

VOLUME 23  
ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY  
2018

# WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN

MEMBER NEWSLETTER \ CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



## Get Ready for Wright and Like

Tour Spring Green and Richland Center on June 2





Recently restored, Tan-y-Deri on the Taliesin estate dates from 1907. Frank Lloyd Wright designed it for his sister Jane and her husband William Porter, associated with the Hillside School.

**W&L** Tan-y-Deri will be a featured highlight during our *Wright and Like* 2018 Friday evening event on June 1. For more information visit our website, [www.wrightinwisconsin.org](http://www.wrightinwisconsin.org).

## CONTENTS



### ARTICLES

- 02 Wright and Like 2018
- 06 Meeting House Roof
- 07 Taliesin Legacy Awards
- 10 In Memoriam
- 17 New Private Entertaining Program at Taliesin

### REGULAR FEATURES

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 01 President's Message     | 12 Wright Thoughts  |
| 04 News Briefs             | 14 Tours & Events   |
| 08 What Wright Means to Me | 20 Vintage Postcard |

### WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN VOLUME 23 \ ISSUE 1

Published three times annually in February, May, and September.

*WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN* is published by Wright in Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization designed to promote, protect, and preserve the heritage of Frank Lloyd Wright, his vision and his architecture—as well as the work of his apprentices, Taliesin Associated Architects, and like-minded architects—in his native state of Wisconsin. Membership benefits include discounts at the Monona Terrace Gift Shop and on *Wright and Like*™ tour tickets, this newsletter, volunteer opportunities, and more. Donors of \$100 or more receive reciprocal membership benefits at Wright sites nationwide (benefits vary by location). To join, visit us at [www.wrightinwisconsin.org](http://www.wrightinwisconsin.org) or contact us at the number or address below.

**Editor** Mark Hertzberg  
**Designer and copyeditor** Scott K. Templeton  
**Special thanks**

to Patrick Mahoney for contributing the vintage postcard.

**Board of Directors (Sites Represented)**  
 George Hall, president; Michael Ditmer, vice president (*Schwartz House*); Andy Gussert, treasurer; Mark Hertzberg, secretary; Lon Arbegust (*AD German Warehouse*); Mary Arnold; Lois Berg; Ken Dahlin; Erik Flesch (*Taliesin*); Bill Martinelli (*Seth Peterson Cottage*); Kim Mattila-Kasten; Mary Ann McKenna (*Wyoming Valley School*); Heather Sabin (*Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center*); Michelle Sweetman (*SC Johnson*); and Dave Weber (*Unitarian Meeting House*).

**Office manager** Sherri Shokler  
**Wright in Wisconsin**  
 P.O. Box 6339, Madison, WI 53716-0339  
 (608) 287-0339 \ [www.wrightinwisconsin.org](http://www.wrightinwisconsin.org)

An intricate wood-and-glass lighting feature hangs near the fireplace at the Barrett-Tuxford House, designed by Arthur Dyson, in Richland Center. **On the cover:** The Hahn House by Charles Montooth near Spring Green.

**W&L** The Barrett-Tuxford House and The Hahn House are both included in the 2018 *Wright and Like* tour.



## President's Message

by GEORGE HALL

To all of our returning members who generously responded to our recent membership drive and fund appeal, the board thanks you. And we welcome you new members and encourage you to get to know us through our new website, newsletters, and events. Your continuing support is important to Wright in Wisconsin and enables us to cover a significant portion of our operating expenses, while we also support the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail (a new Trail brochure is in the works that we will publish this spring) and develop new activities and programs for you, our members.

Since “officially” dividing our organization in July, our board members have worked diligently to approve new articles of incorporation, articulate short-term goals, approve new bylaws, re-establish committees (Finance, Communications, and Programs) including selecting one on which to serve, develop a budget, and make necessary decisions preparatory to filing for our nonprofit status. Importantly, we expanded our mission beyond preserving the work of Frank Lloyd Wright in his native state of Wisconsin, to include the structures designed by the apprentices and Taliesin Architects/Associated Architects. As you well know, our annual *Wright and Like* tour has always featured work by Mr. Wright and the apprentices, as well as by allied architects.

Regrettably, I want to mention the passing of Margo Melli, a former and long-serving board member and Voss-Bascom Professor of Law Emerita at the UW–Madison Law School. Together with former board member Stewart Macaulay (also a UW–Madison Law School Professor Emeritus), she authored a guidebook to Mr. Wright’s work in Madison that we printed some years ago. Our sympathy goes out to her family.

In December a nice update, along with their annual fund appeal, arrived from our former colleagues at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Burnham Block. We encourage



your participation as well as your support for them, and I know that many of you continue to serve as docents and on work parties. And for 2018, our members at the Donor level and above can use their membership benefits for admission to the Burnham Block site.

Since inaugurating our new web site, created with assistance from Image Management in Racine and underwritten by a donation from SC Johnson in Racine, we’ve actively worked on content as we excise the inevitable nits, and developed a protocol for

■ PRESIDENT CONTINUES ON PAGE 16

**W&L**  
 For the first time in the history of *Wright and Like*, we will have the A.D. German Warehouse in Richland Center as part of the tour!





# Wright and Like 2018: Coming Home

Our annual tour explores Spring Green and Richland Center

by SHERRI SHOKLER, office manager, Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin

**Rolling hills and lush river valleys** make up the landscape from which Frank Lloyd Wright drew inspiration. For Wright in Wisconsin's annual *Wright and Like*™ house tour we are “coming home” to Wright’s beloved Wisconsin River Valley and the communities of Spring Green and Richland Center on Saturday, June 2, 2018.

*Wright and Like 2018* will feature eight sites—two buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright and six exceptional private homes by Wright apprentices Arthur Dyson, Herb Fritz, Charles Montooth, William Wesley Peters, and James Pfefferkorn. Of the homes, only one has ever been on tour before—and that was in 2012 when it was the Spring Green Chamber of Commerce building. New owners have repurposed this structure as a tiny house retreat.

