current exhibitions

Prairie Skyscraper: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Price Tower
Through September 17, 2006
The only true skyscraper designed by Wright that was actually constructed, the Price Tower is a glimmering jewel of a building. The exhibition includes original drawings, fascinating samples of correspondence between Wright and the project’s client, furniture, and a large model of the tower.

The Green House: New Directions in Sustainable Architecture and Design
Through June 3, 2007
The second in a series of major National Building Museum exhibitions on sustainable design, The Green House begins with a full-scale, furnished replica of an environmentally-friendly house. Also featured are photographs and models of exemplary houses and apartment buildings from around the world, plus a resource room with many examples of materials that are both green and attractive.

Cityscapes Revealed: Highlights from the Collection
Long-term
The first exhibition presenting a cross-section of items from the Museum’s own collection, including drawings, photographs, material samples, and artifacts from National Historic Landmarks.

Washington: Symbol and City
Long-term
A seminal exhibition about the complex city that the Museum calls home. Spectacular, large-scale historic and contemporary models give visitors an intimate understanding of the city’s past and possible future.

Blueprints is the quarterly journal of the National Building Museum. Subscriptions are a benefit of Museum membership.

Blueprints ©2006
All rights reserved
LBN-85-2530
editor / G. Martin Moeller, Jr
designer / Jennifer Byrne
The National Building Museum explores the world we build for ourselves—from our homes, skyscrapers and public buildings to our parks, bridges, and cities. Through exhibitions, education programs, and publications, the Museum seeks to educate the public about achievements in architecture, design, engineering, urban planning, and construction.

The Museum is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and public agencies.
This unusual and fascinating building is the subject of an exhibition titled *Prairie Skyscraper: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Price Tower*, which is on view at the National Building Museum through September 17. Organized by the Price Tower Arts Center, which owns—and occupies part of—the building, the exhibition delves into the history of the tower’s design. It includes drawings, photographs, original furniture, correspondence between Wright and his client, and samples of the building’s architectural ornament. The exhibition itself was designed by the firm of Zaha Hadid Architects, which has also designed a proposed addition to the Price Tower Arts Center. Both in the exhibition and in the proposed expansion, Hadid’s characteristic sharp angles and dynamic forms masterfully play off of the geometry of the original building.

I want to thank the sponsors who made the presentation of the exhibition at the National Building Museum possible. The Copper Development Association is our lead sponsor, and there’s a good reason for the association’s enthusiasm for the show: much of the Price Tower’s distinct character derives from the beautiful green patina of the copper panels and louvers that line its façades. We also received major support from Mr. C.J. Silas of Bartlesville, who is chairman of the board of the Price Tower Arts Center. Finally, we are grateful to Restore Media, LLC for its sponsorship of a private opening reception for the show.

(continued on page 2)
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chase W. Rynd
Executive Director

The Summer of Wright

The Prairie Skyscraper exhibition is but one element in a series of initiatives at the National Building Museum that we have grouped together under the heading “The Summer of Wright.” Lectures, films, and family activities addressing Wrightian themes complement the exhibition. I encourage you to check the Museum’s website or the monthly Calendar of Events for details regarding this related programming.

This issue of Blueprints is another element of “The Summer of Wright.” The Price Tower was designed and built in the 1950s, when Wright was already in his 80s but still working as actively as ever. During this period, even as he was focusing much of his energy on high-profile public and institutional projects such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Marin County Government Center, Wright never stopped designing single-family houses. In the 65 years since its completion, the Pope-Leighey House—named after its two private owners—has been dismantled and moved twice, once to avoid the construction of Interstate 66 and once because of subsurface soil problems, yet it still looks as contemporary and welcoming as it did when the Popes moved in, in March 1941. It now stands on a wooded site ten miles south of Old Town Alexandria, on a 2,000-acre estate once owned by George Washington.

The story of the design, construction and lasting legacy of the Pope-Leighey House is one of a confluence of the lives of two people, 50 years apart in age, but kindred spirits with a shared philosophy of life. Loren Pope fit the profile of the great Wright client: creative, searching for truth, and someone who had already read Wright’s An Autobiography.

Wright was 72 years old, experiencing a renaissance of recognition and significant commissions as he entered the most prolific period of his career, having recently completed the Jacobs House, Fallingwater, and the Johnson Wax Administration Building, to name a few. Pope was 28 years old, newly married and living above Ward’s Drugstore in Falls Church, Virginia.

In 1939, a young journalist named Loren Pope wrote a three-page letter to Frank Lloyd Wright asking him to design a house for his family. Pope said that he had one-and-a-third acres of land in Falls Church, Virginia, and could afford to spend $5,000. Wright accepted the job, and went on to create a house that was later praised by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., son of the couple who commissioned Wright’s famous Fallingwater, as the architect’s “greatest legacy to the nation.” It was one of Wright’s first “Usonian” houses, his vision of affordable living for the “family of moderate income.”

Today, Loren Pope is 96 years old and can vividly recall the events leading up to his first meeting with Wright, the euphoria of watching the master develop his design, a construction process that attracted curious visitors from around the area and, most importantly, his life-long relationship with Wright, as well as with Gordon Chadwick, the Taliesin apprentices assigned to the project, and Howard Rickert, the young Vienna, Virginia, carpenter who constructed the house.

I recently met with Loren to talk about his house.

(continued on page 4)

The Pope-Leighey House
An Interview with Loren Pope

by Steven M. Reiss, AIA

(continued from page 1)

(continued on page 4)
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chase W. Rynd
Executive Director

(continued from page 1)

The Prairie Sky scraper exhibition is one element in a series of initiatives at the National Building Museum that we have grouped together under the heading “The Summer of Wright.” Lectures, films, and family activities addressing Wrightian themes complement the exhibition. I encourage you to check the Museum’s website or the monthly Calendar of Events for details regarding this related programming.

This issue of Blueprints is another element of “The Summer of Wright.” The Price Tower was designed and built in the 1950s, when Wright was already in his 80s but still working as actively as ever. During this period, even as he was focusing much of his energy on high-profile public and institutional projects such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Marin County Government Center, Wright never stopped designing single-family houses. In the 65 years since its completion, the Pope-Leighey House — named after its two private owners — has been dismantled and moved twice, once to avoid the construction of Interstate 66 and once because of subsurface soil problems, yet it still looks as contemporary and welcoming as it did when the Popes moved in, in March 1941. It now stands on a wooded site ten miles south of Old Town Alexandria, on a 2,000-acre estate once owned by George Washington.

The story of the design, construction and lasting legacy of the Pope-Leighey House is one of a confluence of the lives of two people, 50 years apart in age, but kindred spirits with a shared philosophy of life. Loren Pope fit the profile of the perfect Wright client: creative, searching for meaning, and someone who had already read Wright’s An Autobiography. Wright was 72 years old, experiencing a renaissance of recognition and significant commissions as he entered the most prolific period of his career, having recently completed the Jacobs House, Fallingwater, and the Johnson Wax Administration Building, to name a few. Pope was 28 years old, newly married and living above Ware’s Drugstore in Falls Church, Virginia.

In 1939, a young journalist named Loren Pope wrote a three-page letter to Frank Lloyd Wright asking him to design a house for his family. Pope said that he had one-and-a-third acres of land in Falls Church, Virginia, and could afford to spend $5,000. Wright accepted the job, and went on to create a house that was later praised by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., son of the couple who commissioned Wright’s famous Fallingwater, as the architect’s “greatest legacy to the nation.” It was one of Wright’s first “Usonian” houses, his vision of affordable living for the “family of moderate income.”

Today, Loren Pope is 96 years old and can vividly recall the events leading up to his first meeting with Wright, the euphoria of watching the master develop his design, a construction process that attracted curious visitors from around the area and, most importantly, his life-long relationship with Wright, as well as with Gordon Chadwick, the Taliesin apprentice assigned to the project, and Howard Rickert, the young Vienna, Virginia, carpenter who constructed the house.

I recently met with Loren to talk about his house.

