

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

JULY 2024

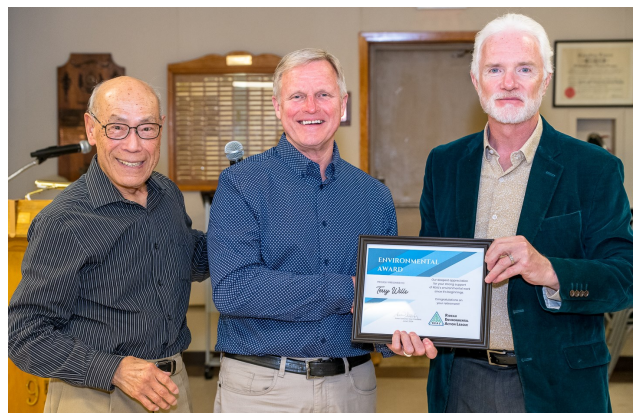
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Evergreen Avenue and Environmental Awards—June 2

A June 2 ceremony at the Smiths Falls Legion was held to dedicate the two latest commemorative stones placed on Evergreen Avenue. Being honoured this year were Richard Shanks, a Korean War veteran and Jim Jenkins, veteran and Past President of RCL Branch 95. Both men passed away earlier this year. The 2024 ceremony was planned for June 2, as this was close to the 80th Anniversary of D Day and was the start of Canadian Environment Week. Keith Anderson described Jim Jenkins accomplishments. The daughters of Richard Shanks, Beth and Betty, expressed how he served Canada and was a hero to his family. Bill Widenmaier provided some comments on D Day, and Peter Au gave a history of [Evergreen Avenue](#).

REAL took this opportunity to present several environmental awards. Dan Andress and Terry Wills were recognized for their outstanding support of REAL through their businesses, (Andress Your Independent Grocer and Wills Transfer respectively). Craig Sinclair was applauded for promoting and teaching tree care in our community and his enthusiastic participation in REAL's greening projects. Katie Hoffman, past president of REAL, was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Membership in REAL for her consistent, dedicated commitment to REAL's activities.



Terry Wills (centre) receiving his award from Peter Au, Evergreen Co-Chair, and Mayor Shawn Pankow, who emceed the event. Terry has enacted many policies in his business to reduce energy use, including a firm speed limit and an onboard system to help drivers track their progress..

Thanks to Chris Uhlig for his photos of the event. You can see more of them on the [Evergreen web page](#).



Mini Forest Soil Prep Day

Our last issue of the REAL Update was just before the mini forest soil preparation on Sat. April 13. The forest is being planted at Corbett/Hyland Park, the greenspace between Empress, Sussex, Elgin and Chambers Streets.

Over forty volunteers braved the cold, wet weather and worked in four shifts to lay down the layers needed to create a base for the mini forest. They tackled one 1 m x 5 m strip at a time, laying down cardboard, leaves, compost and woodchips. Thanks to the Town of Smiths Falls for delivering the piles of materials the day before from their community compost site. Gemmill's Garden Centre provided a water truck and hoses to wet the cardboard down. Thanks to everyone for their energetic and enthusiastic participation. We had a wide spectrum of volunteers, from teenagers to older folks, people from the neighbourhood, Town Councillors and REAL members. Dave Thornley from REAL's board coordinated the whole operation.

Some large rocks were strategically placed on the front edges of the forest area, courtesy of Campbell's Trucking.

Some Grade 7/8 students from Duncan J. Schouler School were enlisted to paint some paint stir sticks with inspiring messages. They were placed on the forest bed Wednesday April 17, when there was a brief opening ceremony by the Town of Smiths Falls. The mini forest team will also be ensuring the site is watered periodically throughout the summer. Now we just have to wait five to six months for the optimal soil conditions to develop!

About 300 plants trees and shrubs will be planted by volunteers this October. Watch for more details about planting day in the fall in local media, on [Facebook](#) and on our website.

We will be adding to the [Mini Forest page](#) started on this website under the Greenspace tab.

REAL has received no special funding for this project, and are paying for it from our reserves because we really wanted to see it happen in our 35th anniversary year. If you are interested in supporting this project with a financial contribution, you may do so at CanadaHelps.org. There is a "Mini Forest" option on the drop down menu.



Volunteers worked one strip at a time to lay down layers of cardboard, leaves, compost and wood chips to establish a soil layer for our mini-forest to be planted in October.

