

The Ager Newsletter

The Waldemar Ager Association

September-November 2016



Coming Events

Ivar Lunde film on Waldemar Ager,
ECPL on Tues. Sept. 6, 7pm.

Ager House Board Meetings,
Mondays: Sept. 19, Oct. 17 and Nov.
21, 9:30 am.

Jake Lindgren on Henrik Ibsen,
ECPL Thurs. Oct. 6, 7pm.

Annual Meeting, Nov. 1, 7:00pm,
Trinity Lutheran Church

International Fair, Nov. 6, UWEC.

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

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

Premiere Screening of Ivar Lunde's film *Eau Claire, The Ager House* and Waldemar Ager

Images and interviews concerning the years when Ager was the publisher of *Reform*, an Eau Claire Norwegian-language weekly newspaper from 1903 until Ager's death in 1941, and detailing the fate of Ager's house in the late 20th century and into the 21st.

Tuesday Sept. 6, 7:00 p.m.
**L.E. Phillips Memorial
Public Library**

Refreshments following
Public invited
Free admission

Co-Sponsored by the Waldemar Ager
Association and the Library

News from the President—Doug Pearson Yard Sale at the Ager Museum



On August 17, the Ager Association held a Yard Sale. Some may remember that we tried a sale of rosmaling things donated by Lois Olson in mid-May, but we did not have many buyers. When we received donations of rosmaling things and other Nordic goods from Jan Etnier, we decided to try a yard sale. The sale on Wednesday included an eclectic combination of Nordic goods— such as unpainted and rosmaled woodenware, candles and candleholders, vases and other containers, and holiday items--and a very mixed array of other goods (books, skis, filing cabinet, watering can, microfiche reader, and lots of small things we sold for fifty cents).

Putting on a yard or garage sale, as many of you know, doesn't just happen. We stored many things for a couple of months (thanks to Mary Elworthy for moving a couple of car loads to her garage and back to the Ager Museum so that we could use the basement for the Nordic Summer camp and other activities), and then we also received many additional donations at various times.

Miriam Hansen and Norb and Helen Wurtzel organized the books and the Nordic treasures. In the end, Miriam packed 8 or 9 boxes of books for the sale. Meanwhile Helen and Norb spent parts of several days arranging and pricing merchandise that they set up on tables around the perimeter of the basement meeting room. They also lay out and priced linens and decorative textiles on the dining room table.



Others of us set to work moving the counter top and filing cabinet from the upstairs Newspaper Room down to the front yard (new bookcases took the place where the countertop and cabinet had been). And many hands helped set up tables and place the sale items out on what started out to be a very foggy and damp morning and turned into a steamy afternoon. By 9 a.m. Tim Hirsch and Ivar Lunde were making all sorts of deals, and people were coming from the basement with paper bags full of purchases.



By about 4:30, John Sandquist, one of our guests, my son and I closed up our sun shelter and started packing unsold goods back into the house.

In the end, **we had sold over \$1200 worth of goods** (about \$700 downstairs, \$500 out on the lawn). Leftovers are going to charity agencies. If you bought something at our sale, thank you. And if you helped us put on the sale (at least 20 over course of the summer), **THANK YOU!**

Thrivent Choice

Robert Fossum—August 11, 2016

Thrivent Financial (a merger of Lutheran Brotherhood and Aid Association for Lutherans¹) has a program called Thrivent Choice. According to the webpage: “With Thrivent Choice®, you can recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go. Since 2010, members have used this program to direct \$300 million to churches and nonprofits nationwide.”

Individuals who are benefit members of Thrivent can direct their Thrivent Choice Dollars to nonprofits that are registered in the Thrivent Choice database. A brief set of instructions for how a member does this is given below.

On the nonprofit's side, it must first become registered in the Thrivent Choice database of eligible nonprofits. The requirements are:

- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit or congregation that meets program eligibility rules.¹
- Recommended by a benefit member.
- Approved by a Thrivent Member Network or Thrivent chapter leadership board before being added to the online catalog.

Once an organization has become eligible to receive charitable funds, it can receive charitable dollars from Thrivent members. Ager Association and Chetek Area Museum are eligible nonprofits as are several of local churches.

To begin the process one can direct Thrivent Choice Dollars by phone.

