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Right Man for Wright Design

James Dennis, steward of the Jacobs I House for over 30 years

by DOUG MOE ■ This article was published February 11 in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. It is reprinted with permission.

This is a story about an architect, a newspaperman and an art history professor, and it starts with a speech.

One night in the 1970s, the professor—James Dennis—went to the Unitarian Meeting House in Madison to hear the newspaperman—Herb Jacobs—speak about what it was like to engage with genius—the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

“He was superb,” Dennis said of Jacobs, who spoke that night about having approached Wright in the 1930s with the challenge of designing a home that could be built for \$5,000. Wright did the design, and Herb and Katherine Jacobs built it at 441 Toepfer Avenue in Madison. They lived in the house for five years before moving to the country in 1942.

Jacobs, a former *Capital Times* reporter, spoke of that and more in his talk at the Unitarian Meeting House. Afterward, Dennis had a minute with Jacobs to say how much he enjoyed the presentation. Dennis

had long been intrigued by the architect. Wright’s fame was such that anyone even briefly in his orbit never forgot it.

Dennis, growing up in Ohio, had an aunt who told of having confronted Wright after a public appearance in which the architect dismissed historical houses. The aunt had a neo-colonial farmhouse.

Dennis saw Wright’s contrariness first hand one night in the 1950s at the Memorial Union. Dennis had just arrived on campus as a graduate student. Wright’s lecture that night dealt with the design of UW—Madison, which the architect assured the crowd was all wrong, backward. The buildings faced away from the lake! They should be razed, Wright said, though he would spare the Red Gym.

At some point after Jacobs’ Unitarian Meeting House program on Wright, Dennis read Jacobs’ book, *Building*

■ JACOBS HOUSE CONTINUES ON PAGE 5

The Jacobs I House, widely considered Wright’s first Usonian home, has been nominated for inclusion among UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites. It is one of the houses featured on this year’s *Wright and Like* tour.



© John Paul Croke

The Dr. Marvin F. and Idabelle Stricker House, designed by Edgar Tafel ca. 1941, built 1949, with a 1998-2000 addition and alteration by Peter Rott, Taliesin Architects, Ltd. This home will be open during the *Wright and Like 2015* Madison tour.

CONTENTS



ARTICLES

- 01 Right Man for Wright Design
- 06 Wright and Like 2015
- 09 Wasmuth Lithographs on Display

REGULAR FEATURES

- 03 President's Message
- 04 News Briefs
- 08 Site Spotlight
- 10 Wright Thoughts
- 12 Faces of Our Organization
- 13 "At Taliesin"
- 14 Tours & Events
- 16 Vintage Postcard

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President's Message

by LOIS Y. BERG

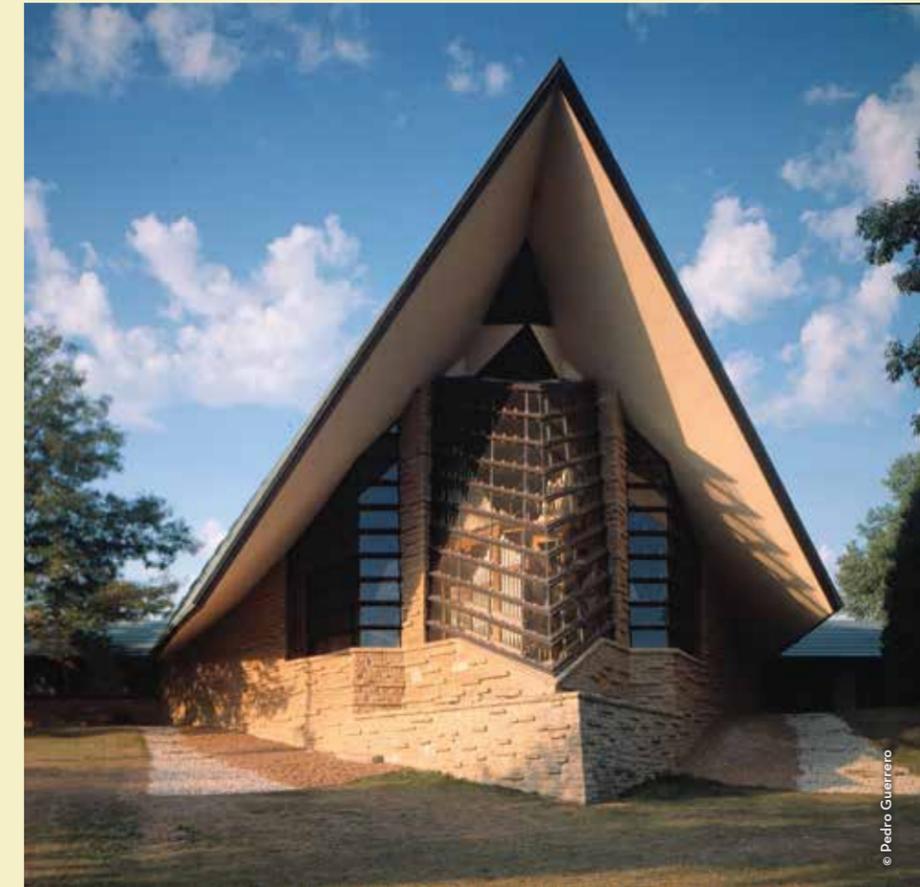
Wright and Like 2015: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Apprentices

