

THE AGER NEWS

October November December 2026

Meetings

The Board meets at the Ager Museum monthly on the third Monday evening at 7 p.m.

Members welcome.

Museum Tours

Monthly

10 - 2

2nd and 4th Saturdays

October 10

October 24

November 14

November 28

December 12

December 26

January 9

January 23

Annual Meeting

Thursday October 15

Meeting at 5:30

Refreshments 6 - 6:30

Program 6:30 - 7:30

At L.E. Phillips Memorial
Public Library

The *Stabbur* Saga

As you know from earlier reports, the *stabbur*, a gift from Gordy Dahl, has stood at the north end of the Ager parking area for two years. In that time, a broken element as been repaired, and a bowed roof trim piece must be replaced. Nevertheless, the time has come for the structure to be moved. The photo below shows a plateau



shaped on land just to the west of the Ager Museum where the *stabbur* will stand. The area under and around the *stabbur* will be covered with river rock. Then stone blocks will be set at the four corners and a mover will roll the *stabbur* to the site and set it on the four piers. If all goes well, the *stabbur* will face West Madison Street by October, when there will be a celebration of this addition as a permanent feature of the museum complex.

Some members and friends have already created a fund to pay for the costs of moving the *stabbur* and for sprucing it up. The wood needs a coat of paint, and we still must repair some elements. If you wish to **add to the fund**, please send a check to Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau

In This Issue

Page 2

The Annual Meeting | Meal | Program
Upcoming Events

Page 3

President's Letter
Become a member of the Board.

Page 4

The Tusenbeiner 4

Page 5

Rosemaling, Knitting and Hardanger

Page 6

Volunteering, Midsummer,
Multicultural Festival

Page 7

Things Change: New king crowned in
Norway. Haakon VIII succeeds his
father King Harald V.

Upcoming Events

October 15 | Annual Meeting 5:30

L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library

November 29 | Advent at the Ager 2 - 4

Bring a non-perishable food item.

December 5 | 4th Annual Baking Demo

Altoona Public Library 3 - 4

January 9 | Workshop on Swedish Poetry

Ager Museum 1 - 3

Read and discuss some Swedish poetry in
The Star By My Head, a collection of modern
Swedish poems by eight Swedish poets. The
book offers the poems in original Swedish
with English translations on the opposite
page. We'll also try writing some poems.

Enrollment provides you with a copy of the
book. Pick it up and get your assignment at
the Ager Museum from 1 - 3 on January 2.

Enroll at agerhouse.org.

The Ager Annual Meeting

In the Riverview Room at the L.E. Phillips
Memorial Public Library,

Thursday, October 15, from 5:30 - 7:30

5:30 - 6:00

Report from President Engen, elections, and plans for the
future.

6 - 6:30

Light supper: meat balls, lefse, herring, crackers and
cheese, some fruit, coffee and kringle.

6:30 - 7:30 "Why Is There a Waldemar Ager Museum?"

The third of our 2026 programs about Waldemar Ager.

Ivar Lunde, Bill Ager, Bob Gough, Tim Hirsch

Lunde will talk about Ager's stature as a newspaper man.

Ager will discuss Waldemar Ager's business life. It is said
that Ager came to work at *Reform* as a bookkeeper as well
as typesetter and reporter.

Gough will introduce us to Ager as a lecturer, a man on
the road with a message..

Hirsch used Ager's novels in his Wisconsin Writers course
at UW-Eau Claire. He will discuss the significance of
Ager's voice in fiction.

The speakers will have 5 - 8 minutes to introduce their
topics. Expect to learn how Waldemar Ager became a
significant citizen of Eau Claire. Expect to understand why
the founders of the Ager Association set out to sustain
Ager's legacy and to uphold the cultural heritage of
Scandinavians in the region.



President's Update

September 2026

Association Members and Friends,

With the close of summer and transition into fall it is time again to prepare for our annual membership meeting. Much has been happening, and we hope you will join us to learn more and participate in discussions to shape our future. For example, our association board has been working with a local architectural firm to design a new building intended to complement the Ager house by providing additional space for our library, exhibits, and events. This proposed addition would occupy the vacant space on the east side of our current parking lot. Achieving this vision will take considerable time, effort, and resources, but we aim to chart a path forward by sharing the concept and discussing next steps.



The annual membership meeting also provides the vital opportunity to address our organizational needs and elect leaders. As noted in past newsletters, we continue to have vacancies among our Board of Directors and within our key committees. Nominating interested members and holding elections are part of the planned agenda. If you are interested in serving or know others who might be great candidates, please let us know. We welcome all newcomers. Long-term Ager Association membership is not a requirement to serve on the board or a committee.

As always, we value your input and feedback, so please contact us if you have questions, recommendations, or would like to volunteer. Please visit our website or Facebook for the latest information updates. ***Ha en fin høst!*** Have a nice autumn day!

Warm Regards,
Chris Engen

Note: On behalf of the Ager Association, President Engen has sent a letter of condolence to King Haakon VIII.