(continued on page 4)
I was working at my first newspaper job—writing for The Washington Evening Star. One day, my boss suggested I look up a kindred maverick thinker and architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. I did some initial research and found Wright’s Wasmuth papers. The sepia tone of the drawings did not appeal to me so I didn’t do any further reading. In January 1938, a Time magazine article again sparked my interest in Wright and his recently published Autobiography. I borrowed the book from the library, returned it the next day, bought my own copy and soaked up all of the Wright I could, until I was neither a great draftsman nor a great reader of architectural journals. I felt that I had poured out my heart as best I could and that he would listen to me. I included along with it a map of the site, contours, and trees. It was a letter that no man with a normal ego could ignore.

**SR:** How did you begin your letter?

**LP:** “Dear Mr. Wright, There are certain things a man wants during life, and of life. Material things and things of the spirit. The writer has one fervent wish that includes both. It is a house created by you.”

**SR:** How did Mr. Wright respond?

**LP:** “Well, I suppose you already know what I am interested in, for you came to see me, did you not?”

**SR:** What did Mr. Wright say in your letter?

**LP:** “Dear Mr. Wright, This is not a letter asking him to design your house; it is a man with a normal ego who is trying to get together a group of his friends and their wives. He is trying to put together a museum for real estate men or subdividers, of whom he is neither. He described the drawings to me. First the floor plans and how a person coming into the living area would see not wall meeting ceiling but surprisingly, a lazy ribbon of clerestory windows with cutout designs around the top of the whole space. The walls seemed to be only screens, barely separating the inside from the outside. The house was L-shaped with a low brick-paved entry. Outside, a cantilevered carport floated over the driveway. Inside the house on the right were rooms labeled “sanctum” and “workshop” and, to the left, was a long gallery with bedrooms. Straight ahead and down five steps soared the open area of fireplace, dining, and living areas. An open kitchen was off to one side. A line of French doors opened inward, on the right, into an extension of the living room floor. It just flowed out into the grass. The roof floated over the entire space supported by only three brick masses. (continued on page 6)
I was working at my first news-

magazine article again sparked my

Every day I would go to the East Falls

Floor plan of the Pope-Leighey House.

THE POPE -LEIGHEY HOUSE : AN INTERVIEW WITH LOREN POPE

4 blueprints 5

I look up a kindred maverick thinker and

just out of college, when my b oss suggested

Autobiography

Steven Reiss: How did you first hear about

Frank Lloyd Wright?

Loren Pope:

Steven Reiss: How did you first hear about

An

Loren Pope:

SR: And how did Mr. Wright respond?

LP:

SR: How did you begin your letter?

LP:

SR: Do you remember the first time you met him?

LP:

SR: Do you remember the first time you met him?

LP:

SR: Do you remember the first time you met him?

LP:

SR: Do you remember the first time you met him?

LP:

He described the drawings to me. First

the floor plans and how a person coming

into the living area would see not wall

meeting ceiling but surprisingly, a lazy rib-

bon of clerestory windows with cutout

designs around the top of the whole space.

The walls seemed to be only screens, barely

separating the inside from the outside. The

house was L-shaped with a low brick-paved

entry. Outside, a cantilevered carport float-

ed over the driveway. Inside the house on

the right were rooms labeled “sanctum” and

workshop” and, to the left, was a long

gallery with bedrooms. Straight ahead and
down five steps soared the open area of

fireplace, dining, and living areas. An

open kitchen was off to one side. A line of

French doors opened inward, on the right,

into an extension of the living room floor. It

just flowed out into the grass. The roof

floated over the entire space supported by

only three brick masses.

(continued on page 6)
I thought Mr. Wright was a genius as he described the house to me.

SR: Did you indicate what effect he was trying to achieve with his design?

LP: Years later he was quoted as saying, “What I was aiming for was the sense of a happy, cloudless day.”

SR: How did you afford the house?

LP: Every lending agency I went to was afraid of loaning me money for the house. In fact, the retired diplomat who ran the East Falls Church Savings and Loan Association tried to counsel me, “Loren, this house would be a white elephant.” My last resort was the Falls Church Savings and Loan Association, which financed homes for its employees. The Star offered to lend me $5,700, to be taken out of my pay at $2 a week.

SR: Tell me about the apprentice that Mr. Wright assigned to your house.

LP: Gordon Chadwick was a 26-year old graduate architect from Princeton who had been working with Mr. Wright as an apprentice for two years. Another Usonian house was to be built at the same time in Baltimore for Joseph Euchtman and both houses were to be handled by Gordon. I was to provide room and board and give him $3 a week, half of what I was making. The Usonian houses used no stock materials, no doors, windows and so on had to be made on site. Gordon bought a carload of second-grade red cypress from the Florida everglades so he could pick out the knot-free boards of the same shade for the houses and still save money.

To keep the costs down on the Usonian houses Wright often had his apprentice act as the general contractor. So Gordon also had to get separate contracts for the concrete work, and masonry, the plumbing and electrical work and of course the carpentry.

SR: What type of contact did you have with Wright during construction? Did he visit the house?

LP: He visited the house several times. During one trip he said that the house was costing me too much and he never asked for the remainder of his fee. He felt it was one of his best Usonian houses and actually wanted to name the house “Touchstone.”

SR: What was it like living in the house?

LP: The house gave us pleasure day and night. Each morning, the big window that took up most of the outside bedroom wall enabled us to enjoy the lawn and the magnificent tulip poplar outside the living room and the woods beyond. The sun would shine through the leaves and the clerestories created dancing patterns of light and shadow as it moved across the walls. Even on a cloudy day the house never looked old or drab, it was so open, the wood and brick so warm and rich. Just being there simply made us feel fulfilled and happy and proud, day after day.

SR: How much did the house cost?

LP: Howard Rickert from Vienna, Virginia, had been working with Mr. Wright as an artist and exclaimed, “What are you trying to do Loren, ruin this place?” So the next day I cut out what I had done and used a string. The next time he came, he approved, especially the square opening I’d made at the outside corner for an axle.

SR: Why did you move after only six years?

LP: When we sold the house in 1956 to move to a 3½-acre farm in Loudon County, our plan was to build a larger Wright house. Mr. Wright came out and picked out the site (of course the most difficult on which to build), but we had cut our ties with the city (and its paychecks) and a Wright house on a farming and free-lance writing income became academic.

Years later in 1959 when I did have a steady paycheck, I discussed another design for a house with Mr. Wright who was staying in New York working on the Guggenheim Museum; but Wright simply didn’t live long enough for us to get our wish.

For many years I’ve been away from the house more than I’ve been there, but spiritually I’ve never left the house. Living in the house has affected my whole life. *
SR: And who was the house’s carpenter?
LP: Howard Rickert from Vienna, Virginia, was the master carpenter who built our house. He was one of the few men who understood what it was all about. After one careful study of the blueprints, he became enthusiastic saying, “This house is logical.”

SR: Describe the house.
LP: It is a big small house for a small family. It is L-shaped, one story on two levels because the lot slopes, with a living room eleven-and-a-half feet high, with a red-oiled concrete floor, which also is a radiant heater by virtue of the hot water pipes underneath. The house has brick supporting piers andypress walls.

For light, ventilation, and decoration, the house has a patterned ribbon of clerestory windows between the top of the wall and the ceiling. You can sit by the fireplace at night and see the stars. There is no paint or plaster, and no masking of any material. The finish, both outside and in, is clear wax, a treatment that complements the beauties of brick and wood. The house gives you a sense of protection, never of being closed in, and of leading you on beyond where your eyes can see. The honest use of materials satisfies the urge you feel when you think you would like to have a log cabin or a rustic hide-out in the mountains. Altogether, it is a soft, warm symphony of charm.

SR: How did the neighbors react to the house?
LP: They thought it was an extraordinary house for an ordinary family. What I was aiming for was the sense of a happy, cloudless day.

SR: What type of contact did you have with Wright during construction? Did he visit the house?
LP: He visited the house several times. During one trip he said that the house was costing me too much and he never asked for the remainder of his fee. He felt it was one of his best Usonian houses and actually wanted to name the house “Touchstone.”