Our annual *Wright and Like* tour travels to Madison this year. The weekend will begin on Friday night at the Wisconsin Historical Society for the premiere of a rare collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-produced presentation drawings and brochures on the American System-Built Homes. Attendees will also be able to view selected artifacts from the Historical Society's Wright archives, as well as recently constructed chairs FLLW WI commissioned to furnish our ASB Model B1 house museum in Milwaukee. After guests view the collections, Jack Holzhueter, historian and Wright scholar, will provide an overview of the scope and importance of the ASBH project while Mike Lilek, Burnham Street Curator, will provide specifics about the homes. The evening continues at the University Club for cocktails, dinner, and a silent auction of Wright- and Arts and Crafts-related items.

The Saturday tour will include a wonderful mix of private homes and public buildings that highlights Wright's Usonian houses and Taliesin Fellowship-related architectural gems in the Madison and Middleton area.

Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin Volunteers

Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin is dependent on volunteers to do the majority of work for our organization. Our accomplishments happen through the work of a volunteer board of directors. The annual *Wright and Like* tour is staffed by over one hundred volunteers to act as house captains and docents for our tour sites. Our ASB Model B1 house museum is open to the public on the second and fourth Saturday of every month, and also the third Friday from May to October. The tours are coordinated and staffed



© Pedro Guerrero

entirely by volunteers. The glue that holds all of these programs and volunteers together is our part-time office coordinator, Sherri Shokler. We appreciate all the work the volunteers both on the board and outside the board do for our organization. We would not be successful without you. Thank you for your time and talents. If you are not currently a volunteer but are interested in helping with any aspect of the organization, please contact Sherri at our Madison office at (608) 287-0339.

Thank You

I want to thank you for your continued support of Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin and hope to see you at our 2015 *Wright and Like* tour on June 5 and 6. ■

The First Unitarian Meeting House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, was constructed 1947-1951. The original National Historic Landmark building that has influenced ecclesiastical and commercial architecture around the country will be open during the *Wright and Like 2015* Madison tour. The 2008 addition will not be available for tours.

Glass, wood, and brick detail from Frank Lloyd Wright's Jacobs I House on the west side of Madison. This home will be open to 2015 *Wright and Like* tour ticket holders.

© Mark Hertzberg



Courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

In Memoriam: Frances Nemtin

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation reports that Taliesin Fellow Frances Nemtin died April 7 in Scottsdale. Nemtin, 96, had been a member of the Taliesin Fellowship since 1946. Prior to that she distinguished herself notably as director of the Milwaukee Art Institute, where she presented an exhibit featuring Frank Lloyd Wright. She worked on three large Taliesin Architects projects in Iran for three years in the early 1970s. Nemtin was instrumental in developing flower gardens and restoring prairie habitat at Taliesin in Spring Green and was the author of numerous publications detailing gardening and Fellowship life with Wright at Taliesin. Raised in India, she graduated from Bryn Mawr College. She was married to architect and Taliesin Fellow Stephen Nemtin for 54 years before his death in 2013. She is survived by her children Leslie Bisharat and Brian Lockhart. ■

Paul Kruty, retired associate professor of architecture at the University of Illinois, has donated a model of Frank Lloyd Wright's unrealized Abram Esbenschade House (1911-1912) to Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin. The model, made by his students, is displayed in the Two Family Flat "C" duplex at 2732-34 W. Burnham Street, Milwaukee. The house would have been built on Milwaukee's Lake Michigan shoreline.



© Mark Hertzberg



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Sandra Wicker tells Terry Parsons and her children Jayden, 12 (left), and Jeffrey, 9, about the American System-Built Homes Model B1 Saturday, February 28. Jeffrey was doing research for a school project about Frank Lloyd Wright. He is a fourth-grade student in Kenosha.