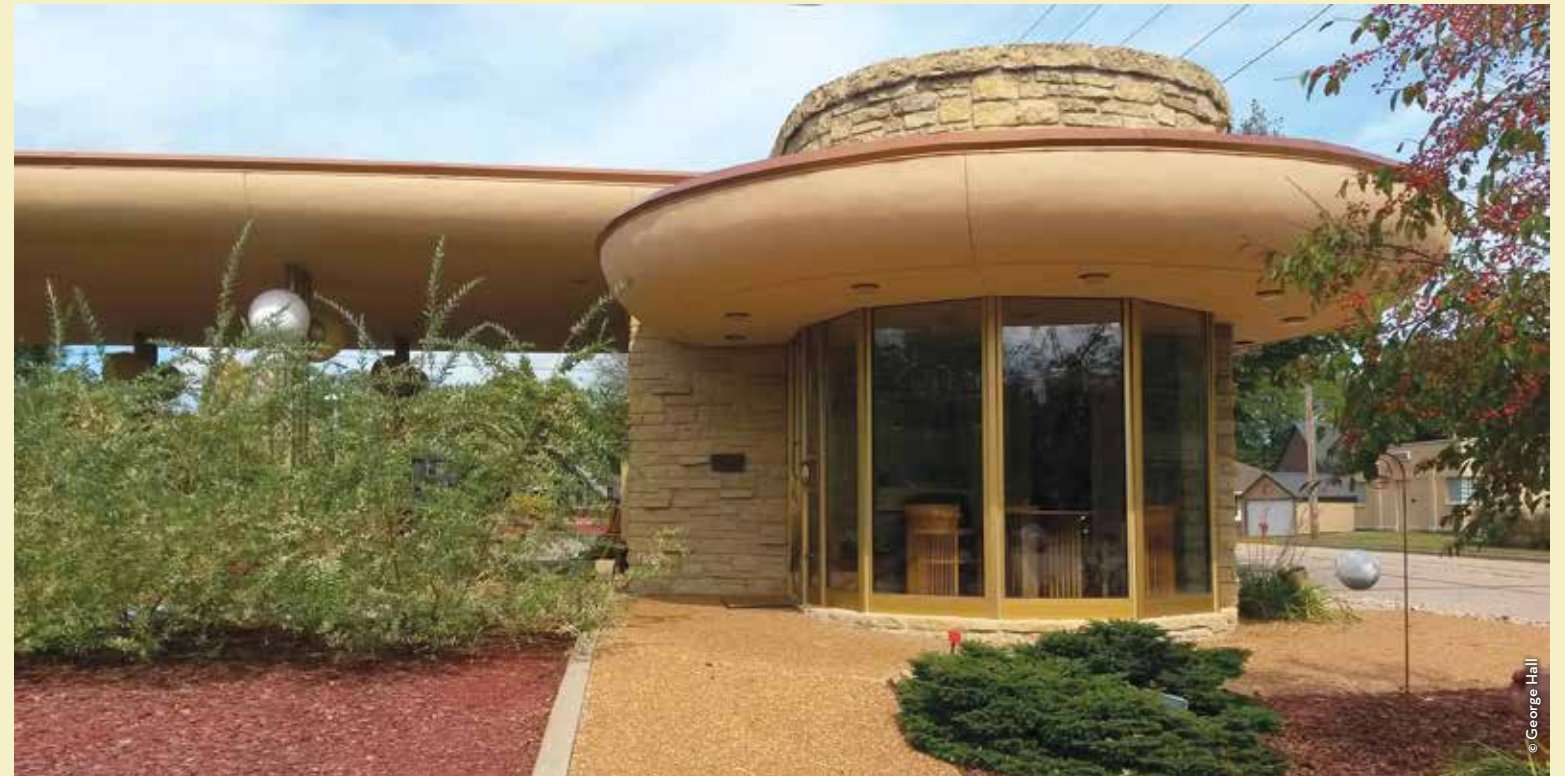
The two Wright designs on our tour are the Wyoming Valley School and, for the first time ever, the A.D. German Warehouse. The Wyoming Valley School will be our day-of tour headquarters and a tour site. This

will be the location for day-of ticket sales, a furniture exhibit, and shopping from an array of vendors.

Docent-led interior tours of each building will be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Order your tickets at [wrightinwisconsin.org](http://wrightinwisconsin.org) or (608) 287-0339. Advance tickets will be \$60 for Wright in Wisconsin members and \$70 for nonmembers. Then in mid-May tour participants will be mailed a tour map and wrist band to wear for admittance into each site. You can plan to visit the sites in any order, according to your priorities.

We are also planning a special June 1 *Wright and Like* Friday evening event on the grounds of Taliesin. There will be local food, drinks, exceptional entertainment, and a tour of recently restored Tan-y-Deri. Details about this special evening will be announced on our website. Please note that Taliesin is not part of the Saturday tour, so if you have not visited previously, consider booking a Sunday tour at [taliesinpreservation.org](http://taliesinpreservation.org). ■

The 1947 “Hill House” by Herb Fritz Jr., who was assisted during construction by apprentice Frank Leach, is the earliest Usonian on the 2018 *Wright and Like* tour.



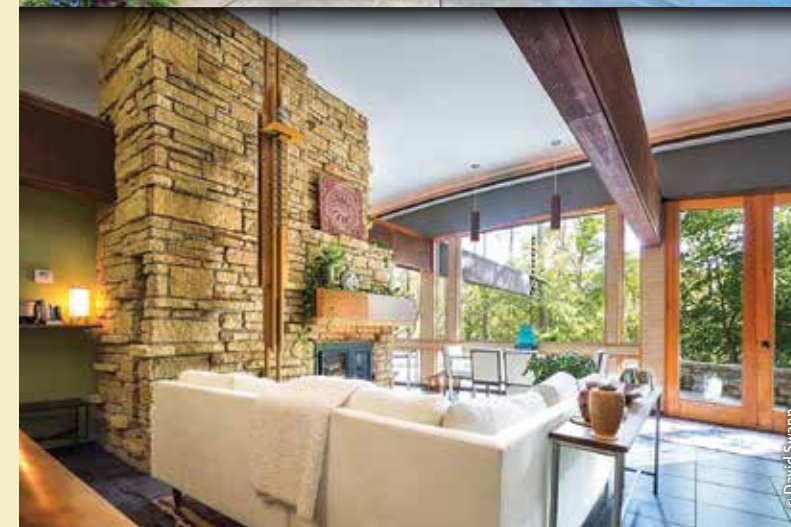
© George Hall



© David Swann



© George Hall



© David Swann

The **Barrett-Tuxford House**, designed by Wright apprentice Arthur Dyson and located in Richland Center, is included in the 2018 *Wright and Like* tour.

Originally built as the Bank of Spring Green “Auto Bank” in 1975, the William Wesley Peters design has recently been converted into a private residence.

The 1979 Gee House and its later additions were designed by well-known Spring Green architect Jim Pfefferkorn.

The “Auto Bank” and the **Gee House** are both included in the 2018 *Wright and Like* tour.



