

WRITINGS

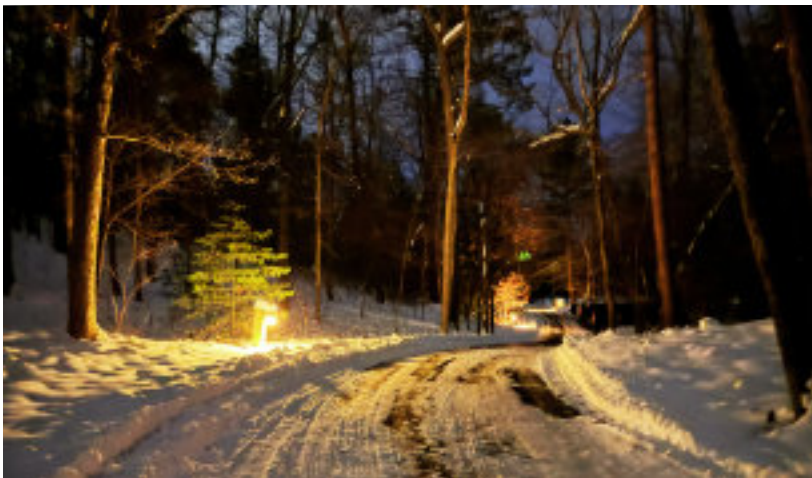
NEWSLETTER OF THE SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2026



THE LIGHTS SHINE ON

By Patrick Molzahn



Though not original to Frank Lloyd Wright's design, ten lights line the approach to the cottage. These were installed in the late 1990's to guide visitors from the entry at the road safely to the entrance. Three decades later, the elements had taken their toll. Unfortunately, the company that sold the original lights, Idaho Wood, no longer carried the same design, which was chosen to compliment the architecture. Unable to find a suitable replacement, Bill Martinelli, who looks after maintenance of the cottage, had all but given up hope.

continued on page 4

WRITINGS

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

- Editor/designer: Patrick Molzahn
- Coordinator: Kermit Traska
- Submit articles and pictures to:
SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com

SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY INC.

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- Vice President: Bill Martinelli
- Treasurer: Catherine Sperl
- Secretary: Marc Londo

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EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- Marcus Jaeger, President
Mirror Lake Association
- Patrick Cieslewicz, Park Superintendent
Mirror Lake State Park

CONSERVANCY STAFF

- Office Manager: Ron Dakter
- Marketing Coordinator: Gail Kohl

RESERVATIONS

Please refer to page 6 of this newsletter

CONTACT US

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 Email: SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com
 Cottage voicemail: (877) 466-2358

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

Change is defined as: *to make something different in some way; or, to replace something with another thing.* Several significant changes have taken place recently within the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy (SPCC). We have made changes to our Board of Directors and the property management firm that handles our reservation system.

Our last newsletter announced that we had two long-term vacancies on our Board of Directors and that we were looking for people to serve on the Board. The response provided several quality candidates and two were elected at the SPCC Annual Meeting in December. Joining the Board on January 1st were Patricia Zingsheim and Paul Wolter. Patricia is from Spring Green, with a master's degree in architecture and credentials as a Certified Public Manager. She has much relevant experience in architecture, urban design, and redevelopment in cities like Milwaukee and Washington D.C.

Paul Wolter is from Baraboo, with a degree in Fine Art. He has worked as a contractor on historic buildings and has served for the past decade as the Executive Director of the Sauk County Historical Society. We welcome Patricia and Paul to the Board of Directors and look forward to including their knowledge and expertise as the SPCC moves forward, dealing with all the challenges associated with operating a Cottage designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

After more than thirty years, SPCC has found it necessary to change the property management firm that handles our reservations and Cottage cleanings between guest stays. This change may be a cause of concern for the many people who have already made advanced reservations for a stay at the Cottage through 2028. Please be assured that all confirmed reservations will remain in effect as they are transferred to the new firm. We are working diligently with both property management firms to make this transition as seamless as possible. SPCC looks forward to working with our new property management firm to continue offering the opportunity for as many people as possible to be able to experience a stay at the Cottage.

