

More about the Rotary Fountain

Information on the first Rotary fountain is a little vague, but it is believed that Alderman Mona Sparling suggested a fountain as a way to beautify the lake area. Rotarian George Janzen, an engineer with Calgary Power, took on the challenge to build a fountain. This fountain had an 8 by 6-foot deck supported by 45-gallon drums. It had a doughnut shaped water pipe on the top with five jets and was anchored in the lake on the north side of the highway by 4 cables. Power was supplied by an electrical cable connected to Dick Peterson's well on the north shore where the current Gazebo is located.

Though built with the greatest of intentions this first fountain was sadly lacking and was no end of trouble. The fountain only sprayed to a height of five feet. It didn't take long for the barrels to start taking on water and the fountain to tip over. That first fountain was a lost cause.

FOUNTAIN NUMBER TWO

After the flood of 1974, which caused the spillway to wash out and severely damaged the Mirror Lake shoreline, beautification of the lake was on everyone's mind. In the fall of 1975, Rotary met with Council with plans to beautify Mirror Lake. After that meeting, the club approved an expenditure of \$12,000 to construct a lighted fountain. The general concepts for the fountain were:

- Lighted fountain with automatic light changing apparatus – three colours

- Floating collar type with twenty horsepower submersible pump

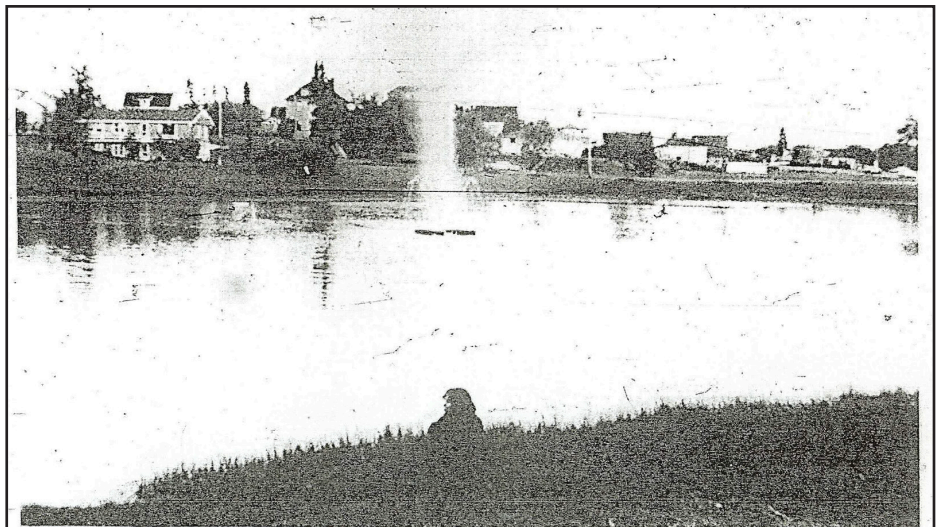
- Thirty-five-foot centre jet and an outer ring of jets – approximately fifteen feet high

In view of the beauty and appeal of a fountain, Council agreed to take on the operation and maintenance cost.

The fountain was installed in June of 1976 on the south side of the highway. However it was installed too close to the highway and sprayed the vehicles on Highway 13. However, it was moved farther south.

This fountain was plagued with problems too. The nozzles kept getting clogged with fish and weeds. Also the floats and parts immediately began corroding. When Calgary Power removed the fountain that first fall it looked like it was 20 years old!

The high school and a pump company were involved in determining if the fountain was redeemable. It was repaired and Rotary continued to struggle with the fountain issue for a number of years.



