

The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum
October November December 2023

Our
30th
Year

The Ager Newsletter

ACTIVITIES

Board Meetings at 7 p.m.
Third Monday of the month.

Open House--Tours

October, November, December

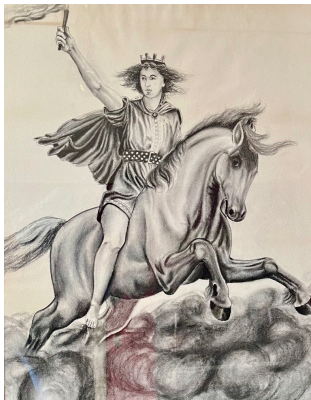
October 14 and 28 : 10 – 2.

November 11 and 25: 10 -2

December 9 and 23: 10 – 2

2nd and 4th Saturdays in
January, February, March.

Or by appointment.



The Waldemar Ager
Association
514 W. Madison Street
P.O. Box 1742
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
54702-1742
715.598.1776
www.agerhouse.org

Coming Soon

Sunday, December 10, 1 - 4

Advent at the Ager
Games
Food
Music

Book Discussion

Jonas Jonasson

Hitman Anders and the Meaning of it All

November 29, starting at 6:30.

At the Ager Museum

2024

January 8 – February 26

“The Art of Water and the Work
of Water Preservation”

An art exhibit featuring six local
artists. Also a series of individual
and panel presentations on the
theme of water.



Help fund the land/building fund. Donations welcome.

Presidential Ramblings by Ivar Lunde

November 14, 2023



Friends,

Greetings from the Waldemar Ager Association and Museum in Eau Claire. Things are slowly moving in the right direction. The houses across the alley are vacant, and the asbestos abatement folks are here! All the work should be completed in three-four days.

Unfortunately, the fellow we hoped would tear down the Whipple street buildings is hard to locate.. Perhaps he is enjoying the nice weather we are presently experiencing. If we connect, we could have the Whipple Street buildings down before Christmas.

The process of demolishing a building is a bit more complicated than I thought. Confusing too!. Recently, a person from the DNR called and said he was ready to inspect our house on Skyline Drive as it was to be demolished.

I said "What?" He was as confused as I was. But I reminded him that we were talking about buildings on Whipple Street.

Presently I am dealing with Xcel and the paperwork for shutting off the electricity and gas. This may take a while. Shutting down the water supply was easy and quickly accomplished by a city employee.

Two individuals close to us just passed away. Borgny Ager, the daughter of Eyvind Ager, and Bradley Larson, the husband of our treasurer, Kathryn Larson, left big shoes to fill. Borgny, bless her heart, left 20% of her estate in trust to the Waldemar Ager Association. Brad was an active volunteer at the museum, cutting the lawn, helping at various events and just being a super person. They will be sorely missed.

We are now looking forward to the Advent celebration at the museum on December 10. Please make a note of this date. We will be very happy to see you at the event.

Have a great rest of the fall and a super holiday experience. Perhaps we should initiate a snow-shoe event this winter?

As always, your support of the Waldemar Ager Association is greatly appreciated!

Ivar

A Short History Of the First 30 Years



The First 30 Years

Starting in 1994, Bob and Avryil Osterhus spent a lot of the early years restoring the Ager house. They were joined by many others—Tom Tompkins, Rod Johnson, Ken Ziehr, Butch and Ellie Paulson, Sue Nelson, Helen and Norb Wurtzel, Jerry Foote, Tim Hirsch, some Boy Scouts (they helped with the first painting job), and numerous others. The Osterhuses also documented the activity, most of which was related to demolition and reconstruction until about 2000. Their photos helped us with remodeling projects in 2014 (all new siding) and again in 2021 (new front steps and another paint job.).

But some of their photos also remind us of the many ways that social events were part of the life of the organization too. There are images of picnics on the back deck, on the grass below the deck (we can't seem to grow grass there anymore), in the basement, and in the house even before it was refurbished. It took a while to get to the finish work in the basement. You will find the Osterhus photo album on a side table in the living room. Note: For this issue I scanned almost 50 of the more than 200 photos. I realized just in time that less is more. Ed.

