

DRAWING FRANK

ONGOING PROJECT CONNECTS ARCHITECT WITH WRIGHT'S TECHNIQUES, VISION

By *Brian R. Hannan*

For Michael Pipher, imitation is more than mere flattery. In making ink-and-paper renderings of the buildings Frank Lloyd Wright designed — the ones that were built, lost along the way or never realized — he wants to learn.

“There is something special about the physical act of sitting at a drafting table and seeing a drawing come to life from a blank piece of paper,” the New Jersey-based architect said. “A computer may give you the ability to render a project as almost life-like, but you don’t get the sense of the project — how one part relates to another, in my opinion. The pen

puts me in direct contact with the building, and it forces me to be more accurate with what I’m seeing or what once was.

“When I sit and start to draw a Wright project, it is a learning experience each time. As I draw, I am working out how everything works together.”

Pipher began making his drawings — now numbering into the thousands — in 1981. Among them are several elevations of the Seth Peterson Cottage, which he first saw in 1996. He made his most recent visit for a weekend stay in July 2019.

“I remember being so excited about seeing the cottage brought back to life —

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WRITINGS

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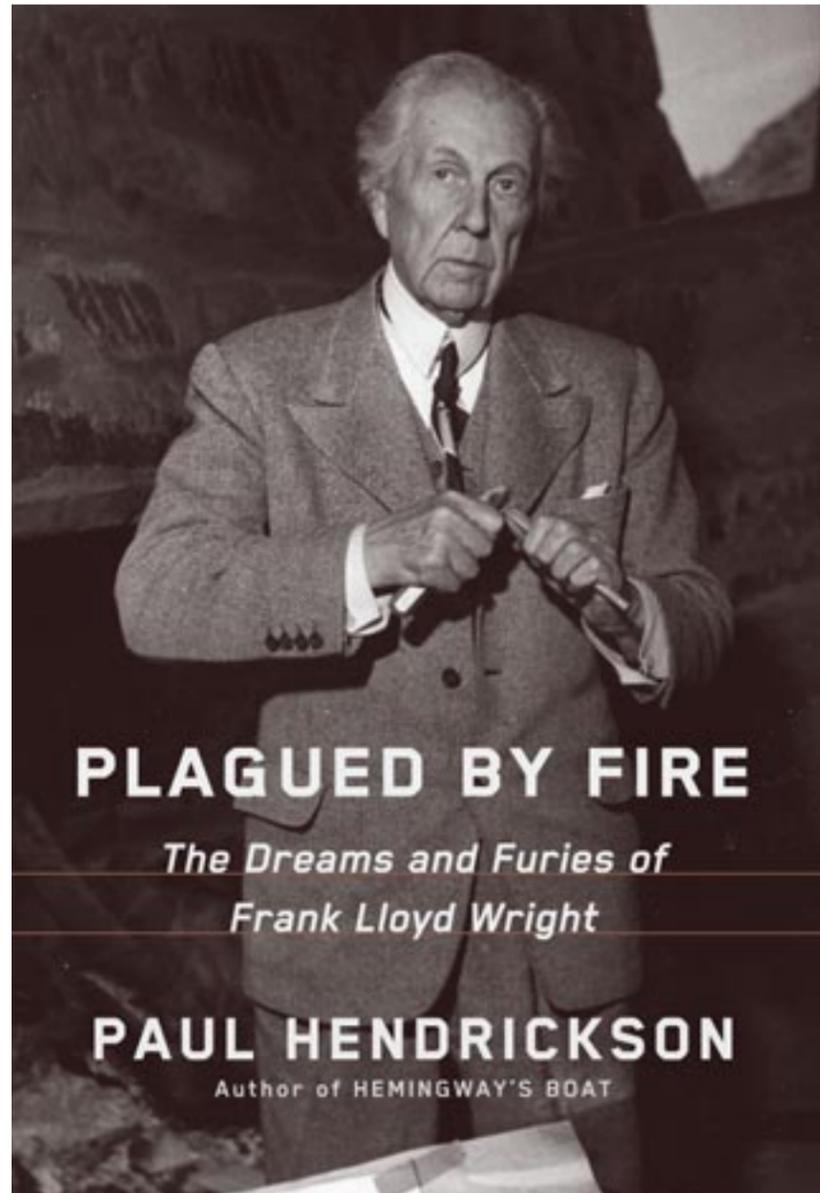
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COTTAGE PLAYS CAMEO ROLE IN NEW WRIGHT BIOGRAPHY