© George Hall

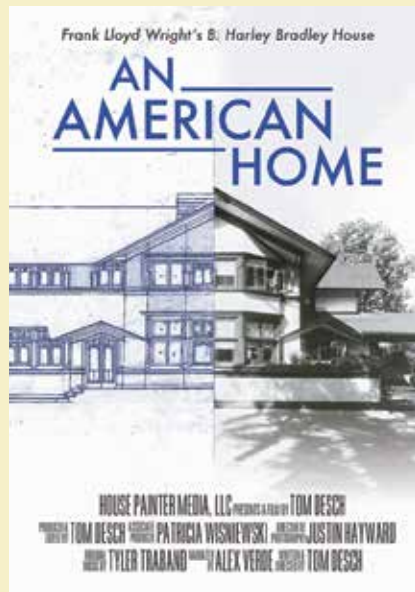




© Monona Terrace

### Bradley House documentary

On Thursday, March 22, at 6:30 p.m., *An American Home: Frank Lloyd Wright's B. Harley Bradley House* will screen at the Golden Rondelle Theater in



Racine. This documentary film tells the interweaving stories of hardship and resurgence of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, his B. Harley Bradley House, and the community of Kankakee, Ill., where the home is located. The Bradley House is considered by many scholars as a major turning point in the history of American Architecture, as it helped usher in the Prairie Style. The film is an exploration of design, history, economics, and historic preservation. It illuminates the fascinating parallels between the community and the landmark, all now experiencing dramatic renewal. The film's director, Tom Desch, will be in attendance to answer questions about

the film. Reservations are encouraged and can be made at [www.scjohnson.com/CIPreservations](http://www.scjohnson.com/CIPreservations) or (262) 260-2154. For more information on the film, please visit [www.americanhomefilm.com](http://www.americanhomefilm.com).

The annual fall Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy Conference will be held at Monona Terrace in Madison.

### Madison to host Conservancy

For the first time in fourteen years, the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy will hold its annual conference in Madison. Running Oct. 10–14, the event, titled Preserving Wright's Legacy in Wisconsin, is expected to draw more than two hundred Wright homeowners, architects, scholars, preservationists, and enthusiasts from throughout the country and as far away as Japan and Australia. The conference includes five days of architectural tours of Wisconsin buildings designed by Wright and other notable architects. Conference events, including three mornings of educational presentations covering issues pertaining to the preservation of Wright's work in the state, will be headquartered at Monona Terrace in downtown Madison. A special dinner for Wright homeowners and public site directors, gala dinner, fundraiser auction, and presentation of the Conservancy's Wright Spirit Awards will also take place at Monona Terrace. Registration for the event opens in June. The Conservancy's past four conference have all sold out, so early registration is recommended.



© Mark Hertzberg

In mid-December the A.D. German Warehouse Conservancy, Inc., closed on the purchase of German's 1912 original warehouse building, right.

### A.D. German buildings reunited

The A.D. German Warehouse Conservancy, Inc., closed on the purchase of German's original warehouse building in mid-December. They are now proud owners of what they call the "1912 Building" built by German in 1912. It is adjacent to the Wright-designed warehouse. The acquisition gives the Conservancy a building with two things lacking in the Wright warehouse: heat and water, enabling them to host events throughout the year and to have a central office location.

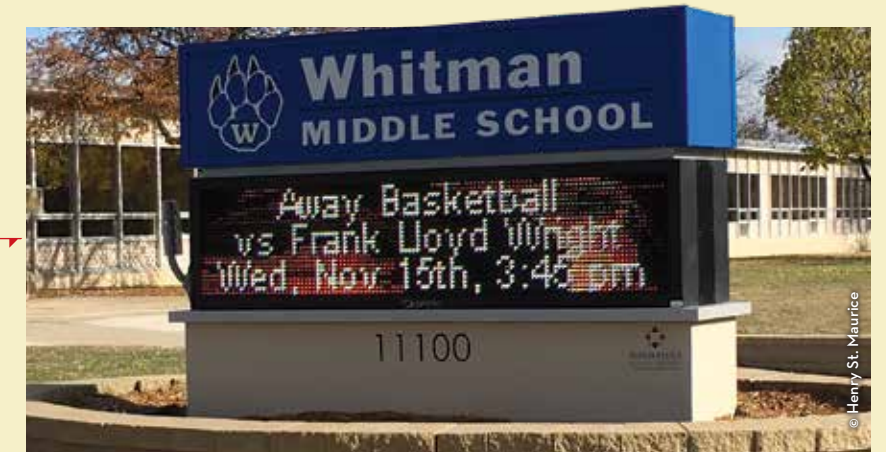
The Conservancy's fundraising effort continues, bolstered by a \$50,000 grant last fall from the Joan Woodman Orton McCollum Foundation. ■

Lon Arbegust, left, President of the AD German Warehouse Conservancy; Mayor Paul Corcoran, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), John Poole, Secretary of the Conservancy; and Michael Meadows, Conservancy board member; gathered on the roof of the Warehouse during Baldwin's tour of the structure.



© Becca Furbish / Teal Tizzy Photography

Wright in Wisconsin board member Henry St. Maurice noticed a familiar name on the sign board of Whitman Middle School in Wauwatosa, and took a picture for us. Frank Lloyd Wright Intermediate School is in West Allis. A call to the school reveals that it is thought to have opened in the late 1960s. It is unknown how it came to be named for Wright.



© Henry St. Maurice



# A New Roof for the Meeting House

The congregation chooses restoration



© Mark Hertzberg

**A few years back I had an epiphany** as I walked into another church, “We have it good at FUS.” It wasn’t that this church wasn’t nice—it was. It was quite new and had all the amenities one would want, along with some that I had never expected from a church. For its largeness and newness, this church lacked something that I had taken for granted: a spiritual quality communicated by the structure that is quickly recognized and absorbed by a newcomer.

This experience is hard to describe, but I’m guessing that for many of you reading these words it is recognizable. To those of you for whom it isn’t, next time you attend a service, as you enter FUS take in the surroundings, but also reflect on the emotional response it elicits. It is fascinating. It is also purposeful.

Many members were first attracted to FUS because of our incredible campus. Some were drawn to our buildings out of wonder and ended up staying because of the programs and community they found inside. Others, like myself, were invited by a friend, and while we appreciated the structures we also took them for granted. I did not realize the important role the buildings themselves play in both our spiritual experience and the opportunities they create for engagement and interaction.

As this newsletter article is meant to communicate the FUS Board’s recommendation on roof replacement to the congregation, it might seem like I had personally reached a foregone conclusion on what needs to be done. However, the opposite was the case. The Society has many competing claims on our resources—assisting those in need, improving congregational

discourse and interaction, and providing opportunities for our members to experience the diversity within the greater Madison community. These are just a few that come immediately to mind. These are important elements of FUS’s “vision” and they rise above the physical structures that shelter and inspire us.

It is within this broader context that your trustees have listened to and debated options for re-roofing the Landmark Auditorium and Loggia. The needed structural repairs are significant, but short of abandoning the building, we need to undertake them. That leaves a decision on the exterior covering for the roof. Most of us have heard the various scenarios, from the least expensive route of asphalt shingles to staying with the original design of copper. This is not an easy decision, as replicating our current roof could cost nearly \$600,000 more than the low-cost asphalt shingle option (which, if selected, would likely cost us our National Landmark status with the National Park Service).

During our August Board of Trustees meeting, we discussed what we have learned during the past six months about our roof problems and the various options we have to fix them. We also discussed the feedback members shared at the recent Roof Forum. We took our duty of representing the congregation quite seriously. The discussion was very lively, with all views being entertained and represented. This is a seemingly difficult decision, but when we stepped back and took everything into account, the decision seemed quite clear.

