



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

This has been an eventful year. In June, we celebrated our 30th anniversary of making the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Seth Peterson Cottage available to the public and recognized the people who have been around from the start of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy in the early 1990s. Bill Martinelli and Claire Barnett attended the initial 1989 meeting that led to the cottage's rehabilitation and remain active on the conservancy board of directors. At that time, I represented the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). After my retirement, I joined the conservancy board of directors in 2002 and have served as its president since 2012.

We also recognized people who have frequently rented the cottage. The record is 23 annual visits for a Kentucky couple who already have made reservations for 2023. Other frequent

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WRITINGS

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

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KENTUCKY COUPLE LOGS MOST ANNUAL STAYS AT THE COTTAGE

After 23 stays—in 23 years—at the Seth Peterson Cottage, Tim and Trish McNeely's favorite season to sojourn there might not be a surprise: "All of them," Tim said. "It is our favorite place to be on the planet."

This summer, the Georgetown, Ky., couple were recognized at the 30th anniversary celebration of the cottage's rehabilitation for having made the most overnight stays since it opened for rentals in 1992. They made their inaugural visit in 2001.

"The very first time that Tim booked the cottage, it was for one night, and he intended to make a business trip out of it," Trish recalled. "When he saw how disappointed I was, he created an invitation to come with him and

Above: Trish McNeely during the first stay she and her husband, Tim, made to the cottage in 2001.

gave it to me for Christmas."

She continued: "We have come in every beautiful season, as well as our birthdays, until we honed in on Frank Lloyd Wright's birthday (in early June). I cried tears of joy one birthday there when my card told me I could get a dog after asking for 14 years."

Tim, a long-time enthusiast of Wright's work, said he enjoys the cottage for its tranquility. He said he and Trish have seen 276 Wright-designed properties, been inside 121 and stayed as overnight guests in eight. They saw the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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visitors include guests who have stayed 18 times and 13 times—and three who have each made nine visits. All expressed appreciation for the time they spent at "their" cottage.

Approximately 300 people toured the cottage and attended the anniversary program. The speakers told of the challenges at the beginning to get support from the residents around Mirror Lake and the DNR, and the difficulties encountered in raising funds. The results from all those efforts are evident by the interest shown from people wanting to rent the cottage as a work of art designed by Wright.

Thank you to everyone who attended the 30th anniversary program, conservancy members and everyone who regularly stays at the Seth Peterson Cottage.

We look forward, as the conservancy, to continue our efforts to maintain the Seth Peterson Cottage and make it available for overnight stays and monthly guided tours. 

MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Patrick Cieslewicz, Park Superintendent

Hello, I'm Patrick Cieslewicz, and I'm the new superintendent at Mirror Lake State Park. My predecessor, Ryder Will, accepted a new position with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) capital development team in Madison.

Here's a brief background on me. I graduated from University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point with a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental law. I worked as a park ranger at Devil's Lake State Park for two seasons before leaving to work in public service outside the DNR. In 2018, I returned to Devil's Lake as a park ranger. I was then able to move into a position as the park manager, overseeing visitor service operations and property development projects. In June 2022, I accepted my current position as the park superintendent at Mirror Lake State Park.


I'm married and have two boys, ages 6 and 8. As a family, we enjoy all types of outdoor activities and visiting many of Wisconsin's state parks.

It was another busy season here at Mirror Lake State Park, with more than 380,000 visitors to the property as of September, and I expect that number to grow as we move into the fall and the leaves start to turn.

Camping also has been busy this summer, with all campsites being reserved every Friday and Saturday night. The trend continues into the fall.

Our naturalist, Cindy, also had another eventful season with more than 600 people attending her interpretive programs that ranged from guided hikes to kayak tours to educational presentations.

During my first few months as the superintendent of Mirror Lake State Park, I've had the opportunity to meet members of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy and other partner organizations. It has been great to learn how these organizations are supporting Mirror Lake State Park and the preservation of its natural beauty for the next generation.

I invite you to stop by my office at the park headquarters or email me at Patrick.Cieslewicz@wisconsin.gov if you have questions about the site or would like to meet in person. 

MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Marcus Jaeger, President

We say it every year, of course: "How can summer be over already?" Believe me, as the years go by, it seems more and more true. Fall is here!