Fountain in the park

Commissioned by the Rotary Club, a new fountain is being tested in Mirror Lake, and has drawn a good deal of comment from neighbors and passers. Ad-

justments are still being made to the unit to get a bigger flow of water, as ordered, and efforts are being made to make the green lights in the base work as the red ones. Green and red were used as the colors of the Rose City.
 —Camrose Canadian Newsphoto

FOUNTAIN NUMBER THREE

In the fall of 1982, Carlyle Pump Company proposed a solution to the fountain problem with a new fountain that could be overwintered in the bottom of the lake. The fountain was described as being:

Fountain jet – height 5 feet. 281 gpm

Fountain lights – 120V 500 W

Pump – 2 stage 15hp, 440V hung directly below fountain jet

Framing and Screening – all aluminum or stainless steel, weight 720 lbs

(any debris or fish smaller than ½ inch go through the pump and fountain head)

Tanks – all aluminum with water and air valves 31.7 cu.ft. – support 1980 lbs



Celebrating the installation of the new fountain

Dr. Ken Rayment, a Rotary member and scuba diver, looked after the fountain from then on. Ken and his “dive buddies” would open the valves to sink the fountain each fall. Each spring they would dive into the lake to locate the fountain and fill the flotation tank with air to raise it.

Ken had many helpers over the years:

Dr. Dale Benham

Gary Fransen and his son

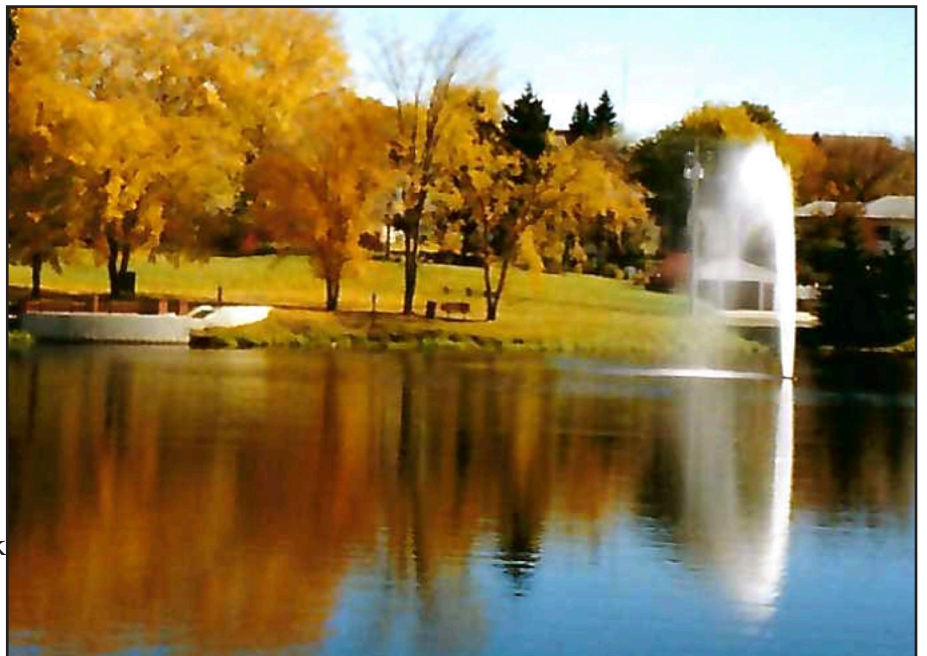
Morris Francoeur and his son

Dr. Bob Cote

Skip Hayden

Ted Gillespie

After a few years, the aluminum flotation tank began to corrode and leak. The tank was scraped, patched and kept afloat. It was replaced with a stainless-steel tank in 1993. Bringing the tank to the surface each spring was a huge task and required an incredible amount of skill, ingenuity and strength. It was often stuck in the mud or turned on its side, making recovery difficult.



