

# The Ager Newsletter

The Waldemar Ager Association

March-April-May 2017



## *Coming Events*

New Spring Classes at the Ager Museum-- Rosemaling and Beginning Norwegian: Full information on p. 6.

March 23, 12:30: Waldemar Ager's birthday ceremony at Lakeside Cemetery.

March 25: Spring program: Lise Lunge-Larson, storyteller, ECPL 10:30am; 12:30 pm: Members lunch, Ager Museum.

May 17: Noon event at Ager Museum. Dinner at 5:30 pm: Best Western Plus.

**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**

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)

**LOOKING AHEAD: Join us for the following events:**

**Thursday March 23, 12:30:  
Waldemar Ager's Birthday  
Ceremony at Lakeside Cemetery**

**Saturday March 25, 10:30am  
ECPL, children's program with  
storyteller Lise Lunge-Larsen**

**Followed by**

**12:30 pm: Members Luncheon  
with Ms. Lunge-Larson,  
Ager Museum**

**May 17, Noon: Short Ceremony  
at the flagpole, Ager Museum, to  
celebrate the meaning of  
Syttende Mai**

**May 17, 5:30pm  
Syttende Mai Celebration at the  
Best Western Plus**

# First 100 Days—Robert Fossum, President

The Waldemar Ager Association and the US Federal Government shared similar fates this January 2017: Transition of power to new presidents. Unlike the US president, the Association's President started out in the Mayo Luther Hospital across the street from the Museum getting a new hip on January 23. Robert Fossum was able to call one meeting of the Association's Board to order before going under the knife. He started a hectic first 100 days that stalled after the operation. This hectic activity has included many plans that promise a great coming year for the Museum and Association.

The Program Committee, under the leadership of past president Doug Pearson, has already developed a great program for the Museum and members. Here is an outline of what is planned:

- A memorial at the Waldemar Ager gravesite on Ager's birthday, March 23, 2017.
- Open houses at the Museum.
- Spring program on March 25.
- 17. Mai ceremony at the Museum on the morning of May 17 and dinner in the evening at the Best Western Plus.
- Midsommar Program.
- Nordic Summer Camp.
- Fall Programs.
- Advent at the Ager.

More details can be found on the website ([agerhouse.org](http://agerhouse.org)).

In addition to a new president, the Board has a new treasurer, Stan Fredrickson, and two new board members: Dianne Lueder and Jane Pederson.

Part of the First 100 Days will be an effort by the board to devolve responsibilities to committees as suggested in the bylaws. In addition to the Library Committee, an additional three standing committees have been charged:

- Program Committee with Doug Pearson as Chair
- Buildings and Grounds Committee with Oscar Brandser as Chair.
- Finance Committee with Stan Fredrickson as Chair.

These committees welcome suggestions and volunteer help. More details will appear on the website.

In addition, the board intends to look at the big picture that I call Membership Management. This includes reviewing our social media offering (website, Facebook, membership database) as well as examining where the responsibilities lie and how these offerings are interconnected. Membership management includes solicitation of renewals and sending out newsletters. I have just sent a notice to all members to renew memberships for 2017. Our organization depends almost entirely on memberships for its continuing operations. So, we hope for an excellent return.

Finally, the Association is searching for an Executive Director. This Executive Director, while not a full-time employee (we call it a part-time/volunteer position), should help to organize the membership management, maintain the Museum Calendar, and keep track of Museum usage. The search document can be found on the website. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact me or the contact on the search document.

In the next newsletter I will report on the First 100 Days (at Ager).

Robert Fossum, President

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### **Lise Lunge-Larsen, Storyteller and Author, to Perform at Spring Program**

Lise Lunge-Larsen, award winning children's author and storyteller, will present a program of interest to all ages in Eau Claire on March 25, 2017. Her appearance is sponsored by the Waldemar Ager Association and she will present her program at the L.E. Phillips Public Library at 10:30 AM.

Lise will do a dramatic storytelling presentation of Norwegian folktales and talk about the unique role the folktales have in Norwegian history and culture.