Additional Trees for Hyland Park

Hyland Park got another boost with the addition of six large trees on April 29. In planning REAL's mini-forest, it was recognized that the park could use some additional shade quickly. So with the Town's permission REAL chose five native trees to be placed there. Steve Rauch of [Diggin it Nursery](#) supplied the trees and generously donated a Trembling Aspen as well. The trees will be very much appreciated by visitors to the park. Thanks to Craig Sinclair, Donna McKenna, Dale Horeczy and Dave Thornley for doing the planting. The native trees are as follows:

Tulip Tree – LIRIODENDRON TULIPIFERA
 Silver Maple – ACER SACCHARINUM
 Eastern Cottonwood – POPULUS DELTOIDES
 Basswood – TILIA AMERICANA
 Common Hackberry – CELTIS OCCIDENTALIS
 Trembling Aspen – POPULUS TREMULOIDES

May 11 Rain Barrel and Plant Sale

Our May 11 sale went very well, and the weather cooperated too. Thanks to Lauralee Merkley for looking after the rain barrel portion of the sale. Donna McKenna arranged for a nice selection of native plants and some trees to be delivered from Grow Wild in Omamee, and Dale Horeczy purchased a selection of bareroot native tree saplings and dogwood from Ferguson Forestry Centre in Kemptville. Seeds collected from native plants in REAL's garden were packaged and available for \$2, and are still available.

Proceeds fund our monarch gardens. We often require replacement plants, mulch, new hoses, plant labels and so on. Thanks for your support of these important projects!



Rain barrels will continue to be sold through the REAL Deal Store while quantities last. They are \$65, or just \$55 for the scuffed up "ugly duckings". We will be able to use the unsold native plants in our own pollinator gardens. There are still some red maple, silver maple and dogwood to sell. The sycamores will be saved for the mini-forest planting, as they can be hard to find.

Trinity United Church was selling mushroom compost from the REAL Deal parking lot that day, \$10 for a 25L bag to support church programs. Its availability is a nice complement to our sale. The church will continue to sell the compost until it is gone. Make your cash payment to our cashier and we will get the money to TUC.

Other Garden News

Monarch Garden. A team of dedicated garden volunteers, led by Donna McKenna and Marje Fletcher, look after the pollinator gardens on site and downtown. They get together once a week (usually Tuesday mornings) to weed, mulch, rearrange and water. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Donna at andisondj@gmail.com

Milkweed.

Growing certain species of milkweed can be a real challenge, as they come up very late in the season. We ordered in five different varieties for our sale: Poke milkweed, swamp milkweed, Sullivan's milkweed, common milkweed



Some of the ladies who tend the gardens at the REAL Deal and at Town Square once a week, usually Tuesdays.

and butterfly milkweed. We have established a separate bed of exclusively milkweed near the front of the building. Milkweed, of course, is the preferred food of the endangered monarch butterflies. If you are planting it, best to group the plants, as the caterpillars will need more than one plant to get them through their 8 – 15 day feeding stage.

Community Garden. The 12 garden plots have all been assigned, and most of them are quite productive. But the season is short, and some people forget that delaying just a few weeks can make a difference. REAL Deal staff, mostly Chester, are keeping the grass cut, the edges trimmed, and the water barrels filled. Some other volunteers keep the other plants around the entrance and rear of the enclosure tended.

Canada Greener Homes Zero Interest Loans

By Alan Leonard

The Greener Homes and Home Efficiency Retrofit programs have ended and incentive grants for energy efficiency upgrades are no longer available for new participants. These were effective programs that helped people afford to increase their homes energy efficiency and to reduce their carbon footprint. This short sighted decision to cancel the program was made just as it is getting much more obvious that climate change is accelerating and causing much more serious effects. We need to act now to limit climate change and making your home more efficient is one of the most effective things you can do.

You can still get a zero interest loan for financing energy retrofits through the Greener Homes zero interest loan program. The loan program will lend up to \$40,000 for a ten year period with zero interest charged! This makes it much easier to afford to do energy efficiency upgrades to your home and to possibly do more effective deep energy retrofits that will drastically reduce your energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

An EnerGuide energy evaluation must be done before you do any work or apply to the loan program. Retrofits must be recommended by the advisor and on the eligible list. Eligible upgrades includes insulation, air sealing, heat pumps, windows and doors and resiliency measures. This very thorough assessment of the present energy efficiency of the house will show you how your home's efficiency compares to other houses of the same size and a modern 'code built' home. All components of the house that affect energy use are assessed and measured and air leakage testing with infrared thermography are done so that the actual energy efficiency can be calculated with computer modeling.