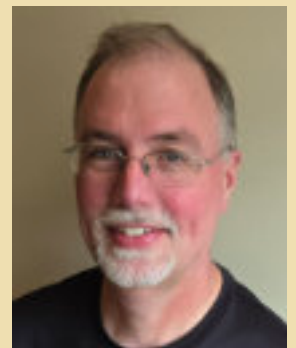
Change is inevitable. However, we strive to manage change in a way so that whatever we do maintains and improves the operation of the Seth Peterson Cottage for future generations.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



The SPCC is pleased to welcome two new Board members:

Patricia Zingsheim
(pictured left)
and
Paul Wolter
(pictured right)



MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Patrick Cieslewicz, Park Superintendent

As spring arrives, road construction—and the familiar orange cones—will be part of the landscape at Mirror Lake State Park. In March, the park began a major infrastructure improvement project aimed at enhancing visitor access and updating facilities.

The first phase focuses on the boat landing area, where improvements include expanded parking on both the north and south sides, installation of a new vault toilet, upgraded accessible (ADA) parking, and a new dock. At the beach, visitors will also see the addition of a new paved path and new accessible retaining wall and path surrounding the beach.

Phases two and three will shift attention to the Sandstone and Cliffwood campgrounds. Work there will include grinding and rebuilding the road base, installing new culverts, and repaving campground roadways.

Due to the scope of the project, areas of the park will experience closures throughout the spring and summer. Phase one is expected to be completed by Memorial Day, with the remaining phases wrapping up by early July.

In addition to these improvements, the park will celebrate its 60th anniversary this year. The Friends of Mirror Lake State Park will host a special celebration on August 14, featuring live music at the amphitheater - a great opportunity for visitors to enjoy both the park's history and its newly enhanced amenities.



MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Marcus Jaeger, President

Here we are again, time for my semi-annual article for the Seth Peterson Conservancy. I am the president of the Mirror Lake Association, and as such, this should be an easy task! Of course it seems easy, and yet, I always struggle to find something informative to share with you in this newsletter. It just hit me why I have such a hard time, and let's just say that I am awfully proud of this difficulty. Please hear me out...

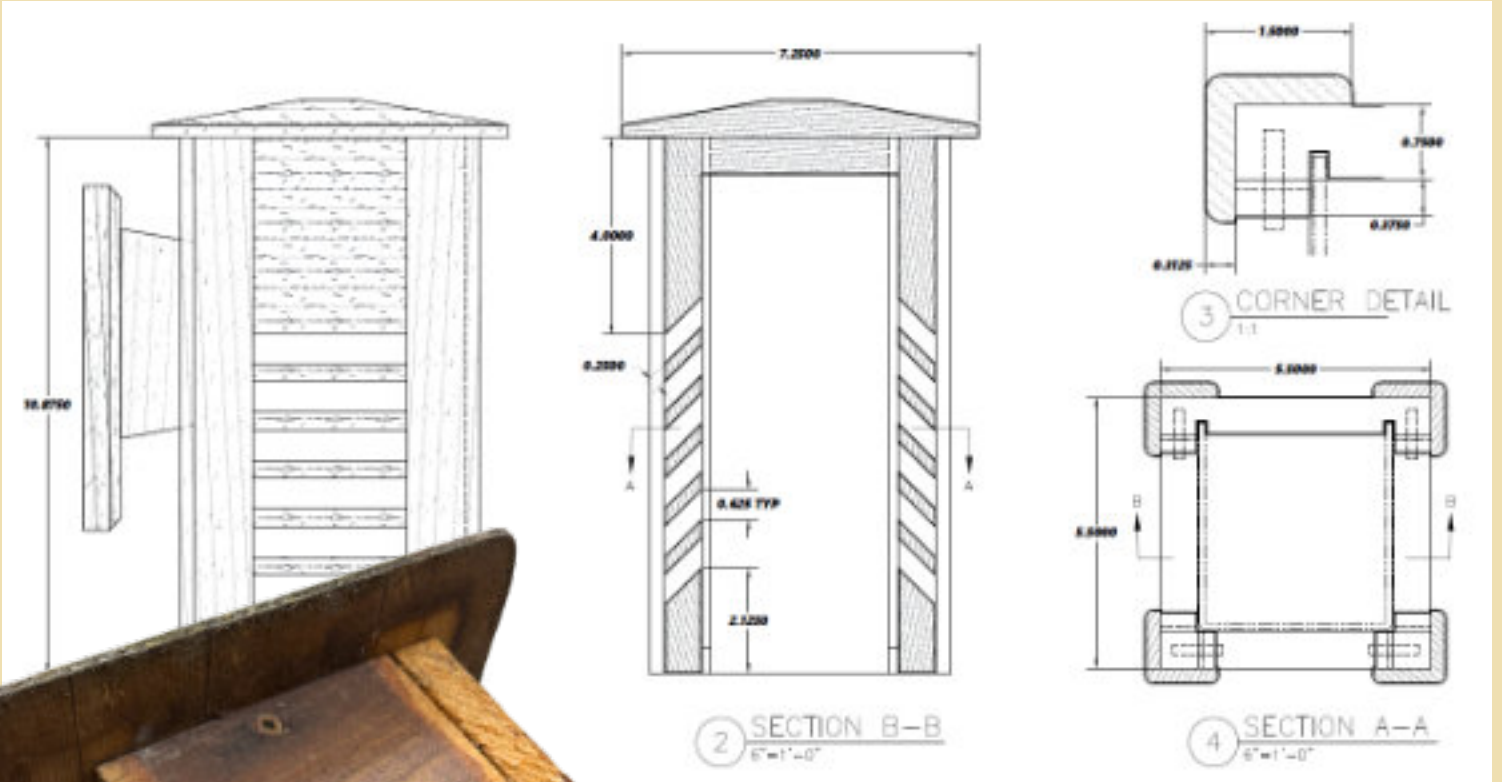
Mirror Lake is different than any other neighboring lake in the region. Different by design! The shoreline is not developed like most lakes. Sure, there is a large supper club (Ishnala) on the lake, but its original structure is over 150 years old. That's what you call being grandfathered in! We also have the Pine Cove Condos across from the dam, but through thoughtful design, you do not see any of the twenty units from the lake.

