

# The Ager Newsletter

The Waldemar Ager Association    December 2016-February-2017



*Ager House, west side in October*

## *Coming Events*

Ager House Board Meetings,  
Mondays: Dec. 19, Jan. 16 and Feb.  
20, 9:30 a.m. Ager House

Advent at the Ager, Sun. Dec. 11,  
1-4 p.m. Ager House

Save the date: Syttende Mai to be  
held on May 17, 2017. Details to  
follow.

**Open House—Tour the  
Ager House and Library**

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays, 10-  
2 pm**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 4-7 pm**

**Public Welcome!**

**The Waldemar Ager Assn.  
514 W. Madison Street  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
54702-1742  
715.834.3985  
www.agerhouse.org**

**Advent at the Ager  
A Nordic Christmas  
Celebration  
Sunday December 11, 2016  
1-4 PM**

**Featuring  
Crafts for Kids  
Tours of the House  
Children's St. Lucia Procession  
Christmas music by Mary Elworthy  
And Robin Fossum**

**Please bring a plate of holiday  
refreshments to share.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!  
ADMISSION IS FREE!**

**Ager Museum  
514 W. Madison St.  
Eau Claire**

## News from the President—Doug Pearson

### Two Members of the Board Retire

Many thanks to Stan Hillestad, Treasurer, and Eric Anderson, Director. For the past six years these two have been mainstays of the Ager Association Board of Directors. Stan kept the books, paying our bills regularly, helping the Board understand and administer the financial commitments for the renewal of the house (siding and roofing), and for such projects as gutters, sidewalk, and tree trimming. Eric has been offering a new idea at nearly every meeting. Years ago he encouraged the Board to consider creating an Executive Director position. The Board will appoint someone to begin work in January of 2017. Eric also suggested the creation of a Nordic Summer Camp for kids. The first year we attracted just 4 campers, but in 2016 we had 15. In addition, Eric taught Swedish at the camp the first year and has offered Beginning Swedish on more than one occasion. He and Erin have been helpful organizers for the annual Midsommar event and the Advent at the Ager celebration in December.

### The Board of Directors for 2017

At the Annual Meeting held on November 1, the membership elected some new members to serve along with two continuing members. Here are the members of the Board starting on January 1, 2017.

President, Robert Fossum (2017-18)  
Vice President, Vicky Finstad (2017)  
Treasurer, Stan Fredrickson (2017-18)  
Recording Secretary, open  
Director, Mary Elworthy (2017)  
Director, Oscar Brandser (2017)  
Director, Robert Gough (2017)  
Director, Dianne Lueder (2017-18)  
Director, Jane Pederson (2017-18)



### Volunteer of the Year

This year, picking up on a tradition that has lapsed for several years, the

Association encouraged volunteers to note their hours in a book on the buffet in the dining room. Twenty-two people kept records. That's close to 20% of our membership. The total number of volunteer hours this year was 733. There were probably many more hours. Not everyone logged hours, and several who did probably did not account for all of their time.

Unofficially, we are calling this the Ev Krigsvold Volunteer of the Year Award. Stan Hillestad is this year's winner, with more than 80 hours of service. Thirteen of the 22 who kept records logged more than 20 hours each. Above, Stan Hillestad and Ingrid Coobs receive volunteer awards from Doug. **THANK YOU, Volunteers!**

Two years ago, as the Board was organizing to get a new sign and implement the plan to identify the house as a museum, we started a regular schedule of Open House hours. In 2015 we were open to the public (at no charge) from 10 – 1 on second and fourth Saturdays of each month. In 2016, we added third Wednesdays, from 4 – 7. There have only been about three open days when

we didn't have visitors. A few times we guided as many as a dozen or more people through the house and introduced them to the potential of our library research area.

To make this work, someone needs to train and recruit docents. In 2016, that was Ingrid Coobs. For her efforts to get two people working at each open house event, President Pearson awarded her a special recognition certificate.