By phone

1. Call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say “Thrivent Choice®.”
2. Press 1 to direct Choice Dollars or 2 to hear Thrivent Choice program Terms and Conditions.(If prompted, say or enter your phone number and date of birth.) Note: Please have your nine-digit Member Identification Number or contract number available.
3. A representative will work with you to direct Choice Dollars.

One can also complete the process online.

1. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice.
2. In the Direct Choice Dollars section on the right, select the “Get started now” link.
3. Log in and enter your user ID and password, and answer your security question. (If you haven't yet registered on Thrivent.com, click “Register for account access.”)
4. Find the number of Choice Dollars available to direct on the right side of the screen.
5. Locate the organization you want to direct to. To direct to a previous organization: Click “Direct Now” next to the organization name; or, On the Activity History page, scroll down and click the name of the desired organization. To direct to a new organization, enter keyword(s) like organization name, city, state, etc. Click “Find.”
6. Click “Direct All” or enter a specific number and click “Direct Now.” Follow the prompts on the confirmation window to direct Choice Dollars.

If you have additional questions about Thrivent Choice® call one of our Customer Care Professionals at 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" when prompted.

¹ Thrivent Financial was officially formed on January 1, 2002, with the merger of Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood (LB), which had been established in 1902 and 1917 respectively. The merger formed the largest fraternal benefit society in the United States. ²<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/28339.pdf>

A Note from the President Doug Pearson

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you are learning a bit about two upcoming programs. On September 6, enjoy the premiere screening of Ivar Lunde's film "Eau Claire, The Ager House, and Waldemar Ager" at the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. The film reminds us of the many ways that Eau Claire was growing in the early 20th century and lets us know how important Ager was to his community—both as a journalist and as an active citizen. Dress up a bit, and help us celebrate Lunde's work. On October 6, learn more about Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian playwright whose work is produced around the world even to this day. Jake Lindgren will help us remember (or discover) some interesting things about *Peer Gynt*.

On **November 1**, later than usual in our annual calendar, **we will have the annual meeting of the Ager Association—at Trinity Lutheran on East Lexington**. We hope to have an interesting film exhibit to look at during a social half-hour, **starting at 7 p.m.**, followed by the meeting.

We'll have the treasurer's annual report (our fiscal year ends in August) and a tentative budget for 2017. Both will be informational but also presented for your approval.

We will also have **elections of officers and members of the Board**. The nominating committee will present nominations for President, Treasurer, two new Directors, and two Directors appointed this year but willing to serve another term. Continuing are Vicky Finstad, Vice President; Robert Fossum, Recording Secretary; and Mary Elworthy, Director. Pearson will remain on the Board for a year as Past President.

Finally, interests in future neighborhood development led me to organize a subcommittee on **Long Range/Strategic Planning** (Finstad, R. Fossum, Hirsch, Pearson, N. Wurtzel, and K. Ziehr. The committee met in January to confer with representatives from Mayo Clinic, and from Eau Claire officials in Economic Development and Parks and Recreation. We also met with Gordy Thorpe, who is very eager to establish a Nordic presence in west side development. The committee has had two other meetings recently—refocusing on Vision, Mission, and Actions Implicit in the Mission. Although these things are important, we realize that theory must become reality and that we must establish who will do what, when, in order to sustain and develop the Association. So expect the committee to be looking for help from the membership.

Save the Date: Henrik Ibsen—the Father of Realism in Theatre

With Jake Lindgren

Thursday, October 6, 2016, 7 p.m., at the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library

Co-Sponsored by the Waldemar Ager Association and the Library

Jake Lindgren will discuss the relevance of Ibsen's work and highlight a controversial work in its day, *Peer Gynt*. Many may think that they are not familiar with that specific Ibsen piece, but it is guaranteed that all will recognize elements from it. Please look forward to a light hearted evening looking into an artist that is still influencing contemporary theatre over 100 years later.

Lindgren is a Fall Creek native with strong Norwegian & Swedish heritage. He received his B.A. in Comprehensive Theatre with an emphasis on directing and design from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and is the founder and Artistic Director of the Eau Claire theatre company, Downstage Left.