In researching his biography on Frank Lloyd Wright, author Paul Hendrickson relied on the assistance of Bill Martinelli, our first vice president at the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. While Hendrickson was initially interested in learning more about the Herbert and Katherine Jacobs House in Madison, he was soon planning an outing to

nearby Lake Delton.

Hendrickson devotes roughly three pages — from a bit more than 600 — to the cottage, telling readers about Peterson and relating the cottage's story of sad decline and eventual rehabilitation.

"I believe that this simple-seeming structure," he writes, "can be thought of as one of Wright's greatest works, bar none." □

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

Consider the responsibility of leading a group, a board of directors responsible for the maintenance, operation and preservation of a work of art created by Frank Lloyd Wright. Responsible for the building not just for now but for the future as well. We have a diverse board of directors from many backgrounds, including those that have studied at Taliesin.

The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy is a nationwide organization devoted to the historic preservation of buildings designed by Wright, as well as to the study of Wright's career. The conservancy has an office in the Chicago area and is beneficial to both Wright home owners and Wright public site administrators. There is an annual conference that includes tours of Wright homes and informational seminars on maintaining Wright structures. Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy board members have annually attended these conferences and brought back helpful information as we consider the continued preservation of the cottage.

I had the opportunity to attend the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy conference in Los Angeles in early October. There was a dinner for Wright home owners and public site administrators, including short presentations on six Wright buildings and seminars on maintaining Wright buildings. Emphasis was placed on disaster preparedness and succession planning.

The conference offers an opportunity to meet with other Wright public site administrators and share experiences about making the Wright experience for our visitors. We find that having the rental income is a great asset for us as most of the other public sites rely mostly on tour revenue and limited grants. We are fortunate!

The 2020 Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy annual conference will be held in late September in Buffalo, New York. We will have someone there. □

MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Ryder Will, Park Supervisor

Fall is steadily easing into the park. Our fall colors are approximately a week or so behind where we would expect them to be, but we are still seeing several visitors out for the nice fall days.

Despite cool evenings and some raining days, we also are still seeing a good number of campers — particularly on weekends. Most of the campgrounds will start to close down this month, and we will be set for our winter camping season.

Yes, that's right: There are people who camp all year round. We see campers almost every weekend throughout the year, unless the weather is really bad. Even then, some folks still come out to camp. We leave six sites open all year.

Camping is certainly a very popular activity at the park, but there a lot of things going on.

One area of park activity that I would like to highlight is our park naturalist program. This year we hired a new naturalist, Cindy Cseri. Cindy brings a great deal of enthusiasm to the position in addition to many years of experience here at Mirror Lake. Prior to accepting the part-time, limited-term naturalist position, Cindy spent many years as the president and secretary of the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park.

We were excited for Cindy to join our staff and saw a great boost to our programming because of her efforts. In 2019 the park hosted 58 naturalist programs serving more than 1,500 visitors. That was a slight increase in total number of programs, but a 40% increase in attendance at those programs. Cindy's programs and the outside groups that she brought in were highly enjoyed by campers, day visitors and local residents.

Some of the highlights include: International Crane Foundation, International Wolf Center, Ancient Instruments, kayak tours, guided hikes, geocaching and story times by the fire. She also hosted a full moon hike that saw close to 200 attendees! We are excited to see how 2020 turns out — Cindy already has a lot of great plans in the works!

While we are excited about the programming, I also want to acknowledge the generous support of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. Part of the conservancy's work is to support the park. To that end, the conservancy has generously supported the naturalist program through an annual donation to the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park, which matches or exceeds those funds to pay the wages for the naturalist position. Without the generous support of the conservancy, the park would not be able to provide this valuable and appreciated service to our visitors.

