

REAL Update



For members and friends of the Rideau Environmental Action League **September 2005**

Idle-Free Campaign Makes REAL Difference to Smog



Just about everyone knows someone who suffers from asthma, or has a hard time breathing on smoggy days. And now REAL has done something about it. The Idle-Free Team spoke to over 380 motorists this summer about vehicle idling, a major contributor to smog.

Culturally, we've grown up with the idea that we turn the car on to warm it up, leave it running when we pick people up or drop into the convenience store, leave it running when we wait in lineups, and leave it running to keep the air conditioner going. The Idle-Free Team spoke to motorists at the lock crossings in Smiths Falls and Merrickville to tell them yes, it's okay to turn your car off while you wait. And, to say that 10 seconds of idling costs more than turning your car off and on.

In fact, it's even good: It's particularly good for your wallet with gas prices so high. But it's also good for asthma sufferers, it's good for kids, it's good for your car, it's good for world oil

supplies, it's good for climate change, it's good for acid rain, it's good for nature – and it's really good for our communities.

Our summer student, Dawn Lewis, led a team of volunteers and other students for six summer weekends, starting with the Chocolate and Railway Festival, July 17 and 18. They waited for the Detached Lock on Abbot Street, Smiths Falls or the Merrickville lock to turn, and approached the cars that were stopped. Each driver received our idle-free brochure, a thank-you coupon for a free Tim Horton's donut if they turned their car off, and a windshield decal to remind them not to idle (and the volunteers not to approach that vehicle again!).

This summer's Idle-Free Campaign was a pilot project; we hope to expand the program. Partway through the summer we received a grant from the Helen McCrae Peacock Foundation to inform the public of the benefits of not idling

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and of maintaining proper tire pressure on their vehicles. The staff person would also be working towards providing idle-free signage at lock crossings and other public locations where drivers tend to idle. We are in the process of hiring someone to work through the fall on these projects.

Thanks to our Idle Free Team for a job well-done: Dawn Lewis, Dave, Amanda Ford, Bryna Heffernan, Fred Grodde, Kyle Cai, Samantha Timmins, Michelle Manibal, Brenda King and Susan Brandum.

A big thank you to Healey's Transportation, Wills Transfer, Impression Printing, Smiths Falls Tim Horton's, HRSDC and the Merrickville and District Community Health Centre for making this summer's Idle-Free Campaign possible.

Learn more about idling at www.reaction.ca.

HRSDC Student Makes a REAL Difference

REAL was fortunate to secure the services of a student for the summer through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Dawn Lewis was responsible for the Idle-Free Campaign, but also moved forward many of our waste management projects, such as researching a municipal waste directory. Dawn completed her duties efficiently and effectively, and was just plain nice to have around. We wish her every success in the coming school year. Here are some of her comments made earlier in the summer.

What have you learned since beginning this job?

I have learned so, SO much since beginning this job. I have always had a general interest in the sustainability of the environment. In high school I was very involved in my Environmental Club where we focused on recycling and tree planting but this job has allowed me to expand my knowledge into other areas. It has given me the opportunity to learn about climate change, smog,

and various options for waste management. It has also made me more comfortable communicating with the public both verbally and in writing.

How will the position help you in your future studies?

I am taking the Environmental option of Civil Engineering at Queen's which focuses on the compatibility of infrastructure with the environment's soil, air and water. This job directly applies to my field because I am learning, practicing, and teaching others methods to reduce society's effect on the earth's soil, air and water.

What types of tasks have you been doing?

I have been doing a great variety of tasks. I started by reading reports, then researched climate change, smog, and the effects of vehicle idling. I have done a great deal of graphics work where I designed a brochure on vehicle idling, designed T-shirts, created and produced window decals, and also designed hand outs. I have written columns for the media including Cogeco Television, the Record News, the EMC and the Merrickville Phoenix. I have aided in the design of the Idle-Free Campaign, created a volunteer script, created idle-free posters and also helped find volunteers for the campaign. I have been implementing the Idle-Free Campaign at lock crossings where I speak to motorists about the issues of idling and hand out printed information. Currently I am starting work on a municipal waste directory.

Do you have any success stories or unique experience you can share?

I think REAL's Idle-Free Campaign has been very influential and it is successfully educating motorists on the issues of idling. I believe that the campaign will reduce society's impact on the environment and it is very rewarding to see myself making a real difference! Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

Environmental Supporters Recognized

REAL was pleased to present a number of Environmental Awards at it's AGM at the Heritage House Museum June 15, 2005.



Sherwood Webb. Sherwood Webb first appeared as a frequent visitor to the Reuse Centre. Always willing to talk, and a booster for the centre, he soon found himself a frequent Saturday volunteer. He then urged us to open on Wednesdays as well. A Rideau Regional retiree, Sherwood now spends most of his Wednesday afternoons working the Reuse Centre as well as many Saturdays. He is our best advertising device. He does his best to connect items with people who need them and often goes out of his way to do so. He has put up additional shelving and has worked up quite a clientele.

