

# WRITINGS

NEWSLETTER OF THE SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY

## MAKING IT WRIGHT

Carolyn Kotchi

**A**ccidents happen. Sometimes things break. Sometimes these things are very dear to us. They may represent an important life event, let's say, a tenth anniversary. An anniversary spent at a romantic idyll in the woods.

Each Cottage guest is given a complimentary Seth Peterson Cottage Mug during their stay. The mug is imprinted with a picture or a saying from FLLW and the current year. The letters I received from Audrey and Morgan, reproduced here, explain in detail the momentous accident. With heartfelt sympathy, we replaced the mugs for the family. I hope the girls can make their own visit to the Cottage some day. ☐

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing this letter because I broke my moms 2015 Seth Peterson mug and I want to get a new one for her. The mug is very special to her because she went there for her 10 Anniversary.

One night I was clearing the table and I broke a seth Peterson mug from 2015. I broke it because I was messing around clearing the table. I was taking a pot over to the counter and my sister was taking over the mug. I broke

it because I dropped the pot which hit the mug which crashed to the floor.

please send a new one.

Sincerely,  
Audrey

Sincerely,  
Morgan



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Sincerely,  
Audrey

Dear Sir or Madam  
CAN we please have  
A NEW 2015 SETH  
PETERSON MUG BECAUSE  
I BROKE MY MOM'S BECAUSE  
I WAS PLAYING  
AROUND I PUT IT ON  
THE COUNTER  
AND IT SLIPPED OFF THE  
COUNTER  
SINCERELY  
MORGAN

Dear Sir or Madam  
Can we please have  
a NEW 2015 SETH  
Peterson Mug becus  
i broke my moms  
Because i was playing  
Around. i put it on  
The cownter and  
it slippet off the  
Cownter  
Sincerely  
MORGAN

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kermit Traska

**T**he Seth Peterson Cottage is going through a time when reservations for overnight stays are being made far in advance. We do, at times, receive criticism that reservations cannot be made on a short-term basis. Success can be overwhelming at times and requires guests to plan far in advance. It must work because we have reservations well into 2018!

The two-night minimum also causes some concern and we occasionally get requests for only one night stays. One recent example comes to mind. The e-mail read: "Afternoon: Read in the information that there may be 1 night available in the 'gap', wondering if there are 1-night dates available. Thank you."

The usual answer to this recurring question is: *There are two ways to check for one-night reservations:*

1. Check reservation availability on our website at [www.sethpeterson.org](http://www.sethpeterson.org), click on reservations.
2. Call our rental agency, Sand County Services Company at 1-800-882-7768, and ask to be put on a waiting list for cancellations. Best wishes!! Kermit Traska

The next day I received this response: "You are kidding me. Kerm Traska my H.S. teacher. Thought Dad would enjoy this for his 84<sup>th</sup> Bday!!! Nice job you have!"

I did not recognize the married name of my former student until she wrote back. I taught high school for three years with her father. It seems they were regular visitors to Mirror Lake State Park and had canoed past the Cottage in the 70's and 80's. Over the years they spotted the Cottage from the lake and several times walked up to explore the site. Interestingly, they had never visited the Cottage from the road.

The conclusion to this conversation took place at the September Open House when the family visited the Cottage and took the guided tour. We spent several hours on the terrace catching up on old times.

**There is an announcement** in this issue of the newsletter concerning the new Cottage video "*Jewel in the Woods*." The video was several years in the making and is a well-done presentation of the history of saving the Seth Peterson Cottage. This should be a valuable item for anyone with an interest in the Seth Peterson Cottage. Order yours today!

**We received an e-mail** from Taliesin West indicating that a young photographer, Andrew Pielage, would be teaching a class at Taliesin at Spring Green and asked if it would be possible for him to photograph the Seth Peterson Cottage. Andrew is on a quest to photograph all of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings. How could we refuse! Andrew photographed the Cottage at our August Open House. Some of his pictures are included with his article in this newsletter. 

## MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

Ryder Will, Park Supervisor

**E**verything is once again getting ready to settle in at Mirror Lake State Park. This has been an exciting season for the park with the celebration of fifty years of enjoyment by the public. Reflecting back on half a century, the park has seen a lot of change, but one constant has been the natural beauty that tens of thousands of visitors enjoy each year.



