

TRANSITIONS



VOL.3 / SEPTEMBER 2010 / BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ART OF TRANSITION / WWW.ARTOFTRANSITION.CA

ABOUT TRANSITIONS

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



As we head into the fall season, things really start to pick up in Durham Region. With the influx of students at Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, we are reminded that our community is forever welcoming newcomers who experience the area for the first time every September, and do we ever have great things to showcase.

Although I've lived in Durham my whole life, I am still discovering hidden gems among my typical favourite places to visit. The diverse arts, culture and heritage of the region is something to be very proud of, and at the same time, is still developing—which is very exciting.

This issue of Transitions is dedicated to the debut of Culture Days, a free, interactive arts and culture festival that's occurring nationwide from Sept. 24 to 26. Durham Tourism invited all eight local area municipalities, artists, event producers and arts organizations to celebrate the creative vitality of our community.

What a response we got! With more than 25 events registered in Durham Region, there is much to choose from for this weekend event. For more information, please visit www.durhamtourism.ca and www.culturedays.ca for detailed event listings.

The Art of Transition is all about innovation, culture and prosperity. Let's keep the transition alive – please submit your ideas, events, and articles for the next issue of Transitions by Friday, Oct. 29.

Jennifer Santos
jennifer.santos@durham.ca
905-668-7711 ext. 2607



**PAINTING OF
GLEN BENSLEY BY
JEFF LEECH, 2009**

See pg. 4 for a profile
on Durham Region
artist and musician
Jeff Leech.

THE ART OF TRANSITION:

THE NEXT STEP

MESSAGE FROM KERRI KING



It's exciting to see how the Art of Transition (AOT) movement is growing in Durham!

I was ecstatic to see how much interest was generated at the recent AOT Creative Think Tank event in June. More than 120 Durham Region leaders attended the event held at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Durham College

campus—a big thank you goes out to both for hosting.

This day long event was exceptional for providing direction on AOT's next steps. We've heard you clearly—the importance of culture, communication and the success of small- and-medium enterprises were identified as major themes at the Creative Think Tank.

Now is the time to put the wheels in motion and incorporate these three major themes into our Economic Development and Tourism five-year strategic plan. The plan will provide clear direction on Durham Region's future and prosperity, touching upon those three themes as decided by you.

One of our themes, the need to integrate culture more deeply into our community, is being addressed already. In September, we are linking with the national Culture Days initiative that focuses on arts, culture and heritage. From Sept. 24 to 26, we invite all Durham Region residents, their friends and family and visitors from beyond to experience what makes Durham a true collective of music, art, history and culinary experiences.

I want to thank everyone who is participating in this year's Culture Days for putting such an effort into making the weekend a celebration of our pride and heritage. We need to showcase Durham's strengths more often and celebrate the great things that we accomplish.

Kerri King, Manager of Tourism
The Regional Municipality of Durham
kerri.king@durham.ca
905-668-7711 ext. 2606



Participants at the Art of Transition Creative Think Tank held in June.

IN TRANSITION PROFILE: JEFF LEECH

PORTRAIT OF AN AR



Portraits, clockwise from top left: Abel Renton, Glen Bensley, Trish Robb, Poor Pelly

“Well we just lost a good man, a good man in this town,” sings Jeffrey Leech on his track *Full Of Tears*.

A good man is how Leech would describe fellow musician Glen Bensley. He would also describe him as a gentleman, and a mentor and of course a friend—a valued friend.

Glen Bensley’s sudden death in 2008 was felt throughout Durham Region’s music community. A week after his second anniversary, that community will celebrate his legacy as Bensley is inducted into Oshawa’s Walk of Fame. Jeff Leech will be among those that will perform at the Gala to be held from noon to 6 p.m. on Sept. 25 in the Bandshell at Memorial Park.

But Leech will be there for other reasons. Leech is also an accomplished painter and has exhibited at the Station Gallery. The Maxwell Heights high school teacher painted the portrait of Bensley, which graces this issue’s cover. It is one is a series of 24 featuring many of the musicians that Leech discovered in the community that grew up around the open mics that Glen held, in particular the Bensley Open Mic at

the Velvet Elvis, owned and operated by Liise Whalley.

Leech, returning to Durham Region, after living and studying in Toronto, was so affected by this camaraderie that he had to document it. He chose paint as the medium, not song. The portraits include members of the Micronite Filters, The Stellas, The Stables, The Recroom, The Champion Heartache, plus Adam Blair.

