

# The Ager Newsletter

The Waldemar Ager Association

June-August 2016



## *Coming Events*

Ager House Board Meetings,  
Mondays: June 20, July 18 and  
Aug. 15, 9:30 a.m.

Kids' Kubb Clinic: Tues, June 14,  
10:30-Noon, Ager House

Midsommar Event: Sat. June 18,  
12-3 p.m., Ager House

Kid Kubb at U.S. Nat. Kubb  
Championship: Fri. July 8

Second Annual Nordic Camp:  
Aug. 1-3, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

The Waldemar Ager Assn.  
514 W. Madison Street  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
54702-1742  
715.834.3985  
[www.agerhouse.org](http://www.agerhouse.org)

## **Midsommar Event**

Saturday June 18, 1-3  
p.m.

A summertime event for  
children and adults  
featuring...

Flower crowns  
Kubb, a lawn game for all  
ages  
Tours of the main floor  
and library

Refreshments:  
Strawberries and ice  
cream  
Coffee and lemonade

Join us for a summer  
afternoon.

Everyone is welcome!!!  
Free Admission

## News from the President —Doug Pearson

On the evening of April 4, John Yilek charmed an audience of more than 100 who had come from Rice Lake, Chetek, Chippewa Falls and the local community. Yilek offered an overview of important episodes in the history of Norway and even turned near the end to sing for us in order to make a point about the evolving culture of Norway.

When we attract audiences of more than about 40 for a lecture or presentation, we almost always have to meet in a venue other than the Ager Museum. So it was for the Yilek talk that we partnered with the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library and used the Eau Claire Room for the presentation.

When organizations need more space for the programs and events they sponsor, they often think of expansion. This year have been exploring the advisability and feasibility of expansion of the Ager Museum footprint in Eau Claire.

In January a subcommittee did some consulting with Mayo Clinic Health System, the Economic Development Officer of the City of Eau Claire, and the Director of Parks and Recreation in Eau Claire. We learned that Mayo Clinic does not currently have expansion plans that would involve properties on the north side of West Madison Street. The City of Eau Claire is concentrating on property development west of the Chippewa River but not extending as far west as the Ager Museum. The Parks and Recreation Department intends to extend trail development across the peninsula of city land that lies directly west of the Ager Museum. That won't happen until the summer of 2017.

In very preliminary talks in our spring meetings, the Board has considered raising funds to purchase the property that lies north of our fence at the back of the house. Recently it

has been suggested, alternatively, that we consider purchasing the corner house directly across the alley from the Ager Museum. Both of these ideas would expand parking options and could possibly provide space for programs and events. At the April meeting of the Board, Gordy Thorpe of Norden Folk presented a far more elaborate vision that would require purchasing property along West Madison Street in order to construct a gift shop, bakery, and events building.

It is tempting to think about these possibilities. Recently the Ager Association has received an amazing gift of just over \$30,000 from the estate of member the late John Peterson. For the time being the Board is keeping this cash in a savings account but may later invest the money as we have done with endowment and special gift funds in the past. Of course, such a sum might help pave the way for development along the lines I have described above—or in some way not yet envisioned.

As president of the organization, I invite you to send me your thoughts about the possibility of expanding our mark on the west side neighborhood, the city, and the region. Should we think of Livsreise in Stoughton, WI, or Vesterheim in Decorah, IA, and their substantial centers for Norwegian/Scandinavian culture as models? Should we simply keep on doing what we have been doing? Are there other visions for the future of the Waldemar Ager Association. Send me cards, letters, or emails to share your thoughts:

Doug Pearson, Waldemar Ager Association,  
PO Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742, or  
[pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu).

I look forward to hearing from you.



## GS troop 3182—Brownies, Putnam Heights, Visit Ager house



Nine enthusiastic Brownies spent part of the morning at the Ager Museum recently, with their leaders Marianna Gilbertson and Linda Gay and a few moms. Norb and I were impressed by their interest, politeness and good questions.

They peeked into Waldmar's trunk, wondering how he carried it, sat on the floor to see an open page of *Reform's* Norwegian words, gasped at the sound of the pump organ, and two girls carefully tried on Hildur's white fur cape.

They are learning about their own family stories and visiting other historical sites in Eau Claire. (The former Eau Claire Library, now a part of city hall was on their schedule for the afternoon.)

We promised to let them know about our Midsommar and Advent Celebrations. They would like to come! After a glass of juice and a pepparkakor, they left for a picnic at Phoenix Park.