Ager Resource Library News, September 2016—By Miriam Hansen

Ager Article: “A Simple Soul”

Two years ago UWEC grad student Taylor Struwe helped out in the Ager Library as an intern, and while there he became interested in learning more about Waldemar Ager and his work. We are pleased that an article written by Taylor and his mentor, Greg Kocken, archivist and librarian at UWEC, has been published in the summer, 2016 issue of Wisconsin Historical Society’s **Wisconsin Magazine of History**. Their article, “A Simple Soul: The Life and Legacy of Waldemar Ager” provides a wonderful overview of Ager and his writings. The Ager Association has received permission to copy the article for distribution, and it is also available in the library files.

New Library Shelving

Many thanks to **Doug Pearson** and his crew who assembled and installed additional shelving for the Ager Library. And thanks to **Oscar Branser** and **Stan Fredrickson**, who shifted thirty shelves of books this past summer! It’s a good thing that we have added the new shelving because we’ve received many wonderful and interesting donations this past year – books, brochures, magazines, and even “bygdeboks”! We’ve expanded the collection into the new bookcases, so we hope you’ll come in and look through these books.



Visitors to the Library



Several folks have been very surprised to learn that the Ager Library has a library, and even more surprised when they discover the wealth of genealogical and immigration materials that we’ve added to the collection. On a recent tour to the Ager House, Dick and Dottie Lind of Rice Lake were one of these couples. We’re glad to report that they were able to gather additional information for their family records from our resources. We encourage others to call for an appointment if they would like to spend some time exploring our genealogical and family history titles. We will be glad to open the house and to our best ability, provide some assistance.

Library Committee

The Ager Library Committee met in June to review the year’s accomplishments and to plan for the tasks that are waiting. **Norma Lionberger, Kathryn Larson, Janette Fredrickson, Tim Hirsch** and **Oscar Branser** have been helping with the vertical file, mending books, planning for our space needs, serving as docents, and even mending the furniture. **Norb Wurtzel** continues to oversee all of the operation, at least when he’s not traveling!



New to the Library

Borgny Ager, granddaughter of Waldemar Ager, has generously donated many mementos from her family’s archives. One of the latest folios of materials is worthy of special attention. This is a collection of articles and letters of Waldemar Ager. As well as personal letters to his children, it includes a letter from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, dated October 29, 1932 and one from Representative Knud Wefold from the 9th District in Minnesota, dated May 11, 1925. *(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

You’ll find several books about migration and immigration among our new additions:

The Cotter's Son, A Story from Sigdal by H.A.Foss, and translated into English by Joel Winkler. (PT 2623.E55)

Julia's Children: A Norwegian Immigrant Family in Minnesota, 1876-1974 by Margaret Gilseth (PS 3557.I645 J8)

Between Rocks and Hard Places: Traditions and Conditions in Norway During the 1800's by Ann Urness Gesme (DL 507.G48)

Nothing to Do But Stay: My Pioneer Mother by Carrie Young (F 645.S2 Y86) is the biography of a young woman who immigrates to North Dakota.

It isn't often that we receive books about Sweden, but now we can finally add one more:

Our Beloved Sweden: Food, Faith, Flowers and Festivals by Janet Martin and Ilene Lorenz. (TX 722.S8 M36) If you've been looking for that particular recipe that your grandmother made, it might be in the food section of this delightful book!

She's a Lee girl!

By Dorothy Sorlie and Ella Fossum

When we discuss the "immigrant experience", we tend to focus on language, recipes, tools, treasured photos, letters, clothing and handiwork. Dorothy Sorlie reminds us that personality traits are passed just as powerfully from one generation to the next in the story she tells of her grandmother, Anna Lee.

Anna (Ashild Ibrekke Hansdotter) was a spirited, sturdy Norwegian woman who travelled with two cousins to the Eau Claire area in 1883, at age 24, to work as a domestic. In 1888 she married Ole Lee (Ola Kittelsson Lien) at First Lutheran Church, and they made their first home on Kendall Street in Eau Claire. In summer Ole worked in the sawmills for \$1.00 a day, and in winter in the woods for \$1.50 a day.

In 1892 they purchased a farm south of Eau Claire on Priory Road. Anna bore six children: Henry, Charles, Mathilda Agrete (Peg), Elmer, Clara and a baby boy who died at birth. Another child died at Camp Randall in Madison as Ole prepared for WWI. Anna helped with farm chores, raised her children, and in order to have some independent income, cleaned the school her children attended and provided the firewood. Of Anna's six children only two grandchildren survived to adulthood.