The Bensley painting was at once the most difficult and the easiest. Difficult because Glen, although a veteran of stage for over two decades, was actually a quiet, shy and reserved character, uneasy before the lens. (Leech needed to photograph first and then work from the picture in his studio.) Leech was shy too about intruding on the man’s privacy but mustered up the courage to ask him if he would agree to being included in the series. Glen agreed and the two shuffled off. Glen continued to be uncomfortable in the situation as

TIST

Jeff snapped away until finally he relaxed, gazed at the ceiling and Jeff shot, seeing the image, the portrait, the narrative and the essence of the man simultaneously in the viewfinder and his mind's eye. He got him. In painting he layered the background with a muted red, symbolic of the red Converse shoes Bensley always wore. The portrait is the one Leech is most proud of.

The collection has only ever been presented complete one time—that was at the Station Gallery in 2009. After the Walk of Fame induction, the Bensley portrait will be given to Glen's sons.

Jeff Leech will perform with the Pepperbox Choir on Sept. 25 and is also playing as part of the Culture Days Kickoff Celebrations Sept. 23 in downtown Oshawa. He has two albums available and can be heard dueting with Trish Robb on the track *Over Seattle* from her recently released self-titled debut album, an album that is dedicated to Glen Bensley.

"His humility and encouragement will never be forgotten."
—Jeff Leech on Glen Bensley

**By Will McGuirk,
Durham Music-ologist**



EXPLORING THEMES FROM THE ART OF TRANSITION AT THE

DURHAM CREATIVE THINK TANK

More than 120 Durham Region leaders came together on June 22 to explore, share and build on the themes and energy from the November 2009 Art of Transition event.

The “Creative Think Tank” focused on three main areas—small- and medium-sized enterprises, communications and culture.

A few common themes emerged from the discussions, including the need to:

- **Engage youth.**
- **Build on Durham’s current strengths.**
- **Break down silos.**
- **Reflect the true nature of Durham.**
- **Collaborate rather than compete.**

Of the three main ideas, specific goals were identified to assist in developing an action plan.

What do small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need to remain viable and be innovative?

SME’s need a spirit of inclusion. They need to be connected to each other, to resources and to customers. They also need access to mentors, technology and financing and need to be enabled in order to do what they do best—create.

How should Durham Region connect and engage its stakeholders?

Successful communications is relevant and effective, two-way and results in unusual and unique partnerships. Effective communications enables many voices.

What will best support a vibrant and sustainable culture within our communities and across Durham Region?

Culture needs to be celebrated and showcased across the Region. People support what they create.

For a mind map of identified themes and ideas, please see page 8.



- 1. Regional Chair and CEO Roger Anderson
- 2. Audrey Andrews, Tracey Tyner Cavanagh, Pauline Reid
- 3. Mike Rosenplot, Ryan Howe, Harley Pageot
- 4. Daniel Knight, Deb Robotille, Ruth Lafarga, Lisa Weiss
- 5. Joan Bontje, Lesley Kelz, Tammy Gay, Sandy Ravary
- 6. Dan Carter



DURHAM'S CREATIVE THINK TANK MIND MAP:

Developed based on themes and ideas brainstormed at Creative Think Tank.





needs organization to implement

appropriate funding for the Plan

the right stakeholders involved

major interest

focus on youth/emerging

coordinate existing events under Durham banner to create mega event throughout Region

use underutilized spaces

champion culture

local voices in broader context

encourage live/work environment creative folks

public art at gateways to region

connecting urban and rural

use venues already in place

legacy park on brownlands

action to break silos across municipalities

vote for arts and culture visionaries

Cultural Champions

existing municipal programs (like Blue Box) distribute information new residents

Mix it up a bit!

Take Fine Arts 'on the road'

Have more horizontal and vertical conversations

Push out e-mails weekly

Across all generations

Across all cultures

Authentic communications - ground up

locations business Centre Durham

encourage regional connections

access shared physical space

Using traditional, digital and emerging mediums

access range of professional resources

directory of mentors /retired advisors to take from start up to mature

Board rooms available for rent/use

Durham's version of TED.com - 'Riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world'

Durham SME 'wiki'

create connections

short lecture series

STAN (Sustainable Training and Networking)

access to micro-financing programs

increase SME knowledge of existing small at provincial and federal levels

job incentives

connect mentors, angels with entrepreneurs

mentorship

encourage SMEs to use apprenticeship programs

Region-wide 'Junior Achievement' type initiative

connect to co-op students and SMEs



FILM POETRY AJAXBROCKCLARINGTON ART LITERATURE OSHAWAPICKERINGSCUGOG DESIGN THEATRE UXBRIDGEWHITBYDURHAM SYMPHONY SCULPTURE DANCE VIDEO CRAFTS PHOTOGRAPHY

CELEBRATE CULTURE DAYS IN DURHAM SEPT. 24-26

Durham Tourism is inviting the community to take part in Culture Days, an interactive, free celebration of local culture. Taking place between Sept. 24 and 26, the festival will celebrate creative expression through the region's artists, musicians, creators, historians and more.

