

# The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum March-May 2018

## **Coming Events**

**Board meetings**, Ager Museum, Monday, Mar. 19, April 16 & May 21, 9:30 a.m.

**Discussion: Bear Town** by F. Backman, Ager Museum, Mon. March 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Susan Brantly: Henrik Ibsen's Enduring Art**, Mon. March 26, 7 p.m. at L.E. Phillips P. Lib.

**International Folk Fair**, Davies Center, UWEC, Sunday April 29, 1-4 p.m.

**Syttende Mai Parade**, Ager Museum, May 17, noon

**Syttende Mai Dinner & Program**, Best Western Plus, Thurs. May 17, 5:30 p.m.

**An Enemy of the People**, Coach trip to Guthrie Theater, Performance 1 p.m., Wed. May 23—see p. 5 for details

**Midsommar**, Ager Museum Sat. June 23, 1-4 p.m.

**The Waldemar Ager Association  
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Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
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715.834.3985  
[www.agerhouse.org](http://www.agerhouse.org)**

## **Happy Days at 429 Chestnut Street**

**By Carol and Peter Anderson**

We, the Andersons lived in the Ager house from June 1968-June 1970. We rented from Luther Hospital. Our rent was \$75.00 a month. We paid for our utilities. We were the last family to live in the house. The family previous to us was that of Dr. Harry Gonlag.

Our children, Elizabeth age 3 and Kristin age 2 loved the house as we did—they played outside, and we watched the train pass by every day. We saw many ducks and birds. August 14th, 1968, Elizabeth and Kristin were at their grandparent's home in Eau Claire for the evening. At 4:00 a.m., Peter and I walked to Luther Hospital Emergency Room, and our 3rd daughter Sara was born at 5:05 a.m. Sara was the last baby to be brought into the Ager House.

We have such wonderful memories living there. We had many family gatherings around the dining room table—birthdays, holidays and reunions. The girls' playroom at the head of the stairs may have been Waldemar Ager's study. The upstairs bathroom had a large claw foot tub—the girls remember it as their swimming pool. It was a huge tub. Later our girls confessed that they enjoyed sliding down the bannister.

Spring 1970, we were told by Luther Hospital that the house was going to be torn down to make a parking lot, and we needed to move. We were heartsick, not only because we had to move from our lovely home but also because it was going to be torn down. We felt so strongly about the historical value of this house that we met with the Administrator of the hospital and were told unequivocally that we could not purchase the house and move it because it was going to be demolished.

In June 1970, we moved to our present home on State Street.

I asked Luther Hospital for a meeting with the Board. of Directors—which I had. I also talked with Elvira Ager and got support from her. I know there were others that supported a decision to give the house a reprieve. It became the *Red Carpet* resale shop temporarily, but there were still rumblings about making it into a parking lot. Others came to defend the Ager House, and at 4 a.m. on a morning in June 1994, the house was moved seven blocks from its original location on Chestnut Street to a city lot on Madison Street. We watched with tears in our eyes. We loved that house and still do.

Thank you to all who fought the good fight for the Waldemar Ager house.

## **From the President's Desk...**

We begin a new year with several changes and great new programs.

The Waldemar Ager Association Board of Directors has several changes. We have a new Director, Kathryn Larson. We also have a new Vice-president, Greg Kocken. Greg is an Associate Professor, Special Collections Librarian, and University Archivist at UW-EC. The other officers have continued as before, save for one loss. Our treasurer, Stan Fredrickson, has resigned, mainly for personal reasons. He will be missed as he has put the financial books into excellent shape and has been extremely diligent in filing state and federal tax forms so we can retain our 501(c)(3)/non-profit status.

Miriam Hansen, along with her husband Jan, moved to Madison WI, relinquishing her position as Librarian and chair of the Library Committee. Our new Vice-president Greg Kocken has agreed to take on this position. Before getting into the details of that position, he is working with the president on financial details until a new treasurer is appointed.

The Annual Membership Meeting approved amendments to the bylaws. After reviewing, the Board found several amendments that required fine tuning. At its meeting in December 2017, the Board approved a revised version that it will send to the membership at the next annual meeting. Meanwhile the Board is operating under the revised version of the bylaws. When final editorial tweaks have been made, the bylaws will be posted on the Association's website and published in the newsletter.

