

The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum
July August September 2022

TENTATIVE ACTIVITIES

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

Open House:

Regular Schedule

2nd and 4th Saturdays every
month—from 10 – 2.

Or by appointment.



Double Helix

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

Annual Meeting

Monday, September 19, 2022

6:30 - 7:00 Business Meeting

7:00 Public Program

At the
Chippewa Valley Museum.

Dixie Hansen Presents

“The Powerful Tool of DNA:
Confirm what you *know* about your
family history and challenge *what
you thought you knew.*”



Presenter: Dixie Hansen

President's Ramblings, by Ivar Lunde

Friends:



Last time I was up on the second floor of the Ager Museum I took some time looking at the books on the shelves. Books in Norwegian, of course, since they have so many. My library may end up there one day as well. Well known authors shouted from the shelves, read me . . . read me! I left with a book authored by a totally unknown name, Benedikt Blad. Google could not find him; however, Benedikt Blood surfaced. Not the same but appropriate. The book I took was *Mordet i Rutebilen*, Murder on the Bus. The bus was traveling from Hønefoss to Oslo via Sandvika. Part of the route was on the east bank of Tyrifjorden. Ha! That is where I will be driving today. I am on my way to Tønsberg, my home town. I like the back roads. No murder, I hope.

The interesting part is of, course, to find out how the book became part of the library, why I picked it off the shelf and why I travel today in Norway. The first page of the book identifies the book as “a gift from the library from Camilla and John Mathiesen.” The name Mathiesen can’t be found in the old directory I inherited. I don’t know why I picked it from all the other books, the title perhaps? I am in Norway for my brother’s interment.

And that leads me to the word “gift.” The Waldemar Ager Associations has established a fund for the purpose of purchasing next door properties for expansion. Our annual meeting this year will divulge plans for doing just that. Throughout the year Director Christopher Engen has made many suggestions, and he will share a plan at the annual meeting on September 19. We hope to entice the broad membership to support this pursuit. Exciting times are ahead.

Gordy Dahl has offered a small version of a Norwegian Stabbur he built in 1988 at his farm near Osseo. We accepted this donation but can’t really move on the gift until we find a place for it. The city of Eau Claire has been contacted to find it a home next door—on the peninsula We hope to give an update at the annual meeting. We have also signed an agreement with Eau Claire architects Lien and Peterson to help develop plans for a Nordic Cultural Center next door.

The maintenance of the Ager House itself is an ongoing concern. We will install a heat sensor in the house to prevent frost damage should the furnace fail when we are not present. The furnace may have to be replaced some time in the future as well. It too has lived a long life. Maintenance of the house is constant. Our Board members have painted when needed, the grounds keeping is ongoing.

My last visit to Norway was five years ago, and much has changed. The natural wonders are still present, but the use of for turnabouts seems overwhelming. Instead of advertising Norway as land of the midnight sun I suggest land of the turnabouts. I experienced more tunnels than ever before, and they were great!

Oh, I almost forgot . . . we are now open for visits. And we had several successful projects with youths, keeping Martin Zens and Bob Gough busy. We have a very active board indeed.

We sincerely thank you for your gifts. Recently a nice donation was received from a former member now living in Oslo, Norway. We cannot thank everyone enough and hope for your continued support. Big things are happening.

Ivar Lunde

Driving in Norway: Recent Photos by Ivar



Ager Association 2022 Board of Directors

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Items for the Next Newsletter
Send to pearsoda@uwec.edu by
November 23.

Genealogy and You

You've seen the ads for Ancestry.com on TV. You've probably noticed that Ancestry is currently bragging about providing access to the 1950 census. Maybe you've wondered what you would find if you started looking for the branches of your family tree.

So you went to the internet for help. Start with yourself, you're told. Then branch out. Fill in the ancestry chart. Or, more practically, find and document family photos, look for documents such as letters and diaries that may be in your memorabilia, consider the things you have inherited, and be sure to interview family members to find out what they know about your relatives.

You can make headway and get energized by this process. But soon you will have to start looking for documents: your birth certificate, the birth records of the rest of your family, school records, censuses, immigration documents, etc. You will need to keep notes about your progress. You will need to discover those in your family who may also be looking at family history. In short, your interest in genealogy will become a hobby, an avocation, an obsession.

And then you will discover (you've watched the CSI shows) the value of DNA research. And then you will be happy to learn that the Ager Association is one step ahead of you. The Association is sponsoring a program likely to be important to you—a practicing or would-be genealogist. But it will also be of interest to anyone fascinated by the revelations of DNA analysis.



