipping label. Once we started in May 2020 we were deluged with pods, and ended up paying far more than anticipated. We announced in December we would accept donations for this purpose, but, well, you know what happened in January. We will ensure that any pods received at the store by March 31, 2021 get shipped off to Elora, ON for recycling, but after that you are on your own.



But we are truly concerned about this new and unnecessary waste product. REAL has ordered a limited number of reusable pods that we will distribute to customers free of charge, to demonstrate there is an alternative to the waste caused by commercially purchased pods. Please inquire at the cash. Of course, an even better option would be to use an alternate coffee brewing method. If there is no easy way to recycle the pods, an eco-conscious consumer will simply choose not to buy them.

Hello Pill Bottles and Crayons

Waste-conscious consumers will be happy to know REAL will now accept three new materials: pill bottles, crayons and glue sticks for recycling.

Prescription pill bottles should be brought to us empty, clean and with labels removed. Most of the time these labels can be easily peeled off. Bottles should be washed in hot soapy water to removed any residue, and brought to the REAL Deal with the lid attached. These bottles are going to be used in the third world for pill distribution. Please only bring us clear plastic pill bottles.

Crayons and glue sticks are being recycled into new push up crayons by a woman for inclusion in Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes.

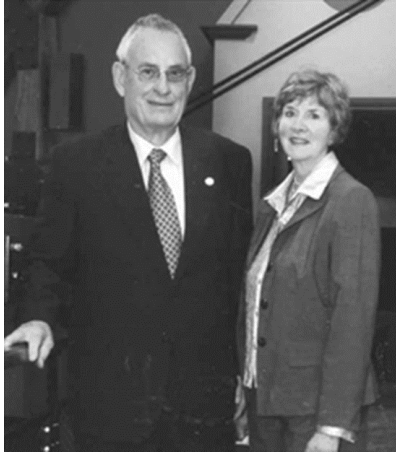
The pill bottles, crayons and glue sticks will be passed on to Earthub in Ottawa. We passed on a large quantity of outer milk bags to the organization in December. The bags are still being made into sleeping mats for the developing world, they are just going to a different organization.



Tom Foulkes REAL Contributions

REAL lost a major supporter and friend with the death of Tom Foulkes on December 10, 2020. Over the past decade Tom (and earlier, along with his wife Pat) made substantial annual donations to REAL. This made a long list of major REAL projects possible.

The first was the recycled art by Val Hudson on the store's outside wall in 2011. The next year Pat and Tom's donation funded the Evergreen interpretive panel and a spruce-up to the front of the building.



The 2013 contribution was directed to composting promotion, which funded some workshops, educational materials and later the compost demonstration shelter. In 2014 we were able to fund several 25th anniversary events, a second solar panel for our thermal wall and the REAL Action Grants. The coverall aka "the dome" behind the REAL Deal was kickstarted with Tom's 2015 donation. The 2016 and 2017 donations were set aside for the rain garden, which has still not come to pass, but may be used for another garden in the Town Square. (See Depave story on page 7.) Several public presentations were made possible with the 2018 donation, and the remainder has been directed to the Journey to Sustainability project. The monarch garden was funded with his 2019 donation. Tom's last donation was made in January 2020.



Two solar panels installed 2014, funded by Tom and Trillium.

The Foulkes donations were made with no strings attached, but the REAL Board has generally tried to focus on projects with a visible impact on the community. Tom and Pat were so

fond of. We consider our options carefully to maximize impact, and try to stay away from using it for day to day expenses like insurance, propane and office supplies.



The recycled art by Val Hudson being installed 2011.

In addition to their financial support, both Pat and Tom were REAL members and volunteers, and Tom served on the Board for several years. Tom was a great REAL supporter, and spoke favourably of REAL and REAL's activities whenever he got the chance. The Foulkes supported many community endeavours beyond REAL, and Tom made a point of giving visitors to Smiths Falls a driving tour of to see the outer facades of facilities where they had an impact, including the hospital, Station Theatre, the Smiths Falls Public Library and the Community Centre walking track. The REAL Board is contemplating how best to honour Tom. When Pat Foulkes passed away in February 2013, a tree was planted in her honour on Evergreen Avenue, and a stone installed on Evergreen Avenue inscribed "Pat Foulkes a REAL Community Builder". So a stone on Evergreen Avenue and / or a tree, possibly on Evergreen Avenue, are definite options.



Tom's donation contributed to the Evergreen Avenue interpretive panel installed at Victoria Park.

REAL Deal News

The REAL Deal Store has already been closed for six weeks. We closed for the holiday break on Dec.23 but could not open Jan. 6 as planned. As of this writing we are hoping to open before the end of February! Rest assured that our staff are all being paid, and we will be applying for the CEWS to cushion the expense. We are hoping that all staff and volunteers will be returning and we can pick up where we left off.