The new bylaws feature the establishment of standing committees. These are **Membership Committee, Program Committee, Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, Library Committee, and Publicity Committee**. Currently only the Program Committee and the Library Committee are populated. We seek volunteers for all committees. If you wish to serve on a committee, please send a message to the president. We are especially in need of members on the Publicity Committee and the Finance Committee.

We were pleased that Diane Lund, Janice Wnukowski, and Florence Weise served as auditors for 2017.

Another feature of the Bylaws amendments was changing the fiscal year from September 1 to August 31 of the following year, to a calendar year fiscal year. This resulted in two treasurer's reports, one for the original fiscal year ending on August 31 2017 and the other for the short four-month fiscal year from September 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. The committee filed a report stating that no problems were found and the books are in fine order. Our thanks to the auditors.

The Association is planning several events this spring. Don't miss the lecture by Professor Susan Brantly titled "**Henrik Ibsen's Enduring Art: The Enemy of the People Is Still with Us**" at 7 p.m., Monday, March 26, at the L E. Phillips Public Library. Related to this is the planned coach trip to the Guthrie Theatre on May 23, 2018, to see the play by Ibsen. See details on p. 5.

Before travelling to Minneapolis in May, the Association is teaming with Norden Folk and Sons of Norway to sponsor the annual 17. mai banquet on May 17, 2018 at the Best Western Plus in Eau Claire. There will be a parade at the Ager Museum at noon that day. Plan to attend both.

Then in June we will again celebrate Skt. Hans (Midsommar) on June 23. No bonfire but lots of fun to be had.

We are still searching for an Executive Director. And after the departure of Stan Fredrickson, we are looking for a Treasurer.

In conclusion, I want to thank Victoria Finstad for her many years of service to the Association, the last few as Vice-president. She has been extremely generous with her time to work at the Museum. Her generosity helped to finance the digitization of the *Reform*, Ager's newspaper. This was a major achievement, as this is now just one of few Norwegian newspapers to have been digitized.

Also, a huge thank you to Miriam Hansen, our former Librarian. She has done a tremendous job of organizing the library, creating the catalog, and recommending books. We hope she will continue contact with the Association. While in the thanking mode, I extend thanks to all the volunteers who have helped in furthering the mission of the Association.

Med vennlig hilsen,  
Robert Fossum

## **Take a class at the Ager Museum**

Mari Carlson introduced about 50 of us to Norwegian TV programs in four **Ta Fem** lunch sessions in January and February. Now she's ready to teach more formally, as is Elbjorg Tobin. Patsy Vork is our rosemaling teacher.

### **Norwegian**

#### **Beginning Norwegian** with Mari Carlson

Mondays, from 10 – 11: March 5, 12, 26, April 2

Cost: \$45 for current—2018—Ager Assn. members. \$50, nonmembers

#### **Intermediate Norwegian** with Mari Carlson

Thursdays, from 7 – 8: April 5, 12, 19, 26

Cost: \$45 for current—2018—Ager Assn. members. \$50, nonmembers

#### **Advanced Norwegian** with Elbjorg Tobin

Thursdays, from 5 – 6:15: March 22, 27. April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10. Cost: \$80 for current—2018—Ager Assn. members. \$85, nonmembers. *Register early.*

### **Rosemaling**

#### **Beginning and Continuing Rosemaling** with Patsy Vork.

Wednesdays, from 5 – 8: March 21, 28, April 4, 11

Cost: \$80 for current—2018—Ager Assn members. \$85, nonmembers

*Vork will provide the basics for new students and guidelines and techniques for those who have had some initial instruction. Note: If new to rosemaling, a student must purchase a \$30 start-up kit from Patsy Vork. Pay the additional fee with the registration fee. Registration forms are at the museum.*

## **Fourth Annual Nordic Camp for Kids (ages 7 – 12)**

Registration is open for this year's day camp. Camp runs for four days from 9 – 12:15 each day, July 30 – August 2, 2018. Cost this year: \$35 per camper. Games, language, geography, carving, hiking, singing, rose maling. Registration forms at [agerhouse.org](http://agerhouse.org).

### To Docent or not To Docent?

#### Open House at the Ager Museum

A small group of Ager members has been greeting and giving tours to visitors at the Ager Museum since our first regularly scheduled opening in January of 2016. We invite more members to help with this important activity. Training and red vests are provided.

The house is open every second and fourth Saturday of the month from 10 – 2, and the third Wednesday, from 4 – 7.

If you can help, please contact Doug Pearson ([pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu) or 715 834 5204).