SR: What was it like living in the house?
LP: The house gave us pleasure day and night. Each morning, the big window that took up most of the outside bedroom wall enabled us to enjoy the lawn and the magnificent tulip poplar outside the living room and the woods beyond. The sun would shine through the leaves and the clerestories created dancing patterns of light and shadow as it moved across the walls. Even on a cloudy day the house never looked cold or dreary, it was so open, the wood and brick so warm and rich. Just being there simply made us feel fulfilled and happy and proud, day after day. To it, we had a presence and a character.

Dinner became a relaxing time to enjoy with my little family. Then when it got dark we could sit by the fireplace and see the stars, or have coffee outside and enjoy our dramatic Japanese lantern. The whole effect was a lift for our spirits.

SR: There are numerous stories about Mr. Wright’s “control” of his projects. Did you experience this with your house?
LP: People often asked if Mr. Wright dictated matters of decor, what kind of dishes we should use or whether we should follow a certain lifestyle. He did not, usually. But there was a case with a magnolia tree I’d planted in front of the carport. Soon it grew above roof level. I was bringing him out to the house. The instant I turned onto our road he spotted the offending magnolia and exclaimed, “What are you trying to do, Loren, ruin this place?” So the next day I cut it down.

Another time, I had placed four or five rows of the brick patio outside the dining area, using a 3-inch mason’s level. It was not the most professional of jobs. He looked it over and said, “Loren, use a string.” So I tore out what I had done and used a string. The next time he came, he approved, especially the square opening I’d made at the outer corner for an axel.

SR: Why did you move after only six years?
LP: When we sold the house in 1950 to move to a 365-acre farm in Loudon County, our plan was to build a larger Wright house. Mr. Wright came out and picked out the site (of course the most difficult on which to build), but we had cut our ties with the city (and its paychecks) and a Wright house on a farming and free-lance writing income became academic. Years later in 1959 when I did have a steady paycheck, I discussed another design for a house with Mr. Wright who was staying in New York working on the Guggenheim Museum; but Wright simply didn’t live long enough for us to get our wish.

For many years I’ve been away from the house more than I’ve been there, but spiritually I’ve never left the house. Living in the house has affected my whole life.

LP: After the house was completed in 1948, Mr. Pope’s book of the same name was published by Mr. Pope. Loren Pope is completing a book about the Pope-Leighey house which he hopes to publish later this year. Mr. Pope has also recently compiled an updated edition of his best-selling book, Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About. Even If You’re Not a Straight-A Student. A companion publication, Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That’s Right for You, has also been published by Mr. Pope. •
No Ordinary Clients
The Story of Luis and Ethel Marden

by Marvin Mueller

LUIS AND ETHEL MARDEN—prime candidates for that distinction. In the 1930s, these clients of Frank Lloyd Wright were extraordinary in their own right. It would be impossible, of course, to state definitively which of his clients was the most fascinating, but there can be little doubt that Luis and Ethel Marden, of McLean, Virginia, would be prime candidates for that distinction.

Luis Marden, who died in 2003 at the age of 90, has been called “the epitome of the Geographic man.” The epithet alludes not only to his 64-year career as a writer, photographer, and senior editor with National Geographic, but also to his intrepid spirit, his insatiable curiosity, and his vast knowledge spanning a wide range of disciplines. Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, to Italian parents, Luis was originally named Annibale Luigi Paragallo. As a teenager, he became proficient in five languages, learned Egyptian hieroglyphics, and wrote a book about photography, a position that led to his name change—the station owners thought his name was too difficult for his audience to understand (although one wonders now if he simply felt it was too “ethnic” given the prejudices of the era), so he chose “Luis” as a variation on the nickname “Louis,” which he already used, and then picked the surname “Marden” at random out of a telephone book.

Luis moved to Washington in 1934, when he was only 21 years old, to accept a job with National Geographic. Despite his youth, he almost immediately had a profound influence on the character and reputation of the magazine, thanks to his introduction of the use of lightweight, 35mm cameras and Kodachrome film, which provided richer color than the film the magazine had used previously. Later, his many notable achievements in various areas brought added luster to the magazine.

The biography of Luis’s wife, Ethel, who now lives in an assisted-care facility, reads like a who’s who of the National Geographic Society. She was considered an expert on underwater photography, and as early as 1944, while fishing along the banks of the Potomac River at right.

The Mardens married in 1939, just one day after Luis returned from an extended trip to South America, where he had been working on a series of articles for the magazine. They settled into a new apartment, but soon began to discuss the idea of commissioning Wright to design a house for them. In March of 1940, Luis wrote the first of several letters to Wright, but the architect was enjoying one of the busiest periods of his career, and even though he soon accepted the commission, it was more than ten years before he was able to begin the design of the Mardens’ house, and nearly twenty years before its construction was complete.

When Luis first wrote to the architect, the Mardens did not yet own a piece of land on which to build their dream house, but in 1946, while fishing along the banks of the Potomac—it was wartime, and they did not have enough gasoline ration coupons to drive to a preferred fishing spot along the Shenandoah—the couple became entranced by a site on the Virginia side of the river just above Little Falls. The next day, they called a real estate agent and learned that a property in that area was for sale, and they bought it shortly thereafter.

Finally, in 1952, Wright produced a design for the Mardens’ house. Because he was so busy with high-profile projects such as the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and advancing age made it increasingly difficult for him to travel, Wright had worked primarily from topographical maps of the Mardens’ property (on his sole visit to the site before construction began, Wright had been unable to reach the main viewpoint because the terrain was too steep for him to negotiate). When the

THE MARDEN HOUSE. Courtesy of the Estate of Mr. & Mrs. Luis Marden Above: Left floor plan.Courtesy of Richard Williams Architects Above: Front floor plan. Courtesy of Richard Williams Architects
No Ordinary Clients
The Story of Luis and Ethel Marden

by Martin Moeller

Luis Marden, who died in 2003 at the age of 90, has been called "the epitome of the Geographic man." The epitome alludes not only to his 64-year career as a writer, photographer, and senior editor with National Geographic magazine, but also to his impetuous spirit, his insatiable curiosity, and his vast knowledge spanning a wide range of disciplines.

Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, to Italian parents, Luis was originally named Annibale Luigi Paragallo. As a teenager, he became proficient in five languages, learned Egyptian hieroglyphics, and wrote a book called Color Photography for the Miniature Camera, which may have been the first ever published on the topic of 35mm color photography. He was soon invited to host a radio program about photography, a position that led to his name change—the station owners thought his name was too difficult for his audience to understand (although one wonders now if they simply felt it was too "ethnic" given the prejudices of the era), so he chose "Luis," as a variation on the nickname "Louis," which he already used, and then picked the surname "Marden" at random out of a telephone book.

Luis Marden, who died in 2003 at the age of 90, has been called "the epitome of the Geographic man." The epitome alludes not only to his 64-year career as a writer, photographer, and senior editor with National Geographic magazine, but also to his impetuous spirit, his insatiable curiosity, and his vast knowledge spanning a wide range of disciplines.

When Luis first wrote to the architect, the Mardens did not yet own a piece of land on which to build their dream house, but in 1944, while fishing along the banks of the Potomac—it was wartime, and they did not have enough gasoline ration coupons to drive to a preferred fishing spot along the Shenandoah—the couple became entranced by a site on the Virginia side of the river just above Little Falls. The next day, they called a real estate agent and learned that a property in that area was for sale, and they bought it shortly thereafter.

Finally, in 1952, Wright produced a design for the Mardens’ house. Because he was so busy with high-profile projects such as the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and advancing age made it increasingly difficult for him to travel, Wright had worked primarily from topographical maps of the Mardens’ property (on his sole visit to the site before construction began, Wright had been unable to reach the main viewpoint because the terrain was too steep for him to negotiate). When the

The Mardens married in 1939, just one day after Luis returned from an extended trip to South America, where he had been working on a series of articles for the magazine. They settled into a new apartment, but soon began to discuss the idea of commissioning Wright to design a house for them. In March of 1940, Luis wrote the first of several letters to inquiry to Wright, but the architect was enjoying one of the busiest periods of his career, and even though he soon accepted the commission, it was more than ten years before he was able to begin the design of the Mardens’ house, and nearly twenty years before its construction was complete.