This is my favorite time on Mirror Lake—by far. Many times during the week, mine is the only boat on the water. There is very little activity on the shore. You may see a couple of people in the state park near the boat launch, maybe fishing from the pier or perhaps walking along the beach area. Oh, and at least until it closed on Oct. 23, Ishnala Supper Club has activity on its decks and beach. Heck, people are always there!

Once the leaves start to change, Mirror Lake becomes even more majestic. As nature evolves, we are losing many of our colorful maples and oaks. They are getting squeezed out by the quicker-growing pines in the battle for sunlight. The birch trees are disappearing as well. Even giving this, the beauty on the lake is seldom rivaled.

Now, once the leaves start to fall, the views from the water change. So it is when I hop in my pontoon and head through the narrows and approach the cottage. This hidden gem on the lake becomes less hidden. Now as I look up when I pass, the cottage becomes much more visible—the sun glimmering and reflecting from the windows. The view of the lake is enhanced as well, as you look from the cottage down Mirror Lake.

As the president of the Mirror Lake Association, I see the relationship between the cottage and the association as a team working together to bring joy and enhance the experience to those visiting the area. That joy is shown by the many visitors we see each year to not only the Seth Peterson Cottage or Ishnala but also those canoeists, kayakers, fisherpeople, (nod to the late Audrey Laatch, who is the first person I ever heard to use that term!), boaters and hikers. Yes, I said "hikers"!

While I am not exactly the most avid of hikers, the trails nearest the cottage are among my favorites. The Pulpit Rock Trail is a short three-quarters of a mile, and I never fail to learn or see something new. The amazing Turtleville trail is

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30th Anniversary Photo Scrapbook



Approximately 300 people attended the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy's (SPCC) 30th anniversary celebration in June. The event included an open house, guided tours, music and comments from SPCC board and ex-officio members.



Above: Guests who have stayed multiple times at the cottage since it opened for overnight rentals in 1992 were recognized.






THE JILL VLADICK BENCH

By Claire Barnett

There's a steep path down to the lake from the cottage, but until this spring, there was nowhere to sit to look at the view once you were there, except on the steps down to the pier.


Jill Vladick was one of the founding members of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. She made the initial contact with Dale Schultz, whom she knew and who was then a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly, to help secure \$50,000 in Wisconsin Depart-

ment of Natural Resources funding used to begin to save the cottage. She also discovered an Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts grant that provided \$10,000 for a new roof. She was instrumental in organizing fundraising events and personally catered a fundraising presentation in Madison. Cottage rentals began after the cottage's June 1992 grand opening, and she died a few months later. A Jill Vladick Memorial Scholarship Fund was started in her name that enabled many Taliesin architecture students to stay at the cottage. 

MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

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somewhat longer but also is full of wonder. This was a small settlement of residents and seasonal folks from generations ago. With a bit of imagination, you can see the homes and feel the presence of others like you and me who also appreciated the abundant beauty of the lake and area.

For now, if you are visiting the cottage and/or the lake, look for me on the water in my pontoon, appreciating all that is special here. My boat will be in the water until I am forced to take it out of the water and finally place it in storage for the winter. Winter! Hey, that is my second favorite season here, but that is a story for another time! 

FROM THE GUESTBOOK

"We've long wanted to come here. A wonderful place, shared with our best friends. Much leisurely time for contemplation, watching the fire and doing jigsaw puzzles. Hoping to return sometime! Thanks to the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy for rescuing this magical place."—Vera & Greg, Urbana, Ill., and Joan & Mark, Austin, Texas

"To anyone who loves beauty, cherishes design and thrills to detail, you have arrived."—Robert, Washington, D.C.

"Thank you, once again, to all who make this beautiful, secluded place available. This was our second stay. The birthday celebrations seem to be a recurring theme. For us, it was Ed. It truly is a gift to live in Frank Lloyd Wright-designed spaces as opposed to just visiting them."—Ed & Carla, Spencer, Iowa

"We spent a lovely few days here. The rain didn't stop us from enjoying the cottage. We enjoyed canoeing to Ishnala Supper Club for cocktails. A perfect getaway."—Ken & Gretchen, Texas

"After looking at the website for years we finally scored a reservation. Well worth the wait. The fall colors are gorgeous, and we enjoyed long hikes and watching the birds. The cottage is designed so efficiently. Love the little touches and especially the veranda. Will get back in line to come during winter!"—Jill & Brad, Crystal Lake, Ill.