She has received the Minnesota Book Award, American Library Association ALA Notable Book of the Year, Horn Book Fanfare Book, Riverbank Review Book of Distinction, and the Anne Izard Storyteller's Choice Award.

Her books include "The Troll with No Heart in His Body"; "The Race of the Birkebeiners"; "The Adventures of Thor the Thunder God"; "The Legend of the Lady Slipper: An Ojibwe Tale"; and "The Hidden Folk: Stories of Fairies, Dwarves, Selkies, and Other Secret Beings. She has a new book coming out in fall 2017 titled "Seven Ways to Trick a Troll", illustrated by Kari Vick.

Lise was born and raised in Norway. She came to the US on a scholarship to attend college. She planned to return to Norway but fell in love, married and remained in the US where, in addition to teaching at the college level, she has become a well-known storyteller and award-winning author. She and her husband have three children and live in Duluth, MN where she is known as the "Troll Lady".

From the introduction to "The Troll with No Heart in His Body":

"Why do children love troll stories? Trolls! When I was a child growing up in Norway, just the mention of that word sent chills down my spine. Trolls were everywhere: in the mountains, in the forests, certainly under bridges, and even in our house. And, of course, trolls were in the stories--the stories I adored and always begged for. Now, having been a storyteller for more than twenty years, I find American children also begging for "just one more troll story."

Lunge-Larsen's web page provides additional information about her: [liselungelarsen.com](http://liselungelarsen.com)

Please call 715.456.2460 if you would like more information. *Dianne Lueder, Program Chair*



## **Ager Library Newsletter— March 2017 By Miriam Hansen**

This past October the Ager Library received a number of books and other items, both contemporary and historical, from Mike and Marilyn Carlson, who are now full-time residents in Green Valley, Arizona.

The library is now very fortunate to have two beautiful books with rosemaling by the noted painter, Nils Ellingsgard: *Rosemåling i Numedal: Dekorativ Måling i Folkekunsten* and *Rosemåling I Vest-Agder* from the Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum. A folio with eight colored prints has also been added to our collection: *Gammel Rosemaling i Rogaland*.

Here are just a few of the other titles from the Carlson collection:

*Astri, My Astri: Norwegian Heritage Stories*, by Deb Nelson Gourley

*Sveriges Historia*, by C.T. Odhner

*Norges Historie med Hovedtræk av Sveriges of Danmarks Historie* by Jens Raabe

*Vang Stavkyrkje*. (Booklet)

*The Wooden-Shoe People: An Illustrated History of the First Swedish Settlement in Minnesota*, by Lloyd Hackl. (History of the Center City/Lindstrom/Chisago City area with many photographs and maps.)

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### **Family Histories**

Occasionally the Ager Library has been the lucky recipient of a family history, a genealogical list, a diary, or a self-published autobiography. Do you have family histories that you would like to share? We have started a small collection of these, and would like to add more. If you or others in your family have compiled and written about your Scandinavian family, whether in a hand-written notebook, or published professionally, we would really appreciate receiving a copy.

As you know, these stories often vanish if someone doesn't take time to record them and keep them from landing in the trash can. We will protect them, and as soon as we have a larger collection, you'll find them listed on our website along with the rest of our collection.

Three from our collection:

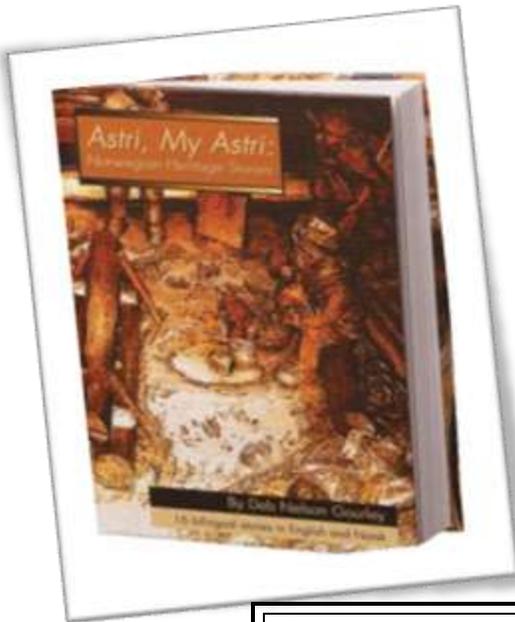
- Erik J. Berdahl Diary, 1750-1985
- John M. Johnson Family History
- The Heyerdahl Family History

