



WRITINGS

NEWSLETTER OF THE SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY

Volume XXX, Issue I

SPRING 2018

HOW TO HELP THE COTTAGE


Like other not-for-profit organizations, the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy (SPCC) relies on volunteers to accomplish our work. We are looking for people interested in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, especially the Seth Peterson Cottage. Some ways to volunteer for the conservancy include:

Board of Directors: The board meets quarterly throughout the year and holds an annual meeting in December. Members oversee long-term planning for the cottage and the SPCC.

Treasurer: The SPCC is currently looking for a new treasurer on the board of directors. The current treasurer will assist in the transition.

Docents: Lead tours explaining to visitors the history of the Seth Peterson Cottage and Frank Lloyd Wright. Training is provided.

Cottage and Grounds Maintenance: Participate in the annual spring clean-up the week following the open house in April. Work includes a deep cleaning of the cottage and grounds, and trail maintenance.

To learn more about volunteering for the SPCC, attend one of our open houses. Contact information is available on page 2. 



‘WRITINGS’ WELCOMES NEW DESIGNER

By *Brian R. Hannan*

When an opening at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Seth Peterson Cottage unexpectedly became available in January 2017, I had only one thought: Road trip!

I recruited a friend, and we made plans to leave the next morning for a brief, overnight visit. I’d been wanting to stay at the cottage since I learned of it in the fall of 2016 while preparing for an outing to Taliesin, Wright’s home and studio in Spring Green, Wisconsin.

The cottage, however, was booked solid for all of 2017 and, for that matter, much of 2018.

Even so, I made a daily habit of checking the reservation website, hoping for a cancellation. I was soon rewarded.

When we arrived, I was so excited to see the cottage that I saw past the overcast, gray skies and soggy, brown yard. I took a quick tour of the house — all 880 square

feet of it — and then hurried to make some pictures before the daylight faded.

My friend and I then headed to the store to stock up for dinner that night (T-bone steaks, caramelized onion/mushroom and Caesar salad) and breakfast the next morning (poached eggs, toast, bacon and coffee). I built a blazing fire in the fireplace. After dinner, we sat around the hearth and talked.

Snow began falling as we chatted and continued overnight. We awoke to a winter wonderland.

Laying in bed that evening before I fell asleep, I thought of Peterson and the dream that brought him to this idyllic spot. His long-fought campaign to convince a reluctant Wright to design a house for him finally paid off, and he looked forward to sharing it with his fiancée.

And then Wright, a childhood hero with whom Peterson shared a birthday, died.

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WRITINGS

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SETH PETERSON COTTAGE
CONSERVANCY INC.

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Contact the Sand County Service Co. at
800-822-7768.

CONTACT US

Website: www.SethPeterson.org
Facebook: Search for the Seth Peterson
Cottage Conservancy Inc.
Cottage voicemail: 877-466-2358



Work week projects in early April included restocking the cottage's woodpile.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

How do we follow a terrific year like last year — in which we celebrated our silver anniversary? More than 200 people attended the anniversary program. The interest in Frank Lloyd Wright and the Seth Peterson Cottage is strong. Cottage reservations remain high with dates into 2020 already taken. The number of monthly open house visitors continues high.

Thank You, Alice Seeliger

Our last newsletter had a help wanted notice for a new layout and design person. Two people responded, with Brian R. Hannan being selected. You have been introduced to Brian, a Frank Lloyd Wright enthusiast, with the cover story of this newsletter. We welcome Brian and extend a heartfelt thank you to Alice Seeliger for carrying out these duties since the early days of the conservancy in the late 1980s.

Last Voyage of the Fall Color Boat Tour

After many years of having the Fall Color Boat Tour and Reception, the board decided to cancel the event for this year. The board is discussing other possible events for this fall or other open house days.

Souvenir Coffee Mug for 2018

The 2018 souvenir coffee mug design is included in this newsletter. Cottage guests each receive a complimentary coffee mug.

Do you have a favorite Frank Lloyd Wright quote that could be included on the 2019 coffee mug? Write to us with your suggestion. If we choose your entry, we'll give you a mug!


Volunteers Needed

An article in this newsletter describes the number of hours put in by our volunteers.

While we are thankful for them, we are always looking for more helpers, especially as docents for open house days and for the annual spring cleaning days following the April open house.

Many of our board members have served for a number of years, some from the beginning of the conservancy.

We are always looking for new people to serve on the board — and the new ideas they bring with them to continue preserving the Seth Peterson Cottage for the next 25 years and beyond. Anyone with an interest in helping the conservancy can contact us by e-mail at:

sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com.
Thank you for your continuing support of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. 