When Luis first wrote to the architect, the Mardens did not yet own a piece of land on which to build their dream house, but in 1944, while fishing along the banks of the Potomac—it was wartime, and they did not have enough gasoline ration coupons to drive to a preferred fishing spot along the Shenandoah—the couple became entranced by a site on the Virginia side of the river just above Little Falls. The next day, they called a real estate agent and learned that a property in that area was for sale, and they bought it shortly thereafter.

Finally, in 1952, Wright produced a design for the Mardens’ house. Because he was so busy with high-profile projects such as the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and advancing age made it increasingly difficult for him to travel, Wright had worked primarily from topographical maps of the Mardens’ property (on his sole visit to the site before construction began, Wright had been unable to reach the main viewpoint because the terrain was too steep for him to negotiate). When the
Mardens received the architect’s initial drawings. Luis was quite displeased with the design. It was apparent that Wright had merely recycled a scheme for one of his somewhat formulaic “football” houses—a term referring to the shape of the plan—and only slightly adapted it to fit the site overlooking the Potomac. In the interview for the Wright Archives, Ethel explained that the design “would have been fine on the prairie… but it wasn’t suitable at all for our place because it didn’t take advantage of the river.” This initial design had rooms on one side and a serene pond and a terrace on the other. Ethel added, “[My husband was indigent and] wrote Mr. Wright and said it was ridiculous to put a placid lily pond above a roaring cataract. They dubbed the house “Fontinalis,” a Latin term meaning roughly “at the spring” or “by the stream.” Not coincidentally, Sabatinius fontinalis is the formal Latin name for the brook trout, which was the Mardens’ favorite fish. As much as they loved the house, they rarely entertained, and indeed were reluctant to have visitors in general. Friends of the Mardens generally understood this to the fact that the house was always so cluttered with diving equipment, books, and countless souvenirs from their explorations. Given Wright’s insistence on orderliness, they may have been slightly embarrassed to be using the house so vigorously. As a result of the Mardens’ desire for privacy, their house remained one of the most private houses near the Potomac. In 1998, Luis, who had developed Parkinson’s Disease, moved to a nursing home. Ethel remained in the house, but she realized that the time was approaching when she and her husband would have to come to terms with the fate of their beloved house once neither of them could live there. In prosperous Washington, there were plenty of people who could afford to buy such a house. But who among these prospects would be willing and able to provide the proper stewardship for such a landmark?

By then however, major changes to the design were no longer possible. Miraculously, despite what would seem to be a significant lapse in the architect’s understanding of the site, the completed house nonetheless appears to be well integrated into its landscape and takes excellent advantage of the spectacular views to the rapids below.

In April 1934, as their house was nearing completion, the Mardens traveled to Phoenix for a conference, and while there, Ethel decided to visit Wright’s compound at Taliesin West. Wright sent word that he was unable to join Ethel for lunch because of another appointment. Ethel later learned that the appointment had been with his doctor. Wright died on April 9, two months short of his 60th birthday. The Mardens moved into their house on May 31. Over the next four decades, Luis and Ethel enjoyed their house to the fullest. They dubbed the house “Fontinalis,” a Latin term meaning roughly “at the spring” or “by the stream.” Not coincidentally, Sabatinius fontinalis is the formal Latin name for the brook trout, which was the Mardens’ favorite fish. As much as they loved the house, they rarely entertained, and indeed were reluctant to have visitors in general. Friends of the Mardens generally understood this to the fact that the house was always so cluttered with diving equipment, books, and countless souvenirs from their explorations. Given Wright’s insistence on orderliness, they may have been slightly embarrassed to be using the house so vigorously. As a result of the Mardens’ desire for privacy, their house remained one of the most private houses near the Potomac. In 1998, Luis, who had developed Parkinson’s Disease, moved to a nursing home. Ethel remained in the house, but she realized that the time was approaching when she and her husband would have to come to terms with the fate of their beloved house once neither of them could live there. In prosperous Washington, there were plenty of people who could afford to buy such a house. But who among these prospects would be willing and able to provide the proper stewardship for such a landmark?

Eugene Smith, a retired banker and executor of the Mardens’ estate, was aware that James V. Kimsey, co-founder of the company that became America Online (AOL), had bought the property next door to the Marden house and was building a palatial new residence for himself. When Smith ran into Ted Leonsis, another AOL executive at a party, he took advantage of the opportunity and asked Leonsis to approach Kimsey to see if he had any interest in acquiring the Marden house. Kimsey’s positive response came quickly, and in 2010, the purchase went through.

Kimsey knew that he would need a talented and knowledgeable team to oversee the restoration of the Marden house. He asked a number of people for recommendations, and one name kept coming up: Bailey C. Adams, of Adams General Contractors, Inc., in Chery Chase, Maryland. Adams already knew the house well; he had met Luis Marden a number of years earlier when he was looking for some rare Brazilian rosewood for a project on which he was working. As in so many areas, Luis had expertise in tropical woods, and was able to advise Adams on obtaining the wood he wanted. Kimsey interviewed Adams and concluded that he was the ideal person to handle the complex project. Richard Williams Architects served as preservation and interior architects, while Robin Rose, co-owner of the Cantilever art and design gallery in Bethesda, and Daniel Donnelly, who owns an eponymous shop in Alexandria, consulted on furniture and upholstery.

The results of the team’s efforts speak for themselves. The restored house is simultaneously authentic and fresh. Kitchen appliances have been upgraded, and a copper roof replaced the original tar covering, but on the whole, the building has been faithfully restored. Period furniture, though much of it is not original to the house, fits comfortably. The interior is inviting and livable.

Now that the project is finished, Kimsey is making good use of Wright’s work as a guesthouse and as an unparalleled venue for entertaining. It is not open to the public, but thanks to Kimsey, everyone can now at least get a glimpse of this residence through photographs such as those that accompany this article, which convey the house’s warmth, elegance, and timeless beauty. Luis Marden supposedly once declared that “One lifetime isn’t enough.” Fortunately for those who admire the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, however, the Marden house has now embarked on its second life.
By then however, major changes to the design were no longer possible. Miraculously, despite what would seem to be a significant lapse in the architect’s understanding of the site, the completed house nonetheless appears to be well integrated into its landscape and takes excellent advantage of the spectacular views to the rapids below.

In April 1959, as their house was nearing completion, the Mardens traveled to Phoenix for a conference, and while there, Ethel decided to visit Wright’s compound at Taliesin West. Wright sent word that he was unable to join Ethel for lunch because of another appointment. Ethel later learned that the appointment had been with his doctor; Wright died on April 5, two months short of his 92nd birthday. The Mardens moved into their house on May 31.

Over the next four decades, Luis and Ethel enjoyed their home to the fullest. They dubbed the house “Fontinalis,” a Latin term meaning roughly “at the spring” or “by the stream.” Not coincidentally, Salvelinus fontinalis is the formal Latin name for the brook trout, which was the Mardens’ favorite fish. As much as they loved the house, they rarely entertained, and indeed were reluctant to have visitors in general. Friends of the Mardens generally attribute this to the fact that the house was always so cluttered with diving equipment, books, and countless souvenirs from their explorations. Given Wright’s insistence on orderliness, they may have been slightly embarrassed to be using the house so vigorously. As a result of the Mardens’ desire for privacy, their house remained one of Wright’s lesser-known works.

In 1998, Luis, who had developed Parkinson’s Disease, moved to a nursing home. Ethel remained in the house, but she realized that the time was approaching when she and her husband would have to come to terms with the fate of their beloved house once neither of them could live there. In prosperous Washington, there were plenty of people who could afford to buy such a house. But who among these prospects would be willing and able to provide the proper stewardship for such a landmark?

Mardens received the architect’s initial drawings, Luis was quite displeased with the design. It was apparent that Wright had merely recycled a scheme for one of his somewhat formulaic “football” houses—a term referring to the shape of the plan—and only slightly adapted it to fit the site overlooking the Potomac. In the interview for the Wright Archives, Ethel explained that the design “would have been fine on the prairie…but it wasn’t suitable at all for our place because it didn’t take advantage of the river.” This initial design had rooms on one side and a serene pond and a terrace on the other. Ethel added, “[My husband was indignant and wrote Mr. Wright and said it was ridiculous to put a placid lily pond above a roaring cataract. And we didn’t hear from Mr. Wright for a while after that.”

