



## CAPTURING THE WRIGHT LIGHT

### THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ANDREW PIELAGE AND HIS STUDENTS

*By Patrick Molzahn*

**O**ur August Open House brought with it beautiful weather and a visit by a renowned photographer and his students. Andrew Pielage (pronounced *Peel - Ledge*) is an internationally recognized name in travel and architectural photography. Based in Phoenix, Arizona, Pielage is on a mission to photograph all of Frank Lloyd Wright's remaining designs.

Born to an adventurous mother and a geologist father, his childhood was spent exploring the dusty backroads of the American Southwest. This constant desert travel rooted his artistic soul in landscape photography.

In his hometown, Pielage discovered the beautiful relationship of landscape and design in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright inspired his passion for this relationship and his mission to photograph all of Wright's remaining designs. Called his [#500filwproject](#), Andrew has photographed 129 of the 431 remaining Wright designs thus far.

**Above:** Photo of the Cottage's terrace by Andrew Pielage.

**Below:** Pielage (center) with his students.



*continued on page 4*

# WRITINGS

WRITINGS is a semi-annual publication of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy Inc.

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- Submit articles and pictures to:  
[SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com](mailto:SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com)

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

Life continues to be interesting when one is associated with a Frank Lloyd Wright building. There was an Open House visit by Seth Peterson's relatives, attending the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy annual meeting, and the start of a legacy program.

Our July Open House had a surprise visit from seven relatives of Seth Peterson. Seth had a brother and a sister. They had children who grew up knowing about Seth through their family gatherings. Through education and jobs, they dispersed across the country, which resulted in fewer chances to get together for family gatherings. This year, after nearly 40 years, the cousins and their spouses gathered in Madison, leading to their visit to *Uncle Seth's* cottage during our July 14<sup>th</sup> Open House (Photo below).

Beth, my wife and SPCC Board member, and I had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy in Detroit. The meeting was attended by Wright building owners, Wright public site operators and people interested in Frank Lloyd Wright. There were presentations and tours of the architecture of Wright and Wright-like homes in the Detroit area. Of special interest was the Friday evening dinner for Wright owners and public site operators where we had the opportunity to discuss challenges and opportunities of managing a public Wright site. There are now about 20 Wright homes available for rent to the public, following our business plan started in 1992.

As we look to the future, the SPCC has undertaken a study over the past year to establish an endowment fund to sustain the Conservancy's financial future. Planned giving is a win-win situation for both donors and non-profit organizations, providing financial benefits and tax breaks for the donors while securing a stable source of support for the nonprofit. More information will be available as our Board of Directors contemplates this important step in securing the future of the Seth Peterson Cottage.



## MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

*By Marcus Jaeger, President*

It seems to me that I have been busier than ever these past six months or so. Just an observation and not a complaint, but as I grow older, I am starting to realize that there is a time to slow down along with a time to fully pay attention to the changes taking place.

Certainly, there are changes taking place on Mirror Lake. It strikes me that after the wonderful autumn we have enjoyed, the leaves have started to change in the past ten days or so. We have a Maple tree situated near the center of the lake and, year after year, it is always the first to change colors...and boy, has it changed! It seems like it changed overnight! The rest of the maples quickly followed suit.

One thing that has not happened overnight is the long-planned dredging project on the lake. Mark Blakeslee and the Mirror Lake Management District have invested countless hours of hard work, and everything was a full go this spring. Well, as we all know, things happen, some which were avoidable and others unforeseen. Plans have now shifted to spring 2025. We are all confident things will turn out for the better.

Another interesting project on the lake is the Dawn Manor restaurant on Burritt Road, scheduled to open next spring. Owner and developer Steve Uphoff presented his project at the Mirror Lake Association's annual meeting in June. This promises to be quite the spot! Of course, in Ishnala, we have the number one supper club in the state. Wouldn't it be something to have two tremendous dining options on our little lake?

Our Association continues to grow. Earlier, I mentioned the annual meeting at Ishnala. This year we had almost sixty people attend. Our picnic was in mid-August, and Labor Day weekend was our annual flotilla where we tied up our pontoon boats in the center of the lake and enjoyed pizza courtesy of the Keg and Patio in Wisconsin Dells.

As I write this article, Christmas is two and a half months away. While I love the changing seasons, I am sad today to put my boat away for the year. Perhaps we will take the boat on one last ride for the year. Thank you for the support you have shown for the Seth Peterson Conservancy.

## MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

*By Patrick Cieslewicz, Park Superintendent*

As summer transitions into fall, Mirror Lake State Park has had an eventful and bustling summer season, attracting visitors from near and far. This summer, the park saw many improvements, including opening a new restroom building in the Cliffwood Campground in late June, a newly paved parking lot and roadway to the beach, and many other smaller projects.