50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration



Ho Chunk Nation helps celebrate Mirror Lake State Park's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

the beauty of Mirror Lake. And, like the Cottage, the park requires upkeep and care to keep it in a condition that visitors can safely and pleasantly enjoy.

Over the last five decades we have built a new office, added campsites and shower buildings, expanded the trails to about twenty miles, improved roads and facilities, and completed a wide variety of other projects and programs, all to the benefit of park visitors.

This has, so far, been one of the best and busiest seasons for the park. Through the month of July we saw 200,000 daily visitors and more than 35,000 camper nights. These are great numbers, as we were at 180,000 visitors and about the same number of camper nights by this time last year. All those visitors have required a great deal of work on the part of our staff and volunteers. We had fewer staff than in some previous years, but we were lucky to have almost all returning summer staff, and everyone worked very hard to keep the park to the standards our visitors expect.

Another change for this year was higher entrance and camping fees. While some visitors were not excited to pay a little more for their stay, most saw the higher fees as an investment in a great park experience. Fees had not been raised for a number of years, and this year saw a moderate increase in vehicle admissions, camping fees, and electrical site fees. With more visitors and slightly

Much as the Seth Peterson Cottage was designed to be part of its surroundings and engage the occupant in this special place, so, too, the park encourages the visitor to find joy in the

higher fees, the park's revenue has increased by 31 percent so far this year. This is particularly good news, since this also marks the first year that the State Parks Program is fully self-funded. We hope to continue to provide the high-quality experience that visitors expect moving forward into the new funding structure.

We are excited to be the home of the Seth Peterson Cottage, and continue to direct visitors to explore the Cottage on open house days. Additionally, the support from the Cottage Conservancy goes a long way to help with our educational programs and presentations and is much appreciated.

As our fiftieth season draws to a close, we are proud to have provided many years of memories to all our visitors. We look forward to fifty more years and beyond.

For the immediate future, the fall and winter provide for some of the best experiences at the park. Fall color viewing, hiking, and boating are all more popular than ever, and we hope for plenty of snow for skiing and snowshoeing this winter.

We hope to see you at the park. ☐

## MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION UPDATE

*Mark Blakeslee, President*

**T**he year of 2016 is a monumental year for the Mirror Lake Association (MLA). We organized as a group thirty years ago.

We had our annual meeting at Ishnala in June. The meeting was a celebration of the history of the state park (which also is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary) and the MLA. Tom Tesch gave a brief history of the state park. We also had Waldo Peterson go over the highlights of the history of the MLA. We're very proud of those highlights and hope we can continue the trend of doing great things! As always, I want to thank Bob Prosser and Ishnala for hosting us again.

For the fiftieth anniversary of the state park, the MLA board voted to purchase and give the park a kayak pier that is specially designed to help people with disabilities (or those who just have a hard time) safely get in and out of a kayak or canoe. This was something the park had on its wish list and something we felt was a necessity. Hundreds of kayakers take to the lake on a busy weekend. We think this will be a great asset to the park and something we hope will help someone who might not normally try to go kayaking give it a shot.

Again this year we had great turnouts for our annual clean-up day, annual meeting, picnic and flotilla. It's great to see good participation by people who believe in our cause and are willing to chip in and help support our efforts to keep Mirror Lake the way it is.

We continue to do our lake clean-up and harvesting of aquatic vegetation to control and eradicate invasive species and stress best land management practices.

As always, I'd love to get your feedback. If you have any thoughts, comments, or concerns, please give me a call or send an e-mail. My cell phone number is 608-575-4652; my e-mail is [mblakeslee@uwalumni.com](mailto:mblakeslee@uwalumni.com). ☐

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### – Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy will be held on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 pm. It will include annual and financial reports, the election of board members and volunteer recognition.

Any member of the Conservancy whose annual dues have been paid may attend and vote on issues brought up at the meeting which generally lasts about one hour. If you'd like to attend the meeting, please indicate your interest by sending an e-mail to [sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com](mailto:sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com). A reception for conservancy and board members and volunteers will follow the meeting. ☐

### – Check Cottage Availability On-Line

Reservations for the Cottage are generally made far in advance. Cottage availability can be checked on-line at [www.sethpeterson.org](http://www.sethpeterson.org), click "reservations" and then "View Seth Peterson Cottage Availability."

