

WRIGHT FOCUS



Lee Patterson, Builder

Lee Patterson, the builder of the Kraus House, still has stories to tell. Twenty-five docents and docent-trainees gathered in the motor court of the house on July 28 to hear first-hand what it was like to build a Frank Lloyd Wright House and to work with the owners, Russell and Ruth Kraus, who commissioned the house. Here are some of Lee's recollections.

Lee told how he had no formal training in building, but he learned from his father who was a general contractor; from being an engineer in the U.S. army; and by his own determination. Initially, when Russell could not find a builder, Lee became particularly interested in the contracting job. He found the potential range of issues facing the architect/owner/builder even more of a challenge because the architect was an icon revered by many, especially by Russell and Ruth. Wright specified that the Kraus House be built on a bed of rock. To make it more stable, Lee, instead anchored the building below ground level by digging a trench beneath the frost line. Just as with Fallingwater, whose model was on display at the Kraus House this summer, questions were raised about the amount of steel recommended for structural support. Lee did what he could to make the Kraus House strong.

By the time Lee left the job, after just over a year, the shell of the house was complete. The walls, a wood

shake roof, the windows, doors and brick were finished. He basically worked with two carpenters, doing much of the inside work himself. The brick work was done by masons. After Lee left, over the next several years, the inside shelves and cabinets, as well as the furniture, were made by others including Russell and his father.

Lee met Frank Lloyd Wright once, in Chicago, at the Illinois Athletic Club, near the end of the construction of the Kraus House. Lee had gone to Chicago to learn about Wright's pre-fabricated houses. Russell was interested in building them on land he owned, which is now Reith Terrace, east of Ebsworth Park. When Lee told Wright he was building the Kraus House, Wright said, "God help you."

Lee surmounted many of the obstacles of construction and still marvels at the finished product. He often discovers a new angle or perspective and says ultimately that, "Frank Lloyd Wright was an artist!" When John Eifler, the FLWHEP restoration architect from Chicago worked on the Kraus House, he said it was one of the most structurally sound Wright houses that he had ever seen. We applaud and thank Lee Patterson for that!



(above left) Lee Patterson viewing a model of Fallingwater on exhibit at the Kraus House.

(above) Lee speaking with FLWHEP docents.



The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park

A Note from the Chairman



This was a year of constant activity. We started in December to plan the annual benefit which was on May 31. Simultaneously, we were planning our annual lecture which took place on April 3 at the Saint Louis Art Museum. The lecture was particularly popular; so unfortunately, we ran out of seats.

Hopefully, those of you who missed the lecture will enjoy reading some of Anthony Alofsin's highlights in this newsletter. The Saint Louis Art Museum will be closed this year for construction, so the lecture will be held at another venue. We will let you know as soon as we know where and when the talk will take place.

For the May benefit, we were able to offer a duo package with art historian, Franklin Toker, author of *Fallingwater Rising*, and an exhibit of paintings of *Fallingwater* by Félix de la Concha for the benefit opening and through August 9. The exhibit involved a rental fee, insurance, shipping and handling and installation costs, but we felt that it was worth the time, money and effort when we saw how the paintings enhanced the Kraus House and reinforced the philosophy and design principles of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The 2010 benefit picnic will be held on June 6 at a beautiful Bernoudy house. We hope you will put the date on your calendar.

There is a new look at the entrance to Ebsworth Park. The bridge was replaced by a culvert. Our next step is to build the Cherokee red gate that Wright designed for the entrance. Russell Kraus saved the plan for it but was never able to build it. Wright often designed a red gate and brick walls to enhance the entrances of his Usonian houses.

We thank Jane Shapleigh for her years of board service and wish her well as she retires from the board. We continue to need your help as we expand our activities, improve the property, and celebrate the hiring of our administrative director, Laura Meyer, who has done everything and more than what we have asked.

Joanne Kohn, Chairman
The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park

Kay Dusenbery Board Member

When I was employed at the Danforth Foundation a number of years ago, I had the good fortune of working with Bob Hall on a number of parks and environment related grants. One day Bob happened to mention that as St. Louis County Parks Director he was helping with a project to acquire and conserve the Russell Kraus house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Since my husband and I were both FLW fans and we'd previously visited the house, I was intrigued and wanted to find a way to be involved. Bob put me in touch with Joanne Kohn. I spent some time learning about the house through docent training, and eventually I was asked to join the board.