Wright had appointed his apprentice Bob Behara to oversee the Marden project, and it was he who gingerly presented the clients’ specific concerns to the architect. Grudgingly, Wright agreed to eliminate the “placid lily pond,” and to honor the Mardens’ request for a “straight glass wall” overlooking the river. Once construction was well under way, Wright visited the site again. This time, he was able to reach the viewpoint, and upon doing so, freely admitted, “I had no idea it was so dramatic.”

Eugene Smith, a retired banker and executive of the Marden’s’ estate, was aware that James V. Kimsey, co-founder of the company that became America Online (AOL), had bought the property next door to the Marden house and was building a palatial new residence for himself. When Smith ran into Ted Leonsis, another AOL executive at a party, he took advantage of the opportunity and asked Leonsis to approach Kimsey to see if he had any interest in acquiring the Marden house. Kimsey’s positive response came quickly, and in 2010, the purchase went through.

Kimsey knew that he would need a talented and knowledgeable team to oversee the restoration of the Marden house. He asked a number of people for recommendations, and one name kept coming up: Bailey C. Adams, of Adams General Contractors, Inc., in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Adams already knew the house well; he had met Luis Marden a number of years earlier when he was looking for some rare Brazilian rosewood for a project on which he was working. As in so many areas, Luis had expertise in tropical woods, and was able to advise Adams on obtaining the wood he wanted. Kimsey interviewed Adams and concluded that he was the ideal person to handle the complex project. Richard Williams Architects served as preservation and interior architects, while

Robin Rose, co-owner of the Cantilever art and design gallery in Bethesda, and Daniel Donnelly, who owns an eponymous shop in Alexandria, consulted on furniture and upholstery.

The results of the team’s efforts speak for themselves. The restored house is simultaneously authentic and fresh. Kitchen appliances have been upgraded, and a copper roof replaced the original tar covering, but on the whole, the building has been faithfully restored. Period furniture, though much of it is not original to the house, fits comfortably. The interior is inviting and livable.

Now that the project is finished, Kimsey is making good use of Wright’s work as a guesthouse and as an unparalleled venue for entertaining. It is not open to the public, but thanks to Kimsey, everyone can now at least get a glimpse of this residence through photographs such as those that accompany this article, which convey the house’s warmth, elegance, and timeless beauty.

Luis Marden supposedly once declared that “One lifetime isn’t enough.” Fortunately for those who admire the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, however, the Marden house has now embarked on its second life.
The Marden House: An Interview with James Kimsey

Martin Muller: How did you purchase the Marden House come about?

James Kimsey: The Marden House is hard by my house. Every morning when I shave I'm looking out my window at that house, which has been a constant reminder that I needed to do something with it. When attorneys for the Mardens approached me to buy the house, Luis had moved into an assisted-living facility. Ethel was still living in the house, and they were both in their nineties. Given the amount of money that a house on the river costs, and given the amenities that were in that house, there was a concern that whoever would buy it wouldn't really live in it, so how would that work? The fact that I happened to live next door, and built a monument to wretched excess, which was my own taking my house manager and me to lunch at the Cosmos Club. I never saw the inside of the house until maybe six months to a year after I bought it. I went over to meet Ethel Marden, who I figured to be a very frail woman in her nineties, and instead I met this very robust woman who showed me around, and ended up taking my house manager and me to lunch at the Cosmos Club.

MM: How did you find Bailey Adams, the contractor who oversaw the restoration?

JK: I have special dinners over there. I’ve had some quiet time—an hour here and there—and sometimes I’ll be like Squire Worthy and walk the properties. It’s not a consuming passion of mine, but owning a Frank Lloyd Wright house is pretty cool, I have to say. Somebody I know was explaining my life to someone who didn’t know me, and he went through the whole litany of explanations and ended up saying that I have a Frank Lloyd Wright house, and the other guy looked at me and said, “Okay, that does it. Nobody has a Frank Lloyd Wright house!”

The first time I was going up this summer, I was going to spend the night there was Patti Austin, the singer, who said it was a Zen experience for her. She lived there for almost a week. You do get a different feeling when you’re in that house—certainly different from being in my house. As I’m sure you know, Taliesin [the name of Wright’s compound in Wisconsin] is Welsh for “shining brow,” and he loved on the brow of hills. The Marden House is sited that way, and it is so arranged as to really bring the river into the house. In pictures, you can see that expanse of glass that sits right on Little Falls, though you really have to see it first-hand to appreciate what Wright did. In short, for me, it’s been a joy, as it was for the Mardens. They had a wine cellar down in the basement with a little plaque on the door that said ‘Ice habitat Felicitas’—“Here resides happiness.”

MM: How do you find Bailey Adams, the contractor who oversaw the restoration?

JK: I have special dinners over there. I’ve had some quiet time—an hour here and there—and sometimes I’ll be like Squire Worthy and walk the properties. It’s not a consuming passion of mine, but owning a Frank Lloyd Wright house is pretty cool, I have to say. Somebody I know was explaining my life to someone who didn’t know me, and he went through the whole litany of explanations and ended up saying that I have a Frank Lloyd Wright house, and the other guy looked at me and said, “Okay, that does it. Nobody has a Frank Lloyd Wright house!”

The first time I was going up this summer, I was going to spend the night there was Patti Austin, the singer, who said it was a Zen experience for her. She lived there for almost a week. You do get a different feeling when you’re in that house—certainly different from being in my house. As I’m sure you know, Taliesin [the name of Wright’s compound in Wisconsin] is Welsh for “shining brow,” and he loved on the brow of hills. The Marden House is sited that way, and it is so arranged as to really bring the river into the house. In pictures, you can see that expanse of glass that sits right on Little Falls, though you really have to see it first-hand to appreciate what Wright did. In short, for me, it’s been a joy, as it was for the Mardens. They had a wine cellar down in the basement with a little plaque on the door that said ‘Ice habitat Felicitas’—“Here resides happiness.”

MM: How did you find Bailey Adams, the contractor who oversaw the restoration?

JK: I have special dinners over there. I’ve had some quiet time—an hour here and there—and sometimes I’ll be like Squire Worthy and walk the properties. It’s not a consuming passion of mine, but owning a Frank Lloyd Wright house is pretty cool, I have to say. Somebody I know was explaining my life to someone who didn’t know me, and he went through the whole litany of explanations and ended up saying that I have a Frank Lloyd Wright house, and the other guy looked at me and said, “Okay, that does it. Nobody has a Frank Lloyd Wright house!”

The first time I was going up this summer, I was going to spend the night there was Patti Austin, the singer, who said it was a Zen experience for her. She lived there for almost a week. You do get a different feeling when you’re in that house—certainly different from being in my house. As I’m sure you know, Taliesin [the name of Wright’s compound in Wisconsin] is Welsh for “shining brow,” and he loved on the brow of hills. The Marden House is sited that way, and it is so arranged as to really bring the river into the house. In pictures, you can see that expanse of glass that sits right on Little Falls, though you really have to see it first-hand to appreciate what Wright did. In short, for me, it’s been a joy, as it was for the Mardens. They had a wine cellar down in the basement with a little plaque on the door that said ‘Ice habitat Felicitas’—“Here resides happiness.”

MM: How did you find Bailey Adams, the contractor who oversaw the restoration?
The Marden House: An Interview with James Kimsey

Martin Muller: How did you purchase the Marden House come about?

James Kimsey: The Marden House is hard by my house. Every morning when I shave I’m looking out my window at that house, which has been a constant reminder that I needed to do something with it. When attorneys for the Mardens approached me to buy the house, Luis had moved into an assisted-living facility. Ethel was still living in the house, and they were both in their nineties. Given the amount of money that a house on the river costs, and given the amenities that were in that house, there was a concern that whoever would buy it wouldn’t really live in it, so how would that work? The fact that I happened to live next door, and built a monument to Ethel, andEthel lived in this house for almost 50 years—you really can’t get to know him a bit, but Ethel is really interesting. She held the women’s wretched excess, which was my own. She wanted to buy the house, made me the clear and logical buyer would that work? The fact that I happened to live next door, and built a monument to Ethel, andEthel lived in this house for almost 50 years—you really can’t get to know him a bit, but Ethel is really interesting. She held the women’s—there’s a picture of him that Luis took while diving. Philippe Cousteau, Jacques’s grandson, spent a lot of his young childhood in the Marden house.