Volunteer Opportunity

At the Annual Meeting we hold elections for officers on the Board of Directors. The members of the Board shape policy and activity for the organization. You can help with this by being willing to be nominated at the annual meeting. The Board meets monthly on the third Monday evening of the month. (Usually we skip the month of December.) As President Engen mentions in his letter for this edition, leadership is needed. We need help becoming a feature of Eau Claire's cultural life. We need new ideas and help sustaining the traditional elements of the Association's work. Please let President Engen know if you will accept a nomination for a position on the Board: chrisengen@agerhouse.org

Access

Doug Pearson

This summer the deck and ramp got two coats of green paint with sand textured into the paint to minimize slippery surfaces. Also, the white trellising around the deck and ramp was washed, scraped, sanded, primed, and finished with fresh white paint.

Work on the ramp reminded me that this is one small way that we make the museum accessible for people with mobility issues. I became more informed about access issues when I attended two summer workshops on being an "Access-Able Organization." I learned several things that are useful for individuals and organizations, such as

- It's always good to ask how you may help a visitor at the museum.
- It's good for an organization to think about ways in which they can be inclusive and helpful to all.
- And it's not just about physical impediments but is also about equal opportunity for participation and success.

The Tusenbeiner 4



The yellow shirts of this summer's Tusenbeiner make a statement for the group photo.

Sixty people, some children in strollers, and one dog participated this year.



We were lucky that temperatures moderated on the morning of July 18th. Also the haze of summer forest fires thinned for about three hours. This event brought over \$600 to the capital campaign. Thanks to our supporters: **Marathon Level:** The Nordic Collaborative, City of Eau Claire Parks and Recreation, Mayo Clinic Health System, Mark Douglas Pearson, Forrest Pearson. **1/2 Marathon Level:** The Y (Eau Claire), Indianhead Track Club, Dave Fitzgerald (Kleven Real Estate), Wendel Companies. **10K Level:** Elizabeth and Bruce Roesler. **5K Level:** Sons of Norway (Løven Lodge No. 29), Fleet Feet on Water Street, Miriam and Jan Hansen, Ben and Marian Anderson, UWEC Distance Running Class (Graeme Pearson and Baden Schrab), Kevin and Rachel McKinley, Silver Spring foods.

Recently | Rosemaling

Natalie Longmire introduced 24 people to rosemaling on July 25. They received some paint and brushes, some paper and mixing dishes, and began to understand what it takes to do rosemaling: mixing colors, loading the brush, controlling the stroke with fine brushwork, getting comfortable with the physical pressure on arm and hand to make natural flow and turn of the paint on a surface (usually wood).

The group would meet three more times after practice at home. Some “final” projects emerged at the last session on September 12.

There seems to be enthusiasm for more: Talk of another another workshop, and suggestions that the Ager sponsor a monthly craft day where rosemalers, knitters, hardanger embroiderers, basket weavers and others may socialize, work, and learn from each other. Watch for more news.



Knitting | Sep 26, Oct 3 & 10

Never knitted? Want to improve your skills? By the time you get this newsletter, Mary Ann Besser Pearson will have started the workshop (on Saturday, September 26, from 10 - noon). But you can attend on October 3 and 10.

Knitting has been around forever. It's a big deal. First, you raise some sheep. Then you shear them. Then you card the wool. Then you spin the yarn (not talking about a tall story here). THEN you get to knit.

Your enrollment in the knitting workshop will include the tools and the yarn you need to work on and complete a project. No sheep required. Very soon you will knit, purl, and wonder what took you so long to find this pleasurable activity.



Fiber Arts | Hardanger

October 17 and 24

Josh Brown introduces the fine art of Hardanger stitching. Hardanger is a practice of embroidery associated with the Hardanger region of Norway. Brown is a teacher of German and linguistics and a cultural historian and fiber arts practitioner.

In two sessions (on Saturdays October 17 and 24, from 10 - noon), you will learn that hardanger is used

to decorate linens, aprons, blouses, and special keepsakes.

Your enrollment includes a kit that will allow you to produce an ornament using the techniques that Brown will demonstrate.



Volunteering

Be a Docent

The Ager Museum is regularly open for tours twice a month throughout the year. We also offer tours for special groups or events. We give more than 30 tours a year, but we have just three active docents. The Association needs YOU.

Programs

Since our last annual meeting (October 2025), we have presented six events and participated with others in three different cultural programs. We have also presented two instructional workshops (rosemailing and knitting) with two more to come (fabric art—hardanger, and Swedish poetry).

These events need member support. Your annual membership dues help with expenses, but there is always a need for assistance with planning, promoting, and presenting a program. **YOU** can help with programming by joining the Program Committee

Housework

In the winter, we employ people to plow the parking lot, sidewalks and ramp. We also pay for lawn mowing in the summer. **But** keeping the gardens around the house looking fresh and well cared for depends on volunteers. The same is true for keeping the interior of the house in good shape. YOU can help with these tasks.