I often talk about all the groups and partnerships that are associated with Mirror Lake. This partnership between the conservancy, Friends of Mirror Lake State Park and Mirror Lake State Park is one of my favorite examples. Thanks to all those who have helped in this partnership over the years.

While fall is a little slower time for visitation, we keep very busy catching up on projects and preparing for the winter. We see a lot of visitors enjoying our ski trails and snowshoeing opportunities.

We also will partner with the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park to again host two torch-lit ski/snowshoe events this winter that are scheduled for the first Saturday in January and the first Saturday in February.

Please take some time to stop out and enjoy the park in the winter. Vendors in the area rent skis and snowshoes, so just give us a call and we can point you in the right direction for gear.

As always, thanks for your support and interest in the Seth Peterson Cottage.

If you're in the area, we hope you'll stop by the park anytime to say hi to the staff. □

DRAWING FRANK

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from the first glimpse to stepping inside what is a little jewel box of architecture,” Pipher said. “There is something special about all Wright buildings, but Peterson has that little extra — a small, intimate space that’s so big and rich in architecture and history.

“For me, it doesn’t matter how many times I visit a Wright building. I am still moved emotionally and intellectually. You can never truly appreciate or understand a Wright space until you get to live in and interact with the space. The Peterson cottage is still heartwarming for me. It was a real treat to be able to spend two days at the cottage, wake up and be greeted by the cottage like an old friend.”

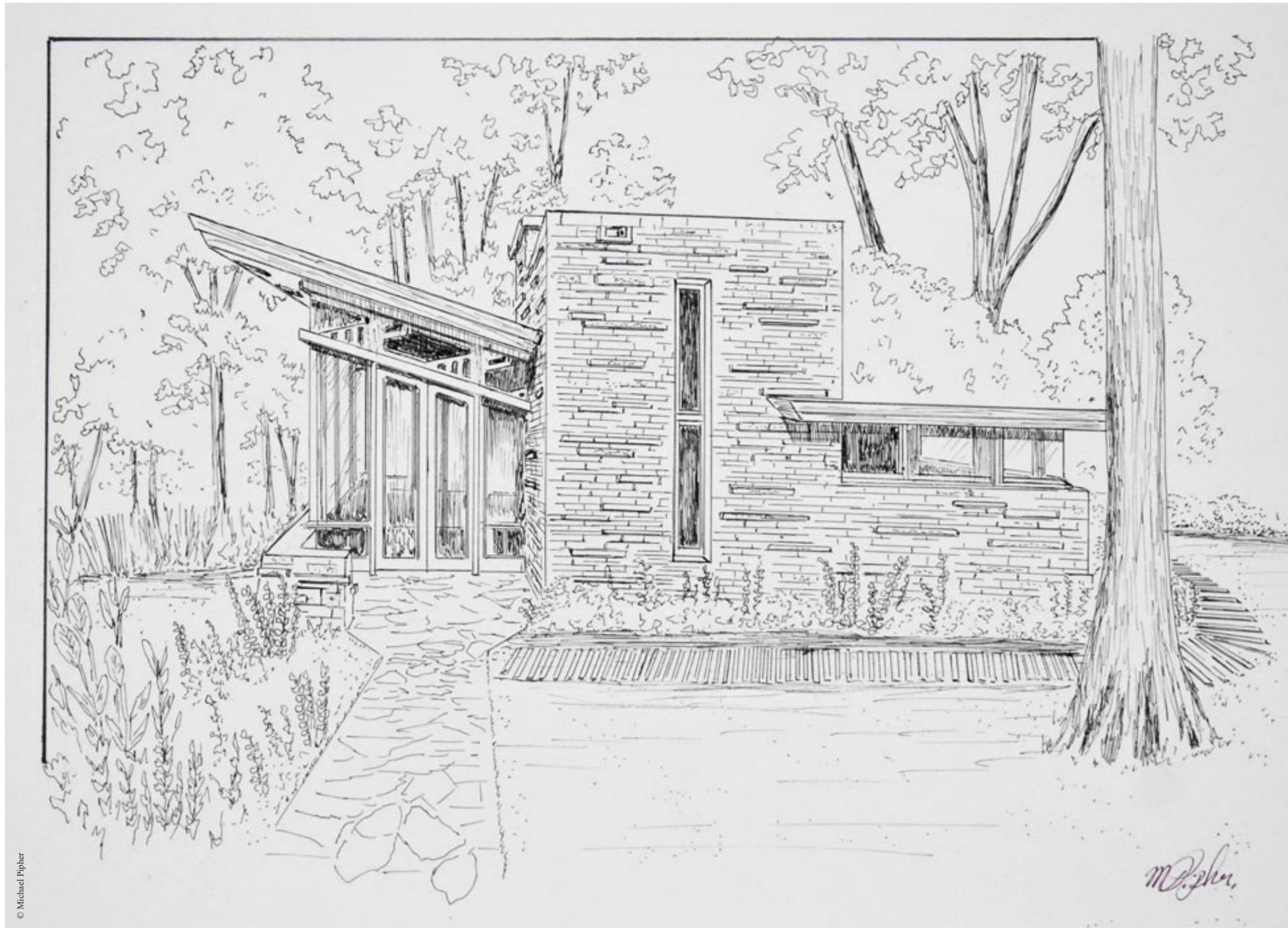
When did you first become interested in Wright’s work? What appealed to you about his architecture?