If you launch your kayak, canoe, or boat from the Seth Peterson dock and paddle toward the main body of the lake, you soon realize that the rock formations, the shoreline, and even the trees are virtually the same as when Seth Peterson himself first discovered Mirror Lake. As you travel through the narrows from the Seth Peterson Cottage to when you reach the center of the lake, you will only encounter one cottage. Once you arrive at the center, there are four homes on your left - all private residences that have stood there for many years. No wonder I have a problem finding something new to report - there is very little new - again by design.

In all fairness, there is a new restaurant, Dawn Manor, across from the dam; but even there most of the materials used on the exterior are over one hundred years old! Mirror Lake does have two newer private homes that have been built in the past ten years. Situated near the center of the lake, you would be hard pressed to see them from the water. Again, this is by design, to preserve the natural beauty of the lake and its surroundings. Many people have been diligent for decades to keep the look and the feel of the lake as natural as possible. You, the visitor, are a beneficiary of the vision of these people.

Now you understand why I struggle to provide new information, even though it is only two columns per year. That's not to say there isn't anything new to share with you. The Mirror Lake Management District just wrapped up a navigational dredging project. This million-dollar plus project included cleaning out of the sediment trap that was installed west of the cottage about fifteen years ago. The goal of this trap was to stop about 80 percent of the phosphorus from traveling down Dell Creek into Mirror Lake. It has done its job! Again, a group of people working hard to keep the lake beautiful and natural.

In other news, the Mirror Lake Association will hold their 40th annual meeting on Saturday June 20th, beginning at 9AM at the magnificent Ishnala Supper Club. All are encouraged to attend. This is a wonderful chance to meet some of the individuals who have dedicated time to preserving the beauty of Mirror Lake. It is also a great opportunity to learn about our lake, the oldest man-made lake in Wisconsin. Oh, and we have a lot of fun as well. Please consider joining us at Ishnala that morning. We would love to see some new faces!



Part of any good design is examining what worked and what could be improved.





Thankfully, one of our Board members, a master cabinetmaker by trade, was willing to take on the task of building replacements. He carefully dissected the original lights and made several improvements to the original design. The lights were installed in April during our annual Work Week, and were stained to match the color of the posts, which were re-clad with cedar last spring.

Maintaining the Cottage is an ongoing task which requires time, energy, and financial support. While we have an excellent group of volunteers, the Board launched **The Seth Peterson Cottage Preservation Endowment Fund** in 2025 to help ensure that this beautiful National Historic Landmark is around for generations to come. If you are interested in supporting our efforts, please contact Kermit Traska at SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com



WORK WEEK 2026

Each spring, one week is set aside for deep cleaning and maintenance of the cottage.

Special thanks to **Bill Martinelli**, who organizes our Work Week, and to this year's crew of volunteers:

Jan Aslaksen, Gary Dischler, Kit Hogan, Rachel and Scott Lohman, Larry Mundth, and Patrick Molzahn



SETH PETERSON MERCHANDISE

by Carolyne Kotchi, Merchandise Coordinator

In the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts.....Golf! Imagine wearing the SPCC Polo Shirt and being able to share your knowledge and wonderful memories of FLW and the Seth Peterson Cottage with your fellow players.