While many of us on the Board did not start here, we have come around to the importance of preserving our historic building. Therefore, the FUS Board of Trustees is recommending that we move forward with fixing our structural issues and replacing the exterior roof with copper. We look forward to discussing this with you at our upcoming parish meeting on Sept. 17 where we will vote as a congregation to approve or disapprove the Board’s recommendation. ■

Madison’s First Unitarian Society is embarking on extensive repairs and renovation of the roof of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Meeting House. This essay by Board of Trustees president Joe Kremer was printed in the Society’s newsletter prior to the congregational vote on the project.

— Dave Weber,  
Wright in Wisconsin Board

# Taliesin’s Past and Future Honored

Renewal Awards celebrate Taliesin Preservation Founders and Shining Brows

**Individuals who profoundly made a difference** in the creation of Taliesin Preservation were honored with Renewal Awards at the first Taliesin Preservation Renewal Gala on Friday, October 27. Founders Award honorees included five inducted into a new Taliesin Preservation Emeritus Board of Trustees: Effi Casey (a Taliesin Legacy Fellow, artist, and musician), Richard Pauls (former president and chairman, First Interstate Corp. of Wisconsin), Frederick P. Stratton, Jr. (former CEO, Briggs & Stratton Corp.), Sue Ann Thompson (former First Lady and founder/president, Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation) and The Honorable Tommy Thompson (governor of Wisconsin, 1987–2001). Also honored with the Shining Brow Award was the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, with Secretary Stephanie Klett accepting on behalf of the department for their efforts initiating the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail.

Casey is a Taliesin Legacy Fellowship member, a violinist and artist who came from Germany to join the Fellowship community in 1966. She was married to the late Tom Casey, an apprentice to Wright from 1950 to 1959. Effi filled the need for a choral director at Taliesin and led a chamber music ensemble. She has enjoyed opening the Taliesin chorus to the greater community, which allowed her to undertake more challenging programs such as “Carmina Burana” and the Brahms Requiem in recent years.

The gala, held at the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center in Spring Green, honored the theme of renewal and the bright future rooted in Taliesin’s history and Wisconsin heritage. More than one hundred guests enjoyed a magnificent dinner prepared by celebrated chef Odessa Piper with chef Evan Dannells featuring Taliesin-grown organic produce, celebrating Wright’s enduring legacy of harmonizing architecture, art, culture, and the land—which is the essence of the ongoing vision of Taliesin Preservation. Kyle Cherek, host of the Emmy Award-winning “Wisconsin Foodie” series, served as emcee.

The Renewal Awards are given by Taliesin Preservation to recognize outstanding individuals or organizations

in categories related to its mission to preserve the cultural, built, and natural environments that comprise the Taliesin property, and to conduct public educational and cultural programming that provides a greater understanding of Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture and ideas. The Founders Award honors those whose profound efforts enabled the creation of Taliesin Preservation and whose dedication has sustained its long-term vitality and spirit of renewal. The Shining Brow Award honors those whose work exemplifies the Welsh triad that Frank Lloyd Wright adopted as the definition of a genius: one who has an eye to see nature, a heart to feel nature, and the courage to follow nature. ■

Taliesin Legacy Fellow and Founders Award honoree Effi Casey at the Taliesin Preservation Renewal Gala.



© Blue Door Consulting



# What Mr. Wright Means To Me

Thoughts about Frank Lloyd Wright from Cooper Chibomba



© Catherine Reiland / UW-Madison

Henry St. Maurice, center, points out features of the Arnold House to the visiting fellows from the Mandela program.

Cooper Chibomba, a planner in Zambia, writes our latest installment of “What Mr. Wright Means to Me,” an occasional feature highlighting how Wright has moved nontraditional Wright aficionados. Chibomba, who was founder of Youth First Development in Zambia and is President of the Zambia Institute of Planners and of the Zambia United States Exchanges Alumni Association, visited Frank Lloyd Wright’s Arnold House (1954-1959) in Columbus in 2016. The house is owned by Wright in Wisconsin board members Mary Arnold and Henry St. Maurice. Arnold grew up in the house.

Chibomba was one of 25 young African leaders (ages 25-35) who participated in the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a program of the State Department’s Young African Leadership Initiative and hosted by the African Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Fellows, representing 19 countries, engaged in a six-week public management institute at UW-Madison, where they explored how American organizations approach public management challenges and the solutions in a variety of domains, including city government, health, environment, and legal systems.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, begun in 2014, is the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). The Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) brings 1,000 leaders from sub-Saharan Africa to US universities for academic discussion, leadership training, and community engagement.



Cooper Chibomba

## The Arnold House ... Nature Meets Place

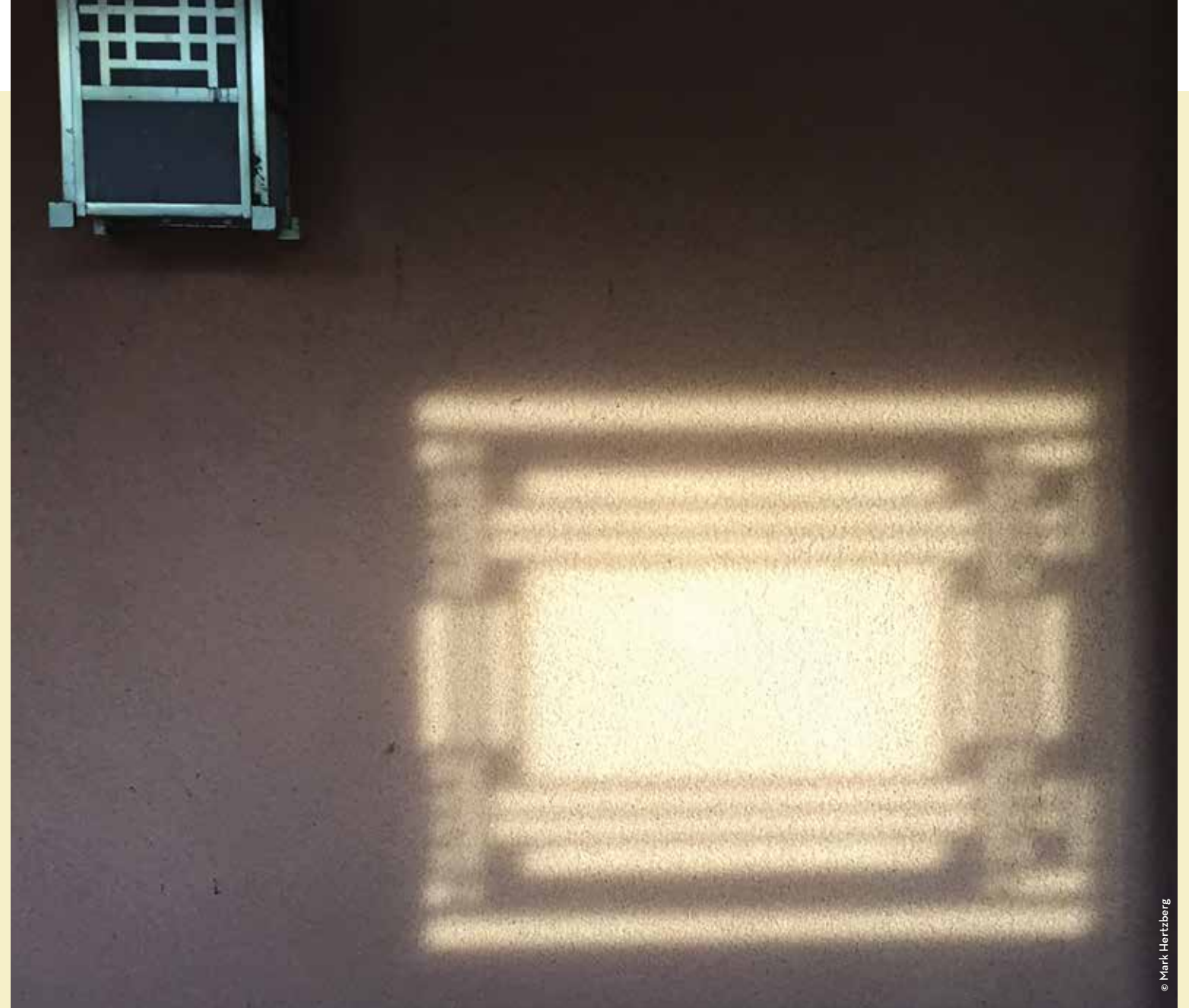
After spending so many years reading about the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and how he influenced American architecture, my dream came true when I was invited to the Arnold House. What really amazed me about the house is the perfect union between the building and the surrounding environment and how