## **Membership Renewals**

A heartfelt thank-you for those who have already renewed their membership in the Ager Association for 2018. The funds are needed to offset the expenses of the alley paving assessment, the purchase of an optical projector and the always unpredictable snow removal costs.

For those who have not paid their dues, please check your mailing label. If the label does not show 2018 or LIFE, we have not received your dues for 2018. Please consider this a reminder to do so. We will be using the funds to maintain the Ager Museum facilities and support the Ager Association programs. We depend on you.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

At the Ager Annual Meeting in October, the membership approved bylaw revisions that change the fiscal year to a calendar year basis, January 1 to December 31. Rather than wait until fall to share the annual financial report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2017, the Board is publishing this report in the newsletter. At the same time, the Board approved a modified budget for expenditures in 2018. If you have questions or comments about the report, please contact Robert Fossum.

--Stan Frederickson

## WALDEMAR AGER ASSOCIATION

### FY-2017 REPORT & FY-2018 BOARD APPROVED BUDGET

#### BUDGET ANALYSIS thru December 31, 2017

<u>REVENUE &amp; SUPPORT</u>	FY-2017 Budget	FY-2017 Actual Amount	FY-2018 Budget
Membership Revenue	5,000	6,710	6000
Contributions & Donations	5,000	5,070	5000
<u>Instruction Revenue</u>			
Rosmaling Class Fees	900	825	900
Norwegian Class Fees	1,200	1,085	1200
Nordic Camp	400	360	400
Hardanger Fees	0	0	0
Instruction Subtotal	2,500	2,270	2,500
House Usage Fees	1,250	801	1250
Misc Revenue (Book sales, ornaments, thrift sales, interest)	1,250	389	1250
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>15,240</b>	<b>16,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES &amp; DISBURSEMENTS</b>			
General Maintenance / Buildings & Grounds	4,500	2,832	4500
Utilities	1,600	1,371	1600
Communication/Phone/Internet/Web Hosting	1,300	1,109	1400
Insurance	820	820	1000
Library	600	480	600
Office & Business Expense	500	829	700
Professional Affiliations	120	160	180
<u>Instruction Expenses</u>			
Rosmaling Instruction	700	650	700
Norwegian Instruction	700	375	800
Instruction Subtotal	1,400	1,025	1,500
<u>Program &amp; Event Expense</u>			
Program	1,000	712	1000
Advertising	1,100	1,120	1100
Nordic Camp	400	337	400
Kubb sponsorship	300	300	300
Program & Event Subtotal	2,800	2,469	2,800
Newsletter	1,000	887	1000
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
Reform - UWEC hosting fees	250	0	0
Executive Director	2,400	0	2400
Alley assessment / Contingencies	1,300	1,300	800
Other Misc Expenses (incl. projector)	--	1,165	320
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>18,590</b>	<b>14,447</b>	<b>18,800</b>

#### **NET WORTH**

Beginning Net Worth (Bank accounts & investments)	49,085	49,085	50,090
Estimated Ending Net Worth	45,495	50,090	47,290

## ❖ Book Discussion

Please join other readers for a conversation about Fredrik Backman's *Bear Town* (Monday, March 12, at 7 p.m., Ager Museum). Bring your friends.

You could say that the book is about hockey, but it is so much more. As in *A Man Called Ove*, and *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry*, Backman (a Swedish writer) sees so much of the small world he explores--the personal struggles each character faces, the forces of society and the government, issues of class, race, and sexuality.

## ❖ Getting Better Acquainted with Henrik Ibsen

Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library (Eau Claire)

Even though Ibsen is presented around the world nearly every week of the year, we don't often get to talk about or see a production of *An Enemy of the People*. In collaboration with the library, the Ager Association is sponsoring two events to learn more about Ibsen and this play.

Professor Susan Brantly, Birget Baldwin Professor of Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison, will talk about the ways Ibsen is relevant nearly 150 years after his play was first produced. Bring your friends and your questions for Professor Brantly.

## ❖ Coach Tour and Tickets to the Guthrie Theater's Production of the Play

**Register by April 18** to be one of the **56 travelers going to the play on Wednesday, May 23**, for the 1 p.m. performance. Tickets are \$50 for 2018 Ager Association members, \$55 for nonmembers.

Registration form with more information at [agerhouse.org](http://agerhouse.org). Or contact [pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu) or 715 834 5204.