Staff. Once our two late summer yard hires moved on, we needed reinforcements! Don Harvey, who retired from the store two years ago, has come back to help on an interim basis. He works two days a week and is enjoying reconnecting with our regular customers. Aira Sarmiento returned to university in September, but managed to work in the yard on Fridays and Saturdays – our first female yard hire! She will switch to Thursdays and Saturdays when we reopen. Tim Dupras is on duty four days a week. We also welcome back Tiffany Carol on cash for three mornings a week, to assist Heather Warren who is on afternoons and Saturdays. Chester Tarkowski and Cole Forbe's OnTrac placements with us have officially ended. However, we are going to keep Chester on four hours a day. He has been ably keeping up to the extra cleaning required due to COVID, and is doing yard tasks and whatever needs doing. Cole will stay with us three hours a day for the time being. He did a little bit of everything during the Christmas season. His patience testing electrical and battery operated appliances is much appreciated. When we reopen, he will spend more of his time helping out back.

Yard Help Needed. We are still looking for a person able to work two days a week (of our choosing) in the yard. If you know someone seeking part time work who is physically fit, good with people, and enjoys working out doors – send him or her our way!

Volunteers. A number of new volunteers have also come forward and are being worked into the schedule. We welcome Penny Condie, Penny Chambers and Peggy Hawley. They are joining our regulars Margot Allen, Nancy Andison, Barb Hicks, Brenda King, Donna McKenna, Una Pugh and Tracy Vandusen. Kevin MacDougall and Shane Bowes-Shanks come in on Thursday mornings.

If everyone wears their Christmas presents to work customers will have an easier time keeping them all straight! Everyone has a new dark green hoodie printed with their name and the REAL logo. We were unable to hold our usual Christmas dinner for staff, so this was the substitute.



Bins near the customer entrance for some recycled materials not accepted in most municipal programs. .

Hard to Recycle Materials Accepted

There are bins for these to the right as you enter the store:

- Household batteries and rechargeable batteries
- Outer milk bags
- Thermostats containing mercury
- Used writing instruments: pens, highlighters, sharpies and mechanical pencils
- Printer ink and toner cartridges
- Pill bottles (clear #5 with lid)
- Crayons and glue sticks

These can be taken to the back yard:

- Scrap metal
- Old wire e.g. faulty Christmas lights

Leave by the black bin near the entrance:

- Electronic waste (TVs, computers, stereo equipment etc.)

Being discontinued as of March 31, 2021:

- Used coffee pods

Storing Your Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

The seasonal nature of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) depots means most households will need to safely store certain products at home until the centers are reopened for collection. Here are some important tips for storing these materials:

DO:

- keep the containers tightly sealed. If there are spills or leaks, store that container separately and use kitty litter, sand or sawdust to absorb the spills.
- keep products in their original containers and keep all the labels on. This is helpful to you and HHW workers.
- store HHW out of reach and out of sight from pets and children.
- follow the storage directions provided by the manufacturer (i.e. do not allow to freeze, do not store in humid areas).

DO NOT:

- store products in food containers, or containers that can't be sealed or may disintegrate.
- mix products together. Mixing products could be very dangerous.

- store products near sun exposure, heat, flames or sparks.
- smoke in areas of your home where HHW products are stored.

OTHER TIPS:

- store products at eye level to reduce the risk of any problems, such as unscrewed tops and leakages, or at least, check on them periodically.
- consider setting HHW in a plastic tub or tray so any leakages will be contained.
- think carefully before buying these products again. Use the least dangerous product for the job and buy small quantities.
- find out exactly what products are accepted. Some products may not be accepted at your depot, may not be considered toxic, or there may be other avenues for their disposal year round (e.g. paint, batteries, fluorescent tubes, motor oil, car batteries)
- above all, DO NOT be tempted to discard them in the garbage, or by putting them down the drain or toilet, or in any other manner if you miss the depot.



To learn more about this alarming situation, Environmental Defence Canada has posted a YouTube video of their January 12th webinar entitled **Protecting Ontario's Environmental Future: What happens Next After the Gutting of the Conservation Authorities**. The presenters were from Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature, the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA), and David Crombie, former head of the Greenbelt Council, former Mayor of Toronto and former cabinet minister. The comments in the chat were worth following also! Access it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcC3EyuUYv0/>.

New Ontario Legislation Weakens Conservation Authorities

On December 8th, the Ontario government passed a new law which seriously weakened Conservation Authorities, allowing the province to turn its back on science-based planning. At the same time, the government has been making reckless and unprecedented use of Minister's Zoning Orders to force through planning decisions without debate or input from municipalities or the public.

Schedule 6, which proposed a number of changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and to the Conservation Authorities' role in land use planning, is a section of the Ontario Government's Omnibus Budget Bill, Bill 229. It was introduced in the provincial legislature on November 5, 2020. Because Schedule 6 was part of a budget bill, the government was not required to provide an opportunity for public consultation under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights.