the two just seemed to form one unit. The stone/limestone cladding makes the house look as though it’s sprouting from the ground. While I could boast of my African stone houses and caves, the long eaves and redwood together with the limestone finish gives the Arnold House a unique geometric look.

My tour of the house and more particularly the extended wing was the most exciting part of the visit. The triangular/diamond shape that creates the wall reinforcement is magical. Throughout the house, the redwood ceilings and walls seem to have this diamond pattern that created a certain warmth and adoration of the spaces. I remember sitting on the sofa and looking at how creatively the redwood was used to create this amazing low roof. The high-placed windows created this beautiful natural filtered day lighting and cooling system that was complemented by the beautiful garden and trees surrounding the house. While some trees had just recently fallen due to the storm, you could still feel the sense of responsibility that the designer had in making this house truly blend with its natural surroundings. I loved the long cantilevered garage and how this just gives the house an open space.

As a young enthusiast of green architecture and a designer myself, the Arnold House opened my eyes to the endless possibilities of the responsibilities that are placed on designers to respect the environment in our work and by all means to embrace buildings that create strong relationships between nature and the buildings. My visit to the US will ever be in my memory because of the wonderful people I met but most of all, the hospitality of the American people and my visit to the Arnold House. The Arnold House was the first home in the US that opened doors to me, an African that had travelled over 16,000 miles to the US to learn about the US and its people. In the Arnold House, I felt at home. ■

Our first contribution to this feature was from Marshall Jones, who is serving two consecutive life sentences in the Wisconsin prison system and became close friends and corresponded with the late Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer. Who do you know who you would likely not run into on a *Wright and Like* tour who could contribute our next column?  
—Mark Hertzberg, Newsletter Editor and Secretary, Wright in Wisconsin.



© Mark Hertzberg

I posted this photograph and remembrance of Gene Szymczak to my [www.wrightinracine.com](http://www.wrightinracine.com) website on December 3, the first anniversary of his sudden death.  
— Mark Hertzberg



© Mark Hertzberg

I pass Frank Lloyd Wright’s Thomas P. Hardy House in Racine almost every day on my daily bike ride. Today was a poignant day, the first anniversary of the passing of Gene Szymczak, a dear friend who was the seventh steward of the house and the man who lovingly rehabilitated it after buying it in September 2012. I wondered how to honor Gene today. As luck would have it, the light was right, and I took a photo with my phone as the sun cast a shadow from one of the entry hall windows on the wall next to the north door.

I surmised from the cars parked in front that his family was gathered in the house. We each got to honor Gene at the house in our own way.

You have probably heard the story, but if not, the house was distressed when I took Gene through it as a prospective buyer. He said to me, “I don’t have children, but this is something I could do for Racine.” You did, indeed, Gene, and we are indebted to you. Gene was honored with a Wright Spirit Award in 2015 from the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and was honored posthumously last June with the Kristin Visser Award for Historical Preservation.

Racine and the Wright community miss you, my friend. ■



IN  
MEMORIAM

# Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer

December 31, 2017

**Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer**, the legendary Wright scholar, died December 31 in Scottsdale. He was 88. He visited Wisconsin in 2011:



Pfeiffer paused for a photo after delivering remarks at the members' opening of a Wright exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum in February.



Pfeiffer took pictures with his cell phone on his very first visit to Wingspread in April. The occasion was a meeting of Wright sites at the Johnson Foundation.



He sat near a portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright while waiting to deliver his remarks.



Pfeiffer signed books for guests, including Mike Lilek and Denise Hice of (then) Frank Lloyd Wright in Wisconsin.

# Margo Melli

January 6, 2018

by STEWART MACAULAY, former board member, Wright in Wisconsin



**Marygold "Margo" Melli** died on January 6, 2018, at the age of 91. She was a member of the Board of Trustees of Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin from 2004 to 2014. For much of her tenure, she served as co-chair of the Education Committee. In that role, she helped create and publish the booklet *Frank Lloyd Wright and Madison*, and coordinated the popular Wright Lecture Series at Monona Terrace. In addition, she and her late husband, attorney Joseph Melli, regularly served as docents at the annual *Wright and Like* events. In 2014 she played an instrumental role in securing funding for the purchase of a rare collection of prints featuring Wright's American System-Built Homes that was donated by Wright in Wisconsin to the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The Mellis were great patrons of the arts. Their collection of prints and other artworks in their home was remarkable, and they enjoyed dance and the theater greatly. Their home on the south shore of Lake Monona has a wonderful view of Monona Terrace as well as the lake and the surroundings.

Margo was a celebrated Voss-Bascom Professor of Law Emerita who made major contributions to the content and study of family law and juvenile justice. When she went to the University of Wisconsin Law School, there were only a very few women lawyers and almost no women law professors in the United States. She once remarked that when she entered the law school classroom for the first time, she thought for a minute that she had blundered into the men's gym. She was the first woman to teach at the UW Law School when she was hired in 1959. She became an important role model and mentor to the ever-increasing number of women who went to law school, became successful lawyers, and entered the academic profession. There is a study of the pioneering women law professors awaiting publication. Margo is one of those featured in it.