Since my professional background was in helping non-profit organizations build capacity, I volunteered to guide FLW House board members through their first strategic planning process.

We began in August 2006 and spent a year discussing our organization's strengths and challenges and charting a course for the future. Working with so many dedicated and talented board members and volunteers was exhilarating, and we developed a plan that identifies many exciting possibilities.

Understandably, preserving and maintaining the house is our top priority and we recognize the importance of ensuring high quality workmanship in every project we undertake. Education is another major goal and we're working on developing more opportunities for school-aged kids to learn about the house and FLW. Adult education has great potential, too, and we've had great responses to lectures, exhibits, and tours we've offered. Our long-term goal is to plan and build a visitor center, which would allow us to consolidate education, exhibition and administrative functions.

Through my work on the board I've enhanced my knowledge of Wright's incredible vision and artistry. I have an even greater appreciation for the gem of a house we've conserved, and I feel we are privileged to serve as stewards. I never tire of visiting the FLW House in Ebsworth Park — it seems to offer something new to discover each time I'm there.

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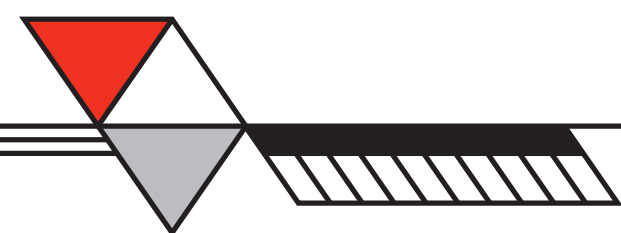
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Entrance Changes at Ebsworth Park

If you haven't visited the FLW house for fear you would fall into Sugar Creek, try again. The bridge is now a culvert and is no longer a challenge. A Cherokee red gate designed by Frank Lloyd Wright will be added to the entrance within a year's time.



Old bridge.



Work in progress.



New culvert.

Oil to Gas

The Kraus House is heated by radiant heating. In the original house, an oil furnace heated water which coursed through pipes under the concrete floors. After over 50 years of service to the house, the oil furnace started to crack. Rather than risk a winter without heat, the board of directors decided to replace the oil furnace with a gas furnace. There was only one problem: there was no gas line. We had to rely on neighbors. We are extremely grateful to Chris and Steve Tini, neighbors to the east of Ebsworth Park, for allowing a gas line to run from their property to the Kraus House. The gas line was not complete until November and some brave guests attended tours with draughts and relief from space heaters. It was a tense few months worrying about falling temperatures, but we made it safely through the fall and now have a new efficient gas furnace. **Thank you Chris and Steve Tini!!!**



Gas line installation.

Anthony Alofsin – Wright Scholar

Anthony Alofsin, writer, architect, art historian and Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, spoke to an overflow audience on April 3 at the Saint Louis Art Museum. Many people were unable to hear the lecture because seating was filled. He also spoke to FLWHEP docents at the home of Debbie and Paul Schneider on April 5. Here are some of the highlights for those of you who missed the talk and for others to review.

Professor Alofsin began his lecture, "Frank Lloyd Wright, St. Louis, and Organic Architecture," by briefly revealing some little-known connections of Wright to St. Louis. Wright visited the 1904 World's Fair where he was exposed to new developments in German and Austrian architecture. Alofsin observed that the geometric forms of the German *Jugendstil* and Viennese Secession movements particularly resonated with Wright's aesthetic. At the World's Fair German Pavilion, Wright also saw the work of architect, Bruno Möhring, who later was an important figure in Wright's publication of his famous *Wasmuth Portfolios* in Berlin. In addition, Alofsin touched on the great impact of William Adair Bernoudy in bringing Wright's legacy to St. Louis.

He then went on to explore the broader question: What was Wright's concept of Organic Architecture? In Wright's 1908 article, "In the Cause of Architecture" published in *Architectural Record*, he outlined six guiding principles: 1) Develop simplicity and repose by reducing the number of rooms, eliminating details, and integrating furniture, pictures, and appliances into the whole; 2) Produce as many styles as clients; 3) Make buildings appear to grow from their sites and harmonize with the natural environment; 4) Conventionalize

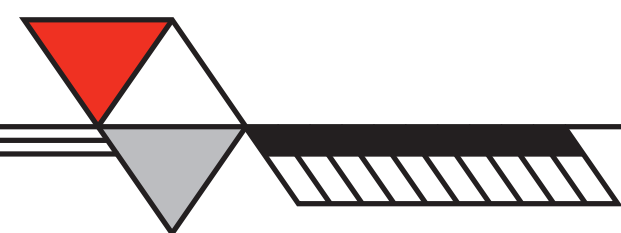
color, using soft, warm and optimistic tones of nature; 5) Reveal the nature of materials; and 6) Create buildings with character and integrity. Although Wright continued to refine his theory of Organic Architecture over his long career, Alofsin underscored that Organic Architecture always remained the central concept of Wright's work.

