

SILVERTON

# Creekside Chat: Silverton murals & aesthetic windfalls

Justin Much Statesman Journal

Published 11:20 a.m. PT July 20, 2017

[View Comments](#)



This article is FREE to your community.

Vince Till, left, and Norm English from the Silverton Mural Society visit the Creekside Chat Wednesday, July 19 at Silver Creek Coffee House. *JUSTIN MUCH | Appeal Tribune*

**Vince Till** recalls a time about a quarter century back when the sprawl of Salem's Lancaster Drive siphoned significant business away from downtown Silverton.

Many of the traditional department stores, such as a small-town Main Street JC Penny, found it difficult to compete with the malls and box stores stretching out on the fringes of the larger, capital city. Vince said those box stores were especially appealing to commuters who could pick up their goods a few bucks cheaper before heading home.

About the same time Silverton felt that big-box economic drain, the city parlayed an economic-development grant into an aesthetic shot in the arm. A Silverton Murals Beautification Team was assembled and the Silverton Mural Society was born, patterned appreciably after mural successes of [Chemainus](#), [British Columbia](#).

Silverton raised money to bring **Karl Schutz**, an ambassador of that Canadian project, to town for consultations.

Twenty-five years hence results from those aesthetic efforts currently adorn walls all over town, admired by locals and visitors alike. Those adornments are, in fact, one of the drawing points that helps maintain Silverton as a magnet for many visitors annually.

Meanwhile, a number of Silvertonians, such as Vince, **Norm English**, and **Jim Squires** make it their intention to ensure those artistic gems remain vivid and intact.

Vince and Norm both sat in during a Creekside Chat at Silver Creek Coffee House on Wednesday, July 19, to discuss the murals and efforts overseeing their upkeep.

A couple hundred yards west on Water Street, **Tonya Smithburg** and **Kali Dirks** were busy working on one of Silverton's oldest murals, Mammoth, which along with The Oregon Trail on the west side of Bethany Market is among the oldest murals within the society's keep – 1992.



The Oregon Trail mural located in Bethany on the west side of the market joins Mammoth on Water Street as Silverton's oldest murals. *JUSTIN MUCH | Appeal Tribune*

---

“Tonya has been touching up murals for five or six years now; she’s quite a talented artist,” Norm said on a walk down to the site. “Kali has been helping her for about a year and is learning quite a bit from her.”

Vince added: “She’s (Tonya) very exacting about what she does; a perfectionist – We’re blessed to have her.

“Kali started off last year working with her and has gotten better as we go along,” he added.