**Ongoing Needs:** One of the summer projects this year included upgrading the library. We have more shelves for books, and we have a new computer and new software to assure that cataloging and other Association actions can be easily accomplished on our equipment. (Parenthetically, **thanks** to the many people who have donated a contribution to support the Internet connection we need in the house for the library work and other tasks.)

**Library:** An **additional library table** similar to the one we now have. The current table is excellent for displaying important features of the library. A second table would be excellent in the open area in the newspaper room adjacent to the main part of the library. This would be a worktable for researchers using the library. Here's what the display table looks like. (It's about 32 x 48, a good size for our purposes.)



**House Maintenance:** **two vacuum cleaners**, one for upstairs, one for the basement and main floor. Both our machines are on their last rollers, belts, and rotors. They don't collect much of the debris.

## Ivar Lunde Presents—

### Eau Claire, The Ager House, and Waldemar Ager

An audience of about 100 Association members and the general public assembled in the Eau Claire Room of the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library on Tuesday, September 6. They were there to watch Ager Association member Ivar Lunde screen and talk about his film: "Eau Claire, The Ager House, and Waldemar Ager."

Born in Tansberg, across Oslofjorden from Fredrickstad, where Ager was born, Lunde was the right man to investigate the social, political, and cultural world that Ager lived in. Both were artists—Ager a writer, Lunde a musician. And, in the course of time, Lunde founded Skyline Publications/Skyline Studios, LLC, a company that produces CDs, publishes music for various instruments, and shoots videos of various kinds.

Lunde's work on Ager includes archival photos of early 20th century Eau Claire, live video of the rivers and natural settings that define Eau Claire's local resources and beauty, and images of Waldemar Ager. To give the work some human touches, Lunde features interviews of founding member of the Association Tim Hirsch, current Board Vice President Vicky Finstad, Library Committee Chair Miriam Hansen, and Ager family member Borgny Ager.

With Hirsch providing the narrative voice, the film establishes that early 20th century Eau Claire was a thriving business and cultural center. We see the offices of the Fremad Publishing Company, the place where the hard work of producing Reform took place. And we get acquainted with other businesses and leaders in the community.

As we watched the film, many of us were comparing our present knowledge of the city's key sites and new development with the record of the past. And we were beginning to understand, if we have read Ager's *On the Way to the Melting Pot*, just how observant and resourceful Ager was as a writer of fiction.

And it was a real pleasure after the last images left the screen to hear Lunde talk about his efforts to understand Waldemar Ager. Lunde reported that he had read all the novels and short stories in the original Norwegian. He read a couple of short passages to us. Even if you couldn't understand the Norwegian, you got the sense of Lunde's appreciation for Ager's style, humor, and satire. Lunde's commentary reminded us of the value of the phrasing in our Mission Statement that advocates that the Association should "preserve and maintain the home, heritage, and literary works of Waldemar Ager." *By Doug Pearson, September 6, 2016*

## **Jake Lindgren Presents--**

### **Henrik Ibsen—The Father of Realism in Theatre**

It is well established that Ibsen is Norway's most important contributor to world literature. His dramatic works established a new vision for dramatic literature in the late 19th century. That was Jake Lindgren's theme when he and a colleague presented "Henrik Ibsen—the Father of Realism in Theatre" at the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library on Thursday, October 6.

A Fall Creek boy with Norwegian and Swedish heritage, Lindgren has a long history of interest and work in the theater. He recalls getting a part in a play in grade school, and that, he says, was it. He'd found his passion. After several years on local and Twin Cities' stages, Lindgren returned to UW-Eau Claire to complete his degree in theater, with an emphasis on directing and design. No one gets a theater degree without learning the history of theater, and it was Lindgren's idea to provide an overview of theater from the Greeks to the era of Ibsen.