If you would like to take a class about writing your family history, check out classes at the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison: [www.nagenl.org](http://www.nagenl.org). At their online site you will find videos about their genealogy classes and webinars—*Miriam Hansen*

## Astri, My Astri: Norwegian Heritage Stories

One of our new library additions, *Astri, My Astri: Norwegian Heritage Stories* is much longer than most family histories. Written by Deb Nelson Gourley, this is the story about her Norwegian ancestors who came to America from Hallingdal, Numedal, Telemark, Voss, Sognefjord, Valdres, and several other areas in Norway. They first came to Koshkonong, Wisconsin in the mid-nineteenth century, and later moved to Norwegian settlements in southeastern Minnesota.

Deb Nelson's curiosity about her Norwegian roots started when, as a young child, she rescued an immigrant trunk from being burned. Under the dirty surface of the old trunk she found the lettering: "Arstri Her Brans Datter, 1812." As a college student she studied Norwegian, then became a "study abroad" student in Norway for six months. In addition to studying in her major area, animal science, she spent time learning about her ancestral background. With help from Gerhard Naeseth and her mother back at home, she was able to explore records at Norway's National Archives,



and eventually she learned that the old discarded trunk had actually belonged to her great-great-grandmother, Astri Herbrandsdatter.

But that is just one of many stories in this interesting bilingual book. (Yes, it's written in English *and* Norsk!) In addition to the maps, genealogical charts and many photos, there are stories about some of the experiences that the majority of Norwegian immigrants faced: starting a church, the flu epidemic of 1918, Indian raids, sending clothing to Norway during the occupation, births and deaths. Deb Nelson Gourley's book reminds us of the importance of recording, not only the birth and death dates of our ancestors, but also the rich tapestry of their stories. -  
--Miriam Hansen

**Have you sent in your membership for**

The Ager Association Membership/Renewal Jan.1 - Dec. 31, 2017

PLEASE MAIL YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE AGER ASSOCIATION.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: The Ager Association, P.O. Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702

Annual Membership Levels: New \_\_\_\_\_ or Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership: \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Call me for help with: Programs \_\_\_\_\_, Publicity \_\_\_\_\_,

Supporting Membership: \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Fund Raising/Grants \_\_\_\_\_, House Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Membership: \$500 \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

General Membership: \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

The Ager Association wants to develop classes to meet the interests of members and others. Language and rosmaling have been favorites over the years.

We have instructors whose schedules we hope may work for you in a Norwegian and/or Rosmaling class.

## **Spring Classes at the Ager Museum**

### **Rosmaling, Spring 2017**

**Instructor, Patsy Vork**

Openings are still available for this spring. **Classes will be held at the Ager Museum from 5 to 8 p.m. on consecutive Wednesdays: April 5, 12, 19, 26.**

If 8 enroll the cost will be \$75 per person (the fee includes paints, brushes, oil, turp, patterns, painting surfaces, and handouts; Patsy will hand these out at the first session).

If 6 enroll the cost will be \$100 per person (the fee includes paints, brushes, oil, turp, patterns, painting surfaces, and handouts; Patsy will hand these out at the first session).

**To reserve your place in this class, send a check for \$75 to Stan Fredrickson, Treasurer, Waldemar Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742. Please make your check out to the Waldemar Ager Association.**

Should fewer than 8 enroll, we will request additional payment. We will confirm plans to go ahead with the class or refund enrollment checks by Monday, March 6.

### **Norwegian, Spring 2017**

**Instructor, Mari Carlson**

Openings are available for a course for beginners (also helpful to travelers) in Norwegian. Even useful for those who have had some introductory study of the language.

**Classes will be held at the Ager Museum from 10:30 to noon on consecutive Mondays: March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1**

If 8 enroll the cost will be \$40 per person.

If 6 enroll the cost will be \$45 per person.