A few open dates remain for November and December 2017, there are many open dates January through March 2018, and a few dates May through July 2018. Check often as there are occasionally reservation cancellations. ☐

### – 2017 is a Year to Celebrate

2017 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Frank Lloyd Wright and the 25<sup>th</sup> year since the dedication of the Seth Peterson Cottage. There will be many celebrations around the country celebrating the life and work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy at our Open House on June 11, 2017 will honor the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Wright and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Seth Peterson Cottage. Wright and Peterson share the same birth date on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mark your calendar to attend the Open House on June 11, 2017. ☐

### – Seth Peterson Cottage Video Now Available

The history of saving the Seth Peterson Cottage from shambles to grand opening is now available on DVD. The "Jewel in the Woods" video is now available on the Seth Peterson Gift Shop Merchandise Order Form ([www.sethpeterson.org](http://www.sethpeterson.org)).

This video will make a terrific Christmas gift for any fan of Frank Lloyd Wright. ☐

## MY VIEW OF THE COTTAGE

Andrew Pielage



**B**orn to an adventurous mother and a geologist father, my childhood was spent exploring the backroads of the Southwest. This constant desert travel rooted my artistic soul in classic landscape photography. Always with a camera in my hand, I couldn't help but take photos of the beautiful landscapes around me.

At fifteen, I discovered a Frank Lloyd Wright book that my brother, who is an architect, had in our home. I was fascinated by all the colors and shapes but, more importantly, I fell in love with how Mr. Wright blended, so effortlessly, the Sonoran desert landscapes I loved with his architecture and home at Taliesin West. In that moment I was hooked on Frank Lloyd Wright.

About five years ago, I had the opportunity to teach a photography workshop to kids at Taliesin West and my passion for photography and architecture grew even more. It has really been an honor to have the opportunity to not only photograph Wright sites but also to teach photography to a new generation of photographers and see that same big grin on their faces that I had when I discovered photography. I teach so that my students will someday be better photographers than I am.

Now, I am on a journey to photograph all of Mr. Wright's buildings...more than five hundred of them. The journey has been a long but rewarding one and the people I have met along the way have been incredible. I was so excited when I heard I would have the opportunity to photograph the Seth Peterson Cottage. Out of all the Wright sites I've seen, it's always the smaller ones I enjoy the most. Even better, the Cottage is surrounded by beautiful trees and overlooks a beautiful lake.

I have learned that light and landscape views were very important to Mr. Wright—so much so that he would sometimes direct you, through his architectural design, to pause and enjoy them. The Seth Peterson Cottage windows are like a big screen TV that is always playing an awesome nature show. I really wanted this relationship to show through my photography of the space.

Usually, photographers want even light, but this is not necessarily so in this case. I loved the streaking light and shadows that danced around the space while I was there, and how at the end of the day the most beautiful golden light shines directly in on the space. It is truly a magical space of light and I am honored to have had a few moments to photograph it.

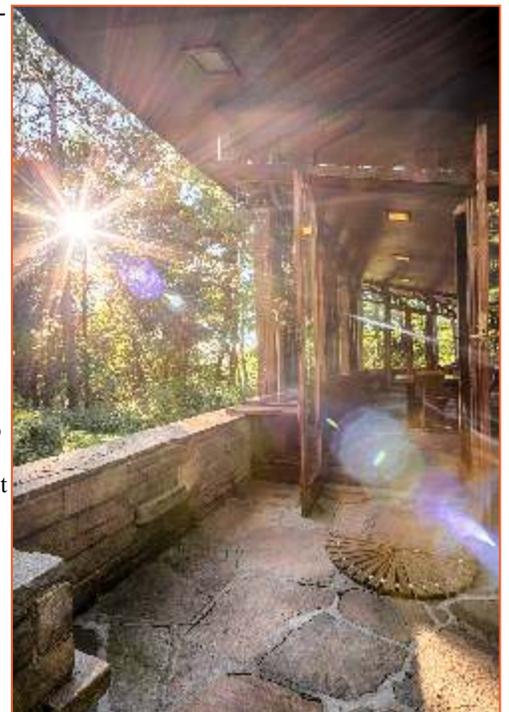
If you would like to see more and join me on my journey with Frank Lloyd Wright, you can access [www.andrewpielage.com](http://www.andrewpielage.com). I am also on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AndrewPielagePhotography](https://www.facebook.com/AndrewPielagePhotography). 