Dorothy's mother Clara Lee spoke of Anna's independent spirit, strong will and faith-directed life. Clara explained that among family members, all Anna's female descendants are capable, independent, strong-willed or, perhaps, stubborn or difficult. The words "She's a Lee girl!" have defined Anna's descendants for four generations.



We know very little about Anna Lee. She was slight in stature and had thick dark hair that was just beginning to turn gray at her death at 81. Dorothy has given the library several letters we believe Anna wrote to Clara, and we have a picture of her as a young woman. Her true appeal lies in the legacy of her personality. She was indeed the first Lee girl.

**The Ager Association
2016 Board of Directors**

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**Items for next newsletter must be
received by Nov. 11, 2016.**

Contributions

Gordon Thorpe—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Louise Koxlien—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Eleanor Paulson—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Jan and Miriam Hansen—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Jo Stolp—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Suzanne and Robert Nelson—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Susan Avery—In memory of Lauren Ager and Roger Ager
Borgny Ager—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Astrid Nilsen—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Linda McClellan—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Keith and Rita Lee—In memory of their aunt Ev Krigsvold
From Kris Bejin: Muriel and Jerry Roach and Carol and
John Leer—In memory of Lauren Ager
Walter C. Clark Jr.
Jeremy and Melissa Krigsvold—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Elizabeth Blum—In memory of Ev Krigsvold
Paulette Vinmans—In memory of Ev Krigsvold

Library Acquisitions

Books from the collection of Ev Krigsvold from Ev's family
Books from the Dovre Lodge in Barron
"The Fairy Tale Concert", a CD by the Eau Claire Chamber
Orchestra, a gift from Ivar Lunde.
Books from the collection of the late Milo Tappon from
Menomonie, delivered by his son, Wayne Tappon of
Ladysmith
Books, magazines, and many other items from Jan Etnier

*We invite members to help us offset our Internet costs
with a gift of one month's service at \$55.00.*

Help wanted!

Docents for the Ager House and Library

Open houses are on 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month
from 10 am to 2 pm and 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings
from 4-6 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

Classes at the Ager Museum

Although we have promoted our education/research mission pretty effectively in our library over the past couple of years, we have neglected classes. It's over two years since Eric Anderson did a class in Beginning Swedish. (We have, however, had two educational summer camps for kids.)

So this fall we proposed two classes: one in **Beginning Norwegian**, one in **Beginning Rosmaling**. The web site (agerhouse.org) provides information about both. **Norwegian begins on Wednesday, September 7.** We think we have enough students for this class to go forward. As I write this note, however, it does not appear we will have enough students to meet the registration deadline for the rosmaling class this time. If the rosmaling class doesn't work out this fall, we will try again in early 2017.

If you or someone you know wants to do the language class, send a check for \$40 to Stan Hillestad, Treasurer, Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742.

Doug Pearson

Open House
Tours available
through
The Ager House
and Library

2nd & 4th Saturdays,
10 to 2 pm,

1st and 3rd
Wednesdays, 4-6
pm

Public welcome!

Nordic Summer Camp 2016—By Doug Pearson

During the first week of August, thirteen children, ages 7–10, spent three mornings getting involved in Nordic culture at the Waldemar Ager Museum. They began each day learning Finnish with Krister Paakkonen as their instructor: *Huomenta* (good morning), *Moikka* (Goodbye), *Kiitos* (Thank you). Next they went outside to play Kubb. Stan Hillestad helped them with the rules and strategies (somehow the arrangement pitted the girls against the boys).

Snacks came next: fruit and cheese (Fontina, Swedish; Jarlsberg, Norwegian; Havarti, Danish).



the Finnish national anthem as well as The Kalevala (the Finnish national story). The highlights were the rope “snakes” (a graphic way to demonstrate an episode in the story) and some tasty cakes that provided food for thought about the last episode of the story.

On the last day of camp, paint brushes in hand, Deb Jarvar and Mary helped the campers try out the techniques of rosmaling. By the time the session ended, using about five different colors and different rosmaling techniques, each one had produced a decorative ornament with an image of a nisse. And no one got very much paint on their clothes.



Then, with maps provided by AAA, the campers developed their map-reading skills. Just where in the world are the Nordic countries? And they also got acquainted with the Museum library—and the Library of Congress classification system.

The last event of the first two days, conducted by Mary Elworthy, introduced the campers to