*By Helen Wurtzel, photo by Norb Wurtzel.*

**Open House—Tours  
available  
Through House and  
Library  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays, 10 to  
2 and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesdays, 4-6 pm.  
Public welcome!**

### **Save the Date**

**The Ager Museum will have a fundraiser  
Yard Sale on Wed. Aug. 17, 9-6.**

**If you have some treasures you would be willing  
to put in the sale to enhance the fund raising,  
please let Doug Pearson know by Monday,  
August 8. (Pearsoda@uwec.edu).**

# Ager Library Newsletter for June-August, 2016

By Miriam Hansen

“Mange Takk” to those who have generously donated money and materials to the Ager Library! We welcome your gifts. Here are a few of the recent highlights:

Two wonderful, and very useful guides for those doing genealogical work: **A Research Guide for Norwegian Genealogy** (6<sup>th</sup> edition), from the Naeseth Library in Madison, and a copy of the **Norwegian Research Guide** by Linda M. Herrick and Wendy K. Uncapher. Both of these guides have details about the use of records, patronymic naming practices, Norwegian names, library locations of bygdeboks, locations of national and regional archives in Norway, and much more. As reference materials, they won't circulate, so come in to the library and use them, or copy appropriate pages.

To add to our collection of family histories, Erik Halverson of Altoona, has contributed three interesting notebooks about his Solør ancestors and their experiences as immigrants, written by his great uncle, Morris (Mike) Halvorson who lived in the Bruce Valley, near Strum, Wisconsin. Also included in this collection is Erik Halverson's English translation of “**En Soløringer's Oplevelse I Amerika.**” Interested readers will find these notebooks in our vertical file.

For children: **Askelad and Seven Silver Ducks** by the well-known Norwegian storytellers, Asbjornsen and Moe. This is the traditional Norwegian folk tale set to music. In this musical telling of *Askelad and the Seven Silver Ducks*, Moe's original has been modified so that two performers can step in and out of the characters they portray, alternating between narrating the tale and acting it out. A CD accompanies this hilarious story, and kids will love the illustrations.

Are you an Augsburg grad, or do you know someone who attended Augsburg College? Learn all about the history of the college in **From Fjord to Freeway** by Carl Chrislock. One interesting chapter deals with “Patterns of Student Life.” My, how times have changed!

Did your ancestors arrive in America via Quebec and the route through the Great Lakes? Perhaps you attended the Ager Association's program several years ago by Odd Lovoll, Professor Emeritus at St. Olaf College, when he discussed the book he was writing about Norwegian immigrants who came to the United States via Canada. Now we have his book: **Across the Deep Blue Sea: The Saga of Early Norwegian Immigrants.** Readers will be fascinated with these transatlantic accounts of life, and sometimes death, as Norwegian emigrants sought new opportunities in North America.

## Recent donations to the Ager Library

We have received many new and interesting items in the library during these past months, and a list of all the items would require additional pages of this newsletter. Please come to the library to do research or just sit down and read some of the wonderful materials that are available. Newer items that are still in print are available for three weeks' circulation.

I hope I have included everyone in our list on page 7. If you are donating materials, be sure to leave your name and address with the items so we can give you our thanks! *M.H.*

# SYTTENDE MAI: A GREAT DAY FOR A CELEBRATION

About 150 people gathered at the Best Western Trail Lodge Hotel and Suites on Tuesday, May 17, 2016. They enjoyed the social hour before the traditional dinner and a presentation by Roger Hellesvig. Sons of Norway (Deb Jarvar and Linda Curtis) took the lead in organizing and producing this year's event. Norden Folk (Orv Bierman) and the Ager Association (Doug Pearson) assisted.

Before the meal was served and while we were socializing, Jean Sivertson urged some pleasant tunes from the piano. The she and Dave Hermundson helped us join them in the singing of "Ja, vi elsker dette landet" and the U.S. national anthem.

The festive tables included Norwegian flags and Viking ships and a plate of lefse. This year meals were served at our tables: baked cod, meatballs, potato, vegetables, rolls, and coffee. John Bjerke, Joyce Johnson, Mary Ann Frederick, Vi Nygard, Audrey Parrett, Dale Larson, Jan Wyss, Pat and Dave Hermundson, Jean Sivertson, Linda McClelland, Janice Wnukowski, Angel Gullikson, Linda Curtis, Deb Jarvar, and others baked special Norwegian cookies.

Roger Hellesvig, performing the role of Ole Oleson, talked about what it was like to decide to leave Norway for America. On stage, Hellesvig had the traditional traveler's trunk and many of the things one would have found in the trunk of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian immigrant—tools, nails, an iron, pots and pans, blankets, the parts of a spinning wheel, and other essentials for starting up a new life in a rugged country side.

At the end of the presentation, Hellesvig answered a dozen or more questions.

There were lots of smiles and nods of appreciation at the end of the evening. Thanks to all who made the event a success.