Our Recent Losses

Borgny Ager passed away on August 23. She was the daughter of Eyvind and granddaughter of Waldemar and Gurolle. Nieces Susan (l) and Kristine (r). 12.11.22



Thanks

Thanks to Debbi and Tom King, who told us almost more than we wanted to know about caring for a herd of Icelandic sheep. Taking care of animals is not all fun and games. The slides and music were a pleasure for all.

Thanks to Miriam and Jan Hansen, who researched and presented the history of Norwegian architecture in about 60 minutes. Closing time at the library prevented us from getting the full story about the era of glass in modern Norwegian architecture.



Brad Larson passed away on October 27. His wife Kathryn serves as secretary on the Ager Board. Brad became in recent years the official groundskeeper for lawn and borders at the Ager Museum. Photo of Brad, participating in The Tusenbeiner.



We remember Borgny and Brad for their abiding support, their energy and enthusiasm, and their love of the organization. Our condolences to the Ager and Larson families.

Advent at the Ager 2023

Sunday, December 10, from 1 -4.

As you can see in the photo at the right, this party makes you smile. At least we hope so. There will be good food, perhaps some games, and music (instrumental and choral, we hope). Get your caroling voice on. Then come to the Ager Museum for this year's event—from 1 -4. Games and/or stories at 2, music at 3. Food throughout.

Please invite your friends to come with you to this year's party.



Donation News

We are pleased to report that donations in 2023 have exceeded the plan in the 2023 budget. The treasurer will prepare a year-end record of donations, and we will publish that document in the March 2024 issue of The Ager Newsletter.

In the meantime, however, the treasurer is catching up on acknowledgements. If you have questions, please email pearsoda@uwec.edu.

Annual Meeting

President Lunde summarized the year's activities and announced the status of the Capital Campaign. Phase One (2021 – 2023) is not yet finished. We are still in the process of purchasing the land across the alley from the museum. Now that asbestos abatement has happened, we look forward to the demolition of the two houses. Then we will move on to Phase Two (2024 – 2025). You can help with that.

We suggest that you **celebrate our 30th year and the plan for expansion** by your gift to the campaign. Consider these possibilities.

\$30 **Send donations to**
\$300 **Treasurer**
\$3,000 **Waldemar Ager Assn.**
\$30,000 **PO Box 1742**
Or more. **Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742**

Coming in Early 2024

“The Art of Water and the Work of Water Preservation”

In collaboration with the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, and with the support of a grant from the Eau Claire Community Foundation, the Ager Association is sponsoring an art exhibit from **January 8 – February 26** at the public library. Six artists are featured, including Ager members Mary Elworthy and Sue Pearson.

We hope you will include the related programs in your winter schedule. All are in the Riverview Room, of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library.

Jan 29 The Geography of the Chippewa River and a writer's tale of a kayak journey to the Mississippi.

Feb 8 Freshwater issues: The Great Lakes and the Boundary waters

Feb 12 Observations on Ice (the Norwegian Arctic)

Feb 22 Rivers and Cultures: Hmong and Native American Views

Notes From the Library by Bob Gough, Member of the Library Committee and the Board

Colonel Hans Christian Heg and the Norwegian American Experience. By Odd S. Lovoll. (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2023. 216 pp. Paper, \$24.95.)

