

NEW!



A front view of Schwartz house and the sculpture garden



The channel looking towards the fountain

The Municipal Leader is pleased to introduce a regular feature in our magazine – Memorable Manitoba. Encouraged by the interesting, beautiful and often unique attractions in some of the communities visited during this year’s June District Meetings, we felt the Leader is a perfect venue in which to share some of our pictorial impressions with our readers. Our chosen attraction this issue is Altona’s “Gallery in the Park.”

In 2006, within the south-central Manitoba community of Altona, stood a large, vacated, turn-of-the-century home. The Schwartz House, as it is known locally, was built in 1902 by Mr. Johann Schwartz for his family. Schwartz was an innovative, ambitious businessman who built grain elevators. This stately house served as his family’s residence for many years, later functioning as a residence for Elim Bible School students and finally as a Bed & Breakfast before closing its doors in 2004.




Close up of the fountain

When CEO **David Friesen** and President **Curwin Friesen** of Friesens Printers approached Mayor **Melvin Klassen**, AMM Central Urban Director, in late 2005 with their vision for an art gallery and sculpture garden a new dream was formed. Coined as “Gallery in the Park,” this project would help mark Friesen’s 100th anniversary in business and would leave a lasting legacy of the appreciation for art and culture in this region. Friesens envisioned that this new gallery and outdoor sculpture garden would position Altona as a destination for tourists and art enthusiasts alike.

With community commitment and Town Council’s approval, the project began. Friesens contributed more than half of the funds towards the \$1,200,000 project, worked hand-in-hand with the Town to bring the plan to fruition, and continue to be involved to this day. In fact, the entire community came together, as private citizens joined alongside artists and corporate citizens to manually lift stones and plant trees. It truly was a community-wide partnership that has given the community an added sense of pride.

Today, the Schwartz Heritage Home displays paintings and smaller three dimensional pieces, while a sculpture garden adjacent to the art gallery enhan-

ces the community’s beautiful Centennial Park. The “art gallery in the park” now provides a permanent venue to showcase the immense talent of artists in rural Manitoba and beyond, and has breathed new life into this grand structure.

The gallery is open seasonally. Please call 204-324-9610 or visit www.gallery-inthepark.com for more information. 

Is there a unique, innovative, interesting or simply beautiful attraction in your community that you’d like featured in Memorable Manitoba? Let us know! Call Lynne Bereza at 204-856-2366 or email lbereza@amm.mb.ca and perhaps it will be featured in next issue of the *Municipal Leader*!

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