Please tell President Chris Engen or Program Coordinator Doug Pearson if you are ready to help with

Tours

Programs

Housework

Chris: chrisengen@agerhouse.org
Doug: dougpearson@agerhouse.org

Midtsommer: June 22, 2026

This year, we did not have a traditional celebration of Sankt Hans day.

Instead, we learned about Trygve Ager, the third of Ager's children. Trygve followed closely in his father's profession. Son Tryg and daughter Ella introduced us to their experiences with their father. Then they explored his professional life, including opportunities as a student at St. Olaf College to translate Norwegian documents into English for then professor/author Ole Rølvaag, a member of the faculty.

We learned that Trygve started his work as a journalist on a fellowship in Norway after finishing his degree at St. Olaf. Then followed work on newspapers, a stint with the Norwegian consulate in Washington, D.C., and a return to full-time journalism back in Minnesota. His most well-known works are *The Fight Of The Norwegian Church Against Nazism* and the translation of *Sons of the Old Country*, which is published by the University of Nebraska Press.



Annual Multicultural Festival: Sep 13

Like the CultureFest held in the fall semester at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, the Multicultural Festival celebrates nations and ethnic groups. Foods, dances, music, demonstrations, and information tables provided lots of information and fun at the Eau Claire Farmers Market south of East Madison Street and along the Chippewa River. The event is sponsored and coordinated by JONAH (Joining Our Neighbors, Advancing Hope), Welcoming New Neighbors, and the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association (ECAHMAA). The Ager Association set up an exhibit and introduced passers-by to Ager and the Ager Museum. Here is President Engen at our table



Kings (and other things) Change

As you probably know, King Harald V of Norway passed away in August. He is succeeded by his son, now Haakon VIII. Hereditary succession is common in royal households and has been the practice for hundreds of years. But other changes have also affected the life and times of Norwegians.

For example, the Vikings called the community at the north end of the Oslo fjord . . . Ånslo. Later, Wikipedia writers note, the spelling evolved to Óslo. Even though the place continued to identify itself as Oslo for about 600 years, dynasties, provinces, and rulers changed frequently. Often, the country fell into unions with other countries—or disintegrated into civil wars. In 1624, a massive fire destroyed Oslo. Then King Christian IV, king of Denmark and Norway (and a contemporary of William Shakespeare), renamed the city after himself . . . *Christiania*.

In 1877, the spelling of the name changed from *Christiania* to *Kristiania*. But change is difficult. From 1877 until 1924, both spellings were used, though the one with *K* was the official government name.

Waldemar Ager enters this history of changes rather late. He was born in 1869 and left for America as a 16-year-old in

1885. Maybe he and his family were objecting to the spelling change. More probably, they, like so many other Norwegians, looked to America as a better place to live.

In 1925, Norwegians called their capital city Oslo once again. At that time, Ager had spent more than 25 years as a citizen of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He had been selected to represent the state of Wisconsin in 1914 at the centennial celebration of 17 mai in Norway. He was enjoying his success as editor and publisher of the weekly issue of the prohibitionist *Reform* and on the brink of celebrating the temperance triumph. (The battle to prohibit the sale of liquor had been won in 1917.) Even as he was having some success as a novelist came the news in 1933 that the 21st amendment had repealed the prohibition to sell alcohol. Now, as Ager was growing older, the younger generation was learning and using English in daily life and business. These were forces that a weekly Norwegian-language newspaper couldn't overcome.

Meanwhile, Haakon VII reigned in Norway from 1905 – 1957. He had lived through two world wars. Between the wars, however, he noticed the work of Waldemar Ager. In 1923, the king awarded Ager a medal recognizing Ager's efforts to promote and preserve Norwegian language and

culture. The king cited Ager's efforts to document the role of Norwegians in the Civil War. And the king pointed out Ager's efforts to develop and strengthen affiliate groups of Norwegians in the Midwest and beyond. In 1939, King Haakon VII awarded Ager with a second medal, the St. Olaf medal of honor. For the king, Ager was a celebrity Son Of Norway.

Soon, however, the king was leading occupied Norway through the period of Nazi occupation of Norway in WWII. He lived to see the end of the Nazi era and the post-war recovery that followed.

Olav V reigned from 1957 to 1991. Olav's son, King Harald V, reigned from 1991 until his death on August 28, 2026. A contemporary of many of us members of the Ager Association, King Harald was quoted in a *People* report online saying something that Ager would likely second: "It is not always easy to say where we are from, what nationality we are. Home is where the heart is."

The new king, Haakon VIII, is 53 years old. There is time for him to become aware of Waldemar Ager and to recognize the role he played in sustaining the souls and hearts of so many other Norwegians in their early years of settlement in America. It is hoped that the new king will visit the Ager Museum one of these days.

by Doug Pearson

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



Here's Gordy Dahl at work on the founding pieces of the stabbur. Notice the piers at each of the corners.

Early 1980s.