One of our great partner groups here at Mirror Lake State Park is the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park. The Friends of Mirror Lake State Park is a non-profit organization that supports both Mirror Lake State Park and Rocky Arbor State Park. The group has many hardworking volunteers who help repair picnic tables, clean campgrounds, implement grants, and hold many special events here at the property.

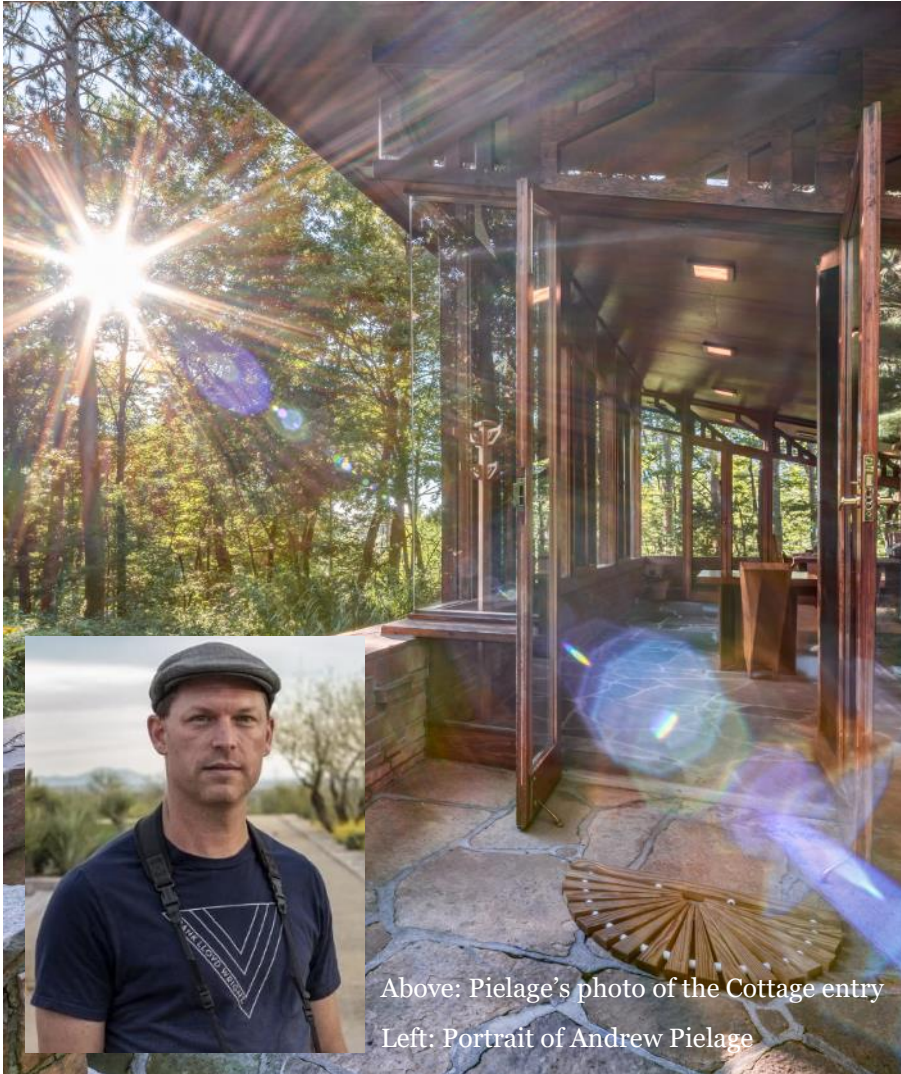
Some of the group's most popular fall and winter events are starting soon. In October, the group will host a Halloween Hike, a torch-lit walk on a one-mile trail. The event always has a special guest for whom hikers collect clues along the route. This is a family-friendly event, with the Friends of Mirror Lake State Park providing hot chocolate and treats. The Friends of Mirror Lake State Park also hosts a candle-light snowshoe/ski event on a one-mile trail lit by torches in January and February.

If you're visiting the Cottage or looking for another way to enjoy Mirror Lake State Park, plan to attend one of these remarkable events this fall and winter. So, take some time to explore, and I hope to see you in the park.



## Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy will be held in person on Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 4:15 pm. The meeting will include reports on annual operations, 2024 financial reports, proposed 2025 budget, election of board members and volunteer recognition. Any member of the Conservancy whose annual dues have been paid may participate and vote on issues brought up at the meeting. The meeting generally lasts about one hour. Anyone desiring to participate in the meeting should indicate their interest by sending an e-mail to [sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com](mailto:sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com).