2018 SOUVENIR MUG SPEAKS TO WRIGHT'S PHILOSOPHY

For Peter Rott, a practicing architect, Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy board member and Taliesin graduate, the Frank Lloyd Wright quote he suggested for this year's cottage coffee cup resonates.

"It struck a chord," he says. "It's really the essence of what I took from Wright."

Rott distilled the quote, "Architecture — A spirit of the spirit of man," from his reading of a passage in "An


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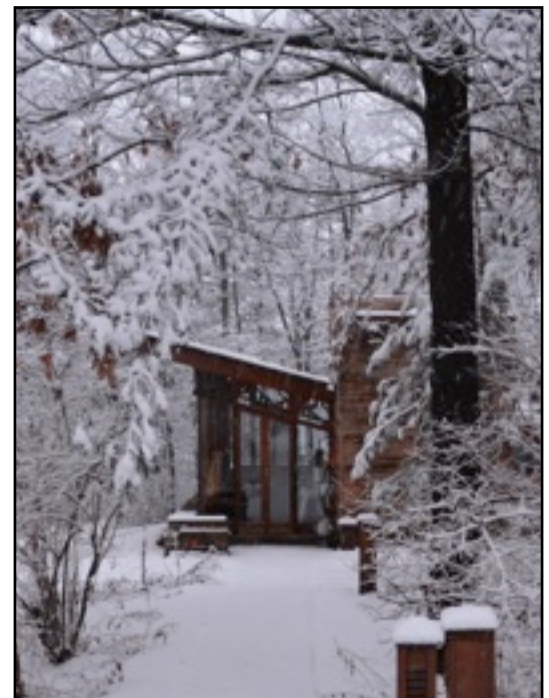
ARCHITECTURE
a spirit of the spirit of man

Frank Lloyd Wright

American Architecture." The book, first published in 1955, collects a number of Wright's lectures, letters and talks. It was edited by Edgar Kaufmann Jr.,

whose parents commissioned Wright to build a summer residence, Fallingwater.

"(The sentiment) is simple," Rott says. "It speaks very strongly." 



NEW DESIGNER

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One year and one day later, Peterson — troubled by that loss, the end of his engagement and mounting construction costs — took his own life. He never lived in the cottage that today bears his name and would not exist without him.


I found myself feeling sad for and grateful to Peterson for this gift, a legacy so many people will be able to enjoy on his behalf.

I've since made another two stays at the cottage — each time with my 5-year-old son, who regularly asks when we can go back. "Soon," I say, hoping for an opening.

I suspect that all of us who are drawn to the cottage have our reasons — some unique, some shared. In recent years, I've visited dozens of Wright's commercial and residential buildings, and I've stayed overnight in five. Only a handful of them are as compelling to me as the cottage.

Even as a corporate writer and former journalist, I can't articulate why. Words fall short of the experience.

So I was interested to learn, on the November 2017 evening my son and I last arrived home from the cottage, that a new newsletter designer was needed. I applied that night.

Several weeks ago — one year and one day since my first visit, in fact — I was offered the position. 





LOVNESS COTTAGE BUILDS ON SETH PETERSON DESIGN

By Claire Barnett

There is a near duplicate of the Seth Peterson Cottage built in Stillwater, Minnesota. Here is its story, plus comparison pictures of the differences.

Donald and Virginia Lovness were Frank Lloyd Wright clients for whom he designed a house, a different cottage and two other buildings. They were frequent visitors to Taliesin, particularly in later years, after Wright's death.

According to their daughters, Lonnie and Tracy Lovness, Wright had suggested the Lovnesses build the Seth Peterson Cottage plan. Wright, they said, doubted whether Peterson would be able to fund construction.

Additionally, the Lovnesses preferred

the Seth Peterson design over the one Wright originally designed for them.

Later, as reported by Peter Rott, a Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy board member and graduate of Taliesin, Olgivanna Wright further encouraged them to build a version of the Seth Peterson Cottage, which by that time was decaying and in danger of demolition. It was considered lost.

The Lovness Cottage was completed in 1973.

Tom Casey, who supervised the building of the Seth Peterson Cottage and also worked on its design, normally would have been involved with this redesign effort. But he was out of the country, serving as the head of Taliesin Associated Architects in Iran. Final design changes were made by William

Wesley Peters.

The main differences between the two cottages are in the kitchen and bathroom. The Lovness Cottage has a full basement that houses the utilities.

By eliminating the Seth Peterson Cottage's utility room, a sandstone wall is exposed in the expanded Lovness Cottage kitchen.

Decorative trim includes a ceramic tile backsplash and counters and mahogany paneling — as contrasted by the Seth Peterson Cottage's laminate counters and douglas fir plywood.

In the Lovness Cottage, a loft overlooking the kitchen is accessed by a stairway entered from the bathroom.