The house was full of stuff when I walked in for the first time. I could tell that Ethel went to some trouble to tidy it up before me, but the place was still packed with stuff. Not a square inch of anything didn’t have stuff on it. Now, we have put her husband’s picture up, and have some of his possessions still on display, so while it’s clearly a monument to Frank Lloyd Wright, I think secondarily it’s a monument to the Mardens.

We also kept a lot of Luis’s books, so just looking at the library he left, and walking around the house, there is always some little quirk to dig down into. I came across a picture of me in Vietnam—the Mardens had put it in a Frank Lloyd Wright frame. I don’t even remember that picture! It’s me sitting with an AK-47 reading a Playboy. It was 1965. A six-year-old picture of me—I was rather shocking when I saw it. They had found it somewhere. It’s fascinating to see how this couple lived in this house for almost 50 years—you really can just see how it worked for them.

MM: After you bought the Marden House, were you besieged by preservationists and Wright aficionados eager to tell you what to do with it?

JK: The article in The Washington Post [August 21, 2005] made it sound as if I had this Greek chorus behind me, but nobody ever sat me down and lectured me about the house. Some people actually even said they had ideas of how I could change it. But if I renovated and changed it, over time, it would lessen its value—and I don’t mean monetary value. It would be a Frank Lloyd Wright house modified to suit my taste. Well, nobody cares about my taste. They all care about Frank Lloyd Wright. So I made a very conscious decision that I should restore it.

This became clear to me when I would go over there and I would say, “Maybe I should turn the garage into a bedroom, or maybe I should take this closet out and put in a window or cut a hole in this wall,” and there were gaps of horror that I would even contemplate changing a line of a Frank Lloyd Wright work. This was probably a binary decision—either I would restore it faithfully, or I would screw with it and risk the ire of a whole Frank Lloyd Wright cadre. Well, the thing of it is, what’s the point of having a Frank Lloyd Wright house if it’s not a true Frank Lloyd Wright house?

So other than taking off the tar-and-gravel roof and putting the copper roof on, which I think was aesthetically good for me, because that’s what I look at every morning when I shave, there have been very few changes. Friends gave me some cute metal birdhouses for the house, there’s been some general landscaping to brighten it up with flowers, but mostly it’s faithfully restored and I’m very happy with it. Obviously I have added some electronic stuff that Wright couldn’t have conceived of. I put a TV in, but it’s behind a cabinet. We had to find one that fit the cabinet, which we did.

MM: Were you a Wright fan before you undertook this project?

JK: I certainly knew who Frank Lloyd Wright was, and had a sense that he was the inspiration for Howard Roark in The Fountainhead. This guy’s always been kind of fascinating to me, but I wasn’t an addict. I did make it a point to go to a couple of exhibitions about Wright’s work—it was kind of interesting to see his stuff. Now I’m beginning to understand the cult that surrounds Frank Lloyd Wright. I am going up this summer sometime to see Taliesin West. Actually the first guest to spend the night there was Patti Austin, the singer, who said it was a Zen experience for her. She lived there for about a week. You do get a different feeling when you’re in that house—certainly different from being in my house. As I’m sure you know, Taliesin (the name of Wright’s compound in Wisconsin) is Welsh for “shining brow,” and he loved to build on the brow of hills. The Marden House is sited that way, and it is so arranged as to really bring the river into the house. In pictures, you can see that expanse of glass that sits right on Little Falls, though you really have to see it first-hand to appreciate what Wright did. In short, for me, it’s been a joy, as it was for the Mardens. They had a wine cellar down in the basement with a little plaque on the door that said “Hic habitat felicitas” —“Here resides happiness.”
“Coonley” and “Wright”

by Avery Coonley Faulkner

Avery Coonley Faulkner is an architect with a long career in the Washington area.

THE AVERY COONLEY HOUSE, in Riverside, Illinois, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and completed in 1908. The Coonleys, who were my grandparents, had spent considerable time going to architectural exhibitions at the Chicago Art Institute and to libraries before asking Wright to be their architect. The design process was long but interesting and involved a large residence, a caretaker’s house, and a stable with living quarters above. Mr. Wright and my grandfather struggled, at times, over costs, but the architect was creative and my grandmother was clearly impressed with his brilliant and unique approach to space, decoration, lighting, and a host of other issues which took time and money to resolve. The two men referred to one another by their last names: my grandfather was “Coonley” and the architect was “Wright.” This may have been typical for that era in the Midwest.

My grandfather had horses to pull a carriage which was used for many purposes including trips to the train station for the commute to work in Chicago. As the house neared completion, my grandfather telephoned the architect to say that he needed a large carriage step at the front entrance in order for guests to be able to step down from a carriage. At a meeting the next afternoon, Wright said, “Now listen, Coonley, I think you should live in this house for a year and, if at the end of the year you still want the carriage step, I’ll design the most beautiful step you’ve ever seen.” He went on to describe special precast concrete planters that would be included and other amenities. When he finished, my grandfather said, “Let me tell you something, Wright. I want that carriage step now, but if, at the end of the year, I don’t like it, I promise I’ll have it removed.” Wright left in some anger but, in a few weeks, the drawings for an elaborate arrival step, complete with planters, were delivered and it was constructed.

Avery Coonley waited patiently for exactly a year and then telephoned the architect, saying, “Wright, I think you were right about the step, and I’m ready to tear it out. I just wondered if you’d like to see it before it goes.” Wright took the train to Riverside the next day and pleaded with “Coonley” not to remove it. When Mr. Wright left, my grandfather, who was a hurdler in college, bounded up the steps to the now famous second floor living room with howls of laughter and his first genuine sense of victory!

Bridge Basics
Recognized by AAM

The National Building Museum’s new Bridge Basics Program Kit, a self-contained educational curriculum package using bridge design as a tool for learning about math and other subjects, received an honorable mention in the Educational Resources category of the 2006 Museum Publications Design Competition of the American Association of Museums (AAM). The other winners in this category for 2006 were the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Based on the popular Bridge Basics program that has been offered at the Museum for a number of years, the kit presents bridges as structural solutions to specific design problems, and introduces students to basic bridge types such as truss, beam, arch, cable-stayed, and suspension. Students work in teams to build model bridges that address hypothetical transportation problems while balancing issues of aesthetics, geography, materials, and cost. The kit contains everything a teacher needs to conduct activities for students in grades five through nine.

The Bridge Basics Program Kit is available to educators across the country through the Museum’s website, www.nbmn.org. The cost is $110 per kit, with a ten percent discount for teachers. The kit has been produced in partnership with the Construction Industry Round Table.

Museum Hosts
2006 Cherry Blossom Festival

The annual National Cherry Blossom Festival is a veritable rite of spring, celebrating Washington’s famous Japanese cherry trees and their delicate flowers. This past March 25, for the first time, the National Building Museum hosted the opening ceremonies for the festival, as part of an all-day family-oriented event that offered an array of activities based in part on the Museum’s popular Origami Architecture programs from previous years. The result was a highly successful festival that drew nearly 6,500 people to the Museum, the fourth highest attendance for a single-day event in the institution’s history.

Presented in cooperation with the National Cherry Blossom Festival organization and managed by Linder and Associates, an event planning firm, the program included various design-oriented activities, such as one in which children created miniature Japanese-style gardens. One long-time Museum volunteer reported that this particular program generated an unprecedented number of compliments from excited parents.

The event also attracted a great deal of local media attention. WDC-Channel 4 did a story about the festival on the previous day, and WJLA-Channel 7 had a live video feed from the opening ceremony. Local cable news outlets covered the event extensively, and The Washington Post and other print media also ran prominent stories.

The Museum thanks all of the volunteers and participants who made this wonderful family festival possible.

The 2006 Cherry Blossom Festival was a wonderful family festival possible.
“Coonley” and “Wright”

by Avery Coonley Faulkner

Avery Coonley Faulkner is an architect with a long career in the Washington area.

