

The setting sun casts shadows into the living room through the cottage's clerestory windows on an early spring evening in April.

MIRROR LAKE

By Brian R. Hannan

On a certain wooded bluff overlooking Mirror Lake, physical distancing comes easy. Apart from the birds, raccoons and squirrels making quick work of any seed placed in the front yard feeder, visitors are scarce — and perhaps as welcome as the inevitable arrival of the time to pack up and head home. After all, we came here to “get away from it all.”

These days, we're spending more time in our houses than we likely ever dreamt — only the staying in is less satisfying than we might have imagined. We're social creatures with close ties to family, friends and coworkers that are being stretched to the limits of all but the most devout hermit. We're anxious to “get

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A tree branch outside the cottage's large expanse of front windows makes for a perfect perch for this northern cardinal. The cottage and its feeder attract several avian species.



WRITINGS

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Bert D. Goderstad, of Hastings, Minn., remembers his childhood friend, Seth Peterson, in the 2016 documentary 'The Jewel in the Woods.'

CONSERVANCY BIDS FAREWELL TO BERT GODERSTAD, JERRY MINNICH

The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy recently said goodbye to two longtime friends: Bertrand "Bert" D. Goderstad, 85, and Jerry Alan Minnich, 86.

We appreciate their friendship and the work they did to help rehabilitate and preserve the cottage. They will be missed.

Bert D. Goderstad
July 12, 1934 - April 26, 2020

Bert was a childhood friend of Seth who shared his interest in Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. The pair would travel by train from their homes in Black Earth, Wisconsin, to Chicago and Oak Park, Illinois, to see Wright's work up close. Bert offered insight into Seth's life and shared original construction documents for the cottage that helped with the rehabilitation. Bert raised funds for the project, and he was an active, life member of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy.



Madison's Jerry Minnich served for many years as the editor of this newsletter and a board member for the conservancy.

More information is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/spcc-bg>

Jerry Minnich
July 6, 1933 - March 28, 2020

Jerry was a writer, publisher, lover of Wisconsin, husband, father, brother and early supporter of the Seth Peterson Cottage rehabilitation. Jerry also served for many years as the editor of our "Writings" member newsletter and endowed the Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award in honor of his late wife.

More information is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/spcc-jm>

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

The Seth Peterson Cottage has been affected by the COVID-19 virus, just like the rest of Wisconsin, the United States and the world. Understandably, we have had many reservations canceled.

Hopefully people will be able to reschedule in the future — though, at this writing, we are not sure when the virus situation will end and we will be able to return to regular operation. Hopefully soon!

Because we don't want people to gather in groups, for health and safety concerns, we have put a hold on open houses until conditions are safe enough for us to resume them. Spring goes on, so we'll feature pictures of the new blossoms for you to enjoy on the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy (SPCC) Facebook page.

As we enter our 28th year of making the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Seth Peterson Cottage available to the public, we are in negotiations with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for our third 15-year lease. The original lease for this unique public/private operation was drafted and signed in 1989, and subsequently renewed in 2004.

Part of the lease states: "The Lessee [SPCC] possesses certain expertise to restore, manage and operate the Cottage...." The conservancy has been caring for and successfully operating the cottage for all these years. The basic stone-and-glass structure of the cottage remains the same with the interior furnishings updated regularly. Thousands of overnight guests have been able to enjoy a stay in this work of art, and many more have enjoyed educational tours on our open house days. By entering into another 15-year lease, the conservancy is agreeing to continue to restore, manage and operate the cottage for future years.

We are concerned for the well-being of all people as we follow government guidelines and look for a quick return to our regular daily lives and operation of the cottage. The conservancy is a sound organization served by a responsible board of directors. We'll get through this situation and continue to restore, manage and operate the cottage.

MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Ryder Will, Park Supervisor

While we find ourselves in an unusual spring this year, May will still find park staff working hard to clean up from the winter, complete projects and get our facilities ready for the summer season.

This spring Mirror Lake is seeing an increase in use as people look to get out of their homes and get out into nature. The opportunity to disconnect from the digital world, get out of the house and stretch our legs has become even more important to people across the country and around the world.

A sincere appreciation for the outdoors and the dedication it takes to provide safe and enjoyable opportunities to get out and explore is growing. The value of taking time to be in nature and experience the great outdoors cannot be overstated. Wisconsin is a place with an incredible variety of opportunities to get out and enjoy the natural world. In these uncertain times, people are taking advantage of those opportunities.

State parks have been one of those opportunities and an important part of the lives of Wisconsin residents as well as a vital part of the state's economy for more than 100 years. The wide range of properties spread across the state are enjoyed by millions of visitors each year.

Mirror Lake is fortunate to be a well-loved but not over-used park. We see more than 350,000 visitors each year, with visitation steadily increasing each year for the last several years. When things are uncertain; it is very likely use will be even higher this year. Thanks to a dedicated staff and cadre of volunteers we provide an excellent outdoor recreation experience for those visitors.