The front overhang of the Lovness

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Left to right: Lovness Cottage facade; Seth Peterson Cottage facade and bedroom; Lovness Cottage bedroom; Seth Peterson Cottage kitchen; and Lovness Cottage kitchen. Photos by Claire Barnett and Bill Martinelli.

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MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Ryder Will, Park Supervisor

 ere at Mirror Lake State Park we are finishing up a somewhat uneventful winter. With low snow totals, we did not see as many skiers on our trails as we would have liked. We only had a week or so of good conditions for skiing, leaving only the most dedicated skiers to venture out on the trails.

Gearing Up for Summer

We are now moving into spring and getting set for the busy summer season. We are looking forward to getting the campgrounds, trails and picnic areas ready for the public.

Park Visitation Continues to Grow

We have seen small but steady increases in our visitation and revenue over the last several years and are expecting that trend to continue. We have really noticed growth in the number of visitors making use of the lake in boats, kayaks and canoes, and on paddle boards. The quality of the water, spectacular scenery and no-wake lake make for a perfect paddling or boating destination.

It takes a lot of work, but we are proud to provide a memorable experience and enjoyable destination for our visitors.

Thank You, Ruth Lindert

In the area of staffing, we are again seeing some fresh faces and saying goodbye to well.

Ruth Lindert, our very talented visitor services associate, has retired. Ruth had been at Mirror Lake since 2010, and we were very fortunate to have her as part of the team for that time.

She plans to spend more time in her garden and with her family.

Welcome to Our New Ranger: Brett Johansen

On the other side of the staffing equation, we welcomed Brett Johansen to our ranger position. Brett joined us as a transfer from Lapham Peak, another state property in the Milwaukee area.

Brett brings more than eight years of experience, and we have been glad to incorporate his knowledge and abilities into the team.

In addition to the changes with Ruth and Brett we will see a lot of new faces as part of our 2018 summer staff.

We were fortunate to have several college students working with us for the last several summers. Many of them have now graduated and are moving on to other jobs in their areas of study.


We plan to hire two new maintenance staff, two new office staff and a new park and recreation specialist to assist across the team with operations, visitor service and special projects. It will be more new summer staff than we have hired for a number of years, so we expect a learning curve while being

excited for some new perspectives and fresh enthusiasm. The new staff will join approximately 10 returning summer employees.

Thank You to Our Volunteers


As important as the staff mentioned above are, with the other full-time employees on the team, we also must recognize that the park and the surrounding areas would not be the fantastic place that they are without the effort of volunteers for the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park and the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. Without the thousands of hours by dozens of volunteers, the experience here would be vastly different.

Just this last year, the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy volunteers put in approximately 1,200 hours of volunteer time, and I would guess there are many additional hours that went unreported. Without that work, the department would be left taking care of the cottage and all the associated tasks, and this certainly does not take into account all the years of work to get the cottage to where it is today.

The next time you're at the cottage, enjoying the beautiful structure and surroundings, I encourage you to reflect on all the hard work that went into making that moment possible. 

MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION UPDATE

By Mark Blakeslee, President

 n an evening in early March, I drove home in almost white-out snow conditions, thinking that we will soon be cleaning up our yards, planting flowers and watching the forest leaf-out.


While this past winter didn't bring us a lot of snow, the ice on the lake was one of the thickest I can remember — more than 20 inches! That meant I didn't go out with my old, and probably not very sharp, hand ice auger to do much ice fishing. I would have spent most of the day cutting a hole, only then I would have been too tired to set a pole.

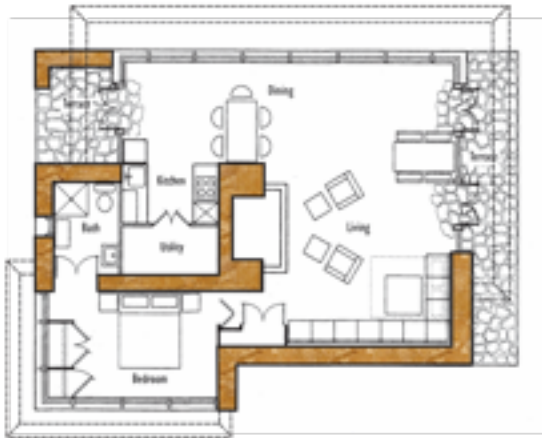
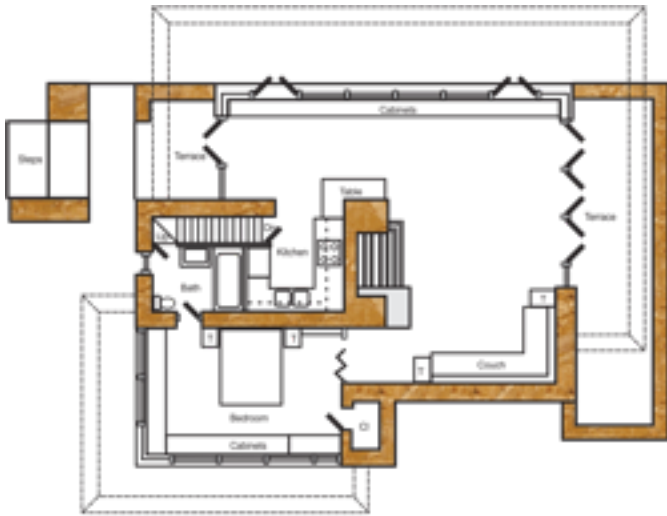
Many of us will soon be back to work picking up litter, testing water, harvesting weeds and removing trees and branches that fell into the lake — just to name a few things.

