

# The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum Sept.-Nov. 2018

## **Coming Events**

**Board meetings**, Ager Museum,  
Monday, Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov.  
19, 9:30 a.m.

**Ager Association Annual Meeting**, Ager Museum,  
Tuesday, Sept. 25, 7:00 p.m.

**Fall Program, Ivar Lunde's presentation on Marcus Thrane.** Eau Claire Room, L.E. Phillips Public Library, Monday, Oct. 8, 7 p.m. **Details on page 2.**

**Advent at the Ager**, Ager Museum, Sunday, Dec. 9 from 1-4 p.m. **Details on back page.**

**A 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration:**  
**Save these dates:**  
Monday, Feb. 11, Evening  
Thursday, Feb. 28, Evening  
Friday, March 22 Afternoon and evening  
Saturday, March 23, Morning, afternoon and evening.  
**Details on page 3.**

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

## **Fall Program: Marcus Møller Thrane**

Ager Association member Ivar Lunde has agreed to make a presentation this fall on Norwegian immigrant, labor leader, newspaper man, and dramatist Marcus Thrane.

**Join us at 7 p.m., Monday, October 8  
Eau Claire Room, L.E. Phillips Public Library**

## **Our traditional Holiday Celebration**

**Advent at the Ager**

**Will be held at**

**The Ager Museum**

**Sunday December 8, 2018 from 1-4 pm**

We hope you'll come and share with us traditional Scandinavian food, crafts for children, music and good times at the Museum

## **Waldemar Ager's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration**

**Exploring His Legacy:**

**Waldemar Ager: Conversations about  
Immigrant Identity**

**Presented by the Waldemar Ager  
Association**

**February 11 and 28, 2019**

**March 22 and 23, 2019**

**Details on Page 3**

## Marcus Møller Thrane Presented by Ivar Lunde



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A year or two before Waldemar Ager was born in Norway, Marcus Thrane was in Chicago starting a Norwegian Theater company. His plays usually have an edge to them—something political or cultural. Some are set in the homeland, some in America. Like Ibsen, he wants to make a point. Unlike Ibsen, he writes very straightforward dialogue, depends on simplistic characterization, and offers an unambiguous plot.

Lunde has been doing a lot of research about Thrane—here and in Norway. And Thrane is well

worth knowing more about. His pioneering efforts on behalf of labor both in Norway and America are notable achievements. We hope you will attend Lunde's presentation.

And there is an interesting connection to Waldemar Ager. Late in life, in ill health, Thrane came to Eau Claire to stay with his physician son Arthur. Thrane passed away in 1890, two years before Ager began work in Eau Claire at Fremad Publishing. Eventually, the desk owned by Thrane was given to Ager, probably by Arthur. The desk was used at the office and now stands in the "Newspaper Room" at the Waldemar Ager Museum.



Note the printer's apron hanging on the door knob.

**Join us at 7 p.m., Monday, October 8  
Eau Claire Room, L. E. Phillips Memorial  
Public Library**

*--Article and photo by Doug Pearson*

## Waldemar Ager: Conversations About Immigrant Identity

### A 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

Next year, the Ager Association will be celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Waldemar Ager's birth. A planning committee has been meeting frequently in recent months and has put together an exciting array of programs.

#### In February:

Monday, Feb 11: "On the Way to the Melting Pot": understood the loss of language and culture.

True Vue, Khoua Vang, Pa Sia Moua.

Thursday, Feb 28: "Immigrants in Eau Claire: 1900 – 1920," Brian Blakley.

#### In March:

Friday, March 22: "Ager's Place in the Canon of American Literature," Tim Hirsch.

Friday, March 22: Reception, Banquet and Program.

Program: "Living Women in the World of Ager's Fiction," ecWIT (Eau Claire Women in Theater).

Saturday, March 23: "Norwegian-American Women—Getting Here, Settling Here," Betty Bergland.

Saturday, March 23: Open House at Ager Museum with programs for children and adults in the morning.

Saturday, March 23: Special luncheon for members of the Ager family.

Saturday, March 23: "Ager as Citizen," Remarks by city officials at Lakeview Cemetery.

Saturday, March 23: Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra concert, including tribute to Norwegian composers.

Also, being considered for later in the year,

- An introduction to access and use of the online version of *Reform*, Greg Kocken.
- Book Discussion Groups: *Melting Pot*, *Christ Before Pilate*, *Sons of the Old Country*.

Other Suggestions? Send your ideas to Doug Pearson (715 834 5204) [pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu).

