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CULTURE CORNER: Creativity and collaboration reinventing Durham

Whitby This Week

As I write this, Whitby is really having a moment in the news and it is heartening for us at Station Gallery to see how creativity and co-operation are woven throughout these stories.

Of particular note is the announcement that Whitby has commissioned local visual artist Sue Miller to paint three public art pieces reflecting civic pride. The paintings will offer a look at Whitby's past, with the first piece being based on a photo of our downtown circa 1947, the second capturing Whitby as we are today, and the final piece offering a glimpse into Whitby's imagined future.

Interestingly, Miller's research into the goals for the term of the current town council formed the basis for her work. It is precisely this type of alignment around common goals that continues to be the catalyst for the great collaboration and incredible positive changes we are seeing around Durham Region. The expression

"a rising tide floats all boats" has been on a lot of people's lips lately, including Whitby Mayor Don Mitchell.

Another interesting collaboration, and one that caught the attention of Lavalife founder/Dragons' Den investor Bruce Croxon this week, is the collaboration between the Town of Whitby and 360insights founder Jason Atkins to build a technology hub in Whitby's downtown core, featuring the former RA Sennett Public School reimaged as an innovation campus.

The technology community is a great example of how creativity is being applied in using new technologies to solve old problems, and is another community that is becoming well-known for building up great momentum via collaboration.

A few weeks ago, Station Gallery was excited to launch a new collaboration that brought together a local visual artist, a local brewery and a local technology company. To celebrate the launch of our Tortured Artist vanilla porter collaboration with 5 Paddles Brewing Company, featuring label art by Whitby visual artist Jade Wysotski, the gallery launched a new e-commerce portal built by local startup Shirtpunch. The portal is built on the same technology that powers Shirtpunch's pop culture T-shirt site online and will allow the gallery to offer printed goods with art that we compile through our network of amazing local artists.

Truly, an exciting and refreshing spirit of collaboration is creating new opportunities at every turn in Durham Region. Who could you be creating something amazing with?

Sue Miller's art is being shown at Station Gallery between now and March 26. We invite you to come visit us and view her work in person.

-- Kerri King is the Chief Executive Officer of Station Gallery in Whitby