Annual Lake Cleanup

The Mirror Lake Association's annual spring lake cleanup is scheduled for May 5, 2018. We expect approximately 30 to 40 people will show up on that Saturday morning to walk roads and park paths and paddle around the lake in boats to pick up debris left from winter activities.

The weed harvester will be readied for the lake and refreshing our water testing supplies. We are also making final plans for all of our summer social activities. We have to have a little play along with all the work. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. We would be thrilled to have you come join us.

As always, I'd love to hear your feedback. If you have any thoughts, comments or concerns, please give me a call or send an e-mail. My cellphone number is 608-575-4652 and my e-mail is markblakeslee57@gmail.com. 



Floor plans of the Lovness Cottage, top, and Seth Peterson Cottage, bottom, illustrate the similarities and notable differences at the two properties. They are provided for illustration purposes, only, and were drawn by Bill Martinelli.




The Lovness Cottage fireplace offers an additional side hearth and features a less-massive, protruding stone hood.

ALIKE BUT DIFFERENT

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Cottage is longer by several feet.

Like the Seth Peterson Cottage, the Lovness Cottage is recessed into a slope above a lake, but the Lovness Cottage has a berm around its bedroom and back wall. Steps lead up to the entrance, rather than down, making its setting quite dramatic.

Author's Note: The Lovness Cottage is not open to the public. Special thanks to Peter Rott and Gordon Maltby for sharing their Lovness Cottage research. 

FROM THE GUEST BOOK

“I just love it here and am so grateful for the space and time Seth allows for appreciating, centering, exploring and just being human!” — *Anonymous*

“Spending a few days in such a unique place offers a chance to think. The cottage brings out the best from within you....” — *David & Janine*

“We came to celebrate Jack’s 65th birthday. The Seth Peterson Cottage is spectacular. A perfect gem. Thank you to all who gave of themselves and their

treasure to restore and keep this artwork alive for all.” — *Laura & Jack*

“Thanks to Frank Lloyd Wright for designing buildings on a human scale and honoring the surrounding environment. We are blessed to live in a state that has fantastic parks, allowing all people to share nature and gems like this cottage. Let’s continue to support a system that shares this earth’s bounty, humanely and democratically.” — *Stephen & Margit*

“Symphony of bird song. Owl at night, song birds at daybreak, cranes in

morning. This cottage sleeps, wakes and breathes with life. Special place. Special time spent. Thank you, Frank Lloyd Wright and Seth.” — *Rachel, Scott, Martha & Adam*

“My 65th birthday present – best present ever! We have lived in the middle of the Kettle Moraine State Forest for 35 years and never felt more in touch with nature than we do here. This space is spiritual. Truly was on my bucket list. Thanks to all those with vision and fortitude before us for saving and keeping this place. Fills my soul.” — *Jan & Paul*

WRITINGS

The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy Inc.
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Reedsburg, WI 53959

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What's Inside

- New Newsletter Designer
- How to Help the Cottage
- From the President
- The Lovness Cottage
- Mirror Lake State Park Report
- Mirror Lake Association Update
- From the Guest Book

UPCOMING EVENTS

Seth Peterson Cottage Open House and Guided Tour

- May 13, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- June 10, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- July 8, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- August 12, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- September 9, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- October 14, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- November 11, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5
- December 9, 1 to 3:30 p.m., \$5

Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy members receive free admission and 10 percent off cottage merchandise.

Statewide State Park Open House

- June 3, includes free admission to the Seth Peterson Cottage and all state parks, forests and trails

Conservancy Annual Meeting and Volunteer Recognition

- December 9, 4 p.m.

✓ Visitors find touring the cottage a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Take a scenic drive and experience firsthand this restored Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home

during the open house tours held each month.

For more information about the cottage, visit us online at SethPeterson.org.

The Seth Peterson Cottage is located at E9982 Fern Dell Road in Lake Delton, Wisconsin