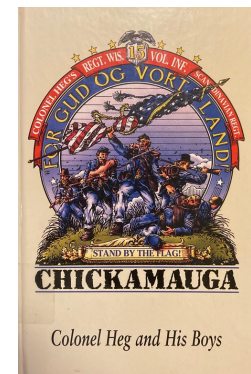
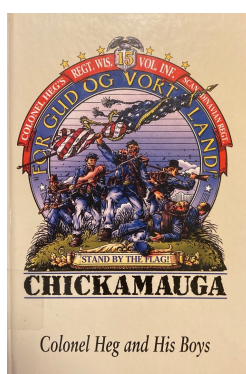
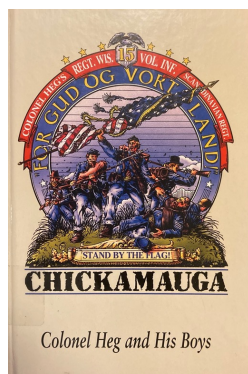
After retirement from teaching, distinguished academic historians sometimes shift their interest from writing deeply-researched original monographs or sweeping syntheses to smaller subjects. One reason is topicality. This is why Odd Lovoll, professor emeritus of history at St. Olaf College and longtime friend of the Ager Association, has written this biography of Hans Heg, about whom Waldemar Ager wrote his only non-fiction book.

In *Colonel Hans Christian Heg*, Lovoll uses his deep understanding of both Norwegian and American sources. He carefully describes Heg's boyhood during the 1830s in the village of Lierby in Buskerud province. He next turns to the Heg family's 1840 migration which ended at Muskego, Wisconsin, placing it into the context of both Norwegian emigration and the westward expansion of population within the United States. The Norwegian-American community of Racine County in the 1840s and 1850s, in which Heg became economically successful and politically involved, is then engagingly detailed.

By winning election as Prison Commissioner in 1859, Heg became the first Norwegian-American statewide elected official in Wisconsin. His subsequent reforms at the Waupun penitentiary were part of his strong social consciousness, which also led Heg to become an abolitionist and head of a company of Wide Awakes, which tried to prevent recapture of runaway slaves. Consequently, it was natural that at the outbreak of war in 1861 Governor Alexander Randall appointed Heg, who also had strong backing from the Norwegian-American community, as commanding officer of the 15th Wisconsin Infantry, the "Norwegian regiment." Drawing on Ager's *Colonel Heg and His Boys* (trans., 2000), Lovoll takes the 15th through the Civil War, with Heg's death in combat at the battle of Chickamauga in 1863 as its centerpiece. Ager would certainly have agreed with Lovoll's point that the experience of Heg and the 15th Wisconsin "gave evidence of both attachment to the new homeland and pride in a Norwegian ethnic identity" (113).

Public recognition of the wartime contributions of Norwegian Americans led in 1926 to the construction outside the Capitol in Madison of a statue of Heg for which Ager headed the fundraising. It was the bizarre destruction of this monument, and its dumping into Lake Monona, during the civil disorder in Madison in the summer of 2020 that encouraged Lovoll to write *Colonel Hans Christian Heg*. Lovoll is able to conclude his book on a positive note with the rededication, on May 29, 2022, of a restored statute of Heg, to which the Ager Association contributed financially.

There are multiple of copies of *Colonel Heg and His Boys* in Norwegian (*Obrect Heg og hans gutter*, 1916) and English translation (2000) in the Ager House library and available for circulation.



The Waldemar Ager Museum
Center for Nordic Culture
P.O. Box 1742
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742
Physical Address
514 W. Madison Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Recommendations

Books you might enjoy: Michael booth, *The Almost Perfect People*; Ole Rølvaag, *Boat of Longing*; a trilogy by Roy Jacobsen, *The Unseen, White Shadow, Eyes of the Rigel*; Jonas Jonasson, *Hit Man Anders and the Meaning of it All*. **A TV series** worth watching (at least the editor of this newsletter thinks so): *Annika*—on public television. Set in Scotland with numerous references to Norwegian myths and culture. Ibsen is still popular. An adaptation of *A Doll's House* closed in June 2023. **An *Enemy of the People*** is set to open in February in New York City. It's another of his plays about hypocrisy. The opening of a scholarly article about adaptations of well-known literature quotes screenwriter Carl Gottlieb, who says that he and Steven Spielberg "always referred to *Jaws* as *Moby-Dick* meets *An Enemy of the People*."

DON'T Forget!

The new year begins with a special exhibit called "The Art of Water." More than 30 works will be on display in the Gallery at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library (Eau Claire, WI) from January 8 – February 26.

The Ager Museum telephone number.

715 598 1776

We'd love to hear from you.
Leave a message.