The Avery Coonley House, in Riverside, Illinois, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and completed in 1908. The Coonleys, who were my grandparents, had spent considerable time going to architectural exhibitions at the Chicago Art Institute and to libraries before asking Wright to be their architect.

The design process was long but interesting and involved a large residence, a caretaker’s house, and a stable with living quarters above. Mr. Wright and my grandfather struggled, at times, over costs, but the architect was creative and my grandmother was clearly impressed with his brilliant and unique approach to space, decoration, lighting, and a host of other issues which took time and money to resolve. The two men referred to one another by their last names: my grandfather was “Coonley” and the architect was “Wright.” This may have been typical for that era in the Midwest.

My grandfather had horses to pull a carriage which was used for many purposes including trips to the train station for the commute to work in Chicago. As the house neared completion, my grandfather telephoned the architect to say that he needed a large carriage step at the front entrance in order for guests to be able to step down from a carriage. At a meeting the next afternoon, Wright said, “Now listen, Coonley, I think you should live in this house for a year and, if at the end of the year you still want the carriage step, I’ll design the most beautiful step you’ve ever seen.” He went on to describe special precast concrete planters that would be included and other amenities. When he finished, my grandfather said, “Let me tell you something, Wright. I want that carriage step now, but if, at the end of the year, I don’t like it, I promise I’ll have it removed.” Wright left in some anger but, in a few weeks, the drawings for an elaborate arrival step, complete with planters, were delivered and it was constructed.

Avery Coonley waited patiently for exactly a year and then telephoned the architect, saying, “Wright, I think you were right about the step, and I’m ready to tear it out. I just wondered if you’d like to see it before it goes.” Wright took the train to Riverside the next day and pleaded with “Coonley” not to remove it. When Mr. Wright left, my grandfather, who was a hurdler in college, bounded up the steps to the now famous second floor living room with howls of laughter and his first genuine sense of victory!

Bridge Basics Recognized by AAM

The National Building Museum’s new Bridge Basics Program Kit, a self-contained educational curriculum package using bridge design as a tool for learning about math and other subjects, received an honorable mention in the Educational Resources category of the 2006 Museum Publications Design Competition of the American Association of Museums (AAM). The other winners in this category for 2006 were the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Based on the popular Bridge Basics program that has been offered at the Museum for a number of years, the kit presents bridges as structural solutions to specific design problems, and introduces students to basic bridge types such as truss, beam, arch, cable-stayed, and suspension. Students work in teams to build model bridges that address hypothetical transportation problems while balancing issues of aesthetics, geography, materials, and cost. The kit contains everything a teacher needs to conduct activities for students in grades five through nine.

The Bridges Program Kit is available to educators across the country through the Museum’s website, www.nbm.org. The cost is $110 per kit, with a ten percent discount for teachers. The kit has been produced in partnership with the Construction Industry Round Table.

Museum Hosts 2006 Cherry Blossom Festival

The annual National Cherry Blossom Festival is a veritable rite of spring, celebrating Washington’s famous Japanese cherry trees and their delicate flowers. This past March 25, for the first time, the National Building Museum hosted the opening ceremonies for the festival, as part of an all-day family-oriented event that offered an array of activities based in part on the Museum’s popular Origami Architecture programs from previous years. The result was a highly successful festival that drew nearly 6,300 people to the Museum, the fourth highest attendance for a single-day event in the institution’s history.

Presented in cooperation with the National Cherry Blossom Festival organization and managed by Linder and Associates, an event planning firm, the program included various design-oriented activities, such as one in which children created miniature Japanese-style gardens.

The event also attracted a great deal of local media attention. WRC-Channel 4 did a story about the festival on the previous day, and WJLA-Channel 7 had a live video feed from the opening ceremony. Local cable news outlets covered the event extensively, and The Washington Post and other print media also ran prominent stories.

The Museum thanks all of the volunteers and participants who made this wonderful family festival possible.
**Liquid Stone: Read All About It (in English or French!)**

In response to enthusiastic public demand, a catalog based on the Museum’s recent exhibition **Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete** has been published by Princeton Architectural Press. Martin Moeller, senior vice president and curator at the National Building Museum, says the catalog is an “exploration of how a common and seemingly banal material — concrete—can be used to create poetic and seductive structures.” Moeller served as both the exhibition curator and co-editor for the publication.

The book includes descriptive text, photographs, and drawings of all of the contemporary architectural projects in the exhibition, which ran from June 2004 to January 2006. It also features information about virtually all of the new technologies and products that appeared in the show. In addition, the book contains several essays by prominent historians, architects, and engineers with expertise in concrete design and technology. These essays expand upon the content of a symposium hosted by the School of Architecture at Princeton University in October 2004. Jean-Louis Cohen, of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, coordinated the symposium, which was directly inspired by the Liquid Stone exhibition. Cohen also co-edited the catalog with Moeller.

The Liquid Stone book was published simultaneously in French under the title *Architectures du béton: Nouvelles vagues, nouvelles recherches*, by Editions Le Moniteur press, through a cooperative agreement with Princeton Architectural Press. The French version of the book debuted at the opening of an exhibition called *Bétons: étonnez-vous!* (which roughly translates as “Concrete; Surprise Yourself!”) at the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. The French exhibition includes a number of models and material samples that also appeared in Liquid Stone, and which are on loan to the Museum from the National Building Museum.

The catalog is available through the Museum Shop. Publication was made possible by funding from Lafarge, the exhibition’s sole sponsor.

**New Trustees**

The newest member of the National Building Museum Board of Trustees is **HOLLIS S. McLoughlin**, who is senior vice president and chief of staff at Freddie Mac (the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation). Prior to joining Freddie Mac, he was chief operating officer of the Hardware Corporation of America, and later, of ISB Solutions. He also served as an assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury from 1989 to 1993. A graduate of Harvard College, McLoughlin has served on the boards of the National Gallery of Art, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, and the Metropolitan Club of Washington, D.C.

The Museum also recently welcomed several new ex officio trustees: **DIRK KEMPThORNE** was confirmed as the 49th secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior in May of this year. Before his appointment to the president’s Cabinet, Kempthorne was twice elected governor of Idaho. He also served one term in the U.S. Senate, before which he was mayor of the City of Boise.

Also in May, **LURITA ALEXIS DOAN** was confirmed as the 18th administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration, making her the first woman to serve as the agency’s chief executive. She was previously president, CEO, and sole owner of a technology company that she founded in 1990.

**CHRISTINE McENTEe** became executive vice president/CEO of The American Institute of Architects in February 2006. Formerly CEO of the American College of Cardiology, McEntee also worked with the American Hospital Association. She holds degrees in nursing and health administration.

**DAVID L. WInSTEAD** was appointed as the commissioner of the Public Buildings Service of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) on October 3, 2005. Before joining GSA, he was a partner with the law firm of Holland and Knight LLP, and previously served as the State of Maryland’s Secretary of Transportation. Winstead holds a bachelor’s degree from Denison University, a Master of Business Administration from Columbia University, and a Juris Doctorate from the Catholic University of America.
Liquid Stone: Read All About It (in English or French!)

In response to enthusiastic public demand, a catalog based on the Museum’s recent exhibition Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete has been published by Princeton Architectural Press. Martin Moeller, senior vice president and curator at the National Building Museum, says the catalog is an “exploration of how a common and seemingly banal material—concrete—can be used to create poetic and seductive structures.” Moeller served as both the exhibition curator and co-editor for the publication.

The book includes descriptive text, photographs, and drawings of all of the contemporary architectural projects in the exhibition, which ran from June 2004 to January 2006. It also features information about virtually all of the new technologies and products that appeared in the show. In addition, the book contains several essays by prominent historians, architects, and engineers with expertise in concrete design and technology. These essays expand upon the content of a symposium hosted by the School of Architecture at Princeton University in October 2004. Jean-Louis Cohen, of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, coordinated the symposium, which was directly inspired by the Liquid Stone exhibition. Cohen also co-edited the catalog with Moeller.

The Liquid Stone book was published simultaneously in French under the title Architectures du béton: Nouvelles vagues, nouvelles recherches, by Editions Le Moniteur press, through a cooperative agreement with Princeton Architectural Press. The French version of the book debuted at the opening of an exhibition called Bétons: étonnez-vous! (which roughly translates as “Concrete; Surprise Yourself!”) at the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. The French exhibition includes a number of models and material samples that also appeared in Liquid Stone, and which are on loan to the Museum from the National Building Museum.