Alofsin described how Wright analyzed nature and abstracted it into primary geometric forms and patterns. This can be seen, for example, in some of his stained glass windows in which he abstracted flowers and designs from nature. In his architecture, Wright employed primary geometric forms, or modules, of different shapes and dimensions. He then organized the modules on grids. These modules, which are like cells in nature, have the power to be added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided. Wright used these processes to create his floor plans, facades, and details of his buildings, resulting in a harmony of all parts.

In addition to lecturing, Alofsin was able to see St. Louis architecture. Sissy Thomas, Peter Shank and Laura Meyer gave him tours of the city including the house that Bill Bernoudy lived in with his wife, Gertrude. Bernoudy was one of Wright's earliest apprentices and a St. Louis native. Chuddy and John Wight now live in the Bernoudy home.



Laura Meyer, Sissy Thomas, Chuddy Wight, and Anthony Alofsin at the home of William Bernoudy.



Celebrating Fallingwater

The FLWHEP is indebted to Barney Ebsworth who served as Honorary Chairman of the benefit, *Celebrating Fallingwater*, on Sunday, May 31, on the Ebsworth Park grounds. Laura McCanna, Liz Studt, and Lea Virtel, the three co-chairmen, did a magnificent job planning a perfect afternoon. Nearly 150 guests attended helping raise almost \$35,000.

Franklin Toker, Professor of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh and author of the book, *Fallingwater Rising*, spoke about the extraordinary relationship between Frank Lloyd Wright and Edgar J. Kaufmann. The founder of Kaufmann's Department Store in Pittsburgh, Edgar J. Kaufmann commissioned Fallingwater in 1935 as a weekend retreat for his family on the mountain stream of Bear Run in rural southwest Pennsylvania. Toker revealed how newly available documents helped him to dispel old myths and uncover truths about the origins and history of Fallingwater. **Many thanks to all the patrons, attendees, and volunteers who helped make this event a success!**



Co-chairmen of *Celebrating Fallingwater*, Laura McCanna, Liz Studt, and Lea Virtel.
Photo by Jim Virtel.



Franklin Toker, author of *Fallingwater Rising*, speaking at the *Celebrating Fallingwater* benefit.
Photo by Jim Virtel.



Fallingwater en Perspectiva

Guests at the benefit were the first to view the exhibit, *Fallingwater en Perspectiva: Félix de la Concha Paints Frank Lloyd Wright's House on the Waterfall*. The FLWHEP hosted the exhibit through August 9. Organized by Fallingwater and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, *Fallingwater en Perspectiva* was presented at Fallingwater and at Price Tower Arts Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, as a larger exhibit of fifty works. For the exhibit in St. Louis, 11 paintings were chosen that complemented the intimate spaces of the FLWHEP, accompanied by a model of Fallingwater that was displayed in Mr. Kraus' studio. The show will travel next to Florida Southern College and to the University of Houston. All of the works will be auctioned in 2011 as part of the 75th anniversary of Fallingwater.

Félix de la Concha was born in León, Spain, in 1962. In 1989, he was awarded the prestigious Prix de Rome at the Academia de Bellas Artes. In the U.S., he has had solo exhibitions at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, The Frick Art and Historical Center in Pittsburgh, and Columbus Museum of Art. He was invited to live and work at Fallingwater for a fourteen-month residency in 2005 and 2006, painting the masterpiece in different seasons and times of day and night.

In the last week of the exhibit, 23 tours were scheduled to accommodate those who wanted to see the paintings. Three special Twilight Tours featuring wine, cheese, and tours of the house and exhibit were also popular offerings. **Thank you to tour coordinators, Carolyn Noll and Sue Geile, and to FLWHEP docents for their tremendous efforts.**

Painting by Félix de la Concha,
View at the Second Fall.