I first became aware of Wright in the early 1980s. Some of the first images I saw were of Fallingwater, SC Johnson, Anunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Robie House and Marin County Civic Center. Wright hit me hard at a young age, and I wanted to know and learn as much as I could. I was drawn to the structures like a moth to a flame — the idea that a home could be more than four walls and a roof. At the time, American architecture was at an all-time low with basic colonials, bi-levels and split-levels and the beginning of cookie-cutter homes. I saw Wright homes as timeless and wondrous at the same time.

What was the first drawing you made? What is the most recent?

One of the first Wright drawings I did was the Romeo and Juliet Windmill at Taliesin. To this day, it still represents everything architecture should and could be. There is a romantic notion to Wright’s work, from the engineering to the purpose of use. Imagine the kids at the Hillside School looking up the hill to see the windmill and the thoughts

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FROM THE GUESTBOOK

“A great way to ring in the new year and unwind for a few days. Great hikes and views! Thanks FLW & Seth Peterson for this gem of a cottage.” — Erin & Keith, Chicago

“Our second time here. Came for our honeymoon and now five years later. Equally wonderful in late summer or midwinter. Glad we brought our cross-country skies — great area for such.” — Wil & Gail

“Amazing place. What a restoration! The pictures tell quite a story. The lake, all iced over, is majestic and peaceful, all at the same time. The lines and materials of the cottage remind us of what FLW was about — the Prairie School design and fitting in with nature. Five out of 5 stars!” — Dan & Kathy, West Bend, Wisconsin

“Here’s to the pauses in life that are necessary for the dreams in life. Seth Peterson must have had a few — not near enough, but his dreams laid the foundation for ours!” — Anne Marie & Nvelle

“We enjoyed our stay at Seth Peterson Cottage. The weather was mild, and we had a couple of sunny days. We look forward to visiting in the summer months. What a wonderful place!” — Jim & Karin, Eau Claire

“Lovely in every way. The first thing I saw on our first morning was a bald eagle flying from the lake toward the cottage. And the birds! Nuthatches, red-breasted nuthatches, tufted titmouse, bluejays, chickadees and several woodpeckers.” — Megan & Brent



DRAWING FRANK

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they had. One of the latest I’ve done is the W.S. MacHarg House, designed while Wright was still employed by Adler & Sullivan.

What is your favorite Wright property?