As people take stock of priorities and what truly is essential, more and more are realizing the chance to get out and be in nature is a vital part of their lives. Through uncertain times, the park staff is making the best of things and bringing a high level of commitment and love of the park to work every day. It is beyond a doubt that we will continue to see changes to our daily lives, but the park staff will continue to do the best we can to serve the public and keep Mirror Lake as safe and enjoyable a place to visit as possible.

Be safe. We look forward to seeing you in the park.

SPRING 2020 COTTAGE WORK WEEK

Mid-April found Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy board members and volunteers busy at work on annual maintenance projects — from deep-cleaning the flagstone floor to chopping and stacking firewood and cleaning and restaining the wood and utility sheds, among other jobs.





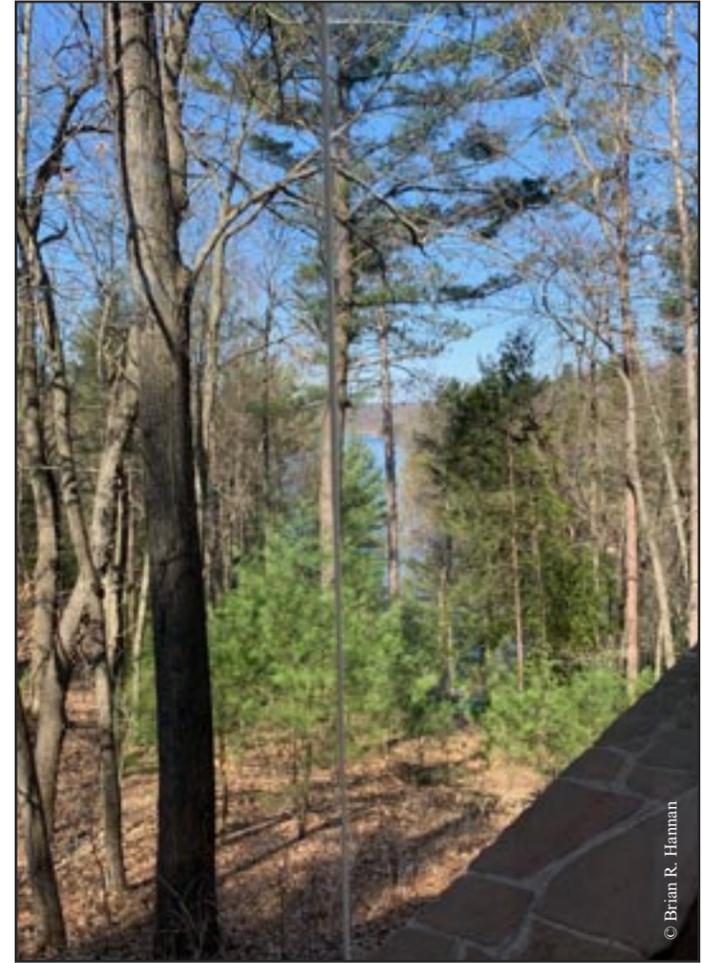
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MIRROR LAKE

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back to normal.”

Even Henry David Thoreau’s “life in the woods” wasn’t defined by isolation and solitude so much as it was by time to reflect and find new perspective. Fun fact: Concord, Massachusetts, was an easy walk, and Walden Pond was a hub of activity. Legend holds that mama did her now-lauded son’s laundry.

While Thoreau stepped away for two years, two months and two days, few among us have that luxury. We have lives to live and Frostian promises to keep — though who, in the intensity of the current situation, hasn’t occasionally lost track of the month, date or day of the week?

We’ve rightly shifted our focus toward what needs to be done for the people we

love or who find us on the front lines of health care or an “essential business.” Many of us pull double-duty home-schooling our children in ways Frank Lloyd Wright understood as “add(ing) tired to tired.”

All the same — and by a show of hands — who’s ready to get away from it all? Not for a lack of will but a human desire for calm, peace and a change of scene?

Who needs a hug? A haircut? An unguarded moment? A meal inside a restaurant? Assurance to the question: Could life ever be sane again? Never mind “normal.”

Our schedules allow us to sojourn at the cottage for a few days — whether to take a break from our routine or to celebrate a personal milestone or occasion. We embrace the idyllic setting, savor the organic architecture and leave with fond memories and visions of a return stay.

Time doesn’t so much slow down as it takes a deep breath, giving us pause to ... reconnect with the world.

Through the conveyance of Seth Peterson’s vision and Wright’s design, we share in the dream that brought him to this certain wooded bluff overlooking Mirror Lake. Seth must have anticipated trading the demands of his job in Madison for tranquility at home, and we find ourselves similarly soothed.

Time doesn’t so much slow down as it takes a deep breath, giving us pause to get out of our head and reconnect with nature. Because we choose to be here, we’re not lost, as we now feel, but found — for a transitory enchanted moment. 