© Anne Stoelting

New construction continues on the block in downtown Madison that includes Frank Lloyd Wright's Lamp House—the white, cube-shaped building seen near the left edge of this photo from early April. The Capitol's Edge Apartments rising in the foreground are targeted for occupancy this fall. Earlier this year the adjacent site—including the white house and the red-roofed building at the right in the photo—was approved for a new 10-story hotel that will cast shadows on the third floor of the Lamp House, despite planning guidelines intended to preserve sunlight reaching the one-time roof garden. Demolition of those two buildings adjacent to the Lamp House is expected to begin once the developers submit sign-off plans to the city.

JACOBS HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

with *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Illustrated Memoir*. The story of the house on Toepfer—widely known as the “Jacobs House,” although there were numerous ownership changes over the years—stayed with Dennis.

One day in 1982, Dennis was chatting with a student, Brad Lynch, a young man interested in architecture.

“Have you seen the Jacobs House?” Dennis asked.

Lynch had not. They drove over to Toepfer. Dennis—who had actually seen the home only once, years before—was dismayed by its condition, at least what he could see through the overgrown trees and shrubs.

“It was a mess,” he said. The signature carport was sagging badly. There was also a sign, staked in the yard: FOR SALE.

Recalling the moment recently—seeing that the house was for sale—Dennis’ eyes got wide all over again. A prudent man would not have even considered it. Dennis never hesitated. “It was crazy,” he said. “I had to go into debt.” The restoration necessary was such that he didn’t move in until 1985. Which means that the news announced [in late January]—important news for all Wright fans, and the Jacobs House in particular—arrives on the 30th anniversary of Jim Dennis’ taking occupancy. It is an appropriate capstone to his great adventure.

The Jan. 30 announcement by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell involved the United States’ nominating 10 Wright-designed buildings in seven states for inclusion as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Jacobs House is among them, along with Taliesin in Spring Green and Fallingwater in Pennsylvania.

The World Heritage list recognizes the world’s most significant cultural and natural sites. The World Heritage committee is currently reviewing the Wright buildings’ nominations and is expected to make a decision by summer.

I first got to know Jim Dennis four years ago, when he published a terrific book, *Robert Koehler’s “The Strike”*:

The Improbable Story of an Iconic 1886 Painting of Labor Protest.

Koehler was a Milwaukee artist whose 9-foot-long painting became a symbol of late-1800s labor protests, but then spent decades in storage and obscurity before being rediscovered.

Something of the same could be said for the Jacobs House. When Dennis bought it in 1982, he engaged his student Brad Lynch—today a successful architect in Chicago—as well as a preservation architect, John Eifler, to help with the renovation. Jim’s two sons, John and David, helped too.

“We got the original drawings from Taliesin,” Dennis said.

They stayed close to the original plans with a few exceptions—introducing steel plates, for instance, and a more efficient heating system.

Marshall Erdman came by at one point and commiserated with Dennis about Wright’s aversion to steel. Erdman, who built the Unitarian Meeting House, said, “He wanted to build it with toothpicks.”

Dennis corresponded with Herb Jacobs, and Herb and Katherine—who later lived in a second Wright home, on Old Sauk Road—stopped by during the renovation. They were pleased that much of the work was restoring the original design.

These days, Dennis smiles when cars stop, and faces peer out at the house. If a car door opens, and Jim is outside, he’ll motion them closer. There’s a tour group coming from France this summer.

He has done the architect and the newspaperman proud. Wright died in 1959, Jacobs in 1987. The house lives. ■



© Julie Meyer

Professor James Dennis has been the savior and steward of the Jacobs House since 1982.

Wright and Like 2015: Madison

Don't miss Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin's event of the year

by GEORGE HALL, *Wright and Like 2015* chair

Apprentices with Frank Lloyd Wright in the Taliesin Drafting Room ca. 1935. Standing to Wright's left are Edgar Tafel and John Howe, both of whom designed homes appearing in this year's *Wright and Like* Madison tour.

The 2015 tour, *Frank Lloyd Wright and His Apprentices*, highlights Wright's Usonian houses and Taliesin Fellowship-related architectural riches in the Madison and Middleton area. The event on Saturday, June 6 features interior tours of three private homes by Wright and five private homes by some of his closest apprentices: Edgar Tafel, Herb Fritz, William Wesley Peters, John Howe, and Herb DeLevie. Most of these

homes, which date between 1936 and 1967, have rarely, if ever, been available for tour. Two of Wright's well-known Madison landmarks, The Unitarian Meeting House and Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, are also featured. The tour tells the stories of the relationships and connections between these sites, their owners, Frank Lloyd Wright, the fellowship he founded, and its successor firm, Taliesin Associated Architects.

All tour sites are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with docents providing guided interior tours. Advance tickets are \$60 for members and \$70 for nonmembers. If ordered in advance, tickets will be mailed along with a driving map so you may start the tour at any location. Tickets will also be available on Saturday, June 6 at the tour headquarters—CUNA Mutual Conference Center, 5810 Mineral Point Road, Madison—beginning at 8 a.m. Day-of tickets are \$70 for members and \$80 for nonmembers.