Program

7:00 p.m. at the Chippewa Valley Museum, Carson Park, Eau Claire
Monday, September 19, 2022

Dixie Hansen Presents

“The Powerful Tool of DNA: Confirm what you *know* about your family history and challenge *what you thought you knew.*”

Dixie Hansen is a long-time family historian (half Norwegian, half 10th generation Yankee) who has devoted decades to digging into her roots using both traditional feet-on-the-ground and online research methods. When autosomal DNA testing for Genetic Genealogy came along in 2007, she was an early and enthusiastic adopter. DNA has allowed her to find cousins she wouldn't have located any other way, to fill in gaps in her lineage, and (where “paper” records proved to be wrong) to correct errors in the family history. In more recent years, as DNA tools have become more powerful and the number of testers has grown to many millions, she's dug in even deeper. These days, Dixie spends many retirement hours providing volunteer DNA “search angel” assistance for adoptees and others with unknown or misattributed parentage. She's helped many of them identify their biological families. Dixie will describe the DNA companies and tools available to researchers, will discuss the cautions to consider if you're thinking of testing, and will provide an overview of what to expect when your results come back.

Events in June

About sixty youngsters (grades 2-5) from Osseo-Fairchild visited Eau Claire on June 17th. Their field trip included tours at the Ager Museum, the Schlegelmilch/McDaniel House, and the Chippewa Valley Museum. Marty Zens and Doug Pearson gave tours to 8 students upstairs and 8 downstairs—four cycles. Bob Gough coordinated the movement of the groups and kept us on schedule. Clare Pearson directed 15 youngsters in the Ager “Olympics” on the peninsula west of the house (four times). Oddly, we have no photos.

About 20 people attended the Ager celebration of **Midsummer** on June 25th. Mary Elworthy (recorder), Clare Pearson (violin), and Graeme Pearson (cello) played folk, classical, and pop music. Strawberries and ice cream were a hit—as usual.

Book Review

A Viking Voyage, in Which an Unlikely Crew of Adventurers Attempts an Epic Journey to the New World, by W. Hodding Carter (Ballantine 2000). G530 .C34 C37 in the Ager library.

Carter is an adventurer, a risk taker. He mixes a straight-forward narrative with the fine details of daily life on a 54-foot *knarr* in order to reenact Leif Erickson’s legendary journey(s) to the new world. He convinces Land’s End, a Wisconsin business, to fund the project—to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars. A shipbuilder in Maine crafts the boat. Carter searches for crew members. They set out from Greenland but are rescued from turbulent waters after a sluggish effort to get to the open seas.

Then, with additional funding from Land’s End, Carter tries a second time—a year later. His crew gets the square sail to do its work, though sometimes they must row in order to make headway in calm weather. By the time the boat arrives at L’Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, Cotter has shown how to persevere when overmatched, how to learn on the job, and how to inspire teamwork. It’s a how-to book for adventurers.

The Gift of a Stabbur

According to *Talk Norway*, “Like all buildings found on the traditional Norwegian farm, the *stabbur* had a clear purpose: it was a building designed for the storage of food. Sometimes, people also used it to safeguard precious clothing and fragile possessions.

“Like most Norwegian farm-buildings it was made of wood, using the old log cabin technique, and comes in many shapes and sizes. For the most part, it is instantly recognisable. Some of the existing buildings are very old, and some are beautifully crafted.

“The *stabbur* typically consisted of one or two floors, and was elevated from the ground, standing on stilts or pillars made of wood or stone. The pillars were shaped in a certain way, often with a wide stone slate on top, preventing mice and other rodents from finding their way in. For the same reason, there would be a gap between the outside stairs and the building itself.”

President Lunde has offered background about the gift and the efforts to site it adjacent to the Ager Museum (see page 2).



The gift from Gordy Dahl

Waldemar Ager Association Strategic Planning

Earlier this year the Board launched a strategic planning effort to map and guide the Ager Association's course for the future. As first described in the winter newsletter (Jan-Feb-Mar 2022), this work corresponds with the Association's upcoming 30-year anniversary. Our strategy aims to preserve past achievements while ensuring the organization's viability and envisioned progress for the next 30 years.