Norway



Sweden



Denmark



Iceland



Finland

## Second Annual Nordic Summer Camp Sponsored by the Waldemar Ager Association and Museum

514 W. Madison Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703

Language, Geography, Art, Music,  
Games

M, T, W August 1, 2, 3, 2016  
9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each day

For Children Ages 7 - 12

Camper Fee: \$25  
Limited to 20 Campers

Registration form available at [agerhouse.org](http://agerhouse.org) or by mail  
(Ager Museum, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742)  
by June 15, 2016.

**Payment must accompany registration.**



Greenland



Faroe Islands



Samiland

**The Ager Association  
2016 Board of Directors**

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**Items for next newsletter must  
be received by Aug. 19, 2016.**

**Contributions—**

**Correction:** In the last newsletter we noted that Mary Nord donated in memory of Øyvind Gulliksen. This should have read “in honor of”.

Kristine Bejin, Paula Lockbaum, Jerry Boos & Maddy Boos—In memory of Lauren Ager

Sue Shepherd & David Crowley—In memory of Lauren Ager

Linda Ager—In memory of Lauren Ager

Norb Wurtzel

Paul Wiersgalla—In memory of Arlene Gunderson Wiersgalla

Doug & Sue Pearson—In memory of John Peterson and Lauren Ager

Barb & Fritz Culver—In memory of Gudrun & Milo Bergh, Thekla & Ralph Culver, Roger W. Ager and Lauren Ager

The Family of John Peterson

Peter & Carol Anderson—In memory of Ev Krigsvold

Tom & Pat Tompkins—In memory of Ev Krigsvold

Stan & Yvonne Hillestad—In memory of Ev Krigsvold,

John Peterson, Jeff Wurtzel and Lorraine Fleming

Mary Kohler—Outdoor repair and replacement fund

**Recent Acquisitions—**

Dorothy Sorlie Urness—Letters and photo of Anna Lee

Tim Hirsch—Picture of Ager and his Temperance men

Tryg Ager—Copper plate of the last photo of Waldemar Ager

Shirley Peterson, Chetek Sons of Norway—Eight books

Karen Homme—Two boxes of books from the library of John Peterson.

Marie Wick of Ladysmith and Joan Gehler of Eau Claire—Several books, magazines and calendars from the Haugesund area

Oscar Brandser—*Across the Deep Blue Sea* by Odd Lovell

Dianne Lueder—Six books on Genealogy—1 Swedish and 5 Norwegian.

Jan Etnier—Many items of linen, pewter, silver, glassware and rosemaling in preparation for her move to Madison.

Marilyn Nicolai Reinart

Mary Elworthy

Irene Lamont

Jan Hansen

Borgny Ager

Robert Fossum

Erik Halverson

Joan Gehler

*Thanks to all for  
these generous  
contributions  
and acquisitions.*

**Wi-Fi support—**Marilyn Jones

The Ager House  
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Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742

### **House Improvements: Library Expansion**

Many of you have contributed books or periodicals to the collection that has been developing almost before the house was on its new foundation. New materials continue to arrive, and the Library Committee, under the leadership of Chair Miriam Hansen, has done a fantastic job of designing the north end of the second floor as the research library. Over the past few years, the committee has sorted and catalogued all the stored materials. Now all the books on our shelves have Library of Congress call numbers, and we have a paper and digital catalogue of the collection. Only about 8 inches of unused shelf space remains. Even the tops of the bookshelves are in use. At the May meeting of the Board, we agreed to expand the library into the “Reform” room. **We also agreed to purchase about \$350-\$400 worth of IKEA bookcases that will allow the collection to grow in the coming years.** If you would like to defray all or some of the cost of this project, please send funds to Stan Hillestad, Treasurer, Waldemar Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742.

### **House Improvements: Gutters and Downspouts**

If you have come to the Ager House on a rainy day and entered through the back door, as you climbed the steps to the deck you got drenched by the waterfall coming off the east roof edge. If you approached using the ramp, you were likely splashed a bit as rain came off two roof edges that parallel the ramp. The sidewalk at the end of the ramp is pitted and sunken toward the basement foundation. **We believe that the installation of gutters and downspouts on the three east side roof edges of the house will remove enough rain and melting snow to preserve sufficiently the siding, ramp and stairs that run along that side. This job will cost us about \$600.** If you would like to defray some of the cost of this project, please send funds to Stan Hillestad, Treasurer, Waldemar Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 547021742.

—Doug Pearson





**Syttende Mai 2016, Eau Claire, Wisconsin**  
Hosted by Norden Folk

Above: Banquet Hall of Best Western Trail Lodge Hotel. Above right: Roger Hellesvig, guest speaker performing as Ole Oleson, 19<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian immigrant to America. Right: Jan and Miriam Hansen with friends from Rice Lake. Lower right: Borgny, Asti and Ingrid enjoying the evening.

Below: Nate Everson of Seattle, Washington sent member Martin Fossum a photo from the Syttende Mai 2016 Parade in Seattle.