## ❖ Coming Soon to the Riverside Theater, UWEC: *Kingdom Come*.

*Kingdom Come*, a story of Norwegian immigrants coming to Wisconsin, was written by Amlin Gray as part of a theater project that premiered at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater in 1983. The setting is the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the dependence of the story on immigrant journals and anecdotes gives the play a relevance to the immigrant experience today, whether the viewer is a descendent of immigrants or a recent immigrant.

The play opens on March 1st at 7:30 p.m. and runs March 1st-3rd at 7:30 p.m. each night, March 7th-10th at 7:30 p.m. each night, with a closing show at 2 p.m. on March 11<sup>th</sup> in Riverside Theatre, Haas Fine Arts Center on the UWEC campus. Tickets can be purchased through the Service Center website, at the Service Center in Davies Student Center or at the door.

## A Generous Use for Thrivent Choice Dollars

Several newsletters ago we ran an article on how to use Thrivent Choice dollars. The first of our members to take advantage of this were Bradley and Kathryn Larson, whose Thrivent Choice check arrived recently and was added to our general fund. Thank you and congratulations.

Eligible Thrivent Financial members have the option to recommend where Thrivent Choice donates millions of charitable dollars each year. If you are a Thrivent member, you may wish to direct Choice Dollars to your nonprofit. Visit <http://links.members.thrivent.com>. Reminder: 2017 Choice Dollars expire on March 31, 2018. —Robert Fossum

## Ole Bull Concert

Fathers' Day, June 17, 2018, 7:30 p.m.  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
421 S. Farwell Street

Ole Bull, the great 19<sup>th</sup> century violin virtuoso, played two concerts in Eau Claire. The first in 1870 was to assist his new father-in-law, the Honorable J. G. Thorp, and Thorp's partner, Peter Truax, in opening their new music hall. The second concert on June 17, 1873 was at the Music Hall to raise money for a Leif Erickson monument in Madison.

A program commemorating the 1873 concert will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church on the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Norwegian violinist's second concert in Eau Claire. The program on June 17, 2018 presents music selections that were commonly aired at Ole Bull concerts. A typical concert would include a soprano and a tenor/baritone, a piano accompanist who would play one or two solo pieces, and Ole Bull.

The script read by the four performers is taken from newspapers of the time and retains the 19<sup>th</sup> century wording. The **first half** of the program covers his life from childhood to his death in 1880.

Ole Bull's playing held audiences around the world spellbound. The **second half** of the program will describe an Ole Bull concert and will try to explain the unique musical qualities that were Ole Bull's trademark.

There were three violinists at the pinnacle of performance in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Henri Wieniawski, Henri Vieuxtemps, and Ole Bull. All three were technical wizards and dazzled audiences around the world with brilliant showcase pieces. It was said that while his contemporaries impressed the crowds at their concerts, Ole Bull's playing captured the hearts of his audiences. That is the Ole Bull we will try to present.

The cast of *Ole Bull*:  
*The Last (and Final) Farewell Tour* includes Anna Rybicki, soprano; Luke Otto, tenor/baritone; Jennifer Lohmann, piano; and Rob Kuchta, violin.

--Rob Kuchta



### Book Review

#### *On the way to the Melting Pot* by Waldemar Ager.

Despite its datedness and its unpopularity compared to works by Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson, who wrote similar works on provincial America, *On the Way to the Melting Pot* is strikingly relevant today. The novel takes place in an unnamed, early twentieth century Midwestern town where the same dynamics that are at play today. We, too, are towns of both immigrants and long-time citizens. We are rich and poor. We struggle with addictions to alcohol, money and the past, and we raise our children into an uncertain future. We succeed and we fail. We are still on our way to the melting post that is modern America.

Ager's book is partly a response to his contemporary, Israel Zangwill, a Jewish playwright who praised America as a place where "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race." Instead, Ager advocated maintaining ties to our mother countries to help prevent a kind of melting down to a new culture that knows nothing of its origins. He rejected the foreign language bias of his era. He thought an unrooted society was liable to lose itself in vice.

In this novel, Ager introduces characters much like people he observed in Eau Claire, where he lived. Louis (Lars), a young Norwegian immigrant, quickly adapts to American ways by learning English, adopting mannerisms, and moving up in his business through enterprising work habits. He invites his Norwegian girlfriend to come over as his fiancé. She, too, succeeds, finding work in a loving household. However, their differences threaten their relationship. As Louis becomes more prosperous, he finds Karoline common. For her part, she watches him turn into someone she no longer knows. As the years of their engagement wear on, will the forces of money, ambition and differing views on marriage and class pull them apart?