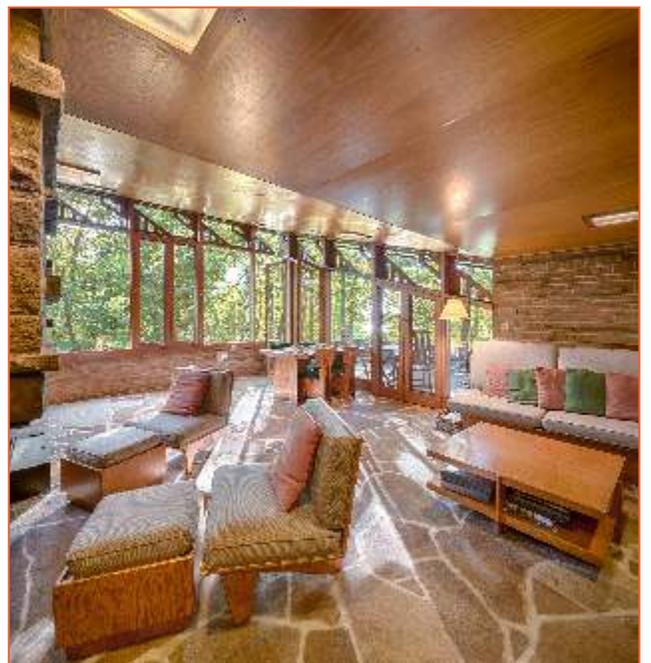


*As we were preparing this newsletter, we received this update:*

I'm proud and really excited to announce that I just accepted a three week "Artist in Residence" at Fallingwater. I will be spending one week there in November and two more weeks in July/August of next year!

- Andrew





## JILL VLADICK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Claire Barnett

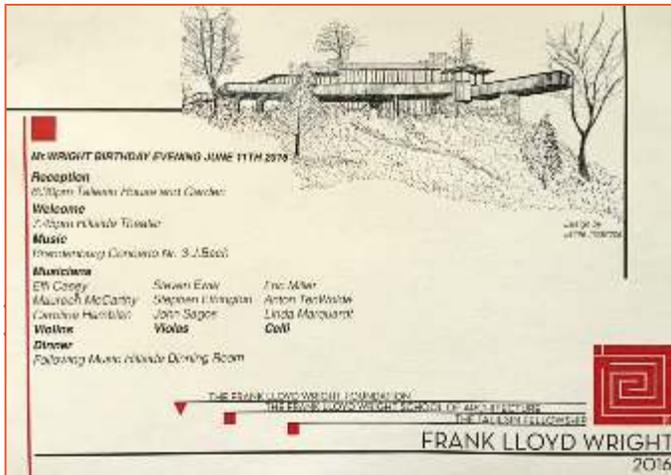
**T**he Jill Vladick Scholarship Award winner in 2016 was Jaime Inastroza of Chile. His cottage stay was shared with his wife, Alejandra, and their two-year-old son, Julian.



Jaime and Alejandra and son Julian on the Cottage terrace.

Prior to coming to Taliesin, Jaime had received an architectural degree from the University of Valparaiso. He met Alejandra while working for a government agency for two and a half years, restoring earthquake-damaged historic houses. They sold their home and possessions in Chile to come and live “the Taliesin Experience.”

They enjoyed having lunch on the Cottage terrace during their stay, while watching the wind blowing through the trees. Jaime is in his second year of the Master’s degree program at Taliesin, and will graduate in December. □



The program card for Mr. Wright’s Birthday Evening, designed by Jaime.

## KRISTIN VISSER AWARD APPLICATION

**A**pplicants are sought for the 2017 Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award which is given 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 1925 will be given preference and the work

shall have been substantially completed within the two years previous to the year of application.