Margo was passionate in her roles as educator, lawyer, feminist, supporter of the arts, wife, mother, and friend. ■





## WRIGHT THOUGHTS

by KEN DAHLIN, AIA

# The Future of Architecture: Some Questions to Ask Ourselves

As the beginning of a new year gets us thinking about what lies ahead, I thought it interesting to go back and examine Wright's ideas about the "Future of Architecture," in order to see if it is relevant today, and gain perspective on the future. One hundred ten years ago, in 1908, Wright said in *In the Cause of Architecture*, "As for the future—the work shall grow more truly simple; more expressive with fewer lines, fewer forms; more articulate with less labor; more plastic; more fluent, although more coherent; more organic ... It shall become in its atmosphere as pure and elevating in its humble way as the trees and flowers are in their perfectly appointed way, for only so can architecture be worthy its high rank as a fine art ..." This was written before his Wasmuth publication in 1911 and the ensuing International Style of architecture beginning in the 1920s. Indeed, it appears his prophecy of the future was quickly fulfilled regarding a greater simplicity and plasticity in architecture.

Much later, in 1953, he wrote the book *The Future of Architecture*. While the first essay was written before modern architecture took hold, this later book was written in retrospect of the rise of modernism both in Europe and in the United States. The beginning of the book includes an interview with Hugh Downs, who asks Wright if there is any difference between his use of the word "organic" and Downs' use of the word "Modernist" architecture. Wright replies that they are "very different," and gives some reasons for this. While it has been 65 years since that interview, I wonder if we need to ask the question again, "Do we know when a design becomes organic?" This is an important question, because if there is no important difference between the two then we can continue on the path of modernism and keep Wright as a footnote, an idiosyncratic genius perhaps, in the progression of modern architecture. Another possible answer to that question is that, yes, there is a difference, but Wright's "organic" is rejected as a viable or desirable option. In other words, it is not relevant to our day and age and only has historic significance. Either way, we should not sentimentalize Wright's architecture, but evaluate it based on its principles and relevancy today and for the future.

*The Future of Architecture* is a sustained argument in fact for this very difference, as much of the book makes an unfavorable critique of the modernism popular at the time. For example, later in the book he states "human houses should not be like boxes, blazing in the sun, nor should we outrage the machine by trying to make dwelling places too complementary to machinery. Any building for humane purposes should be an elemental, sympathetic feature of the ground, complementary to its nature-environment, belonging by kinship to the terrain." He also states, "The machine should build the building ... But it is not necessary for that reason to build as though the building, too, were a machine—because, except in a very low sense, indeed, it is not a machine, nor at all like one. Nor in that sense of being a machine, could it be architecture at all!" Lest one think that Wright was opposed to the machine, he was the one who, in 1901, wrote "The Art and Craft of the Machine," which was something of a shock to the arts and crafts society in which it was presented.

But Wright gives an important key to this difference in the above quote which needs to be understood in our time, because ironically, it is today's culture which is less able to understand this than the culture of Wright's day. When he refers to the "low sense" of the machine, he acknowledges that at a very elementary level, a building is a mechanical assemblage of parts which serve a function of shelter, etc. Another word for this is reductionism, and by it we could say (as Wright does elsewhere in the book) that a chair is a machine to sit on, a tree is a machine to bear fruit, and a home is a machine to live in, and so forth. So, if Wright is not satisfied with this "low" sense, then what is the higher sense he is after? It was a holistic sense, or a teleological conception of architecture. Teleology is the idea that an object's meaning is derived not by its individual parts in isolation but by the end purpose or goal of its being. When Wright speaks of the centrality of the "Idea," this larger sense of the whole and purpose is in mind, its essence. Now, the International Style architects promoted the idea that their forms were not artistically imposed by an architect-artist but were derived from their functions (form follows function);

however, history has shown us that the International Style was as much an aesthetically imposed style as any other style. The difference was that as a style it prioritized a machine-like, or reductionist "sense" of looking at architecture. One could say it was the style of non-style.

Today, modernism is back in vogue, although the expressions of it have multiplied in many various directions. There is a strain of it which, like the International Style, emphasizes box-like, minimal forms, which Wright referred to "as though cut from cardboard ... ruled together in box-like forms ... superficial." While there are some subtle differences with today's box-style modernism (contrast of materials instead of all-white boxes for example), I believe Wright's critique of them today would be similar.



Toward the end of *The Future of Architecture* is a chapter written to "the young man in architecture," where he writes, "I am here to assure you that the circumference of architecture is changing with astonishing rapidity but that its center remains unchanged. The center of architecture remains unchanged because—though all unconfessed or ill-concealed—beauty is no less the true purpose of rational modern architectural endeavor than ever, just as beauty remains the essential characteristic of architecture itself." Indeed, since Wright's death, the circumference of architecture has expanded

tremendously with technology, computerized and parametric design, non-rectangular geometries, digital fabrication, 3D printing, and the like. Wright also said that "by means of a greater science, a more integral order may now be executed than any existing." Here, as one example, I would consider fractal geometry. Fractal geometry is an organic function because it is the math of the integrated whole, where successive iterations of scale have within them the imprint of their geometry at a higher and lower scale. The Mandelbrot set is one example of this.



But the challenge of this is how to take pure mathematical form and transform it into habitations for people in the real world. This is a boundary where math cannot cross and where the 'function' of habitation, use, site, and the human spirit must be integrated into the greater whole.

Perhaps the key thought here is that today we have lost the center of building, lost in the ever-expanding circumference of novelty and technology. As much as Wright himself pursued that expanding circumference of technological advance, he never lost the eternal center point of design, and this is why his buildings also have a timelessness to them. What are some of these "center" principles? A sense of space, for example, and with it a real sense of place and shelter, and the connection with the land which it is built upon. Also, a sense of repose which comes from the harmony of a unified and integrated whole. Computer parametric design may create elaborate skins of buildings with geometries too complex to do by hand anymore, but they are no substitute for the sense of space and shelter of a building, and its place within the context of its environment, whether natural or urban. Without this sense of repose, they become shallow, hollow, noisy gongs which become another clever but temporary meme on the landscape instead of serving the higher purpose of inspiring and uplifting the human soul. As we look to the future, I think we still have a lot to learn from Wright. ■



**WISCONSIN WRIGHT SITES** Taliesin® \ Hillside Studio and Theatre \ Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center  
 A.D. German Warehouse \ Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church \ American System-Built Homes \ Bernard Schwartz House  
 Monona Terrace® Community and Convention Center \ Seth Peterson Cottage \ SC Johnson Administration Building  
 Unitarian Meeting House \ Wingspread (H.F. Johnson House) \ Wyoming Valley School



## TOURS & EVENTS

### AT WISCONSIN WRIGHT SITES

FEB-APR 2018



Janet Parks was a recipient of the prestigious Wright Spirit Award at the annual conference of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City in October. She will speak at Monona Terrace on April 17 as part of the Wright Lecture Series, sponsored by Wright in Wisconsin (see listing, this page).