With the help of images in a PowerPoint presentation, Lindgren showed us the structural elements of Greek drama and the evolving themes of great dramatic literature, leading up to world famous works by Ibsen such as *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler*, and the very different and early work, *Peer Gynt*.

Lindgren's colleague in the theatre company Downstage Left presented a short cutting from *Peer Gynt*, featuring the rascal/scoundrel/liar Peer himself. We left that night knowing that Ibsen was as well acquainted with the world of Norwegian folk stories as he was aware of the drawing rooms, business offices, and kitchens of the plays that we think of as modern realism. *By Doug Pearson, October 6, 2016*

## Ager Resource Library News, Fall 2016—By Miriam Hansen

### Waldemar's Surprise

Wouldn't Waldemar Ager be surprised? His *Reform*, Ager's weekly newspaper, will soon be available in a digitized format at the Ager Library! If you have tried to use the brittle, sometimes crumbling, original newspaper copies, you'll know why we are happy to have the digitized version.

Unless you're fluent in Norwegian you might not be able to read whole articles in the *Reform*, but if you would like to read historical articles, check for a family obituary, an incident that occurred in Eau Claire County in 1920, or read an editorial by Ager about events leading up to World War II, you might find it helpful to use the digitized version. (In case you need some help with translation, we have a couple Norwegian-English dictionaries in the library, as well as several members who can help you.)

Many thanks to **Tim Hirsch** who made the arrangements with the Wisconsin Historical Society to have *The Reform* digitized, and to **Vicki Finseth** who has helped with financing the project. The *Reform* is available for use in the Ager Library.

### Ager House Visitors (see picture page)

Guests from Würzburg, Germany, Professor Ruediger Ahrens and his wife, Uta (who is also a teacher), visited the Ager House while they were visiting the States in August. They were impressed with our museum and library, and were eager to learn about Ager and his contributions to Eau Claire.

Unfortunately, the Ahrens left for Washington D.C. before the occasion of Ivar Lunde's wonderful film about Ager and the growth of Eau Claire. The film, which was premiered at the L.E. Phillips Public Library, was introduced by Professor Lunde and was warmly received by a large audience.

### Genealogy Resources

Roger Davis, librarian for the Genealogical Society of Eau Claire, visited our library in September and donated a copy of the holdings of their genealogical library. The list, which includes numerous Scandinavian books, has been inserted into a folder and can be found on the library table along with two of our other booklets: *A Research Guide for Norwegian Genealogy* and the *Norwegian Research Guide*. The Genealogical Society's collection, which is non-circulating, is housed at the Chippewa Valley Museum. To access it, please contact the museum library for an appointment. To learn more about the Genealogical Society and their collection, contact Roger Davis at rogerd445@gmail.com.

### New Computer

For the growing library collection and the Surpass database, the Ager Association provided funds this year for a new desktop computer. As a result we now have a laptop computer with Internet connection available for patron use. If you would like to use it, please ask one of our docents for assistance.

### Update on Library Holdings

Due to the generosity of our members and their families, as well as numerous friends, we have added approximately 177 new items to our cataloged book collection since June of 2015. You can check our catalog on the Ager website by clicking on "Library" and using Adobe to see the author listings.

In addition, our vertical file of miscellaneous articles, booklets, and family histories has also grown, expanding the collection into two file drawers. An alphabetized subject list of these items is available in the catalog notebook, which is always available on the library table. Several archival containers have also been added; in them you will find some of our rare (and often fragile) items. We are still working on documenting most of them. To keep them safe, please ask to use a set of gloves.

## Fall 2016 Norwegian Class at the Ager

By Robert Fossum

This past September and October I taught a Beginning Norwegian Class every Wednesday evening at the Ager Museum. There were seven students registered.

We used the book *The Mystery of Nils*. This is a wonderful book for beginning to learn Norwegian. Running through the book is a story about a *Nisse* Nils and a *jenta* Susanne. The various episodes become more difficult with time. The grammar and other peculiarities of the Norwegian language are explained. Questions are posed using the text from the story. It was a clever way to introduce the language because the students seemed to enjoy learning.