The arts and culture festival is occurring nationwide and will be celebrated by a number of communities across Canada, including Durham Region. See page 14 for a list of events scheduled to date. For more information, see the events calendar at www.durhamtourism.ca or visit www.culturedays.ca.

INTRODUCING CULTURE DAYS

From Sept. 24 to 26, Canada will celebrate the arts and culture from coast to coast with Culture Days, the largest-ever public participation campaign undertaken by the arts and cultural community in this country.



DURHAM REGION ARTIST, KAREN RICHARDSON

Durham Region has joined the ranks of communities ranging from small towns to big cities hosting **free, hands-on, interactive arts activities.**

Culture Days is a collaborative movement to encourage **awareness, participation** and **engagement** of all Canadians in the arts and cultural life of their communities. Already, we are seeing an amazing response to the campaign with extensive media coverage, tons of social media buzz and hundreds of volunteers organizing activities. In this first year, there are more than 500 activities registered across Ontario! Culture Days congratulates Durham Region for the great events scheduled to take place this year, and we look forward to seeing how Culture Days will grow and flourish in your region.

We invite you to participate in the “behind-the-scenes” world of artists, creators, historians,

architects, curators, designers... all within your own community. Explore your own creativity and discover the inspiring work that goes on in studios, rehearsal halls, community centres, libraries, parks, theatres, museums and galleries, public squares, or on the downtown streets of Durham Region. Please visit www.culturedays.ca to search for activities in Durham or to check out the movement across the country.

**By Aubrey Reeves, Ontario Arts Council's
Culture Days Animator/Coordinator
On behalf of the Ontario Culture Days
Task Force**

culturedays
CELEBRATING ARTS + CULTURE
FROM COAST TO COAST TO COAST

THE CONCEPT OF *PORTAGE*

Since the “Transitions through Transmissions” article ran in the last issue, I’ve had folks ask me to clarify the concept of *Portage*.

Well, this is *Portage*. This zine. You are *Portage*. Your friends, family, neighbours are *Portage*. In fact, any vehicle that carries the message is *Portage*. Papers, magazines, websites, blogs, voices, music, any mode of communication that builds on that original indigenous mode, is the canoe. That’s *Portage*.

What’s the message?

The message is our home. This land—Durham Region—and what it has for you, for me, for visitors.

Biking trails, hiking trails, horse racing, car racing, vintage cars and automotive research centres, art galleries and studio tours, waterfront beaches and water parks, steam trains, architecture and small-town streetscapes, Bill Lishman, Viktor Tinkl, to name a sample. Have you ever been out to Tinkl’s place on a studio tour? It’s Disneyland by Antoni Gaudi. But not. It’s by Tinkl, and its here.

And space, such space, such drives. One can listen to all three sides of Joel Plaskett’s *Three* and not leave Durham Region.

There is a provincial park and four family friendly zoos, where children can not just see, but smell, touch and run with the animals. And it’s not such a huge investment like say Toronto Zoo. Durham Region’s zoos are manageable and doable in an afternoon.

What we don’t have is spectacle. No CN Tower, no Statue of Liberty, no Big Ben. There is no single narrative to feed the Cyclopean eye of the media.

Spectacle is hassle, aggravation, its \$5 for a bottle of water and no shade. Spectacle leaves us out, and we want in. In Durham Region we know small works. Afternoon trips to the farms, friends playing in the civic square, walking the dogs through glades hearing only the scolding of birds works. Small is stress free and

quiet times. It is easy on the body, the ears, the eyes. Small is relaxing. Durham is just about the biggest collection of small, it’s Cullen Park on 1,000-square miles.

So how can we share this message?

We in Durham Region become our own media, our own message carriers, and our own canoe. Pick up the canoe and *Portage*.