Finalized and approved by the Board in June 2022, this strategic approach fosters prioritized alignment of actions (*Ways*) and the development of supporting resources (*Means*) to attain a shared vision for the future (*Ends*). In keeping with Association bylaws, this long-range planning continues our focus along four lines of effort:

- Preserve and study the literary works of Waldemar Ager
- Celebrate and promote Nordic culture
- Maintain the Ager House
- Share and promote immigrant cultures

The ability to deliver events and activities within these areas relies upon sufficient means within four key areas:

- Membership
- Funding
- Facilities
- Associations and Partnerships

Putting this broad scope into action will rely upon an annually recurring cycle that plans, delivers, and assesses the outcomes of supporting activities and events. In July 2022, the Board held a separate, in-depth planning session, and applied this new approach to draft the annual plan for 2023. We are excited to present this plan to all members at the upcoming membership meeting on September 19. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the strategy, hear all that is being planned for the upcoming year, ask questions, and provide recommendations to help us to deliver impactful, enjoyable events and activities. We hope you will join us!

Table of Contents of the Plan

1.0 Purpose
2.0 Background
3.0 Vision (<i>Our Future</i>)
4.0 Mission (<i>Our Present</i>)
5.0 Ways (<i>Actions to achieve our Ends</i>)
5.1 Preserve and study the literary works of WaldemarAger
5.2 Celebrate and promote Nordic culture
5.3 Maintain the Ager house
5.4 Share and promote immigrant cultures
6.0 Means (<i>Resources to execute our Ways</i>)

6.1 Membership
6.2 Funding
6.3 Facilities
6.4 Associations/Partnerships
7.0 Strategic Framework
8.0 Annual Operational Planning
8.1 Annual Planning Meeting
8.2 Board Review and Approval
8.3 Monitor Event/Activity Execution
8.4 Review and Evaluate Event/Activity Results
Summary
Appendix A – Terms of Reference

Waldemar Ager Association

Book Discussion Group

In the last two meetings, the group has discussed the trilogy by Norwegian writer Vidar Sundstøl: *The Land of Dreams, Only the Dead, The Ravens*. The stories are set on Minnesota's north shore where Sundstøl lived for two years.

The discussion group has been meeting for about three years. During the pandemic, we used Zoom a time or two.

We invite YOU to join the group. To make that easier, we are publishing a reading plan for the rest of 2022 and for our planned bi-monthly get-togethers in 2023.

If you want to be a part of the group and receive reminders (and, sometimes, discussion topics), please send a note to Doug Pearson (pearsoda@uwec.edu). If you want to join using Zoom, please let us know that too. We can try to make that work.

2022 Last Wednesdays of each month.

October 26

Waldemar Ager, *Sons of the Old Country*

November 30

Henning Mankell, *Quicksand*

2023 Last Wednesdays of each month.

January 25

Waldemar Ager, *Christ Before Pilate*

March 29

Michael Booth, *The Almost Perfect People: Behind the Myth of the Scandinavian Utopia*

May 31

Ole Rølvaag, *Boat of Longing*

July 26

Jo Nesbø, *The Kingdom*

September 27

Trilogy by Roy Jacobsen: *The Unseen, White Shadow, Eyes of the Rigel*

November 29

Jonas Jonasson, *Hit Man Anders and the Meaning of it All*

Help Needed

- **Planning and supporting programs.**
- **Working as a docent.**
- **Helping care for the house and grounds.**
- **Fundraising.**
- **Serving on the Board.**

Doug Pearson or Marty Zens

pearsoda@uwec.edu martyzens@gmail.com

Note: We **need** more docents. Please volunteer.

Email Doug Pearson to set up a training session.

Takes about an hour.

Rejoin or make a special end-of-year contribution:

online: agerhouse.org

OR send a check in the enclosed envelope:

Waldemar Ager Association
PO Box 1742
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742

The Ager Museum has a new telephone number. Leave a message.

715 598 1776

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

Yard Sale

Postponed to 2023. Save your
"treasures" for collection next
June.

It is hard to say if the pandemic is coming to an end or just evolving into an ongoing fact of life. Many of us are waiting for the next booster to be available. Even though it is true that some vaccinated people get COVID, they usually experience minor symptoms and respond to treatment relatively quickly.

And this state of affairs brings to mind NEWS from *Reform*, a short note published not long after the Armistice was declared in 1918, ending the first world war.

19 November 1918

"The influenza serum has arrived her from the Mayo Institute in Rochester. On Friday a goodly number of people were 'vaccinated' over in the City Hall. It is said about the serum that it is completely uninjurious, so if it does not help, it does no harm either. It is understood that it is a preventive for influenza. They say no clearly defined case has developed among those who are 'vaccinated.'"