## Wright Calendar

### Thursday, February 15 Monona Terrace

Madison

John Vetter, AIA, Vetter Denk Architects.  
 7 p.m., lecture hall, reservations required.  
[www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/](http://www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/)

### Saturday, March 3 Madison Children's Museum

Madison \ \$10 members of Wright in Wisconsin and Madison Children's Museum, \$15 nonmembers

Grownups get a chance to explore Madison Children's Museum and to celebrate the life and legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright through storytelling and artful activity. Tour the museum's newest exhibit and journey through Wright's Wisconsin youth in *From Coops to Cathedrals: Nature, Childhood, and the Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. Craft handmade letterpress notecards, and enjoy colorful stories of the master as told by some of the museum's exhibit advisors and local FLLW experts in a pub talk setting inspired by The Moth Radio Hour. Light refreshments provided; cash bar (wine and beer).

6-9 p.m., ages 18 & up, reservations required.

#### Schedule:

6-7:30 p.m.

Hands-on letterpress: print your own notecards

6:30-7 p.m.

Guided exhibit tour of *Coops to Cathedrals*

7:30-8:30 p.m.

Wright Tales: Storytelling

Tickets: [www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org)

### Thursday, March 22 SC Johnson

Racine

Film *An American Home: Frank Lloyd Wright's B. Harley Bradley House*, plus post screening Q&A with director Tom Desch.

6:30 p.m., Golden Rondelle Theater, reservations required. [www.reservations.scjohnson.com](http://www.reservations.scjohnson.com)

### Thursday, March 29 Monona Terrace

Madison

Talk by Anne Schopf, FAIA, design partner at Mahlum.

7 p.m., lecture hall, reservations required.

[www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/](http://www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/)

### Tuesday, April 17 Monona Terrace

Madison

Wright Lecture Series

Janet S. Parks, architectural historian and curator talks about the Wright archives and how it compares to other architectural archives.

7 p.m., lecture hall, reservations required.

[www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/](http://www.mononaterrace.com/eventbrite/)

## Ongoing tours and events

### Burnham Block American System-Built Homes, Models B1 and Two Family Flat "C"

Milwaukee \ \$15

Tours with trained docents 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, and 2:30 p.m. January 13 and 17; February 10 and 24; March 10 and 24; April 14 and 28; May 11, 12, 25, 26; June 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30; July 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28; August 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 31.

Not handicapped accessible, gift shop.

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

### AD German Warehouse

Richland Center \ \$10

Open every Sunday and 1st Saturday of every month 10 a.m.-2 p.m. May-October, other times by appt. (608) 604-5034 or email [larbegust@gmail.com](mailto:larbegust@gmail.com)

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

### Bernard Schwartz House

Two Rivers \ \$15

For tour info email

[Michael@theschwartzhouse.com](mailto:Michael@theschwartzhouse.com)

[www.theschwartzhouse.com](http://www.theschwartzhouse.com)

### Monona Terrace

Madison \ \$5 per adult, \$3 per student

Guided tours May 1-October 31, 1 p.m. daily;

November 1-April 30, 1 p.m. Friday-Monday,

closed major holidays, [www.mononaterrace.com](http://www.mononaterrace.com)

### Seth Peterson Cottage

Lake Delton \ \$5

Open house and tours 2nd Sunday of each month,

1-3:30 p.m., [www.sethpeterson.org](http://www.sethpeterson.org)

### SC Johnson

Racine

March-December various tours, plus

exhibition. Reservations at (262) 260-2154 or

[www.scjohnson.com/visit](http://www.scjohnson.com/visit)

### Taliesin

Spring Green \ Various prices

A variety of tours, times, and prices May 1-

October 31, reservations strongly recommended.

(877) 588-5900, [www.taliesinpreservation.org](http://www.taliesinpreservation.org)

### Unitarian Meeting House

Madison \ \$10

Tours Sunday mornings (year-round, free),

weekdays 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. May-

September, groups by appointment. (608) 233-9774,

[fusmadison.org/tours](http://fusmadison.org/tours)

### Wingspread – The Johnson Foundation

Racine

Tours Wednesday-Friday by appointment only.

Register at [www.scjohnson.com/visit](http://www.scjohnson.com/visit), call

(262) 681-3353, or email [tour@johnsonfdn.org](mailto:tour@johnsonfdn.org)

### Wyoming Valley School

Spring Green \ donation appreciated

Tours Saturdays and Sundays,

10 a.m.-2 p.m. (608) 588-2544 or email

[wyoingvalleyschool@gmail.com](mailto:wyoingvalleyschool@gmail.com)

Events are free unless otherwise noted.  
 Visit [www.wrightinwisconsin.org](http://www.wrightinwisconsin.org)  
 for a complete listing of tour schedules  
 and contact information.

## Finding "Frank"

### Bringing Frank Lloyd Wright alive for Madison's children

It took some imagination to decide that the high-concept work of a famous architect belonged in a children's museum. Fortunately, imagination is in good supply at Madison Children's Museum.

*From Coops to Cathedrals: Nature, Childhood, and the Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* opened on the second floor of the museum in June. Like all MCM exhibits, it was created by staff and community members with expertise in many different aspects of art, engineering, building, education, and child development. The content of everything we do is inspired by our surroundings, from our lakes, to cows, to red barns, to the people who live here—and now Frank Lloyd Wright and his architecture.

The exhibit brought together an array of new community partners, Wright experts and enthusiasts, local historians, businesses and museum supporters. *From Coops to Cathedrals* invites children to tinker, build, and playfully explore the world of the famous architect who grew up only blocks from the museum.

The exhibit, the first of its kind, opened in conjunction with a worldwide celebration of the 150th anniversary of Wright's birth, and was developed in close collaboration with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and Taliesin Preservation, Inc., and lead scholar Virginia Terry Boyd. Their expertise, guidance, and the access they provided to their immense treasure trove of objects, photographs, and materials about his life were invaluable.

Relying on Frank Lloyd Wright's autobiography, we re-imagined Mr. Wright's childhood and later life to inspire kids to experiment, tinker play, and learn by doing, which is exactly what Mr. Wright did throughout his life. Our goal was not only to make his work and life come alive for families, but more important, to encourage and inspire children to be creators, inventors, engineers, architects and dreamers themselves.

On our quest to discover "Frank," we are particularly indebted to Dan and Natalie Erdman. Both Dan and Natalie have deep roots in Madison; he is an architect, she is the director of the Madison Department of Planning. Dan's father, Marshall Erdman, often said he owed all his success in business to Wright, who gave him his start in design and construction work in the 1950s. "Wright's presence was always around my family while growing up, and Natalie and I feel it is important to maintain that connection," said Dan. Seeing children playing in the exhibit brought to life Frank Lloyd Wright as a child, as though "all the children there were his playmates." In this

FINDING FRANK CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



## PRESIDENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

managing the site. I want to thank board members Heather Sabin and Mark Hertzberg, as well as our office manager, Sherri Shokler, for their help bringing this site to fruition. I would encourage you to periodically visit the site. And Sherri will be sending out occasional alerts via Constant Contact when notable additions occur. We're hoping that our new website will enable us to better manage information and ticket sales for events at all of the Wright sites represented on our board, and ticket sales for Wright in Wisconsin events such as our *Wright and Like* tour in June, and the Mason City, Iowa, tour in late October (for which more information will be provided in our May newsletter).