Mat

Kjøkkenutstyr

Ost

Ostehøvel

Ektegeitost

Osteledning

Bestemorost

Gaffel

Jarlsberg

Kniv

Kjeks

Skje

Vafler

Tallerken

Gløgg

Kopp

Wis. Cheddar

Glass

Serviet

For the final class Robin and I prepared a Nordic Buffet for the students. (See left.)

After eating and enjoying the non-alcoholic gløgg, the class was treated to a short concert of Hardingfele tunes played by Robin Fossum.

One student mentioned that the Buffet and Concert was worth the registration fee. Perhaps a second course will be offered in the spring.

Part of the buffet was for students to study the list of foods and utensils presented. How many foods (Mat) and utensils (Kjøkkenutstyr) can you name?

**If you or someone you know wants to do the language class, contact Robert Fossum or Stan Fredrickson, Treasurer, Ager Assn, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742.**

**The Ager Association  
2017 Board of Directors**

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**Items for next newsletter must  
be received by Feb.15, 2017.**

**Contributions**

*Harold and Dorothy Olson—In memory of Ev Krigsvold  
Jan Hansen*

*Betty and LaVerne Pampuch—In memory of Ev Krigsvold*

*Barbara and Fritz Culver—In memory of Ev Krigsvold*

*Ella Fossum*

*Doug Pearson*

**Library Acquisitions**

*Laptop computer for patron use*

*177 books added since June 2015*

**New Members**

*Tony Mouw and Connie Bahr*

*Ron and Susan Seningen*

*Marilyn and Roger Skatrud*

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*Members are welcome to help us offset our Internet costs  
with a gift of one month's service at \$55.00.*



At the annual meeting on Nov. 1, Norma Lionberger, the Fredricksons and Oscar Brandser viewed the photography of Daniel Bastion Nelson.

**Help wanted!**

**Docents for the Ager House and Library**

Open houses are on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays each month from 10 am to 2 pm and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evening from 4-7 pm.

Docent orientation is available: For information call...

**House—Ingrid Coobs (715.933.4105)**

**Library—Miriam Hansen (715.835.6179)**

Docents receive the following benefits: Flexible scheduling, introducing visitors to Eau Claire and mastering the operation of a small museum. If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer, give us a try.

The Ager House  
514 W. Madison St.  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742



**“Through  
Daniel’s  
Eyes: The  
Photography  
of Daniel  
Bastian  
Nelson.”**

Now Showing  
at UW-EC  
Library

The ice skater in the photo by Norwegian carpenter Daniel Bastian Nelson is ready to take off around an ice rink in Eau Claire circa 1905. This is one of Nelson’s original 415 glass negatives being housed at the Univ. Archives and Special Collections Dept. of McIntyre Library at UW-Eau Claire.

Picture Page Dec. 2016

This month is Doug Pearson's last month as president of the Ager Association. He first served as treasurer in 2009-2010. As president since Jan. 2014, he has overseen major changes in the Ager Association.

- ✦ He saw the completion of the exterior makeover of the Ager House—siding, window frames, (many of which he painted), wood trim, shingles, a new gutter system on the east side of the house to protect the ramp, and, most recently, a new sidewalk on the east side.
- ✦ Repaired and upgraded mechanicals: furnace, lights, locks, etc.
- ✦ Added new book shelves in the library.
- ✦ Organized two Nordic summer camps for children, 2015 and 2016.
- ✦ Managed year around member and public programming for the Association.
- ✦ Directed the design and placement in the front yard of a flagpole (gift of Helen and Norb Wurtzel) and a new sign with our new name-- (gift of Marian and William Klish).
- ✦ Continued the education program with two Norwegian classes this fall.
- ✦ Extended Open House hours and set up docent program with Ingrid Coobs.