The 100% pique cotton blend polo shirt comes in forest green or natural. The \$32 cost is well worth it because my husband assures me that it takes 3 strokes off his golf game. Check the web site to order or visit the Cottage on the 2nd Sunday of the month during our Open House to see it for yourself.



ATTENTION GUESTS WITH RESERVATIONS!

The Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy is changing the property management firm that handles our reservations. **All reservations confirmed for 2026, 2027 and 2028 remain in effect as they are being transferred to the new firm.** All available nights for 2026 and 2027 have been reserved. No new 2028 reservations will be accepted until arrangements are completed with the new firm. Thank you for your understanding and patience. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us via email: SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com



Pictured: Jan Aslaksen with his lucky Seth Peterson polo shirt. When he's not on the golf course, Jan can often be spotted volunteering at the cottage wearing his customary overalls.

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

“A welcome respite for these troubled times.”

Tom & Beverly
Oshkosh, WI

“Each time we come here, from the first smell of the wood fires to the last click of the door latch, it becomes more comfortable, more familiar, more special. Were so fortunate that this place is being used as it should - by people, to experience and enjoy - and not as a precious, delicate, protected object. Our never-ending gratitude to the Conservancy for its work keeping this place for all of us.”

Brent & Jane

“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
Blaine, MN

“Happy St. Patrick’s Day!
Another wonderful visit. The full moon lit up the forest so beautifully.

A quiet night of cards by the fire was exactly what we needed.”

The Litzenbergers

“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 were beautiful. Thank you for keeping this cottage up and allowing us to visit.”

Luke & Pam



FROM OUR FACEBOOK SITE: GUEST REVISITS THE COTTAGE AFTER 30 YEARS...

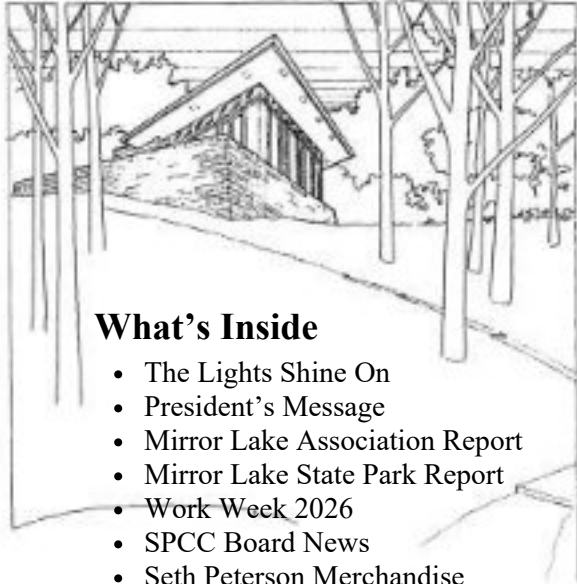


August, 2025: I was able to stay at the Seth Peterson Cottage once again. The first time was nearly 30 years ago. Since then, I’ve been thinking of returning and was happy to do so a few weeks ago (though I had to book this reservation two years ago). Thanks to a prior post in this group about the nearby Fern Dell Gorge / Pulpit Rock Trail. It’s only a 10-minute walk from the cottage and since you’re walking in, no parking pass is needed. It’s a nice short hike in the morning. The cottage and its scenery is really a gem and glad I was able to relive it again. Hats off to Seth Peterson who brought together the property and the architect to create this.

WRITINGS

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

Note: Cottage location appears in the map below.



What's Inside

- The Lights Shine On
- President's Message
- Mirror Lake Association Report
- Mirror Lake State Park Report
- Work Week 2026
- SPCC Board News
- Seth Peterson Merchandise
- From the Guestbook

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 Schedule:

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------|
| • May 10 | 1 to 4 p.m. | \$5 * |
| • June 7 | 1 to 4 p.m. | FREE! |
| • June 14 | 1 to 4 p.m. | \$5 * |
| • July 12 | 1 to 4 p.m. | \$5 * |
| • Aug. 9 | 1 to 4 p.m. | \$5 * |
| • Sep. 13 | 1 to 4 p.m. | \$5 * |
| • Oct. 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. 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.

Seth Peterson Cottage E9982 Fern Dell Road Lake Delton, Wisconsin

GPS:

43.56178°N, 89.82432° W