What I see *Portage* as is a potluck of conversations, where we residents share the reasons why we live here in this rich corner of this country at the top of the world, at the top of its game.

Portage is carrying that message, your message, from one end of the Region to the other and then to the other. *Portage* is the means but the message is you.



**By Will McGuirk,
Durham Music-ologist**

CELEBRATE CULTURE DAYS

September 24

Sharing a Significant Music

Pickering Library – Pickering

Multilingual Gallery Tours

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery – Oshawa

Community Textile Tree

Knitery – Whitby

Adrenalin: 40 Hour Arts-a-thon**

Station Gallery – Whitby

Pass the Book Gala

Jubilee Pavilion – Oshawa

Friday Fashion Show

Isabella's Chocolate Café – Oshawa

The Champion Heartache: Indoor Voices CD Release

Status Lounge – Oshawa

The Depth of Art**

A Gift of Art – Newcastle

Artist Studio/Gallery Open Door**

Eteli Art Works – Pickering

September 25

Glass Studio Open House*

839 Greystone Crt. – Oshawa

Karen Richardson Studio Exhibition*

Karen Richardson Watercolour Studio – Port Perry

Karen Richardson Open Studio*

Karen Richardson Watercolour Studio – Port Perry

Town Art Party 25 Year Celebration

Downtown – Uxbridge

Doors Open Oshawa*

Various Locations – Oshawa

Saturday Arts in the Park

Memorial Park – Oshawa

Walk On! Glen Bensley

Memorial Park – Oshawa

Eleven in Motion – Abstract Expressions in Animation

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery – Oshawa

Costumed Life Drawing

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery – Oshawa

Grandmothers to Grandmothers / COFAA Arts & Craft Sale*

Pickering Islamic Centre – Pickering

School Days and Days of Rebellion

Pickering Museum Village – Pickering

September 26

Celebration of the Harvest

Downtown – Port Perry

The SCA Boardwalk Art Fair

Palmer Park – Port Perry

Dance Workshop

living. the dance company – Brooklin

NOTES:

* This event runs both Saturday and Sunday.

** This event runs all weekend long.

Visit www.durhamtourism.ca or www.culturedays.ca for descriptions of events.



WALK ON!

GLEN BENSLEY

Glen Bensley is the godfather of today's Oshawa's music scene.

In fact, for almost two decades, he hosted open mics at venues throughout Oshawa. The Bensley Open Stage is where many of today's young musicians first found their voice, their place.

While Bensley was known for his repertoire of 300-plus songs that included Mississippi blues and murder ballads, Depression-era torch and twang, folk and jumped-up jazz, any genre of musician could join him on stage. He inspired and influenced a diverse range of bands including Cuff the Duke and Cure Gravity.

Glen came to Oshawa via Toronto, England and India. Like many come-from-aways, he found a home here and created one for others. On his stage he shone a light on the vast talent in Durham Region.

He played in the Hokum Runners with Heather Luckhart, whose last show before Bensley's untimely death in 2008 was on the bandshell stage in Memorial Park as

part of The Shwartz music festival. It's on that stage that Glen will be inducted into the Oshawa Walk of Fame. Previous inductees include Ed Broadbent, Tonya Lee Williams, Terry Kelly and June Eikhard.

"The first time I ever played songs that I had written, in public, was at one of Glen's open stage nights at the Dungeon," says Wayne Petti of Cuff The Duke and backing vocalist for Blue Rodeo. "He was the first person to make me feel like what I was doing was a good idea, that playing music and writing songs was something I should and could do. He gave so many of us a platform to express ourselves in a fun, respectful environment and that's something that's not easy to find in the music business."

Wayne has written and recorded a song for Bensley who always wore red Converse All-Stars. He has given Transitions permission to reprint the lyrics.

By Will McGuirk,
Durham Music-ologist

RED SHOES

Memories of you will be with me forever the
sound of your voice and your style.
The road I was on when I heard that you
passed, was a road that you helped me find.

When I go home
It's not the same.
I can still see you
Standing there in your red shoes.
Saying, "go play a song or two."

In the weeks that followed your songs filled
the air your friends sang for you in the park.
I know you were there with them singing
along just like you're here right now.

When I go home
It's not the same.
I can still see you
Standing there in your red shoes.
Saying, "go play a song or two."

I cannot believe that a year has gone by
without playing on your stage.
You made us all welcome you gave us a voice
so we will keep playing on.

I bid you farewell my friend (repeat)



THE ART OF TRANSITION

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