Special Friday Evening Event: Complementing the Saturday tour is a special event co-sponsored with the Wisconsin Historical Society at their headquarters at 5 p.m. Friday evening, June 5. The evening features the recently acquired collection of rare presentation drawings and brochures for Wright's American System-Built Homes, special Wright selections from the Society's archives, and talks by two Wright authorities, Jack Holzhueter and Mike Lilek. We will also showcase new chairs commissioned for the ASB Model B1 home in Milwaukee, including the finished ASB Model C3 chair and a full-scale prototype for the two side chairs Stafford Norris is building for the B1. Dinner at the University Club follows. The pre-World War I ASB initiative and the later Usonian houses both represent Wright's attempt to develop and employ building and design systems that strived to lower costs. Tickets for the Friday event are limited and must be reserved by June 1. The cost is \$75 for FLLW WI and WHS members; \$100 for nonmembers. ■

GEORGE HALL is a Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin board member.



TICKET INFO

■ You may view a downloadable ticket brochure describing the Friday and Saturday events and purchase tickets at www.wrightinwisconsin.org or by calling (608) 287-0339. Due to scheduling difficulties we regret that the proposed Sunday morning event will not take place. Instead, the ticket brochure suggests other Wright sites available for tour in Spring Green, Wisconsin Dells, and Two Rivers. Tickets are not refundable. Events take place rain or shine. Tour homes are not handicapped accessible. ■

(608) 287-0339 FOR INFO OR TO VOLUNTEER

Photo courtesy The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University)



© John W. Moore



AMERICAN MODEL C3 PATENTED 1936
AMERICAN SYSTEM-BUILT
HOUSES DESIGNED BY
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
THE RICHARDS COMPANY
PROPRIETORS MILWAUKEE

Perspective views of furnished interiors give a sense of Wright's intent for comfortable living spaces. The house at the corner of Burnham Street and Layton Boulevard, now owned by Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin and awaiting funds for restoration, is a Model C3 as illustrated in this print. This print and the others in the collection recently acquired by the Wisconsin Historical Society will be on display at the *Wright and Like* special Friday event.

JACOBS II TOUR OPPORTUNITY

■ As a benefit of membership in FLLW WI, you are the first to learn of this special *Wright and Like 2015* event, which is open to just 120 persons on Saturday, June 6. Rarely open to the public, the Herbert and Katherine Jacobs Second House (aka Jacobs II) in Middleton is a listed National Historic Landmark. With the purchase of a \$25 ticket (separate from the *Wright and Like* tour ticket), you can experience Wright's "Solar Hemicycle" through a tour led by the home's current owners. Open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the first-floor-only tour will be ticketed for a specific time within the 4-hour time frame. Please call the FLLW WI office at (608) 287-0339 to purchase your ticket(s). Please note that the number of tickets you may purchase corresponds with your membership level. Online or mail-order sales for this tour are not available or accepted. ■

“Still Bend” Celebrates Anniversary

The Bernard Schwartz House turns 75

In 1938 Frank Lloyd Wright was asked by *Life* magazine to design a modern “Dream House” for an American family of moderate income. In a letter accompanying the *Life* plans Wright described the house as “a kind of enclosed patio” adding, “American (I prefer to say Usonian) family life is unlike any other in the world and I think this plan recognizes it for pretty much what it is ... a little private club ... with special privacies, ultra conveniences and style all the while.”

The original family that *Life* chose decided not to build Wright’s “little private club.” Businessman Bernard Schwartz from Two Rivers drove to Taliesin after seeing the design in *Life* magazine. He found that

Wright was eager to have the scheme built. 2015 marks the 75th anniversary of the completion of Still Bend, and in commemoration numerous events are being planned to celebrate this remarkable home’s past and future.

Bernard and his wife, Fern, bought a large lot on the East Twin River, and Wright began modifying his *Life* submission, changing materials and flipping the second floor to provide for an interior balcony overlooking the large main floor living space. He referred to that as the “recreation room.”

Construction began in the fall of 1939 with the home

■ **STILL BEND** CONTINUES ON PAGE 15

Wasmuth Lithographs on Display

New exhibition at SC Johnson offers rare opportunity

Nearly fifty framed lithographs from Frank Lloyd Wright’s celebrated Wasmuth Portfolio (1910) have been displayed in SC Johnson’s “At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright” gallery in Racine since May 1. The exhibition is named “Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Portfolio.” The rare Portfolio contains Wright’s world-renowned lithographs, revealing plans and perspectives of his work in natural landscapes—serving as both a blueprint for European modernist architecture and an innovative art form in its own right. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to view the designs in Fortaleza Hall on the company’s campus, which boasts two buildings designed by Wright: the SC Johnson Administration Building (1936) and the SC Johnson Research Tower (1943/44).