The 2015 award was presented to John Eifler, AIA, and Bonnie Phoenix for their work in rescuing and restoring the William F. Ross House in Glencoe, Illinois.

The deadline for applications is March 15, 2017, for work done in 2015 and 2016. The 2017 award, which will include an honorarium of \$5,000, will be presented in June 2017 at the Seth Peterson Cottage.

Complete requirements may be obtained by contacting the Award committee chairman, Jerry Minnich, by email at [jminnich7@att.net](mailto:jminnich7@att.net). □

## FROM THE GUEST BOOK

“...To be together as brothers in this magical space has been more precious and necessary than could possibly be imagined. Thank you all for your devotion to Frank & Seth’s vision, for the restorative power of the location, and for your exemplary care for the property.”

Trev, Mitch & Owen  
Canada & NYC, USA

“... Our stay here has been very relaxing. Being unplugged from the day to day hectic lives we lead has led to great conversation and a chance to appreciate a simpler way of life.”

Don & Jean, Newton, IA

“A lovely night with Frank Lloyd Wright. What could be a more beautiful site? Thank you to the preservationist!”

Chip & Kathy, Mason City, IA

“What a lovely way to spend our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Fun and relaxing in a beautiful setting and a truly historic home.”

Michele & Scott

“One of the best Frank Lloyd Wright houses we’ve ever stayed. As one of the children who stayed here I can gladly say that I had a great time. Our entire family got along, I was never once angry or upset. I didn’t care what I looked like or if anyone saw me with my parents because it all is nature around us. I want to come back for sure.”

The Guthries’s

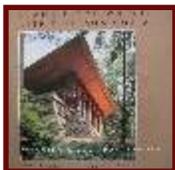
“Our 5<sup>th</sup> time here! Always peaceful. Always perfect! We brought our 15 year old son this visit. His words on first seeing the Seth Peterson Cottage ‘It looks like a tree-house!’ After an enjoyable weekend he felt otherwise.”

Jeff, Juli & Zack, Downers Grove, IL

## THE SETH PETERSON COTTAGE

### A Living Legacy

*This is the twentieth and final excerpt from the book, Frank Lloyd Wright's Seth Peterson Cottage: Rescuing a Lost Masterwork, by John Eijler, AIA, and Kristin Visser. It is the definitive story of the Cottage.*



The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy began as a group of concerned citizens who saw the potential of a forgotten work by a master architect. They viewed the Cottage not as an eyesore but rather as an integral component of their local history and a part of their community. From enthusiastic but naive beginnings, the SPCC learned how to raise a significant amount of capital and manage a cultural icon using an innovative and profitable approach. If there is a single ingredient to which the Seth Peterson Cottage rehabilitation owed its successful completion, it was the optimistic and determined attitude of Audrey Laatsch and the other members of the Board of Directors of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, who had the courage and determination to make the rehabilitation a reality. The board developed a carefully considered plan for the rehabilitation and subsequent use of the Cottage, a plan that protected the historic integrity of the building while incorporating changes needed to ensure successful operation of the Cottage as a vacation rental. Once they had developed a plan, they stuck to their vision through long negotiations with state agencies.

The Seth Peterson Cottage project offers lessons in public-private cooperation, not only to the State of Wisconsin, but to other organizations and individuals interested in preservation. The Cottage, for years a white elephant, was transformed into an economically self-sufficient venture. The conservancy agreed to rehabilitate the structure primarily with privately raised money, easing the fears of state officials regarding public expense. In return, the conservancy received state authorization and seed money.

Many states own significant historic structures that need rehabilitation and new utilization strategies. Perhaps these states should reevaluate the current status of those buildings and look toward the private sector to implement programs to preserve publicly owned historic sites. On the other hand, a willing private sector must round out the equation. As of this writing, the states of Wisconsin, Maryland, Virginia, and New York are addressing similar preservation issues, regarding state-owned property and private initiatives. The public-private partnership is slowly evolving as a preferred alternative to the limited options available through the public sector alone. Such joint relationships promote the restoration and use of historic buildings, encourage all aspects of historic preservation, and give the public a more direct sense of ownership of our cultural heritage. □

## OPEN HOUSE DETAILS

The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Seth Peterson Cottage is open for tours the second Sunday of each month from 1:00-3:30 pm. Reservations are not required.