Our events are evidence of the increasing collaboration occurring between Wright in Wisconsin and other Wright-related institutions. Later this year our Wright Lecture Series (a joint collaboration between Wright in Wisconsin and the AIA Southwest Wisconsin Chapter) will feature, among others, Janet Parks (recently retired archivist from the Columbia University Avery Library, who managed the transition of the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives from Taliesin West to the Avery Library). Those of you who joined our July, 2017, Manhattan tour would have encountered Janet Parks, as she appeared in one of the videos at MoMA's Wright 150th exhibit. Thanks to Henry St. Maurice for recruiting her.

This is my last column, as it is time for me to step down as president. While it has been an honor to serve you, the past few years seem like ten years telescoped into two, and now that a structure is in place, it is time to hand over the office to Michael Ditmer, our current vice-president and co-owner of the Frank Lloyd Wright Schwartz House/Still Bend in Two Rivers. I really look forward to getting back to meeting and working with home owners, researching apprentice houses, assisting with getting architects' files into appropriate archives, and spending time with friends and in my woodworking shop. I would like to thank our past and current board members, along with Sherri Shokler, for their patience, willing collaboration, and sage advice on so many facets of our organization. Hope to see you at *Wright and Like* in Spring Green and Richland Center, or at one of our other events! ■

## FINDING FRANK

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

way, another generation of children can grow up with Wright's presence, just as Dan did.

This exhibit was significant for others with a connection to Wright. J.H. Findorff & Son Inc. has been a major supporter of the museum, and they are also connected to the legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright—as the builders of the Wright-designed Monona Terrace. These connections made support for this exhibit a natural fit. They told us, "Our future is determined by the support and nurturing that we bring to the children in our communities. Supporting Madison Children's Museum is an opportunity to impact young minds that are attracted to creativity and innovation."

Others found themselves swept up in the excitement building around the new exhibit. Eliot Butler, president of the Great Dane Pub & Brewing Company and former MCM board chair, has lived in the Wright-designed John C. Pew house in Shorewood Hills for nine years, and became an enthusiastic supporter. He says that seeing children playing in the exhibit made him imagine Wright and his brother playing, experimenting, and learning. "I hope that my giving enables children to learn about themselves, and gives them ideas about navigating the world as they grow. It is important to the future of Madison to support our children."

MCM board member Darcy Kind says she felt "blown away" by the beauty, profound message, and sheer joy of the exhibit and the subtle ways in which it expresses so many profound ideas and ideals. In addition to their donation to the exhibit, her husband, Marc Vitale, also contributed in a unique way. His company, Future Foam, provided the raw material that we transformed into the strikingly realistic-looking "limestone" blocks in the exhibit. Marc's employees were thrilled to see what their product had become, and many of them take advantage of Future Foam's corporate membership to bring their families to play in the exhibit and the rest of the museum.

From the toddler painstakingly shoving blocks through the wooden shape-sorter, to the pre-teen creating an intricate mosaic with the Froebel blocks, *From Coops to Cathedrals* entices every visitor to stop and look at the world a little differently: to see the beauty in shape and line, to ask why a dog house or a chicken coop can't be a work of art, and to play in the company of a boy named Frank. ■

# New Private Entertaining Program at Taliesin

Host an unforgettable event at Wright's Wisconsin estate

Taliesin Preservation announces the unveiling of a new space-rental program enabling the general public to host private events across Frank Lloyd Wright's 800-acre Taliesin estate. These incomparable event spaces offer world-class architecture and stunning Driftless Area landscape views for your next special gathering.

## Taliesin Events

Possibilities include a having a reception in Wright's living room or drafting studio, hosting a private performance in the Hillside Theater or Assembly Hall, enjoying a cocktail in the newly restored Tan-y-Deri, or dining overlooking the Wisconsin River in the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center. As Taliesin Preservation continues the legacy of elegant indoor and outdoor hospitality established by the Wrights and the Taliesin Fellowship, they will create contemporary events that are exquisitely executed while respecting the historical significance and architectural integrity of the estate.

According to the announcement from Taliesin Preservation, guests have the option to take advantage of unique additions such as a pianist to perform on one of Wright's many pianos, a fire in the fireplace, an expert speaker in your area of interest, or a customized private tour by one of our seasoned guides—all coordinated by Taliesin Preservation staff.

## Specialized Culinary Options

Taliesin Preservation has partnered with Enos Farms as their preferred caterer to provide a thoughtful dining experience. Enos Farms is owned and operated by Erin and Jeremy Lynch, and have named their business after



Jeremy's great-great-grandfather, an uncle of Wright's. Enos Farms offers impeccably sourced, local organic fare, some of which is grown at Taliesin by the farmers at Fazenda Boa Terra.

## Taliesin and Taliesin Preservation

Taliesin is the home, studio, school, and country estate of Frank Lloyd Wright, located near Spring Green, Wisconsin. Taliesin is the name of Wright's 1911 home as well as the 800-acre estate that includes buildings from nearly every decade of Wright's career, from the 1890s to the 1950s.

Taliesin Preservation is a Wisconsin 501(c)(3) founded in 1990. Its dual mission is to preserve Taliesin's cultural, built, and natural environments, and to conduct public educational and cultural programming that provides a greater understanding of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture and ideas.

## Reservations

Prices for spaces across the Taliesin estate range from \$500 to \$12,000 based on the space and capacity of the event. Limitations and restrictions apply. For more information or to make a reservation, visit [taliesinpreservation.org/visit/privateevents](http://taliesinpreservation.org/visit/privateevents) or inquire with Aron Meudt-Thering, Events Manager, at [athering@taliesinpreservation.org](mailto:athering@taliesinpreservation.org) or (608) 588-7900, Ext. 221. ■





FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT WISCONSIN  
HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM

P.O. Box 6339  
Madison, WI 53716-0339

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

Madison, WI  
Permit No. 47

VINTAGE  
POSTCARD

courtesy of PATRICK MAHONEY



View of Hillside Home School near Spring Green, ca. 1907. The Romeo and Juliet windmill is visible at the top of the hill. Wright's 1902 building for the school is at the left in the image. The 1887 Shingle style school designed by Wright while employed by Joseph Lyman Silsbee is visible at center (demolished by Wright in 1950). The octagonal barn seen at the right side of the image was designed by Hermann Von Holst.

**Corrigendum:** The Spring Green Area Chamber of Commerce no longer has its offices in the satellite drive-through bank, shown as the featured post card on the back cover of the September, 2017, issue of the newsletter. The structure is now a private residence, and will be included in the 2018 *Wright and Like* tour (see page 3).