



James Hopkins

WPA Mural Restored in Rochester

While converting the former Rochester High School into the Rochester Community Schools Administration Building in the 1990s, renovation crews found a surprise peeking through the drywall: a 23-foot-long mural depicting local scenes including the Ferry-Morse Seed Farm and the Parkdale Biological Farm of Parke-Davis, Inc.

The painting, titled “Industrial Environment of Rochester High School,” had been completed in 1938 by Marvin Beerbohm as part of the WPA Federal Art Project. The mural was kept on display until 1961, when the artwork was covered with Sheetrock as renovations were made to the school.

A few years ago, the Rochester-Avon Historical

Society adopted the mural for restoration and enlisted art conservator LaVere Webster to restore the Depression-era piece. The painting was cleaned and repaired, mounted on a new canvas and framework, and now hangs in the school administration building’s main meeting room.

Beerbohm died in 1981, but his daughter, Cynthia Beerbohm Maguire, attended the public unveiling in January 2011.

“I feel both of [my parents’] presences here tonight,” said Maguire in a press release distributed by the Rochester-Avon Historical Society. “And they are smiling.”

Ford House: *There’s an App for That*

First released in August 2010, the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House App allows people to tour the Grosse Pointe Shores’ property without ever leaving their living rooms. The smartphone application features home videos shot by Edsel Ford, guided tours, and the opportunity to better learn about the Ford family.

“It’s very personal and sometimes deeply emotional,” said Kathleen Mullins, president of Ford House. “Visitors [can now] connect with this iconic family in a whole new way.”

The app is available for download from iTunes, or visitors may use a pre-loaded iPod Touch during visits at the Ford House. All other smartphones can access the tour as a web app at www.fordhouse.org/mobile tour. For more information, visit www.fordhouse.org/explore.html or call (313) 884-4222.

