FLORENTINE FOUNTAIN
RESTORED AND PAINTED

By Richard O. Reisem

With a grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation and funds from the member-supported Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, the elegant, cast-iron Florentine fountain has been restored. The surface was stripped of all paint; cracks were repaired, primed, and repainted the fountain's original color, metallic bronze, which is a dark green, almost black. Because the fountain was out of commission for almost a year, the pump was frozen and refused to operate, so we acquired and installed a new pump, and now we again see the upward spray of water falling into the upper scalloped pan, spilling over into a lower cast-iron bowl, and finally spouting through the mouths of eight rams' heads into a stone basin. The ground-level stone basin itself has also been repaired and sealed with a bedliner installed in the bottom of the pool. The pool water drains through a filter to remove any debris before being pumped back to the top of the fountain to repeat the decorative plunge.

The major restoration work was accomplished by Heister Building Restoration, Inc., headed by Kammy Sue and Bill Heister. The last major restoration of this elaborate 1875 Victorian fountain occurred in 1985, when John Clark III, president of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, presented a gift of $25,000 to repair the fountain. That gift was matched by the city of Rochester, which permitted a complete restoration of the fountain and the Medina sandstone pool. The fountain was completely disassembled and shipped to the Architectural Iron Company in Milford, Pennsylvania, where 22 layers of paint were removed, and parts in good condition were used to make molds for parts that were deteriorated. Those 22 layers of paint included a green similar to patinated copper, a white, simulating marble, and other colors, but the original color from the factory was bronze, which is what it is today. Bright sunlight brings out the dark green of bronze in an otherwise seemingly black surface.

The original foundry mark on the base of our Florentine fountain indicates that J. L. Mott Iron Works in New York City created the fountain. It is 24 feet tall and weighs 14 tons. The foundry was established in 1828 by Jacob Lawrence Mott Sr., In 1870, J. L. Mott Jr., became head of the company and produced a significant display of the foundry's works at the U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.

For the first time in its 137-year history, this Florentine fountain is now lighted. A spotlight high in a nearby tree was installed last fall and illuminates the gleaming fountain at night.

The elegant Florentine fountain has been restored and painted metallic bronze, which was the original color of the fountain when it was installed in 1875.
Three female statues surround the fountain core below the top basin. The lower basin reveals detailed floral ornamentation and the Venus' heads that spout water to the bottom pool.

A close-up view of the lower cast-iron basin reveals the elaborate bas-relief detailing on the Florentine fountain. Although the fountain pump was not operating when this photo was taken, today, the eight Venus' heads spout water that falls into the ground-level pool where it is recirculated to the top of the fountain.

Twelve large blocks of Medina sandstone form a wall around the retaining pool of the Florentine fountain. As part of the restoration, the pool was sealed and a bed liner installed.

Practically every square inch of the base of the fountain is embellished with three-dimensional floral and animal details.
ANNUAL PLANT SALE YIELDS $531 FOR FRIENDS

Every year on a Saturday morning in late May, a group of plant connoisseurs, garden club members, and independent plant specialists gather up rare, special, unusual, and interesting plants and stage the Proud Market Plant Sale at the Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, in front of the Warner Castle, which is just across the avenue from Mount Hope Cemetery. All manner of plants, many of them hard to find, are for sale at exceptionally reasonable prices.

The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery have participated in this annual event for many years, usually under the leadership of Friends Trustee John Peasall, who lives at No. 1 Castle Park. John always contributes appealing plants from his own garden, and this year, for the May 26 sale, Mary and Ed Olinger, Jan Wyland, Sue O’Neil, and Paul Casterline also contributed plants to the Friends of Mount Hope stand. Although the Proud Market Plant Sale officially opens at 8:00 a.m., many of the plants are already sold by that time, and the rest are gone well before noon.

Seen in the photo of the Friends for-sale display are, from the left, Mary Olinger, John Peasall, Valery O’Hara, Jan Wyland, and Cheryl Gavenda. Everything they brought sold for $561, which was contributed to the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.

FRIENDS INVESTMENT FUNDS NOW MANAGED BY ROCHESTER AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

On June 11, 2012, Marilyn Nolte, Friends president, and Richard Reisem, Friends vice-president, met with Dana Miller, vice-president of the Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF), to negotiate the transfer of funds from the Friends bank account and residual funds in the discontinued Rochester Cemeteries Heritage Foundation (RCHF) to a new RACF account that was created for the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery (FOMH).

Approximately $54,000 was transferred from RCHF’s account to the new Friends account at RACF. Also, a significant portion of the nearly $100,000 Friends’ investment account will also be transferred to RACF once current large bills have been paid and the transfer amount is determined. This transfer of FOMH funds to RACF will mean better financial yields for our organization. The dividend yields for checking accounts these days is essentially nil. RACF invests 70% of its portfolio in equity funds and 30% in fixed income funds. The RACF blended endowment portfolio yield for one year is 3.4%; for 3 years, 18.2%; for 10 years, 5.7%.
GUIDED WALKING TOURS
OF MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY
EVERY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

From now through the end of October, the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery offer guided walking tours of the cemetery every Saturday and Sunday afternoon. The Saturday tour is new this year and starts from the south entrance on Mount Hope Avenue, which is near Elmwood Avenue opposite the Distillery Restaurant. Parking is along the road inside the cemetery gates. The two-hour walk starts at 1:00 p.m., covers about 1.1/4 miles, and has about 25 stops, which include Rufus Sibley, co-founder of Sibley’s department store, Frank Gannett, founder of the Democrat & Chronicle, James Vick, founder of Vicks Nursery, Frederick Douglass’ daughter Rosetta Sprague, and other notable Rochesterians. The tour is $5 a person, although members and children under 16 are free. The south section of the cemetery is flat land, making the tour particularly easy to walk. Chilled lemonade and cookies are served after the tour.