Recommendations are then made in a comprehensive report which shows you the retrofits that will save the most energy so that you can make informed decisions about the upgrades you wish to do.



When you have completed the retrofits you require a second post-retrofit audit to confirm the upgrades and to receive your updated EnerGuide efficiency rating.

If you have already have had an EnerGuide audit but haven't done retrofits (or all of them) and have not had the post-retrofit audit, then you can still apply for the loan program. Some conditions apply. You can find more information about the program [on the Natural Resources Canada website.](#)

If you have questions or wish to make an appointment for an EnerGuide energy evaluation, please contact: [Alan Leonard](#), NRCan Registered Energy Advisor, 613 864-3099

Compost Demo Site

One of our community gardeners, Phil Kennedy, has volunteered to get the compost demonstration site sorted out. We have had some people offer to bring kitchen compost to the site. If you would like to do this, please get in touch so we can discuss "the rules". Some temporary signage will be added shortly so materials will be added where they are needed most. Don't have a backyard? REAL has two Food Cyclers (electric countertop composters) to lend for three weeks at a time,



Inspiring Presentations at June 19 AGM

Members attending REAL's AGM on June 19 heard two very inspiring presentations. Patricia Lynch, a retired Kemptville elementary school teacher told us about the "The Wonders and Joys of Raising Monarch Butterflies". She looks for monarch eggs on milkweed plants and raises the butterflies in a controlled environment indoors. Finding enough milkweed to feed them through their caterpillar stage is a challenge. After they become a chrysalis, and later emerge as adults, the monarchs are released. The students were very excited by the process and are delighted to have the monarchs land on them.

Meaghan Linauskas, science and art teacher at SFDCI, described some of student activities taking place in the geodesic dome behind the school. Our group enjoyed a brief tour of the facility. A recent sale organized by the students raised \$2,000 for the Table mostly through the sale of vegetable seedlings. Meaghan has great ideas for making use of the greenhouse in the future, many of which would involve the community. She and REAL will be considering getting some milkweed plants started in the dome next spring.



Students tending plants in the dome behind SFDCI.

The presentations were followed by highlights of REAL's activities since the last AGM, and other AGM business. Treasurer Dave Thornley is entering the second year of his term, and four board members are starting a new two year term: Donna McKenna, Karen Schecter, Peter Au and Barb Hicks. Aira Sarmiento was elected by the membership and will start a two year term. Our bylaw allows for additional board members, so we would be happy to discuss the possibility at any time throughout the year.

Welcoming Aira to the Board



Aira Sarmiento is the newest member of the REAL Board, but you may have seen her around the store in the past! Aira was employed inside the store in the summers of 2019 and 2020 as a student, and did some yard shifts over 2021 and 2022. So she is very familiar with the REAL Deal operation.

Aira and her parents came from the Philippines in 2008. She is very passionate about nature. Aira has been an ocean ambassador in the Ocean Bridge Program, and ran several service projects educating the public about ocean health. At REAL she has been involved in organizing a beeswax wrap workshop and putting together a resource binder on the monarch garden. Aira graduated from Algonquin College in the Environmental Technician program in 2022.

Aira has been getting a handle on REAL's Tool Library and has participated in several workshops on REAL's behalf. REAL is very fortunate to have to have Aira's energy and enthusiasm for environmental protection on our team.



Volunteer News. Congratulations to Andrew Harris, who, along with his Perth Special Olympics basketball team, won gold at the Ontario Provincial Spring Games in Waterloo, On May 23-26, 2024. Andrew volunteers in the REAL Deal yard several hours each week. The team is now practicing their soccer moves for a big tournament to be held in Perth later this summer. Way to go, Andrew!



Shoreline Cleanup. Our annual Shoreline Cleanup Saturday May 5th saw several trouble spots along the Rideau Waterway, including near the Bascule Bridge and by the Jasper Road boat launch, cleaned up. Pictured here are the “Garbage Warriors” and Donna McKenna.



Paddlefest. Thanks to Cynthia Code and Ginny Toffanello for staffing REAL’s table at Rideau Roundtable’s Paddlefest at Lower Reach Park June 15. We featured some of our greening projects, had some saplings available for sale, and a demonstration rain barrel.



Pitch In Smiths Falls. The 2nd Smiths Falls Scouts were some of the many local residents who participated in Pitch in Smiths Falls April 20—May 4, a community wide litter cleanup. One observation was that there seemed to be more vaping litter. A couple dumping locations were reported to the Town. Thanks to Joanne Constantine for taking on most of the organizational tasks this year, assisted by Donna McKenna, Brenda King, Cathryn Davidson and Barb Hicks.