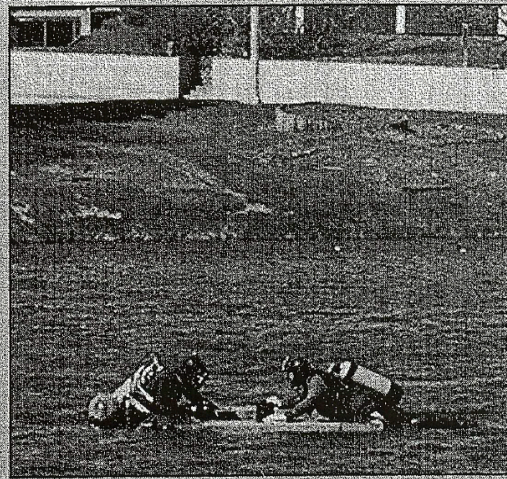
By the spring of 1997, the pump no longer functioned. The years being in the lake without the opportunity for inspection had taken its toll.

MAY 1996

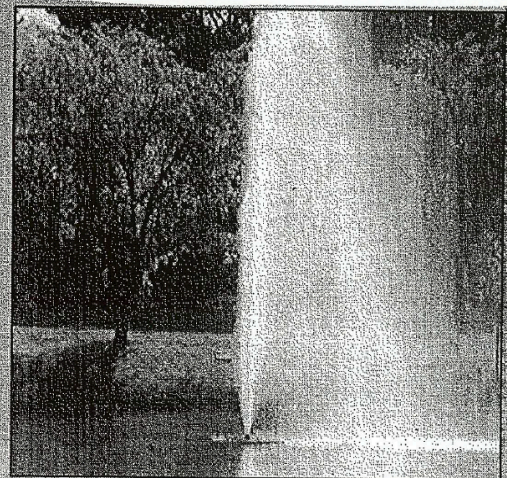
Fountain bubbling



Dr. Ken Rayment (left) and Ted Gillespie (right) climbed into their wet suits and entered the 10 degree temperatures of Mirror Lake, last week, with the objective of raising the Rotary Club's water fountain. The fountain was partially buried at the bottom of the lake, and the divers had to dig in silt to find the valves. Once that was accomplished, they were able to fill the base with air from an extra tank, causing it to rise to the surface.



After it was at the surface, Dr. Rayment and Gillespie cleaned the surfaces, including a lens for the light, which illuminates the fountain at night. The whole process of diving and raising the fountain had to be repeated yesterday (Monday) afternoon, after one of the valves leaked, causing the fountain to sink.



The Camrose Rotary Club fountain is now in its 20th year of operation. The fountain was purchased from Boeing Manufacturing Company, of Calgary, on May 31, at a cost of \$12,000, and installed by Dr. Ken Rayment and Marvin LaBarge. The City of Camrose pays for all the power to operate the fountain.

FOUNTAIN NUMBER FOUR

Fountain number four was installed in 1997 with a ceremony in the park July 21st. This fountain weighed only 300 pounds so it was easily removed by a backhoe each fall, inspected and re-installed in the spring. The flotation ring was PVC filled with Styrofoam and the fountain pump, impeller and nozzle were stainless steel. With the inclusion of low voltage lights, the club purchased the fountain for about \$14,000.

Despite the new features, it was far from maintenance free, requiring annual cleaning and inspection. Every second year it was sent to Calgary to have the motor serviced and all the seals checked. The lenses and electrical connections also required replacement. In 2004, in spite of all this maintenance, the electrical system needed a major overhaul to the tune of \$2,500.

We have Rotarian Ted Gillespie to thank for leading the work involved with fountain number four. Thanks also go to his helpers Andreas Dahle, Rod Lindberg, Ken Rayment, David Taylor, various summer students and many others who helped out in the boat.

**INSTALLING FOUNTAIN
NUMBER FOUR IN 2001**



FOUNTAIN NUMBER FIVE

The fountain has become a recognizable symbol of Camrose. What would Camrose be without the Mirror Lake fountain?

With the issues experienced with the first four fountains, the club and the city decided it was a project better handled by the professionals at the city.

The most recent fountain, installed in the mid 2010s, was funded 50/50 by the city and Rotary Club and is maintained by the city.