The Sunday tour commences from the north cemetery entrance on Mount Hope Avenue opposite Robinson Drive. The two-hour tour starts at 2:00 p.m. and covers a little more than a mile, mostly on paved roads and hilly terrain. Parking is inside the gates along the roadways and register for the tour inside the gatehouse. You will visit a number of historic gravesites, including Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Himam Sibley, founder of Western Union Telegraph Company. The tour is free to everyone. Lemonade and cookies are served after the tour in the gatehouse.

The banners announcing these tours appear at the north and south entrances to Mount Hope. They are new this year and were a personal gift of Mary Gaudio, assistant commissioner of the city’s Department of Environmental Services. We thank her for the generous gift of nine banners, which include not only the Saturday and Sunday tours but also promote the Thursday twilight tours and special theme tours throughout the season.
CITY OF ROCHESTER
ANNOUNCES NEW
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Individuals and groups are invited to participate in a new volunteer project that is sponsored by the city. It is called the 2nd Saturdays Volunteer Program. On the second Saturday of every month from June to October, 9:00 a.m. to noon, volunteers will work in small groups led by experienced cemetery and landscape professionals. Tools and beverages are provided, but bring your own gardening gloves. Park within the cemetery’s main entrance, which is located at 1133 Mount Hope Avenue, across from the Distillery Restaurant.

Volunteer contributions allow the cemetery to maintain a high level of natural beauty and assist with general horticultural activities, such as planting, weeding, and raking. Activities also include removing overgrowth, picking up small headstones, filling in sunken graves, and other maintenance activities. Volunteers need to be at least age 12, and an adult must accompany volunteers who are 12-17 years old.

To obtain further information and to register, go to www.cityofrochester.gov/mounthope/
Many tombstones in the oldest Jewish lot, which is in Section O, were recently restored, but more need to be repaired and reset. The Farash grant will provide funds for work in this and other Jewish lots in Mount Hope.

**FRIENDS RECEIVE FARASH GRANT**

The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery has received a grant in the amount of $10,000 from the Farash Foundation to repair and restore older Jewish lots in the cemetery. The grant states that the Friends organization, working with the city of Rochester, Department of Environmental Services and the Jewish community, will prepare a detailed project plan.

Friends trustee Earl Gurell said that many work parties from the Jewish community have been in the cemetery improving Jewish lots during this spring and summer. He will notify the Rochester Jewish community about the Farash grant. It is hoped that the community and individuals will also provide some financial assistance that can broaden the scope of the amount of restoration work that can be completed. Planning for this project will begin in mid-July.
FRIENDS SEEK GRANT TO DEVELOP A TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

By Richard O. Reisen

As part of the Mount Hope Cultural Landscape Report that was produced for us in 2009 by Heritage Landscapes LLC and Wendel Duchscherer Architects & Engineers, PC, there was a chapter describing the tree inventory that was made of the area of the cemetery north of Grove Avenue, generally known as the old section.

The tree inventory was completed over a period of several weeks during August and September 2008. The inventory included 2,191 trees in the 96 acres of the heavily forested and hilly north section of Mount Hope. The trees that were counted were significant canopy trees with diameters larger than 4 inches. For each tree, the report gives the GPS coordinates, the tree type, the size, condition, and maintenance recommendation.

All of the varieties of oak trees constitute 34% of the tree population; maples, 23%; spruce, 10%; arborvitae, 5%, and other genera, 28%. The report concluded that the overall health of the trees is good with 91% of the population to be in good to fair condition. 100 trees were considered to have potentially hazardous conditions, like disease or branches too low over road and pedestrian ways.

Tom Jones, a FOMH member with a special interest in trees, advised of a grant available from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that would provide funding for the development of a tree management plan. Maranne McDade-Clay, our grant writer—with input from Zak Steele, landscape architect and a new Friends trustee, and others—prepared the necessary paperwork for submission. Such a plan will contain two primary aspects: (1) a maintenance program for existing trees and (2) a tree replanting program. This information will be of vital importance for the FOMH and the city of Rochester, Department of Environmental Services, as we continue management of the cemetery tree population.

It is estimated that developing such a plan would cost $15,070, so we are asking the state to grant us $7500, and we will match that fund from our investments and the value of the volunteer hours that Zak and others will contribute to the project.

As we go to press, the grant proposal is being considered in Albany. We will let you know the outcome.
What is this 1800s grinding stone doing in Mount Hope Cemetery? Where did it come from? Who put it in the cemetery as a monument? Why? How did it happen? And when? These are the questions that a top-notch journalist asks when writing a good story, and if you would like to read the fascinating answers concerning this millstone, and scores of other intriguing stories about interesting gravestones, you should buy a copy of the brand-new book, *Gravestones in Mount Hope Cemetery*. It's full color, printed on besi-quality coated paper, spiral-bound, lavishly illustrated, and pure pleasure to look at and read. All this for $20 (tax included). Order it today by downloading an order form at www.fomhc.org. Or pick up a copy at the Mount Hope Cemetery office, 1133 Mount Hope Avenue, opposite the Distillery Restaurant, during office hours Monday through Saturday. The book is also available at our Saturday and Sunday afternoon tours. Lots of people have told us “It’s a great book!”