Experiencing Fay Jones Architecture

Twenty-two friends of the FLWHEP traveled to northwest Arkansas in November to see the works of renowned architect, E. Fay Jones (1921-2004). One of the most famous students of Frank Lloyd Wright, Jones was awarded a Rome Prize Fellowship in 1980 and the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal, its highest honor, in 1990. Jones was a professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville from 1953 until 1988. The School of Architecture in Fayetteville was recently named the Fay Jones School of Architecture in his honor.

Jones' office was in Fayetteville and is still very active with his associate and partner of 25 years, Maurice Jennings, at the helm. Jennings was very generous sharing information and showing drawings and models of Jones' works.

The highlights of the trip were visits to two of Jones' most renowned works, both sacred structures. Thorncrowne Chapel (1980) was built for a private client on a wooded hillside near

Eureka Springs. In 2000, it was recognized by the American Institute of Architects as the fourth most significant building of the twentieth century.

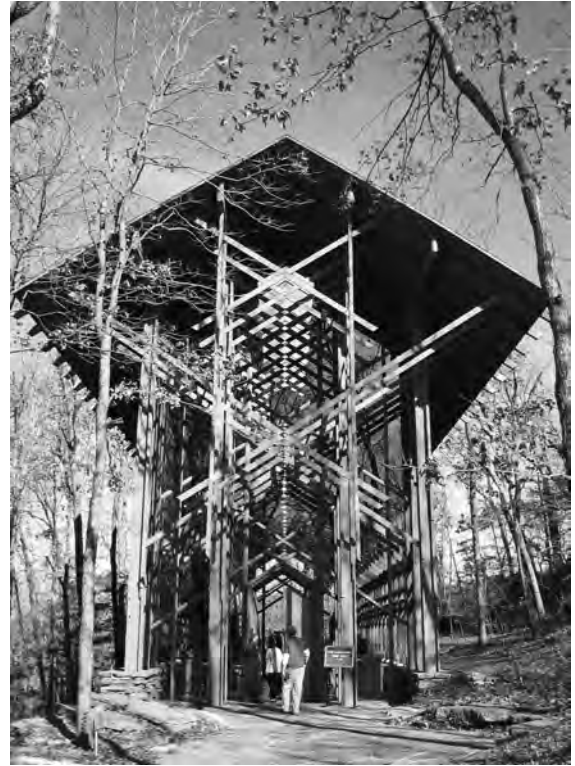
Thorncrowne is a tall, narrow, one-room chapel. Jones identified the 13th century Gothic chapel of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris as the inspiration for the proportions and the "ascendancy" of Thorncrowne. Interlocking pieces of gray wood harmonize with the gray bark of the forest seen through the clear glass walls and skylights. Flagstone floors and low stone walls also echo the Ozark environment. At Thorncrowne, the diagonal cross-bracing creates a

striking diamond-shaped lattice effect and a dramatic play of light and shadow; according to Jones, "decorative enrichment should come from the thing itself, not be applied to it afterward."

The Mildred C. Cooper Memorial Chapel (1987) is located in a secluded wooded setting near the town of Bella Vista. Like Thorncrowne Chapel, the Cooper Chapel is a tall, one-room chapel. Rising to a height of 48 feet, it has a steeply pitched roof, Gothic arches, and an oculus, or circular window. Curving, interlocking steel beams are painted a soft bronze color, almost appearing like wood. The steel structure is surrounded by clear glass walls and wood lacing, allowing for views of the surrounding woods and a beautiful play of light. In both Thorncrowne and the Mildred C. Cooper chapels, the simplicity and elegance of the structures invite meditation and evoke a deep feeling of reverence.

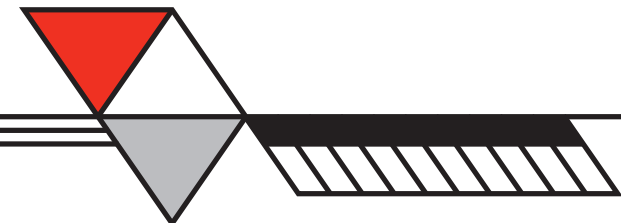


Maurice Jennings, partner of Fay Jones, and FLWHEP docent Ann Bauer.



(top) Thorncrowne Chapel.

(above) Mildred C. Cooper Memorial Chapel.