Reservations are open for guided tours of the exhibition, as well as the famed Great Workroom in the Administration Building, and the Research Tower which is now in only its second year of being open to the public. In addition, for the first time, guests will also be able to visit third-generation company leader

H.F. Johnson Jr.’s office from the 1950s when they tour the Administration Building. Self-guided tour options will be provided for Fortaleza Hall, including access to the Wasmuth Portfolio exhibit and the Lily Pad gift shop.

Visitors can also add a free tour of Wingspread, H.F. Johnson Jr.’s Wright-designed home (1937), to their reservation. Wingspread, the last and largest of Wright’s Prairie-style homes, is five miles north of the SC Johnson campus.

SC Johnson is continuing to support Wright’s work beyond Racine by sponsoring the 2015–2016 Taliesin West tour season in Arizona and is the exclusive regional sponsor of the highly anticipated 2015 Chicago Architectural Biennial.

SC Johnson’s Frank Lloyd Wright Tours, which attract more than 15,000 visitors annually, are available Wednesday through Sunday. Visit scjohnson.com to learn more and reserve a free tour time. ■

SC Johnson joins Chicago Architectural Biennial

by MICHAEL BURKE ■ This article was originally published in *The Journal Times* (Racine)

CHICAGO—A \$1 million gift from SC Johnson will help fund the inaugural Chicago Architectural Biennial this year, described as North America’s largest international exhibition of contemporary architecture.

SCJ Chairman and CEO Fisk Johnson announced the donation during a press conference at the Chicago Cultural Center. The event included a list of international participants and public programming for the exhibition that will run from Oct. 3 to Jan. 3 with the City of Chicago as host. “The Biennial will enrich Chicago’s continuing role as a crucible of architectural innovation. ... (It) will highlight architectural projects and experiments that offer a breadth of design approaches and cultural perspectives,” according to a news release issued by the Chicago Cultural Center.

The Biennial will include free weekly tours of the Wright-designed buildings on the SC Johnson campus at 1525 Howe St. It will also include large-scale exhibitions featuring new generations of the world’s leading architectural talent, and public programs that engage a network of more than 60 cultural partners to date.

The Biennial’s list of participants includes architects and artists based in more than 25 countries and across five continents. In addition to exhibitions, there will be a range of film screenings, symposia, performances, tours, and city-wide regional programs. Full programming is still in development and will be announced over the coming months. Admission to the Biennial will be free.

A complete listing of programming, special events, and symposia will be available in the coming months at the Biennial website.

www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org



© Michael Ditmer



WRIGHT THOUGHTS

by KEN DAHLIN

So What Does “Organic” Actually Mean?

In Wright circles, the term ‘organic’ is used so often that we take it for granted. We see and experience Wright’s architectural works and intuitively agree that the word *organic* seems an appropriate classification. But it is anything but a simple matter to try to be exact in putting down a definition of organic architecture. Even Wright himself, who wrote extensively on his ideas, seems to have had difficulty conveying what it was he was after.

Does organic as Wright used it mean biological? No. Wright himself said it isn’t something ‘hanging in a meat market’. Is it then biomimicry and the imitation of nature? Wright was strongly opposed to imitation of nature. He felt one needed to find the underlying structure or geometry of nature, its inner principle, and abstract it as he did with his art glass designs for example. One can see this distinction when comparing his geometric Butterfly lamp in the Dana House with an ornate Tiffany lamp, for example.

Does organic mean using natural materials or materials in the nature of what they are? Yes, this is an important facet of organic architecture, but surely we have many examples of buildings using wood and stone and do not classify them as organic. Does it mean using horizontal lines? This is how he described the development of the Prairie style and its relation to the horizontal planes around Chicago just before the turn of the twentieth century, but no, this in itself is not sufficient to classify a work as organic. For then his Mile-High skyscraper, the Price Tower, the Guggenheim Museum, Kalita Humphreys Theater, and others would not be organic.

After Lao-tzu, Wright claimed that the essence of a building wasn’t the walls themselves but the space contained within that was the essence of the building. Is this what defines organic? Here again, we can cite many buildings where a central space is the key organizing principle, such as many atrium hotel buildings, but once again most of these are not organic either. What about the destruction of the box and opening up spaces? Mies and Le Corbusier did that after Wright also with their International Style, but Wright never felt theirs was an organic architecture.

Several definitions of organic architecture are given on the Taliesin website, such as the following example:

The Dictionary of Architecture and Construction defines Organic Architecture as ‘architecture whose design is established in accordance with the processes of nature rather than based on an imposed design.’