Above: Pielage's photo of the Cottage entry  
Left: Portrait of Andrew Pielage

Since 2011, Pielage has made a pilgrimage to Taliesin in Spring Green to lead two photography workshops each summer. "The Wisconsin journey is a highlight of my summer," says Pielage. The first workshop, aimed at beginners, covers everything from "how to turn on your camera" to mastering aperture, shutter speed, and ISO, guiding participants to become proficient in manual shooting by the end. The second workshop is for intermediate photographers, focusing on digital darkroom techniques using Adobe Lightroom. Both workshops offer exclusive access to Taliesin, with students staying on the 800-acre estate for three days, allowing them to explore and photograph every corner of the property.

With over 100 alumni from these workshops, Pielage says his gatherings are always a blast, blending artistry and a shared passion for Wright's work. This enthusiasm led him to expand beyond workshops to offer unique "Architectural Tours." These tours shift the focus from technical instruction to enjoying the company of fellow Wright enthusiasts and exploring his designs. For his first Wisconsin Tour, Pielage chose the Seth Peterson Cottage. Managing 12 photographers while trying to capture the Seth Peterson Cottage in just two hours was a challenge, but as you can see from his students' photos to the right, their visit was a huge success.

To learn more about Andrew and see more examples of his work, visit: [www.apizm.com](http://www.apizm.com)





Photo Credits (clockwise from top left):

John Anderson

Jim Durrant

Karen Magara

Karen Durrant

Karen Sekikawa

Paul Wipperfurth



## APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR 2025 VISSER HISTORICAL PRESERVATION AWARD

**M**arch 15, 2025 is the deadline for applications for the 2025 Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award.

The award, selected by the directors of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, is presented every other year to an individual or organization in recognition of past work in historical preservation of a Frank Lloyd Wright or Prairie School building in Wisconsin or a contiguous state. In general, buildings constructed between 1900 and 1959 are preferred, with the restoration work having been substantially completed within the two calendar years prior to the year of application. The 2025 award will be given for work done between 2022 and 2024.

The award is in the amount of \$10,000.

Applicants are asked to support their applications with a statement fully describing their restoration project, including its state of completion, a supporting statement from the building contractor and/or architect, a letter or letters of support from scholars and/or working professionals familiar with the project, photographic evidence of work completed, and any other supporting materials. Applications will be judged by a panel of members of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, along with several outside experts/scholars.

The award recipient will be announced on April 15, 2025, and the award presented at the Seth Peterson Cottage on June 8, 2025.

The award is named in honor of Kristin Visser, who was instrumental in the restoration of the Seth Peterson Cottage and a tireless worker on its behalf. She is the author of *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School in Wisconsin*, and, with John Eifler, A.I.A., *Frank Lloyd Wright's Seth Peterson Cottage: Rescuing a Lost Masterwork*. Visser, who was a planner for the Wisconsin State Department of Natural Resources, died in 1998 at the age of 48.

The Seth Peterson Cottage, located in Mirror Lake State Park, near Wisconsin Dells, is Frank Lloyd Wright's final Wisconsin commission (1958) and, at only 880 square feet, one of his smallest. It was rescued from ruin by the concerted efforts of a local group of lakeshore property owners, spearheaded by Audrey Laatsch, and restored through a public/private partnership effort. Dedicated in 1992, it serves today as a unique rental cottage, managed by the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy.

Applications should be sent to: Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, PO Box 186 Lake Delton, WI 53940. Hard copy or emailed digital applications accepted.

Questions? [SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com](mailto:SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com)

### Past Kristin Visser Award Winners

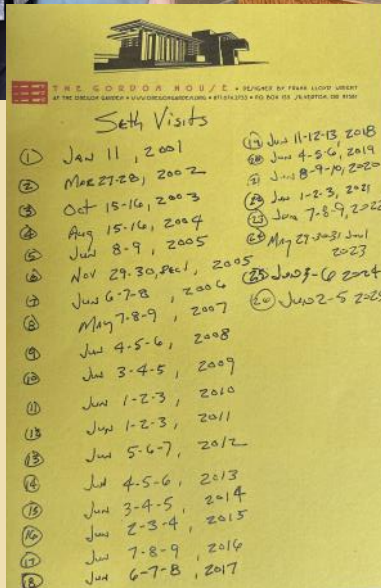
- ✦ 2007 Steve Sikora and Lynette Erickson-Sikora, Willey House, Minneapolis, MN
- ✦ 2009 Paul Harding and Cheryl Harding, Davenport House, River Forest, IL
- ✦ 2011 Mary Arnold and Henry St. Maurice, E. Clarke Arnold House, Columbus, WI
- ✦ 2013 Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin, B-1 ASBH, Milwaukee, WI
- ✦ 2015 John Eifler and Bonnie Phoenix, Ross House, Glencoe, IL
- ✦ 2017 Gene Szymczak posthumously, Thomas P. Hardy House, Racine, WI
- ✦ 2019 Doug LaBrecque, Curtis and Lillian Meyer House, Galesburg, MI
- ✦ 2021 Nicholas and Lauren Witkowski, Brookfield Kindergarten, Brookfield, IL
- ✦ 2023 Ellen Bendel-Stenzel and late husband Michael, Jack and Gloria Grabow House, Rochester, MN





**Tim and Trish McNeely** recorded their 26th stay at the Cottage this past June. The couple, from Georgetown, KY, first arrived in January, 2001. Their visits are always preceded by stops in the Madison-area where they purchase local delicacies including wine and chocolate!