FLW Building Conservancy Conference

The Conservancy's annual conference will be held this year from October 7-11 in Buffalo, New York, the site of the founding of the Conservancy 24 years ago. The mission of the Conservancy is to save Wright buildings. It was the demolition of the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo that gave the impetus to form this important organization. Central to the conference will be touring of the Darwin Martin House and the Martin summer house, Graycliff, which have been in the process of restoration since the early 1990's. A visitor's pavilion at the Martin House designed by Toshiko Mori was opened in 2007 and will be of great interest.

The theme of the conference will be "Wright in the Drafting Room: Drawings for the Built and the Unbuilt". Wright designed more than 1,000 buildings in his career with approximately 480 realized. This summer's anniversary exhibit at the Guggenheim museum in New York also celebrated the unbuilt as well as the built structures of Wright.

This conference will add to our knowledge of the scope of Wright's talent and imagination.

Besides tours of some of Wright's most significant houses, the conference will present speakers of note and visits to



The Darwin Martin House in Buffalo, New York.

Photo by Biff Henrich, courtesy of the Martin Restoration Corporation.

Eliel Saarinen's Kleinhans Music Hall, the Adler and Sullivan Guaranty Building, and the Roycroft campus in East Aurora, New York, the Arts & Crafts community where bookbinding, leatherwork, metal crafts, furniture, art glass and decorative arts were practiced. The conference is open to the public.

For more information: www.savewright.org

Dana-Thomas House Reopens

The Dana-Thomas House, one of the most outstanding of Wright's prairie houses and owned by the state of Illinois, has reopened in Springfield. It was closed for state budgetary reasons. Find out more information by visiting www.dana-thomas.org. Donald Hallmark, the executive director of the Dana-Thomas House, has resigned his position after 20 years. A search will be conducted to replace him.



The Dana-Thomas House. Photo by Peter Shank.

New Executive Director for the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy

Ron Scheruble, the executive director of the FLWBC since 1999, has retired from his position. Janet Halstead took his place on July 15th and now leads the national organization whose mission is to save Wright properties. She brings to the position expertise in non-profit leadership, fiscal management and skills in programming and fund raising. During Scheruble's tenure, the Conservancy saved several Wright buildings from demolition and found new owners for dozens of Wright houses. We wish him well and welcome Janet.

Janet Halstead,
new Executive
Director of the
Frank Lloyd
Wright Building
Conservancy.



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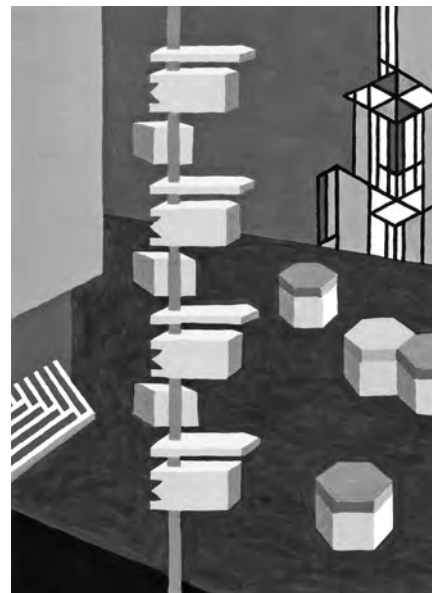
Gift Shop News

Remind your friends of your involvement with the Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park by sending or giving Wright-designed gifts this year for the holiday.

Members may be interested in the FLWHEP holiday card. The card features design elements of the Kraus House in a reproduction of a watercolor by artist, Peter Shank. There are 10 cards in a package for \$12.50. (Members qualify for a 10% discount.) The cards are available either blank inside or with Season's Greetings.

Other new and popular items in the gift shop this year are aprons embroidered with the FLWHEP logo on the bib. The aprons are available in red or black and are a sturdy duck fabric with a Teflon coating. A selection of books, note cards, jewelry and puzzles with Wright themes are also offered. Email info@ebsworthpark.org for additional information.

 Gift certificates for tours are ideal for the holidays! They are available by e-mailing **Info@Ebsworthpark.org**



The FLWHEP holiday card, "Let There Be Light", by artist Peter Shank.

Clean Windows

For two years now, Chuck Laney of Ambassador Window Cleaning Co. has personally provided us with clean windows at the Kraus House. We are extremely grateful and recommend his work: telephone number: (636) 498-6006