In REAL Life

Newcomer Event. REAL was one of the 18 community organizations represented at the June 22 Newcomer Event. The event was moved from Town Square to the Community Centre when it threatened to rain all day. Volunteers Cynthia Code and Karen Schecter had a chance to talk to many folks who are new to town about REAL's community projects, including the store, and even provide directions! There was a draw for three REAL Deal gift certificates (\$20-Rosemary Sargent, \$15-Kathy Deutokom and \$10-Maria) as well as two of our REAL canvas tote bags (Sherri Dastous and Maria Ka). The event attracted a good crowd, who also enjoyed a BBQ, live music and children's activities.



Donated Plants. A number of people have donated excess plants from their gardens. We usually offer these for sale unless they are a native plant we need in our own gardens. Special thanks to Julia for bringing us so many plants from her pollinator garden in Kitley. As it gets later in the season, donated plants will probably be offered free to good homes. It is very hot and dry behind the REAL Deal, and if they require immediate planting, they might not do so well. Occasionally people have houseplants that need to be rehomed, we are happy to take those as well.



Movie Props. Doug Phillips, an Actor and Director from Merrickville heard about the REAL Deal several years ago from a set designer who had been to our store. His first purchase was a retro computer monitor. He frequently shops our store for items for his films. Some of our store items appeared in his recently released YouTube movie "White Trash". An upcoming episode of the TV series "Mud Creek", on Prime and Amazon, will feature items from the REAL Deal in two scenes: a round yellow telephone and retro typewriter. "Raghorn" and "Stealing Chaplin" are just two of the films he has written and produced. He is actively looking for 60s and 70s items. So maybe you will see something in his films you recognize!

REAL is Green Community of the Year!

REAL was very pleased to receive two 2024 Green Communities Canada (GCC) Awards May 9. The awards celebrate excellence in the GCC national network.

REAL was selected as **Green Community Member of the Year.** "A longstanding Green Communities Canada Member organization, the Rideau Environmental Action League has been a respected environmental voice and a consistent presence in Smith Falls, ON. For the past 35 years it has undertaken small-scale, local, hands-on projects that show residents they can take environmental action and make a difference." Thanks to GCC for this unexpected honour. REAL appreciates the recognition, given the inspiring work done in member communities across the country.

Green Communities Canada connects and supports 23 community-based climate action groups across Canada to share resources, co-create innovative programming, and elevate the member groups collective impact. Eight of these organizations were also recognized for reaching a milestone in longevity including REAL for 35 years, Ecosource (in Mississauga) for 45 years, and Sustainable Kingston for 25 years.

Congratulations to all of this year's recipients! Winners receive a certificate and bragging rights for the year.

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

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Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

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
Tool Library**

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

**Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram**

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

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

LOCAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

The REAL Deal does not accept hazardous waste of any kind.
HHW depots are your opportunity to safely dispose of dangerous materials.
Never dispose of HHW with your regular waste, your recycling or down the drain.

VARIES BY MUNICIPALITY

Local options are seasonal and vary by municipality. You may require proof of residency. Make plans to get to a depot, otherwise you will have to store it until next year!

GATHER YOUR HHW

Items should be in sealed containers, identified (preferably with original labels), and in a cardboard box so that the container does not need to be returned to you.

**LANARK HIGHLANDS AND TAY
VALLEY TOWNSHIP**

Use the Middleville Hazardous Waste Depot at, 686 Wolf Grove Road, Lanark, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. until mid September. See the Lanark Highlands website for a tracking form for estimating the volume of material you are bringing.

MOST OF LANARK COUNTY

Including Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond/North Elmsley, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth and Smiths Falls:

Use the HHW depot at 128 Patterson Crescent, Carleton Place. Hours are Saturdays 8 a.m. until noon, until August 31.

LANARK, LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

Saturday, July 6 at Lombardy Fairgrounds 6 Kellys Rd, 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 17 at North Leeds County Patrol Garage 331 County Rd 29 &
South Leeds County Patrol Garage 2714 County Rd 3
8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 21 at Spencerville Fairgrounds 22 Ryan St &
North Grenville Patrol Garage 720 County Rd 44
8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**CHECK YOUR MUNICIPALITY'S
WEBSITE**

Check for a full list of materials accepted at your municipality's depot. Examples include fluorescent lightbulbs, antifreeze, propane tanks, fire extinguishers, used motor oil, insecticides, thermostats, and turpentine.

Make your plans now!

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**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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