This seems reasonable on the surface, but it falls short of closing the gap of really understanding the principle. For instance, what does it mean to design in “accordance with the processes of nature”? What are the processes of nature? We have many things to consider, such as the force of gravity, the path of the sun and the seasons, the various states of water from solid to gas, wind patterns, etc.

However, any building that actually gets built and survives must be designed in accordance with those processes of nature. Some may not be as energy efficient, but generally all buildings are pretty good at obeying the law of gravity. And do we call all those energy efficient or sustainable buildings organic? Not necessarily. And what about the last part of that definition, “... rather than based on an imposed design”? How is design anything but an intentional action that is imposed on materials and methods? This cannot mean following the process of a Jackson Pollock painting of (seemingly) random patterns emerging from the medium, can it?

To be sure, one of the cutting edges of architectural design today is through parametric design and digital fabrication, following formulas and calculations that seem to take the human “imposition” out of the mix. But there are two problems with this scenario. One is that the seemingly non-imposed design in reality never loses the designer’s setting up of the parameters, testing them, judging them and finally coming up with a design deemed appropriate to the problem at hand.

There is today an assumption that with our technology and understanding of the natural world we will design more appropriate and natural buildings. Part of this assumption is that if we take into consideration all the functional, technological, environmental, and social

needs of building design that somehow the form (and beauty) will naturally follow as if automatically by formula. The complexity today of building technology, the increasingly difficult and complex environmental and urban conditions and regulations, and social contexts make it difficult to master even a few of the important design criteria today and so often the “big picture” is missed and we have come to accept architecture that simply looks ugly to the layperson.

Even more problematic for us is that Wright clearly didn’t agree with this “non-imposed” method anyway. Never did Wright try to replicate nature nor fail to create a contrast between his architecture and its natural setting. With all Wright’s talk about Nature, his own works are still very “man-made,” expressing

the “art and craft of the machine,” and intentionally so. Often we see in Wright’s works straight lines that form angular prows that cut into natural hillsides like a boat cuts through water—not disappearing or dissolving into nature, but setting up a relationship to the natural realm. This relationship is a very special one, to be sure, in dialogue with nature; however, it is as though neither nature nor architecture loses its own identity in the process. I think we can agree that there is something special in this dialogue with nature that Wright established. In all the above discussion, we looked at where the answer doesn’t lie. In the next article we will look more into where the idea of organic architecture may lie. ■

KENNETH C. DAHLIN, AIA, is a Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin board member and architect/CEO at Genesis Architecture, Racine.

The Mary Lescohier and Louise Kloepper House, designed by William Wesley Peters, Chairman of Taliesin Associated Architects, built 1963. This home will be open during the Wright and Like 2015 Madison tour.



Wright Volunteer for 25 Years

Meet Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin board member Bill Martinelli

Everyone with an interest in Frank Lloyd Wright has an introduction story—a memory about a transformative visit to that one building that left an indelible impression. For Bill Martinelli, who grew up in the Westmorland neighborhood of Madison, it was trick-or-treating at the Jacobs I House. That early experience imparted an interest in architecture, and particularly Frank Lloyd Wright, that has remained a significant part of his entire life. Bill graduated in 1973 from Madison College with a degree in architectural technology, and his first job was as a draftsman at a small firm specializing in residential development. From there he moved to Strand Associates, where he worked for 29 years.

In the mid '80s Bill began looking for a house on the west side of Madison and came across a Marshall Erdman design-built house. While other buyers were leery of the home's flat roof, that didn't deter Bill. He bought it immediately and has been there ever since.

It was around this same time that he became involved with several different Wright organizations. Having heard there was a Wright-designed structure there, Bill visited Mirror Lake State Park. When inquiring at the park headquarters about the structure, the park ranger's warning ("don't go looking for it because you'll get in trouble") was just the invitation Bill needed.

A few years later he heard about a group getting together in the Dells to try to save the Wright cottage on Mirror Lake. At that fateful meeting he signed up as a volunteer; met Audrey Laatsch, the driving force behind the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy; and began a 25-year volunteer effort that continues to this day. His roles have included vice president and facility manager. In that position he is in charge of organizing the annual work week, a time for maintenance and major repair work. It's Bill's job to schedule the contractors and volunteers.

Bill attended the very first Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy Conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. in 1990,



Courtesy of the Seth Peterson Conservancy

and over the years has missed only one. Last year was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the conference, and he's sure to be at this year's event in Milwaukee.

His involvement with Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin began in the organization's early years when he served as its second Treasurer. He returned to the board in 2002 as the site representative for the Seth Peterson Cottage. Throughout his time on the board Bill has given his talents and efforts to our programs, particularly the annual *Wright and Like* tour. His contributions include everything from photographing tour sites to creating signage and tour maps, and working as a docent and house captain. Recently he has chaired the membership committee.

