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# Wisconsin State Journal

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

MADISON, WISCONSIN

## ADDING TO A WRIGHT CHURCH



The view from the windows of the semicircular addition to the First Unitarian Church provides a mirror image of the addition and its connection to the original Frank Lloyd Wright-designed church. Architects chose a gentle curve to contrast with the sharp angles Wright chose.

# Unthinkable curve graces his design

By **RON SEELY**  
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In the mid-1940s, when Frank Lloyd Wright was being considered to design a new church for Madison's First Unitarian Society, the choice of architect prompted considerable disagreement among congregation members.

One member called Wright "arrogant, artificial, brazen ... a publicity seeker, an exhibitionist, egotist ... unscrupulous, untrustworthy, erratic and capricious." And, she added, she didn't like his architecture very much either.

Even so, Wright was chosen and after a difficult four years, the congregation had a new church that has since become a Madison landmark and a building that is considered one of Wright's most important and beautiful designs.

Now, some 60 years later, a just-completed \$9.1 million addition stands alongside Wright's dramatic, soaring roof.

And though the construction of the addition was not quite as tumultuous as the building of the original



ABOVE: Among the green features of the addition is a roof planted in sedum, which will need to be weeded but not mowed. The roof helps control runoff and keeps the building cool in the summer.

LEFT: A sculpture of a child, created by a congregation member, graces an interior courtyard of the new addition.

### FAST FACTS

**What:** A \$9.1 million addition to the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed First Unitarian Society church, a National Historical Landmark.

**Location:** 900 University Bay Drive.

**Architect:** Kubala Washatko Architects, Cedarburg.

**Builder:** Findorff Construction.

**Size:** 21,000 square feet.

**Green features:** Geothermal heating and cooling systems, green roof planted with sedum, abundance of natural daylight and ventilation, dual-flush toilets and waterless urinals.

Please see **CHURCH**, Page A7

# New future ahead for Edgewater

New owner plans to expand, refurbish art deco-style hotel

By **DEAN MOSIMAN**  
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The venerable Edgewater Hotel in Downtown Madison may be refurbished, expanded and offer more public access, becoming perhaps a "Union Terrace for adults."

Robert Dunn, president of the Hammes Co., a prominent international developer with Wisconsin roots, is buying the art deco-style hotel — host to notables from Elvis Presley to George H.W. Bush — with an intent of returning the property to its former glory and more.

"It's a unique piece of property in the market," said Dunn, whose company has handled projects from Lambeau Field to Beijing Olympic National Stadium and is the nation's largest



health-care facility developer. "This is an opportunity for it to be something much more than it is today."

Edgewater president and general manager Scott Faulkner will remain with the hotel, which has been operated by his family since it opened

Please see **HOTEL**, Page A8

**READERS' CHOICE** Vote at [www.madison.com/WSJ](http://www.madison.com/WSJ)

# State pension fund declines; effect unclear

By **JUDY NEWMAN**  
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If you think your personal retirement account took a hit from the skidding stock market, consider this:

The value of the Wisconsin Retirement System's Core Fund equity holdings dropped \$2 billion last Friday alone.

And that was before this week's stunning slides in the Dow Jones industrials: 504 points Monday and 449 points Wednesday. The impact of this week's losses is not yet available.

"That's a huge thing and we're certainly going to feel that," said Vicki Hearing, spokeswoman for the state investment Board, which manages the state retirement accounts.

But it doesn't mean state pension checks will dry up — or even decrease — any time soon.

The Core Fund, previously called the Fixed Fund, would have to fall more than 16 percent before the \$40,000 current and former government employees who contribute to it would see their retirement balances or pension checks reduced, said David Stella, secretary of the Department of Em-

Please see **FUND**, Page A8

### WATCH LIST

The state investment Board, which manages the Wisconsin Retirement System funds, has holdings in five financial services companies that have faced troubles in recent weeks. But they make up a relatively small percentage of the total \$79.4 billion in the Core and Variable Trust Funds, as of Aug. 31.

Company	Stock	Bonds
Merrill Lynch*	\$44.3	\$98.2
Lehman Bros.*	\$5.9	\$95.5
AIG*	\$95	\$44.3
Fannie Mae*	\$10.7	
Freddie Mac*	\$4.3	

\* As of Sept. 12, in millions

As of Sept. 8, in millions

SOURCE: State Investment Board



### MORE IN BUSINESS

The stock market took another nosedive Wednesday as the American banking system appeared even shakier and investors worried that the financial crisis is spinning so far out of control that even government rescues can't stop it. **PAGE C1**

# 600 mailed checks missing

Probe seeks to locate UW-Madison financial aid and tuition refund checks sent to students.

By **DEBORAH ZIFF**  
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More than 600 UW-Madison students are waiting for overdue financial aid and tuition refund checks from the uni-

versity, a few worth as much as \$10,000.

The checks, about \$1.6 million in total, are more than two weeks late.

Bursar Cathie Easter said she got a receipt from a Milwaukee branch of the post office that the check vendor, Milwaukee-based A.B. Data, put the checks in the mail on Aug. 29.

What happened to the checks after that is a mystery. U.S. Postal Service spokes-

woman Marge Oehlke said the post office is investigating but declined to discuss what might have happened.