Admission is \$4.00 for adults; children 12 and under Free. Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy members receive free admission. The Open House schedule is listed on the last page of this newsletter. The open house tours attract more than a thousand visitors a year!

Group tours for 10 or more people or special private tours can be arranged by calling 608-393-7472. These tours can only occur on days when there are no reservations or on the days after guests have checked out and before the new guests have arrived—generally between 10:00 am-4:00 pm. There is an extra charge for group and special tours. □



Tour goes use many forms of transportation to get here!



## WRITINGS

is a publication of The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, Inc. for the Cottage by Frank Lloyd Wright in Mirror Lake State Park.

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Seth-Peterson-Cottage-Conservancy-Inc](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seth-Peterson-Cottage-Conservancy-Inc)

Cottage Voice Mail: 877 466-2358

### The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee

President: Kermit Traska

First Vice President: Bill Martinelli

Second Vice President: James Booth

Treasurer: Paul Wagner

Secretary: Peter Rott

### Members

Claire Barnett, Jim Draeger, Bill Dupuy, Tim Hegglund, Dr. Steven Kincaid, Carolyne Kotchi, Raymond Matlosz, Jerry Minnich, Heather Sabin, Cheryl Weston

### Ex-officio members

Mark Blakeslee, President, Mirror Lake Association  
Ryder Will, Superintendent, Mirror Lake State Park

### Conservancy Staff

Office Manager: Ron Dakter

Marketing Coordinator: Gail Kohl

**For Cottage reservations call the Sand County Service Company, Lake Delton, Wisconsin: 608 254-6551.**

# WRITINGS

THE SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY, INC.  
400 VIKING DRIVE  
REEDSBURG, WI 53959

## Address Service Requested



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sunday, **Nov. 13**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4
- Sunday, **Dec. 11**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4  
4:15 pm Annual Meeting of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy and Volunteer Recognition
- Sunday, **Jan. 8**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4
- Sunday, **Feb. 12**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House and Valentine's Day, Guided Tours, \$4
- Sunday, **March 12**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4
- Sunday, **April 9**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4
- April 9-14—Annual Work Week, Spring Clean Up**
- Sunday, **May 14**, 1-3:30 pm, Open House, Guided Tours, \$4

**SPCC Members receive free admission and 10% off Cottage merchandise.**

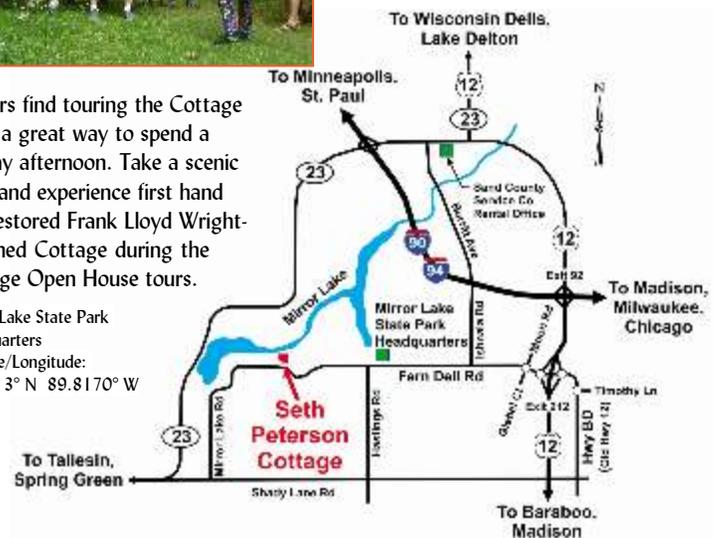
**Join us at one of our monthly Open Houses.**



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

Visitors find touring the Cottage to be a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Take a scenic drive and experience first hand this restored Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Cottage during the Cottage Open House tours.

Mirror Lake State Park Headquarters  
Latitude/Longitude:  
43.5613° N 89.8170° W



[www.sethpeterson.org](http://www.sethpeterson.org)