FROM THE GUESTBOOK

“Despite the gray and dreary weather, we enjoyed this cozy cottage as a short get-away from our hectic lives. As an architect, I have a great appreciation for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and loved to “live” in one of his creations for a few days. The setting is spectacular! Hope to be back some time to enjoy it in the summer.” — Pam & Greg, Minneapolis

“This was our first visit to the cottage and will not be our last. Beautiful in every way! When we decided to ‘take the leap,’ we decided on leap day and the Seth Peterson Cottage. The ceremony was small, short but beautiful — and definitely memorable. We look forward to spending many anniversaries back at the cottage!” — Andrea & Matt, Wausau

“We’ve been coming here for 15 years, and the place has not lost its magic. Thanks to Seth, Mr. Wright and the conservancy for this wonderful respite from reality.” — Kenneth & Philys, New Orleans

“Mere words cannot adequately convey how special and meaningful being so blessed to be in this cottage. We will be bringing back to our slice of heaven this place and how it has become a shared language for Martha and me to articulate our future together.” — Martha & Michael, Julian, California

“This weekend was worth the wait! A chance to unplug and enjoy the symphony of birds and frogs instead.... We especially liked canoeing up the lake. The perspective from the water was ideal to see how seamlessly the cottage merged with the rest of the forest. Thank you to all the people dedicated to preserving this gem!” — Jennifer & Patrick, Duluth, Minnesota

“First read about Seth Peterson Cottage in ‘Midwest Living’ magazine several years ago. Our trip was planned around our stay at this amazing getaway. What a wonderful experience!” — Mary & Joe, Nashville

COTTAGE INDUSTRY

MULTIMEDIA RE-CREATIONS CAPTURE PEOPLE’S LOVE FOR PETERSON COTTAGE



Seth Peterson Cottage dollhouse by Joey Korom and James Mattea, of Korom Creative LLC, for the 2011 ‘Just the WRIGHT Size: Designing and Building Small Houses’ exhibit at the Milwaukee Museum of Art

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, these Seth Peterson Cottage-inspired designs and models leave little room for doubt. People love our little jewel in the woods.

Over the years, we’ve found or received photos of their creations. Here are a few we thought you might enjoy. 📷



Ron Olsen, Janesville



School project, Alisa Jordheim and Lindsey Meyers, Appleton



Gingerbread cottage, unknown baker



Computer model, ERIKMESA1179



Lego model, Riley, Brickworld Chicago 2017

MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Mark Blakeslee, President

This spring has certainly sprung a surprise on all of us. Never in my dreams would I have thought we would be sheltered in place and not be able to visit one of my favorite places on earth, Mirror Lake. All of us at the Mirror Lake Association hope that everyone is safe and healthy.

This pandemic has made us take a couple steps back, but we hope to be back in operation soon. Not being able to get out has delayed a number of important spring projects.

Our annual spring cleaning day is delayed indefinitely. Typically we would have 30-plus volunteers come and walk roadways and park paths to pick up litter. Hopefully we will be able to get to that before the plants grow too tall, the mosquitoes come out and the poison ivy is in full force.

We also had to suspend our water testing — which we have

done for more than 30 years. We can get the water samples, but the labs that analyze the samples are closed. We will persevere and wait patiently until the day comes when we can start-up again.

As soon as we can, we will begin our work for the summer. We plan to start the process of doing some analysis work on some major projects on the lake. All of them are dredging projects that will help clear run-off that blocks navigation and contributes to the escalation of aquatic vegetation growth.

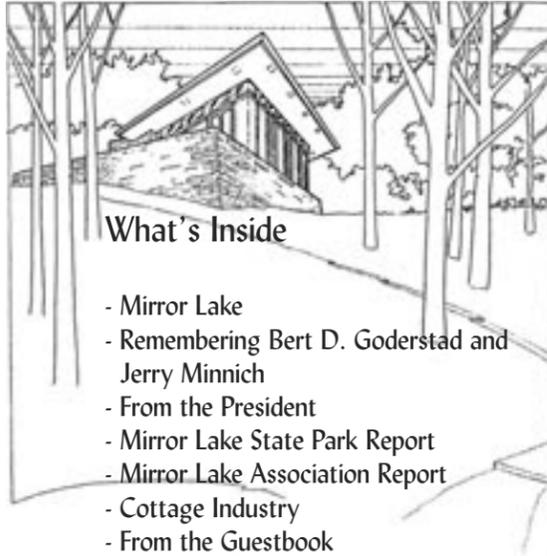
Our annual meeting of the membership will be in June. We will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and reflect on the strong history of advocacy the Mirror Lake Association has had for Earth Day.

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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Address Service Requested



What's Inside

- Mirror Lake
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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

Tours are typically held on the second Sunday of every month, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., and cost \$5. Tours are currently suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please visit our website or Facebook page for information about when tours will resume.

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 13. 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

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