"This is a highly unusual circumstance," she said. "We are doing everything we possibly can to continue to search for the mailing."

UW-Madison sent e-mails Monday to affected students letting them know they could put a stop-order on the checks and the university would re-

issue them.

Recognizing that some students depend on the money for food and rent, the school is also offering them short-term, zero-percent interest loans.

Ben Pfeilstifter was in line at the bursar's office Wednesday to put a stop-order on his check.

"I'm pretty much OK," he said of his financial situation.

Please see **CHECKS**, Page A8

### TODAY'S WEATHER

Partly to mostly sunny  
HIGH 72  
LOW 54  
DETAILS ON BACK OF THIS SECTION

### FIVE ON THE FLY

**1 Celebrating Madison:** Descendants of President James Madison and the slaves who lived on his plantation, Montpelier, joined U.S. Supreme Court justices and others Wednesday to celebrate the end of a five-year, \$24 million architectural renovation.

**2 Wide Web-outs:** The power blackouts that followed Hurricane Ike have caused the widest outage for U.S. Internet service since 2003, according to a firm that tracks Internet connectivity.

**3 Mailing Day:** A 42-cent commemorative stamp being released today features a portrait of movie star Bette Davis as she appeared in 1950's "All About Eve."



**4 Economic benefits:** Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next 12 years will benefit California's economy and save its residents money, according to a report by state air regulators.

**5 Law upheld:** A federal appeals court upheld an Arizona law that penalizes businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants and requires them to verify the employment status of their workers.

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Photos by CRAIG SCHREINER - State Journal

The addition to the First Unitarian Church features natural surfaces, such as pine from Georgia and red pine pillars from the Menominee tribe's sustainable forest.

# Church | Architect's legacy loomed large

Continued from Page A1

church, members of the congregation who helped guide the project say that it sometimes seemed as if the demanding architect was reaching from the grave to grab the architectural drawings and bend the work to his will.

"We had to capture the greatness of Frank Lloyd Wright's work without becoming intimidated," said David Weber, who served as a liaison between the congregation and the builders and architects.



Services will now take place in a new 500-seat auditorium while the auditorium in the original church will be reserved for special events.

## Major challenges

The Rev. Michael Schuler, the parish minister, said that in the beginning of the 10-year remodeling and expansion project, the challenge sometimes seemed overwhelming.

There were the needs of a burgeoning congregation to meet — 1,500 members now compared to 150 when the church was built — and the complications of dealing with the legacy and looming shadow of Wright.

## Circular design

The architects, Kubala Washatko Architects, of Cedarburg, eventually came up with a circular design that wraps the addition around the outside of the lot and keeps the focus of visitors on the Wright building.

From anywhere within the addition, looking out through the tall, glass walls, one's gaze is drawn to Wright's original chapel with its inspiring roof (Wright took as a model for his roof a pair of hands clasped in prayer).



**Brian Joiner**, a church member, helped design the building's green features.

While the volunteers in the 1940s called themselves the Stonehauers, this latest group of workers dubbed themselves Stonehauers: the Next Generation.

"There was a great sense of re-engagement among members," Joiner said. "It really did a lot to build community."

When the budget on the original church continued to rise (the church ended up costing \$214,000, nearly triple Wright's original estimate), congregation members pitched in to haul stone from a local quarry.

This time around, congregation members volunteered to chip mortar from some of that same stone so that it could be used in the addition.

While the volunteers in the 1940s called themselves the Stonehauers, this latest group of workers dubbed themselves Stonehauers: the Next Generation.

But the result, Schuler said, is an addition that he calls "ambitious and visionary" not only for its attentiveness to the congregation's rich history but also because of its sensitivity to the challenges faced by the planet today.

Because the building was declared a National Historical Landmark in 2004, the church had to get clearance from the State Historical Society for both the expansion plans and for the \$750,000 repair and remodeling of the original building.

Weber said even removing a large pane of glass to move in equipment for the remodeling job was difficult because building laws require it be replaced with safety glass.

The State Historical Society would not allow the use of safety glass because of its different appearance from the original glass used by Wright. Another way to get the construction equipment into the building was found.

## First service held

Despite the trials, the congregation gathered for the first time last Sunday in the church's new 500-person auditorium.

Around them spread a 21,000-square-foot addition that satisfied not only the necessity of echoing Wright's groundbreaking work but which also boasts cutting-edge environmental innovations, such as a geothermal heating and cooling system, a green roof planted with sedum — a hardy plant — that minimizes storm-water runoff and keeps the building cooler in summer. No, it will not have to be mowed but it will have to be weeded.

Brian Joiner, who directed

installation of the building's eco-friendly features, said the biggest challenge included designing for the 500-person auditorium and creating an addition that echoed Wright's original design without copying it exactly.

Rather than rely upon the sharp angles Wright used in his original design, architects chose the contrast of a gentle curve for the addition.

"We used geometry that reinforces the iconic power of the landmark," said architect Vince Micha. "The curve was the simplest and quietest gesture we could make in response to the intense geometry already present on the site."

Joiner said the combination of green features and the glass-walled, light-filled design reflect Wright's belief in integrating nature and architecture.

The addition is full of natural surfaces, including pine

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