You can help. Be a contributor to the funding of these events. We have applied for a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, but the grant requires matching funds. We have some support from UW-Eau Claire, but member support and other fund-raising efforts will help pay lecturers, the theater group, musicians, the special luncheon, and the costs of promoting the events. Here are suggested levels of support:

**\$1000 Diamant (Diamond)**

**\$500 Gull (Gold)**

**\$250 Sølv (Silver)**

**\$100 Bronse (Bronze)**

Financial support of any amount will be most welcome. Please send donations to

Treasurer  
Waldemar Ager Association  
PO Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742

Planning Committee: Robert Fossum, Greg Kocken, Jane Peterson, Robert Gough, Tim Hirsch, Doug Pearson, Susan Avery, Ella Fossum

## Nordic Summer Camp 2018

### By Doug Pearson

#### *Low numbers and High Activity Make Summer Camp a success!*

We had just four campers for the fourth annual Nordic Summer Camp at the Ager Museum, the same number we had in the first year.

So what did we do? First, on three mornings, Mary Elworthy introduced the campers to the national anthems of Iceland (a tune and words that were very difficult), Denmark, and Sweden. Why just those three? Two reasons: Mary had only half an hour each day, and the other reason will become clear if you keep reading this report.

Next, we took a tour of the house, borrowing a scavenger hunt list put together by Helen and Norb Wurtzel when they entertained a group of Girl Scouts. We concluded the tour standing in front of the trunk Ager used on his trip from Fredrikstad to Chicago. You can still make out a bit of his name and the word Chicago on the front of the trunk. We took the trunk to the basement and talked about what Waldemar might have put in it. Then, using a folding template designed by Sue Pearson and printed on heavy

paper, the campers created their own miniature trunks. On day two we talked about what they would put in their trunk or backpack if they were making a move to some new country.

Each day we took a short break and snacked on fruit and Scandinavian cheese and crackers.

Then we went outside to participate in the newly-invented Scandinavian Cup games. The games were inspired in part by the fact that Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden qualified for the World Cup futbol championship. The games included ring toss and

bean bag throwing, dribbling a soccer ball between traffic cones with a broom, using a hockey stick to shoot a ball into a hockey net, kicking a penalty kick (soccer ball) into an open net, kicking a free kick into a hockey goal guarded by a goalie, pretending to be a jousting and running with a four-foot sponge noodle and knocking down seven water bottles placed on saw horses on the peninsula of land west of the house, running a 70 yard dash, throwing a whiffle ball for distance, throwing a frisbee for distance, and jumping rope (most jumps in 30 seconds). We threw out the rope jumping after the first day because our ropes were too long for two of the jumpers.

Each day, all the campers played for one of the three teams. When it was all over, all the campers had earned ribbons for first, second, and third place. The award ceremony was a little silly.

On the third day we took a vacation from Cup games and tried soap carving and a hike at the Chippewa Valley Museum and in Carson Park. Hardest day for me. Soap is not my medium. Ice cream cones were welcomed by everybody. I had a hard time explaining why the group should know that Hank Aaron has an important attachment to Eau Claire, but it was easy to keep the kids engaged at the newly-updated playground. The hit there is the zip line!



On the fourth day, Deb Jarvar introduced the campers to rosemaling. She brought heart-shaped wooden picture frames, each with enough space

for decoration on the face of the frame. No one got hurt.

The really new thing this year was the plan to serve a Scandinavian meal to parents and grandparents or guardians of campers on the final day. To start things off, the campers sang the Swedish national anthem (remember, Norway didn't get into the World Cup). Campers had made placemats, set the table, helped peel and mash potatoes, got out of the way of food in the oven, and helped get the table cleared at the end of the meal.

Menu:

meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas and carrots (should have been rutabaga, but the peas and carrots were our concession for color), lemonade, and apple juice and a fine almond cake donated by Linda Curtis.

Nordic Camp for Kids is one of our newest offerings. Consider it for next year. See the Picture Page.—*Ed.*

*Save the Date for our Annual Meeting:*  
*Tuesday Sept. 25, 2018      7:00 P.M. at the Ager Museum*

Dear Members and Friends,

The Annual Meeting of the Waldemar Ager Association will take place on Tuesday, 25 September 2018 at the Ager Museum, 514 W Madison St. Eau Claire WI at 7:00 P.M. The agenda:

- Review of 2018 activities
- Business
  - Secretary's Report
  - Interim Treasurer's Report
  - President's Report
  - Unfinished Business

• Vote on final revised version of the Association Bylaws. The Bylaws that were passed in 2017 required a few tweaks that have been made over the past year. The new version is available by email or at the meeting.

- New Business
- Elections of officers and directors. According to the Bylaws, the President and Treasurer are to be elected for two-year terms. The President's term begins on the day after election. The Treasurer's term begins at the beginning of the next fiscal year which is 01 January 2019. There are currently 5 directors, 4 of whom will be completing terms. So two directors will be elected to two-year terms. One director will be appointed for a one-year term. The slate of officers will be sent to the members at least two weeks before the meeting. The Nominating Committee consists of Florence Weise (chair), Greg Kocken, and Doug Pearson.