There was substantial public opposition from municipalities, environmental organizations, conservation authorities, indigenous organizations, community groups and individuals. Nonetheless, Schedule 6, as a part of Bill 229, was passed in the Ontario legislature on December 8, 2020 with limited changes and an additional section was added referencing Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs). An MZO "could force a conservation authority to issue a permit even if it goes against their provincially-delegated responsibility to protect, infrastructure and the environment." (Conservation Ontario.)

The proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act through Schedule 6 will significantly limit the ability of Conservation Authorities to protect Ontario's environment and ensure people and property are safe from flooding and other natural hazards. Watershed planning which supports communities will be limited. These changes do not belong on a budget bill.

What's Next? Schedule regulations still need to be developed so the various aspects of Schedule 6 can be implemented. The Province of Ontario has announced a Working Group to help the Government decide what will be included in the new regulations. While there was no opportunity for public consulta-

tion regarding Schedule 6, the public did have a chance to comment on the expansion of Minister's Zoning Orders. Those comments were due by January 30.

What Can Be Done Now? Find out more and speak up! Take a look at YoursToProtect.ca, a website by Environmental Defence Canada. You can also see what [Conservation Ontario](#), [Ontario Nature](#), [CELA](#) have to say.

Tell your MPP and the provincial government that this situation is unacceptable. We need to have the public consultation regarding Schedule 6 that should have happened in the first place.

Going forward, hold the MPPs accountable whenever they try to use this new law to allow developers to destroy key natural environments. When the next elections rolls around, make sure the environment becomes an issue, and that those who treat the environment and the laws made to protect it callously don't get re-elected.

Let municipal and county councils know you value the work of Conservation Authorities.

Support the local Conservation Authorities on the issues.

Get back to basics: learn more about forests, wetlands, and nature in general, and make sure kids get to experience and learn more about it. If you know it and love it, you will be more likely to want to work towards protecting it.

REAL and the Rideau Roundtable are looking at working together to create Nature Appreciation and Wetland Awareness Educational programs. Another upcoming program to watch for is "Freshwater Stewardship Communities" by Watersheds Canada.

See page 5 for a link to a January 12 webinar hosted by Environmental Defence on this topic.

A 3D illustration showing a group of colorful, stylized human figures standing on a circular, light-blue platform. The figures are in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink). One blue figure is being pulled away from the group by a grey, shadow-like figure that is stepping off the edge of the platform. This visual metaphor represents the concept of 'leaving the herd' or breaking away from a group.



Electronics Recycling. New electrical and electronic equipment regulations came into effect in Ontario January 1, 2021. As a result the Ontario Electronic Stewardship program (OES) is no longer, and it is the Electronic Products Recycling Association (EPRA) who will be managing the safe and secure collection and recycling of electronics in Ontario. [See video.](#) At this point, nothing will change for users of the ewaste depot at the REAL Deal, and Redi Recycling in Petawawa will continue to collect and process whatever we collect. Last year we collected 48 tonnes through this service.

Two Board members have taken an online Depave Coordinator course through GCC to be better prepared to organize a successful event. The course is also a requirement to access some of the funding secured by the GCC. We are hopeful this will happen in 2021, but these are early days. Stay tuned for developments!

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

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We're on the Web
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. – 5 p.m.
Closed due to Stay at
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Reopening Soon!

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

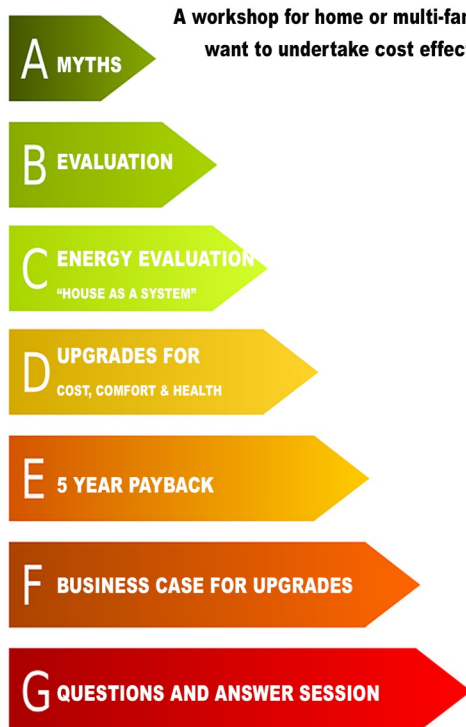
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Send contributions to the
April issue by March 15 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

REAL'S Journey to Sustainability

Presents this **FREE Workshop by Zoom**
Maximizing Efficiency In Your Home



This workshop is presented by two experts: Jason Takerer, senior technical researcher, CHMC and experience high-performance home builder, and Alan Leonard, REAL's own Certified Energy Auditor with 30 years experience in construction and renovation and twelve years experience in home energy auditing.
With the collaboration of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 95 and Your TV (Cogeco)

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