**To reserve your place in this class, send a check for \$40 to Stan Fredrickson, Treasurer, Waldemar Ager Association, PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742. Please make your check out to the Waldemar Ager Association.** We will confirm plans to go ahead with the class or refund enrollment checks by Monday, March 13

If you would be interested in taking a language class this spring, we have a potential course in Norwegian for travelers, beginners or others with some knowledge of the language. The instructor will be Mari Carlson. Please let me know if you would be interested in taking a Norwegian class on **Monday mornings, from 10:30 to noon (six weeks)**

**OR**

**Thursday mornings, from 10:30 to noon (six weeks)**

**OR**

Able to meet twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays, from 10:30 to noon (3-week class)

There would be six 1.5 hour classes beginning in early April. Our goal is to enroll eight language learners. Cost for either the 3-week or the 6-week pattern would be \$40 per student.

The Waldemar Ager Association, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, ancestry, color, age, familial status, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, lawful sources of income, national origin or any other discriminatory practice prohibited by state or federal law.

**The Ager Association  
2017 Board of Directors**

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**Items for next newsletter must  
be received by May 19, 2017.**

**Contributions**

*Mary Elworthy—To the Internet Fund*

*Robert Fossum*

*Carolyn and Daniel Johnson—To the Endowment Fund*

*Debra Johnson—To the Internet Fund*

*Carol and John Best—In memory of Solveig Ager Best and  
Dr. John Best*

*Tryg Ager*

**Library Acquisitions**

*Mike and Marilyn Carlson—Books, pamphlets, periodicals*

*Ron and Rachel Pechauer—Books*

*Marilyn Reinart— Books*

*Diane Lueder—Henrik Ibsen DVD Collection*

*Sharon Pogodzmski—Dictionary*

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

**What's happening at the Ager Museum  
during Summer 2017?**

**Kubb Instruction Day for Kids—Tuesday, June 13,  
10-11:30**

**Kids Fishing Day at Half Moon Lake (Morning to be  
arranged)**

**Midsommar Event—Saturday, June 17 (Tentative)  
1-4pm**

**Nordic Camp for Kids—July 31-August 3 (Mornings)**

**Ager Museum Annual Yard Sale—August 28**

**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

News from the *Reform* is going to become a regular part of our newsletter.

If you had been reading the April 7, 1903\* issue of the *Reform*, you may have come across the following items.

**Local News**

Wausau Board and Lumber Company, which is going to establish a factory down by Shaw Town, will, it is said, hire about 200 men and work both night and day. McDonough Company will provide the machinery. [Note: McDonough Manufacturing still operates in Eau Claire to this day.]

**World News**

W. J. Bryan still maintains that free silver will save the country.

New York capitalists have received a contract from Paris officials for the illumination of that city.

\*In 1903 Ager and his young family moved into the house now called the Ager Museum.

# Advent at the Ager Museum – December 11, 2016



Photo by Emily Smith: Santa Lucia Procession  
Below: Photo by Norb Wurtzel: Robin Fossum and Mary Elworthy



Advent at the Ager Museum, the final Ager Association program of 2016, was another successful celebration. Even though the nearly 8 inches of snow that fell on Saturday may have discouraged some people from venturing far from their TV sets, many of us enjoyed the treats (krumkaka, rosettes, sugar and butter cookies, cheeses, herring, Swedish rye bread, and other delicacies) and the entertainment. Robin Fossum and Mari Carlson played their fiddles in duets and solos and joined Mary Elworthy, who played the pump organ. Then, as we have been seeing for many years now, seven young people in costume presented a Santa Lucia parade and mini-concert. And their singing encouraged the singing of a few carols.

Visitors wandered the house, learned about Waldemar Ager and his newspaper, and discovered the upstairs research library and its primary source of organization and information, Miriam Hansen.

Down in the basement, our younger visitors kept busy “fishing” for prizes, drawing t versions of the tomten, and making decorations.

Carol Anderson organized things again this year and was assisted by Ingrid Coobs, Ella Fossum, Eric and Erin Anderson, Robin Fossum and the many members who contributed special holiday deserts. Thanks to all who attended and made the afternoon a success—D. Pearson