The couple was featured in the Fall 2022 edition of WRITINGS. For more info on their story, visit our newsletter archive: <https://www.sethpeterson.org/documents/newsletter/2022/SPCC-Newsletter-Fall-2022-Web.pdf>



## FROM THE GUESTBOOK

“Oh my. What a place! We loved the serene vibes we received here. Amazing story behind it. Just goes to show how one person really can make such an impact on so many.”

**Ken & Meg**  
Eden Prairie, MN

“Our family – ages 2 to 67 – enjoyed spending the days here, July 25th to 28th. The canoe was perfect for a boat trip to the beach. Of course, the cottage is gorgeous. Thank you for maintaining this special place.”

**Denise & John**  
California

“We received our 2-night stay at SPC from our three boys as a birthday present. It was a dream come true, as we have always wanted to stay here. We enjoyed the wildlife and walking in the woods, searching for the elusive pileated woodpecker. FLW has been our favorite architect, and to have experienced time in one of his designed homes was very special. We’re already looking forward to our return visit, perhaps in a different season of the year.”

**Marleen & Jack**  
Edgerton, WI

“Our daughter gave us a “gift weekend” to the Seth Cottage a year and a half ago for our 25th wedding anniversary. We finally got to use it this weekend and absolutely loved the place. FLW has been my favorite architect since I studied him in college. The cottage and the setting was beautiful. Thank you for keeping this cottage up and allowing us to visit.”

**Luke & Pam**

“Booked the cottage a year and a half in advance for my 40th birthday getaway and it did not disappoint. Thank you, Frank and Seth, for leaving us this gem!”

**Sarah & Skye**



## THE NOTEBOOK

By Carolyn Kitchi

**T**he first thing Abigale did when she and her parents arrived at the June 9<sup>th</sup> open house was to buy a Seth Peterson Cottage Notebook. She immediately began to draw the exterior of the cottage and later the floor plan. After the tour, I asked her if she wanted to be an architect. She did not hesitate to say, “Yes!”.

Her parents took her to Fallingwater last year and that ignited the flame. The family lives in Maryland and plans to visit as many FLW sites as possible while in Wisconsin. Abigale Kratzer is 9 years old, or as she says, “I’m almost 10.”



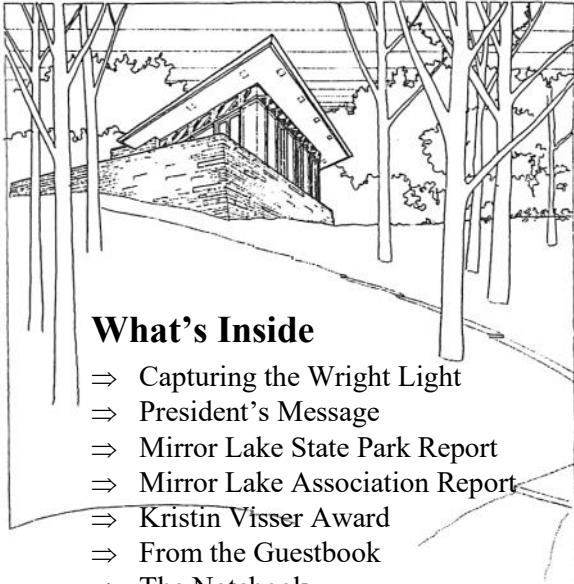
# WRITINGS

The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy Inc.

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Lake Delton, WI 53940-0186

**Note:** Cottage location appears in the map below.



## What's Inside

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Want to learn more about Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Wisconsin? Visit [WrightInWisconsin.org](http://WrightInWisconsin.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Seth Peterson Cottage Open House and Guided Tour Schedule:

• Dec. 8	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *
• Jan. 12	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *
• Feb. 9	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *
• Mar. 9	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *
• Apr. 13	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *
• May 11	1 to 4 p.m.	\$5 *

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

### Become a Member of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy

More information is available on our website, [sethpeterson.org](http://sethpeterson.org). Click "Membership," under "The Conservancy" on the top menu.

✓ 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 on the second Sunday of each month. For more information about the cottage, visit us online at [SethPeterson.org](http://SethPeterson.org).