In his spare time, Bill collects paper ephemera on Wright that includes brochures from the sites he visits and a collection of over 850 books and 300 magazines. He hopes one day to donate the collection to a source that can use it as a reference library.

Like other Wright aficionados, Bill is on a mission to visit all the Wright-designed sites in the country. He has a list of about 420 Wright structures to visit and at this point he's been to four hundred—several more than once. There's one big trip that is still on his bucket list: a visit to Japan. If your Wright travels happen to cross paths with his, be sure to say hello! ■

SHERRI SHOKLER is the office manager at Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin.



With Spring upon us and flowers blooming, this "At Taliesin" column (published by the Capital Times on July 24, 1936; the Grant County Herald on July 29, 1936; and the Wisconsin State Journal on July 31, 1936) speaks of the importance of flower arranging. It was written by Charter Fellowship apprentice Mary "Marybud" Roberts (1913-1995). A daughter of the soon-to-be Wright client Abby Beecher Roberts, she married fellow apprentice John Lautner on January 1, 1934, less than three months after their arrival in October 1933. Marybud Lautner wrote at least eight "At Taliesin" columns during her short tenure in the Fellowship. — RANDY HENNING

AT TALIESIN

Flowers are so beautiful in themselves that the majority of people believe that any arrangement will do. Every home would be more attractive if more time and thought were spent on the relation of flowers to their backgrounds, their containers, and to themselves. They should be selected carefully for color and size so they become an integral part of the room as a whole. It isn't true that any flower looks lovely in any place. Imagine the stifling effect of a large vase of red peonies in a room chocked with furniture, then the refreshing simplicity of a single blossom in a shallow bowl.

Before you investigate the garden or flower shop, look impersonally at the room. Reduce the background to simple planes. Try eliminating all pictures on walls and photographs on the piano. Take off any hanging table covers and replace them with little mats if you must use something. Put away everything that isn't actually in use. Flowers too often appear in a welter of nick-knacks.

Then bring out all of your vases and bowls and experiment until you have found the most suitable place for each. Leave the three best and put away the others again. Use your imagination in choosing the most beautiful of the seasonal flowers to be placed in each vase in its own place. Too often you bring in an armful

of flowers and wonder what you're going to put them in. Do it backwards—think what would be the liveliest in the vases you have.

When you have combined flowers, bowl, and room to best advantage, take out half the flowers and rearrange them. The result will give each blossom a better chance to show its beauty.

Use color according to your mood and the weather outside. Tall blue delphiniums in a crystal vase will seem to fill your room with fresh breezes. In dark weather, use brilliant pottery bowls filled with Zinnias. No matter when you arranged your bouquets—yesterday or a week ago—when their crispness is gone, throw them out immediately.

MARYBUD LAUTNER

On Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock Taliesin presents at its Playhouse a gay Viennese film called "Karneval und Liebe" by the famous comedy director Carl Lamac. The noted European singing star Hermann Thimig takes the leading role. Best of all is the music—all by Johann Strauss played as only a Viennese orchestra can play it. With this picture will be shown a beautiful short subject: "Isola di Capri" of Italy and its famously beautiful landscape. ■

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

Wright Calendar

- **May 14**
Monona Terrace
Madison
 The Wright Design Series
 “Marshall Erdman and ‘Wrightification’ in Madison”,
 presented by Prof. Anna Andrzejewski, UW-Madison
 7 p.m., Lecture Hall
- **May 16**
American System-Built Homes Model B-1
Milwaukee \ \$20/\$25
 Spaces and Traces Tour
 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
historicmilwaukee.org
- **June 5 & 6**
Wright and Like 2015
Madison
 Tours of private homes, special events
 See page 6
- **June and July**
Taliesin
Spring Green \ Fees vary
 Youth Programs: Architecture Camp I & II
 City Planning Camp
 Registration required. Contact Caroline Hamblen at
 (608) 588-7090, ext. 230
www.taliesinpreservation.org/education/youth-programs

Ongoing tours and events

- **American System-Built Homes Model B1**
Milwaukee \ \$15 donation
 Tours monthly on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays, plus
 the 2nd Friday of each month May–August.
 No reservation needed. 12:30–3:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Schwartz House**
Two Rivers \ \$10 donation
 Public tours 1st Sunday of June and August, 3 p.m.,
 reservations required
 Email Michael@theschwartzhouse.com