The catalog is available through the Museum Shop. Publication was made possible by funding from Lafarge, the exhibition’s sole sponsor.

New Trustees

The newest member of the National Building Museum Board of Trustees is Hollis S. McLoughlin, who is senior vice president and chief of staff at Freddie Mac (the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation). Prior to joining Freddie Mac, he was chief operating officer of the Hardware Corporation of America, and later, of ISB Solutions. He also served as an assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury from 1992 to 1993. A graduate of Harvard College, McLoughlin has served on the boards of the National Gallery of Art, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, and the Metropolitan Club of Washington, DC.

The Museum also recently welcomed several new ex officio trustees: Dirk Kempthorne was confirmed as the 49th secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior in May of this year. Before his appointment to the president’s Cabinet, Kempthorne was twice elected governor of Idaho. He also served one term in the U.S. Senate, before which he was mayor of the City of Boise.

Also in May, Lurita Alexis Doan was confirmed as the 18th administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration, making her the first woman to serve as the agency’s chief executive. She was previously president, CEO, and sole owner of a technology company that she founded in 1990.

Christine McEntee became executive vice president/CEO of The American Institute of Architects in February 2006. Formerly CEO of the American College of Cardiology, McEntee also worked with the American Hospital Association. She holds degrees in nursing and health administration.

David L. Winstead was appointed as the commissioner of the Public Buildings Service of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) on October 3, 2005. Before joining GSA, he was a partner with the law firm of Holland and Knight LLP, and previously served as the State of Maryland’s Secretary of Transportation. Winstead holds a bachelor’s degree from Denison University, a Master of Business Administration from Columbia University, and a Juris Doctorate from the Catholic University of America.
Thank You!

The Museum thanks the following individuals, companies, associations and agencies for gifts of $25,000 or more from December 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018. These generous gifts provide essential support for the Museum’s exhibitions, education programs, and endowment funds. Some of the contributors listed below are in partial fulfillment of larger pledges.

$100,000 and above
Bengtson & Company
The J. N. Logan Foundation
The David P. & Ingrid D. T. Rogers Foundation

$50,000–$99,999
The American Museum of the Moving Image

SUPPORT
**Thank You!**

The Museum thanks the following individuals, companies, associations and agencies for gifts or for services rendered between December 2005 and May 2006. These generous gifts and professional support are essential for the Museum's exhibitions, education programs, and endowment funds. Some of the contributions listed below are in partial fulfillment of larger pledges.

### SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution Range</th>
<th>Contributors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| $100,000 – $200,000 | Morgan Buell & Co.  
 | The Nathan Cummings Foundation  
 | The Home Depot Foundation |
| $250,000 – $499,999 | Bloch Home Appliances  
 | Clark Construction Group, LLC  
 | Large North America Inc.  
 | Phoenix Concert Association  
 | Royal Netherlands Embassy  
 | Turner Construction Company |
| $500,000 – $999,999 | The American Institute of Architects  
 | The Association of American Commercial Art  
 | The Boston Preservation Committee  
 | Concerts in the Parks  
 | International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Construction Workers  
 | The Koch Foundation  |
| $1,000,000 – $1,999,999 | The American Institute of Architects  
 | The American Institute of Architects Students Association  
 | The Bank of America  
 | The Boston Preservation Committee  
 | The Dallas Morning News  
 | Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA)  
 | Fred and Eleanor M. Burgoyne  
 | The Ford Foundation  
 | Foundation Support  
 | ITS, Inc.  
 | J.C. Penney  
 | Laborers’ International Union of North America  
 | The Lee Foundation  |
Mystery Building

The Mystery Building from the Winter 2005–06 issue was the Manhattan Building, which is actually in Chicago. Designed by William LeBaron Jenney, and completed in 1891, it was one of the earliest tall buildings supported entirely by a steel structural frame. A set of decorative elevator shaft grills from the building, removed during a renovation, is on view in the Museum’s ongoing exhibition Glimpses Revealed: Highlights from the Collection.

The Manhattan Building was correctly identified by: Karla Barber, of Lansing, Michigan; Erin Blake, of Washington, DC; Gregory Bushart, of McLean, Virginia; John Morris Dixon, of Old Greenwich, Connecticut; Wilbert R. Habsbrouck, of Chicago (whose firm worked on the renovation of the Manhattan Building in the 1980s); Eric Jenkins, of Washington, DC; Kyle Johnson, of Brooklyn, New York; Mike Larson and Jerry Marsady, of Washington, DC; Lawrence Eric Levine, of New Castle, Delaware; and former National Building Museum staff member Michelle Rinehart. Two respondents pointed out that critics have not always viewed the building favorably. One (now outdated) edition of Chicago’s Famous Buildings dismissed the design of the Manhattan Building as “not particularly impressive,” thanks to the profusion of materials and bays that “produce an effect of disunity.” Current opinions of the structure are generally more favorable. This issue’s Mystery Building boasts a bold, Greek Revival façade. Can you name the building, its architects, and its location? Send responses to: Mystery Building, National Building Museum, 401 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The National Building Museum is a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the maximum allowable extent of the law. To obtain a copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement, please call 202.272.2448 ext. 3500.

M E M B E R S H I P A P P L I C A T I O N

Members receive reduced admission to education programs, subscriptions to Blueprints and the Calendar of Events, invitations to exhibition openings, and discounts on Museum Shop purchases. For more information about benefits, as well as corporate membership opportunities, please call 202.272.2448, ext. 3200.

☐ Yes, I want to become a member of the National Building Museum! Please begin my membership at the following level:
☐ Corinthian Pillar $2500
☐ Corinthian $1000
☐ Contributing Member $500
☐ Sustaining Member $250
☐ Supporting Member $100
☐ Family/Dual $60
☐ Individual $40
☐ Senior/Student $30

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY/STATE/ZIP
EMAIL
DAYTIME PHONE

☐ My check payable to the National Building Museum is enclosed.
☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ American Express
☐ Visa
☐ MasterCard

SIGNATURE
DATE

MARK AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD

You can become a Museum member in any of the following ways:

BY MAIL: National Building Museum
401 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001
BY FAX: 202.376.3436
BY PHONE: 202.272.2448
BY INTERNET: www.NBM.org

The National Building Museum is a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the maximum allowable extent of the law. To obtain a copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement, please call 202.272.2448 ext. 3500.
The National Building Museum explores the world we build for ourselves—from our homes, skycrapers and public buildings to our parks, bridges, and cities. Through exhibitions, education programs, and publications, the Museum seeks to educate the public about achievements in architecture, design, engineering, urban planning, and construction.

The Museum is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, associations, and public agencies.
The Pope-Leighey House

No Ordinary Clients:
The Story of Luis and Ethel Marden

An Interview with James Kimsey

"Coonley" and "Wright"

Prairie Skyscraper:
Frank Lloyd Wright’s
Price Tower
Through September 17, 2006

The only true skyscraper
designed by Wright that was
actually constructed, the Price
Tower is a glimmering jewel
of a building. The exhibition
includes original drawings,
fascinating samples of corre-
spondence between Wright and
the project’s client, furniture,
and a large model of the tower.

The Green House:
New Directions in
Sustainable Architecture
and Design
Through June 3, 2007

The second in a series of major
National Building Museum
exhibitions on sustainable
design, The Green House begins
with a full-scale, furnished
replica of an environmentally-
friendly house. Also featured
are photographs and models of
exemplary houses and
apartment buildings from
around the world, plus a
resource room with many
eamples of materials that are
both green and attractive.

Cityscapes Revealed:
Highlights from
the Collection
Long-term

The first exhibition presenting
a cross-section of items from
the Museum’s own collection,
including drawings, photo-
graphs, material samples,
and artifacts from National
Historic Landmarks.

Washington: Symbol and City
Long-term

A seminal exhibition about
the complex city that the
Museum calls home.
Spectacular, large-scale historic
and contemporary models
give visitors an intimate
understanding of the city’s past and possible future.