Thank you for spending so many volunteer hours working with us.

Norm Ruttan. Norm is truly a committed environmentalist. He has built partnerships to care for the environment from across all sectors of society – business, tourism, government, non-profits, and individuals. He has a history of getting things done. Once he retired from Parks Canada he got even more done.

Norm launched and had recognized as a UNESCO Reserve the Frontenac Arch Biosphere

Reserve. He created and operates with his sons, i-wastenot, a company dedicated to helping municipalities and citizens reuse and make the most of their excess materials. He launched REAL's Rideau.Reuses website and is an invaluable support for our expanded Reuse Centre.

Thank you, Norm, for teaching us, for being a role model and mentor, and for being so willing to help us.

Harold and Sharon Chatburn of Glass and Class. Glass and Class, formerly at the County Fair Mall, has closed and the owners Howard and Sharon Chatburn have retired. This business has always been a friend to REAL and to the community at large, particularly in the performing and cultural sector.

The Chatburns have always been willing partners in providing an outlet for all kinds of REAL's ticket-sales, from our Art Auctions to our many concert fundraisers. Glass and Class was one of the first businesses to offer discounts to REAL members.

Thank you for being promoters of REAL and helping us achieve our goals.

Reuse Centre Project Zipping Along

The plans for the expanded REAL Reuse Centre are zipping along. More community partners are coming on board and we hope to be making a significant announcement within a few weeks. Watch the Record News and EMC for news.

Just to remind everyone, we are planning to open a Reuse Centre store that will carry larger household goods and materials for renovation and, within a little while, take in your electronic waste and provide refurbished computers. The centre will also be key to helping disadvantaged workers in the area get good volunteer experience and job training.

REAL Needs You!

REAL needs more to help if we are to move forward on new projects. September is a time of new beginnings; maybe this is your year to devote some time to the care and feeding of our organization. Here are a few of our many volunteer opportunities:

Insurance File. Do you understand insurance-ese? As a non-profit organization, REAL and its directors have liability insurance. We need someone to look after this file: understand it, make sure it is what we need, follow any changes that need to be made to it, and complete renewal applications as necessary. Insurance is a major expense for us, and we want to make sure we are doing it right! Contact: Susan Brandum, 283-3482, sbrandum@cogeco.ca.

Volunteer Coordinator. To be more effective as an organization, the Board has created the new position of Volunteer Coordinator. The person would be responsible for recruiting and recognizing volunteers, maintaining a volunteer list or database, lining up volunteers for specific tasks, and report to the Board monthly. Contact: Bunny Haughton, 283-1843, haughms@falls.igs.net.

Membership. This is a year-round position with the peak workload being the first few months of the year when we ask members to renew. The Membership Chair would maintain the database of individual and corporate members, send renewal notices, and work with the Treasurer to collect and record membership fees collected and recruit new members. Ideally the chair could plan an event for members to learn more about REAL and encourage their involvement. The Chair must be computer literate. Contact: Barb Hicks, 283-9966, dhicks11@cogeco.ca.

Hemp Bag Promotion. We need someone to investigate and followup on various means to sell our hemp bags. If your time and interest allows, this could be extended into a broader promotion of the “say no to plastic bags”

concept, similar to the one being used in Perth. Contact: Susan Brandum, 283-3482, sbrandum@cogeco.ca.

It's In the Bag

The REAL hemp bags have arrived and they look and feel great!

It's been a long process, but we now have the most environmentally benign reusable bag we could get. Use these bags to tote your shopping, school supplies, or anything else so you can say no to plastic bags.



Our "Make a REAL Difference" bags:

- use hemp instead of cotton, which uses heavy amounts of pesticides and water
- are produced by a local Ontario cottage industry instead of overseas workers whose conditions we know nothing about
- are printed with water-based inks instead of water-polluting synthetic inks
- support REAL's work
- promote REAL with their attractive design.

The bags measure W 43 cm (17") x H 38 cm (15") x D 12 cm (4 3/4") , and have two carry straps made of the same fabric.

Bags are just \$18, or \$15 each if you buy two or more. Sorry, we can only accept cash or cheques.

Bags can be purchased at Modern Thymes on Russell Street in Smiths Falls, by contacting Elva Corless at 283-0309, or order through www.REALaction.ca. Bags can be mailed for a \$5.00 handling charge.

See “The (Plastic) Bag Beast” in our May 2005 issue for more on the plastic bag problem.

September Diver and Shoreline Cleanups

This year's diver cleanup will be taking place Saturday, September 10 from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. along the northern shore of the Rideau between the Comfort Inn and Beckwith Street Bridge, Smiths Falls (behind the LCBO and Chamber's Street Plaza, next to Comfort Inn). This is the same location tackled the past two years, but there is still more metal debris and shopping carts down there. Hard to believe isn't it? We need lots of onshore volunteers as well to haul the snagged items up from the water.

The Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth will be participating once again by picking up garbage from the Rideau shoreline between Victoria Park and Lower Reach Park. They will be out "after school" on September 14th or 15th.

These efforts are REAL's contribution to the annual Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup organized by the Vancouver Aquarium. We'll let you know what we found in our next issue.

Yard Sale Attracts 178 Visitors



Our Free Yard Sale was a great success! Saturday, August 6 was a beautiful day and we managed to move 454.5 kg. of household goods out of the Reuse Centre into the hands of new owners and out of the waste stream. Now our volunteers and patrons can move a little more freely in the Johnston Street Centre, which was severely overstocked. And best of all, we had 178 visitors that day, many of who had never heard of us before, and who now understand what the Centre has to offer.

101 MPG Car?

Yes, it's true. REAL and LL Green were lucky to be positioned beside a Transport Canada display at the Art



The Smart Car

of Being Green Festival in Lanark Village this summer. They had a Smart Car on display as well as a hybrid, and a "clean diesel" Audi out of Europe. Transport Canada had tested this family-size sedan which cost it \$28,000 to buy by taking it on road trips from Toronto to Vancouver and Toronto to Charlottetown. The car is rated at 101 mpg. The road trip to Vancouver was before the recent wollop in gas prices, but it had cost them \$83.46 for that trip. On the trip to Charlottetown, which is all downhill, the car achieved a milage of 114 mpg. Can you buy this car here yet? No. John Neufeld of Transport Canada said that while Transport Canada had approved it for import, the car manufacturers say the North American market won't demand such cars until gas hits \$2/litre and so won't be bringing in such cars. REAL is sending a letter to Audi recommending they reexamine this position.

We had a great time at the festival. Among the displays were some on solar water heating and other solar applications. About 25 people came out for our Well and Septic workshop and said it was fabulous. One 65-year-old woman said "it was the best thing she had ever heard."

Recycling/Recycled Paint

There's a new option in the region for disposing of your old paint, and getting inexpensive recycled paint.

Bargain Building Materials, a chain out of Quebec, has set up a store in Stittsville. No doubt prodded by the Province of Quebec, which has far more enlightened policies on the environment

than Ontario, Bargain Building Materials takes in your old paint, recycles it, and sells it back to us at about half the price of new paint. Bargain Building Materials is a partner with eco-peinture, the Quebec society for the environmental management of paint.

This is a far superior option for your used paint than taking it to household hazardous waste. Paint taken in at HHW depots often goes to be burned as fuel at cement kilns or other operations, or is buried in hazardous waste landfills. Far better that it get recycled and used.

You can bring in primer, paints, stains, lacquers and varnishes, regardless of make or manufacturer. You can buy interior and exterior latex, alkyds, alkyd epoxies and wood stains. Colours range through the rainbow from whites, pinks, terracotta, lilac, yellow, red, dark green, to bark and slate. Bargain Building Materials is located at 2105 Carp Road, Stittsville.



Hazardous Waste Depots for LL & G Residents

Saturday, September 24 may be your last chance to properly dispose of your hazardous waste before next spring.

Lanark Residents: The last day for the depot on Patterson Crescent off of McNeeley Avenue in Carleton Place will be Saturday, September 24. It is available to residents of Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls, and is open Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon Saturdays. But don't wait until the last Saturday - the lineup increases leading up to the last day.

Leeds and Grenville Residents: September 24th is the second of two Household Hazardous Waste Days. Locations are the South Grenville Patrol Garage, County Road #21, east of

Spencerville from 8:30 a.m to 11:30 .a.m., and the North Grenville Patrol Garage on County Road 44, south of Kemptville from 1:00 p.m until 4:00 p.m. A Hazardous Waste Day was held at the North Leeds Patrol Garage and the South Leeds Patrol Garage on Saturday August 27.

Members with E-mail?

This newsletter is also available to members via e-mail. If you have provided an e-mail address and are still getting the print version, it is because the address supplied is no longer valid.

Announcements

Saturdays, 9 - 4. **Community Compost Site**, Hwy 43 W. of Smiths Falls near Hillcrest Cemetery, for Town of Smiths Falls and North Elmsley residents. Closes late November.

Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:00 and Saturdays, 9:30 - 12 , **Reuse Centre**, end of Johnston St., Smiths Falls. Free exchange of household goods too good to throw away. Call Elva at 283-0309.

1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9 - 12. **Plastics (#2 through #7) Recycling Depot** open to Drummond-North Elmsley and Perth residents, at Town Yard, Perth.

Sunday, Oct. 2, 3:30 - 5:30, **Evergreen Avenue Volunteer and Donor Appreciation BBQ**, Walton's Shelter, Victoria Park. RSVP to Peter Au, 284-8338 or aaapeterau@cogeco.ca.

Contact Us

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