"The Seth Peterson Cottage gave our family the perfect location for an amazing vacation. We enjoyed hiking and relaxing in front of the fire. The cottage is beautifully maintained. The peaceful, serene location and how seamlessly the cottage embraces nature made for a welcome respite. We've been Frank Lloyd Wright fans for a long time and will never forget the chance to stay in a home he designed."—JP, Nancy, Elly & Ben, Appleton, Wisc., and San Diego

ENTRIES SOUGHT FOR 2023 AWARD

PROGRAM RECOGNIZES SIGNIFICANT PAST WORK IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

March 15, 2023, is the deadline for applications for the 2023 Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award.

The award, given 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 given preference, and the restoration work shall have been substantially completed within the two calendar years previous to the year of application. The 2023 award will be given for work done between 2020 and 2022.

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

Applicants are asked to support their applications with a statement fully describing the 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



Left: Kristin Visser

announced on April 15, 2023, and the award presented at the Seth Peterson Cottage on June 11, 2023.


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 AIA, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Seth Peterson Cottage: Rescuing a Lost Masterwork." Visser, who was a planner for the Wisconsin 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 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 today serves as a unique rental cottage managed by the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy.

Past Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award Winners

- 2007: Steve Sikora and Lynette Erickson-Sikora, Willey House, Minneapolis, Minn.
- 2009: Paul Harding and Cheryl Harding, Davenport House, River Forest, Ill.
- 2011: Mary Arnold and Henry St. Maurice, E. Clarke Arnold House, Columbus, Wisc.
- 2013: Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin, American System-Built Homes Model B-1, Milwaukee, Wisc.
- 2015: John Eifler and Bonnie Phoenix, Ross House, Glenco, Ill.
- 2017: Gene Szymczak posthumously, Thomas P. Hardy House, Racine, Wisc.
- 2019: Doug LaBrecque, Curtis and Lillian Meyer House, Galesburg, Mich.
- 2021: Nicholas and Lauren Witkowski, Brookfield Kindergarten, Brookfield, Ill.

Submit printed applications to: Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, P.O. Box 186, Lake Delton, WI 53940. Email applications or send any questions to: SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com. 




KENTUCKY COUPLE

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archives when they were located at Taliesin West, with Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer showing them original Wright drawings and artifacts.

"All of these experiences were awesome, but they all pale with what we

feel at the Peterson cottage," Tim said.

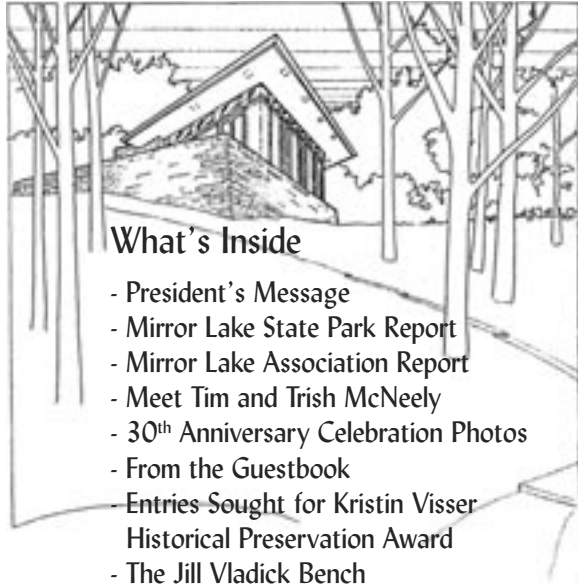
Trish agrees: "The cottage has its own smell and feel, making you want to spend all your special occasions there. I married into (Tim's interest) but have come to love Wright structures too. We've stayed in more than a few now, but this is the only one to which we keep returning, like it's our second home." 

WRITINGS

The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy Inc.
P.O. Box 186
Lake Delton, WI 53940-0186

Note: Cottage location appears in the map below.

Address Service Requested



What's Inside

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- Meet Tim and Trish McNeely
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- The Jill Vladick Bench

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

- Dec. 11 1 to 4 p.m. \$5
- Jan. 8 1 to 4 p.m. \$5
- Feb. 12 1 to 4 p.m. \$5
- March 12 1 to 4 p.m. \$5
- April 9 1 to 4 p.m. \$5
- May 14 1 to 4 p.m. \$5

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

Notice of Annual Meeting

The annual Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy meeting will be held from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. on Dec. 11. Active members are welcome to attend. RSVP by sending an e-mail to sethpetersoncottage@gmail.com.

✓ 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.

Seth Peterson Cottage

E9982 Fern Dell Road
Lake Delton, Wisconsin