- Announcements
- A reception will follow on the main floor of the Museum.

I look forward to seeing you at this important meeting.

Best wishes,

Robert Fossum

## Reform Now Available Online

*Reform* now available online through the Digital Public Library of America

In early August, the digital version of *The Reform* was harvested by Recollection Wisconsin for inclusion in the Digital Public Library of America. The digital version of *The Reform*, consisting of a fully searchable archive of issues from 1896-1941, was recently placed online through a partnership with McIntyre Library at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The Digital Public Library of America connects researchers with the vast digitized collections of America's libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions. This rich set of primary sources includes nearly thirty million photographs, books, maps, oral history interviews, personal letters, government documents, and much more that help us to better understand American history. Inclusion in the Digital Public Library of America significantly enhances discoverability of *The Reform* for scholars around the world. Recollection Wisconsin is the regional service hub of the Digital Public Library of America that made this enhancement possible. You can view the online archive by visiting [library.uwec.edu/spaces-collections/digital-collections](http://library.uwec.edu/spaces-collections/digital-collections) or by searching the Digital Public Library of America (<https://www.dp.la/>) for "Ager Association."

Greg Kocken  
Vice President, Ager Association  
UW-Eau Claire Archivist



Reprinted from the Digital Library of America: *Reform*, Tuesday Dec. 7, 1939. The front page contains local news, Roosevelt's activities in Washington, and as the centerpiece, news about the War in Europe.

### Docents, We Still Need Docents!

If you feel comfortable giving a tour of the Ager Museum, please let me know so that I can include you in the invitations I send out to arrange coverage.

If you don't feel comfortable because you are not sure what to say or include, let me know that. I will be glad to guide anyone interested in giving tours at our open house days: second and fourth Saturdays, from 10 – 2, and third Wednesdays, from 4 – 7.

It's fun—really!

Doug Pearson (715 834 5204) [pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu).

**The Ager Association  
2018 Board of Directors**

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**Items for next newsletter must be  
received by Nov. 16, 2018.**

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

**New Members**

Judy Evenson—Menomonie, WI  
Virginia Wright—Eau Claire, WI

**Members and Friends: Transitions**

**Lois Missman** passed away in West Grove, PA in July 2018. She painted and donated the large painting at the top of the stairway to the library, as well as several silver pieces.

**Marilyn Nicolai Reinart** of Black River Falls, daughter of Waldemar's fourth daughter Hildur Ager Nicolai, died in Feb. 2018.

**Steven Gleason** of Poulsbo, WA, husband of member Hildur Oyen Gleason, died in June, 2018.

**Gifts**

*A Painter's Year in the Forests of Bhutan* by A.K. Helling.

Donated by Robert Fossum.

**Yard Sale**—The Association earned \$677.29 from the June Yard Sale.

As president, I asked the Board by email to approve my appointments to the **Nominating Committee**. The following Nominating Committee has been approved unanimously: Florence Weise (Chair), Greg Kocken and Doug Pearson.—Robert Fossum

**Final Note**

Below is a Norwegian table prayer translated by Robert Fossum in 2012. We don't know its origin, but it may complement your 2018 Thanksgiving Celebration.

*Herre, din jord bærer mat nok for alle  
takk for den delen du vil vi skal ha,  
lær oss å dekke et langbord i verden  
som alle kan reise seg metta fra.*

God, your earth bears food enough for all  
Thanks for that part you want us to share;  
Teach us to set a long table in the world  
From which everyone can leave completely satisfied.

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

**Mystery Emerges:** Kathryn Larson emailed the board this summer during a visit to Norway. Some of her relatives found a ring they believed came from America with other relatives. What was it for?



Greg Kocken replied: This ring references the Order of Knights of Pythias. This group is still active (founded in 1864 in Washington, D.C.). You can learn more from their website: [www.pythias.org](http://www.pythias.org). This organization may even have records to help you discover more about this ring. **Mystery solved.**

## Advent at the Ager

The annual Advent at the Ager will take place on **Sunday, December 9, from 1 – 4.** We need someone to coordinate activities and preparations. If you are interested, please contact Doug Pearson (715 834 5204) [pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu).

If you are willing to bring baked goods other foods for this Christmas celebration, please let Doug Pearson know that. He will pass along the information to the coordinator.

This annual event is fine opportunity to come and taste Christmas foods you may not have tasted since you were a child. We also welcome any baking, etc. you would like to share. In the past we have had children's activities on the lower level with music, decorations and Christmas treats on the first floor. The library will be open for you to see items such as Marcus Thrane's desk.



It's been a busy summer at the Ager Museum!

First, the Annual Yard Sale on June 7.



Second, the Annual Midsommar Event on June 23



And third, Nordic Summer Camp, July 30-Aug. 2, 2018.



Photographers: Dennis Weise and Mary Elworthy