- **Monona Terrace**
Madison \ \$5 per adult, \$3 per student
 Guided tours May 1–October 31, 1 p.m. daily,
 closed major holidays
- **SC Johnson**
Racine
 Various tours, plus exhibition *Frank Lloyd Wright
 and the Wasmuth Portfolio*. Reservations at
www.scjohnson.com/visit or call (262) 260-2154
- **Seth Peterson Cottage**
Lake Delton \ \$4 donation
 Open house and tours 2nd Sunday of each month,
 1–3:30 p.m.
- **Taliesin**
Spring Green \ Various prices
 A variety of tours, times, and prices May 1–
 October 31, reservations strongly recommended
 (877) 588-5900
- **Unitarian Meeting House**
Madison \ \$10 donation
 Tours Sunday mornings (year-round, free),
 weekdays 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. May–
 September, groups by appointment (\$7)
 (608) 233-9774, fusmadison.org/tours
- **Wingspread – The Johnson Foundation**
Racine
 Tours Wednesday–Sunday between 9:30
 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. when conferences are not
 in session, by appointment only. Register at
www.scjohnson.com/visit, call (262) 681-3353, or
 email tour@johnsonfdn.org
- **Wyoming Valley School**
Spring Green \ donation
 Tours by appointment, wyoingvalleyschool@gmail.com
 or call (608) 588-2544

Events are free unless otherwise noted. Visit wrightinwisconsin.org for a complete listing of tour schedules and contact information.

STILL BEND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

being completed in the spring of 1940. Wright named the house “Still Bend,” referring to its site on a bend in the river where the water slows to create a large marsh before continuing to flow into Lake Michigan about a mile away. The nearly 3,000 square foot, four bedroom house was constructed with his typical Usonian materials: red tidewater cypress board and batten, red concrete floors with heating pipes below, and red brick. After visiting the completed house in 1941, Wright went back to the drawing board to design a workshop addition, pergola stretching out from the house towards the river to meet up with a small farm unit, and an elaborate boat house—none of which was built.

Still Bend is now owned by brothers Gary and Michael Ditmer and is open to the public for tours and overnight rental, giving people the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in Wright’s vision for American domestic living. The house is also available for weddings, corporate retreats, and other events. Since acquiring the house from the second owners, the Ditmerters have completed numerous restoration projects, including the removal of siding that had been added in the 1970s, restoration of the roof with asphalt and white gravel covering, cleaning and waxing a majority of the interior cypress, and extensive repair of the exterior brickwork. Future restoration plans include the installation of sixteen French doors that had once lined the perimeter of the first floor living space, reproducing all of the Wright-designed furniture, and executing the original landscaping plan.

The next public tour is Sunday, June 7 at 3:00 p.m. There is no cost for *Wright and Like* ticket holders. Otherwise the cost is \$10. For a complete schedule of upcoming tours and special events, visit www.theschwartzhouse.com. ■

MICHAEL DITMER is the Schwartz House representative on the Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin board

Milwaukee Hosts FLLWBC



Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy 2015 Annual Conference *Wisconsin: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Laboratory* The Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin September 30–October 4, 2015

Frank Lloyd Wright’s life story is intimately entwined with his home state. To Wisconsin he left a built legacy unmatched by any other area, spanning more than seven decades. He built houses—both simple and elaborate—lakeside residences, schools, religious buildings, commercial and industrial buildings, apartments, and one of only two tall buildings he ever constructed. His Usonian house concept and House for a Family of \$5,000–\$6,000 Income were first built in Wisconsin, and he worked out his cast concrete ornamental friezes there. Many more structures envisioned for the state remain only as dreams on paper. Join the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy for tours of more than a dozen Wright buildings, educational sessions that explore Wisconsin as Frank Lloyd Wright’s Laboratory, special events in architecturally significant venues, and more. Registration begins in June.

Visit savewright.org for more details.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT WISCONSIN
HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM

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The postcard caption on the back page of the previous issue of *Wright In Wisconsin* (Vol. 20, Issue 1, February 2015) confuses the sequence of development on Rocky Roost. It calls the building in the image a “complex.” It is not a complex; it is a single building with a windmill attached to it to bring fresh water from a well below the surface of the lake. This cottage was definitely designed by Wright. It appears in the list of his buildings compiled by Henry-Russell Hitchcock in the late '30s and published in the early '40s.

This non-complex was erected in part by using three little buildings from the 1890s that were erected for Robert Lamp and his partner in this endeavor, Melville Clarke. Two of those little buildings were probably designed by Wright because he sketched them in the early 1890s. The third appears to have been the cabin from Clarke's boat, the *Solid Comfort*. Then Wright jammed the three together, added a second story with a wrap-around walkway at the second level, and finally added the windmill. This construction took from 1901 through 1903.

The commission was not only for Robert Lamp; it was also for Melville Clarke. The two were avid sailors. Both were bachelors. And they definitely shared the Roost equally—both its expenses and its facilities. — JACK HOLZHUETER