What kind of melting pot are we headed toward? What is our heritage worth to us? Of what value are we to our community without knowing where we come from? Are we more or less able to engage with people of other cultures when we identify as Americans versus Scandinavian-Americans? Do Ager's characters foreshadow our own futures? Read Ager's captivating tale of colorful turn-of-the-century townsfolk to calibrate your own twenty-first century views.

--Marl Carlson

## The Ager Association 2018 Board of Directors

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**Items for next newsletter must be  
received by May 18, 2018.**

**Visit our website [Agerhouse.org](http://Agerhouse.org) to  
view the newsletter in color and  
much more.**

## New Members

Marilyn Hagen—Mondovi, WI  
Marie Wolbach—Palo Alto, CA

## Contributions, Memorials and Honorariums

Borgny Ager—*In memory of Eyvind and Inga Ager*

Tryg A. Ager

Carol & Peter Anderson—*In honor of the Ager House at 429  
Chestnut St. (1968-1970)*

Susan Avery—*In memory of Tom Avery, Roger Ager and Eyvind  
& Inga Ager*

John and Carol Best—*In memory of Roald Ager*

Oscar & Beth Brandser

Jeff & Stacey Culver—*In memory of Gudrun Bergh*

Frank Derge

TIAA-CREF (by) Jan Etnier

Ella B. Fossum

Robert & Robin Fossum—*In memory of Winifred Fossum*

Ruth E. Harris—*In memory of Naomi Harris*

Daniel & Caroline Johnson

Bradley & Kathryn Larson—(Thrivent Choice)

Ray A. & Betty Larson

Margaret “Meg” Nord—*In honor of Øyvind T. Gullikson*

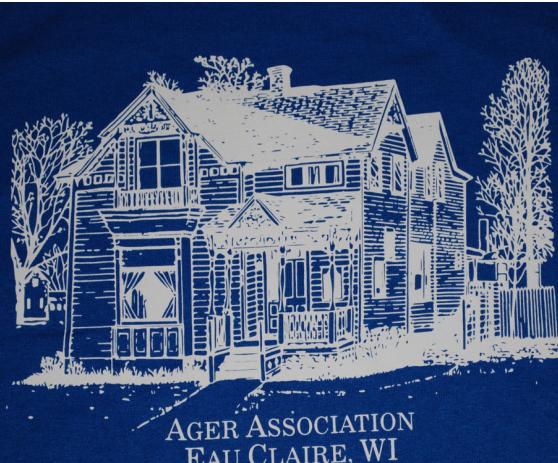
LaVern & Betty Pampuch—*In memory of Margaret & Chuck  
Wiltrot*

Dorothy Sorlie & Jim Urness

Paul Wiersgalla—*In memory of Arlene Gunderson*

Marie Wolbach—*New membership in honor of Ella Fossum*

**Introducing the Ager House Logo... Now available in red or  
blue t-shirts with the logo on the front. The sizes are S,M,L &  
XL. The price is \$10.00.—Florence Weise**



The Waldemar Ager Association  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742



# Spring Yard Sale

The Ager Association is sponsoring a SPRING YARD SALE on June 7, 2018, 8 am–5 pm. PLEASE check your homes for suitable items and plan to donate. Scandinavian items are especially desired but gently used or new items of any kind will be accepted for resale.

Please contact **Mary Elworthy**, 715.379.7491, by phone or text to arrange drop off/pick up OR deliver to the Ager Museum, 514 W Madison St., Eau Claire, ONLY during scheduled **Open House** times listed below.

**March Open Houses:** Saturdays, 3/10 and 3/24, 10-2; Wednesday, 3/21: 4-7

**April Open Houses:** Saturdays, 4/14 and 4/28, 10-2; Wednesday, 4/18: 4-7

**May Open Houses:** Saturdays, 5/12 and 5/26, 10-2; Wednesday, 3/21: 4-7



**Advent at the Ager 2017** included the Santa Lucia carolers, Mari Carlson on the fiddle and a table of Christmas baking. Borgny Ager, an original member of the Ager Association, is pictured with her nieces, Susan Avery and Gloria Ager along with her three grand-nieces and great nephew.