I tend to lean toward the ones that are overlooked. To this day, when people ask for my favorite, my first response is, “What timeframe or period?” I have favorites in each because they are so different, yet, in some ways, the same. To this day, my all-time favorite is the Romeo and Juliet Windmill, followed by the Nathan G. Moore 1923 remodel. My favorite period is the Prairie School years with the wood, the glass, the spaces. My favorite that never came to be is the Wolf Lake Amusement Park. My favorite that is no longer with us is split between Midway Gardens and the Imperial Hotel.

Why do we study Wright’s work? Why do we still care so much about it?

I know why I study Wright build-



ings. Wright is still teaching us what architecture can be and should be — how a home should relate to the nature of the site on which it sits. I think most people are still intrigued by Wright because his work is still fresh and exciting; everyone wants the open plan that they think is new. I think some people get wrapped up in the man more than his architecture. Yes, he lived a colorful life and was not the “common man,” even by today’s standards. If you’re only going to focus on the personal, then you’re missing out on so much. 



MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Mark Blakeslee, President

Seeing the end of another season is always sad. The colors of the leaves are making the forest look spectacular now! But, before we know it, they will all be on the ground and covered with snow.

Many of the residents on the lake have summer or three-season homes. Late fall means you drain the water pipes and close it up. We then live the next six months with the memories of the past and the anticipation of spring.

The lake association had a good year! We had good membership participation at all of our events. Our annual end-of-summer flotilla had a record number of boats participate. Our flotilla is a time for anyone with a boat to meet in the middle of the lake, share good fellowship and, more importantly, some great homemade desserts and snacks. People without boats join in as well: We just turn some into water taxis to make sure everyone can be involved.

Mirror Lake may freeze over for the winter, but it doesn’t close down. The Delton Sportsmen’s Club and the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park have many winter activities planned

that are well-attended. In fact, it’s tough to find parking spaces during their events. I liken it to a sporting event; you might have to walk a little ways.

We continue to monitor the water quality of the lake and control invasive species from entering in the lake. Unfortunately, with the rapid spread of invasive species entering surrounding lakes, this work will be a permanent part of our work and mission going forward.

We know the devastation these species have done on other lakes and we want to do whatever we can to make sure it doesn’t happen to us.

During the winter, we also will be looking for ways to solve our eroding shoreline and prevent the formation of deltas at sensitive areas around the lake. That also means removing some deltas that already have been created.

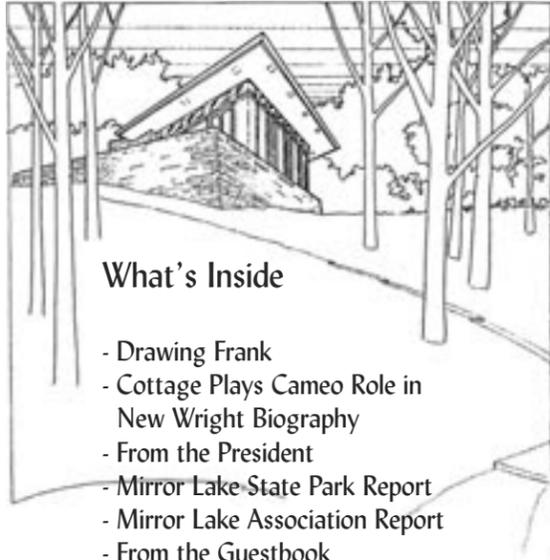
Given our tight budget, we have to work strategically — focusing on projects we can afford and that will give us the greatest return on investment.

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

WRITINGS

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Want to learn more about Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Wisconsin? Visit WrightInWisconsin.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Seth Peterson Cottage Open House and Guided Tour

- December 8 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5
- January 12 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5
- February 9 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5
- March 8 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5
- April 12 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5
- May 10 1 to 3:30 p.m. \$5

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

Annual Meeting & Volunteer Recognition

- 4 p.m. December 8. RSVP by sending an e-mail to sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com. The meeting will last approximately one hour. After, we'll have social time and dinner — and decorate the Christmas tree.

✓ 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.

Seth Peterson Cottage

E9982 Fern Dell Road
Lake Delton, Wisconsin

