

The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum

August, September, October 2019

Coming Events

Board Meetings, Ager Museum,
Mondays, September 16,
October 21 and November 18, 9:30
a.m.

Yard Sale

Thursday, September 5, 8:30 - 3

Book Club Discussion:

Monday, September 23, at 6:30
Karin Fossum's *The Whisperer*

Monday, October 21:
Book not chosen

Annual Meeting and Program

Monday, September 30

Open House

2nd and 4th Saturdays, 10 - 2
3rd Wednesday, 4 - 7

Third Music Special: Wednesday,
September 18, 6:30

Fourth Music Special: Wednesday,
October 16, 6:30

**The Waldemar Ager
Association**

**514 W. Madison Street
P.O. Box 1742
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
54702-1742
715.834.3985
www.agerhouse.org**

Save the Date

Monday, September 30, 2019

6:30 to 7:00

2019 ANNUAL MEETING

What's the state of affairs for 2019—the 150th anniversary of Waldemar Ager's birth in Norway?

President **Kocken** will give a short overview of the year's events including a plan to raise funds for upgrades and repairs at the house.

Treasurer **Gough** will provide the financial report.

President Kocken will invite the nomination committee to offer its report.

President Kocken will invite members to discuss their views of the year and thoughts about the future.

Special Program

Following the formal meeting,

A view of the past from some of the key founders and leaders in the 90s.

Panelists will share their memories of when the house needed to be renewed and the organization needed to begin its work.

Refreshments and social time.

President's Column
Amazing Year!
By Greg Kocken

What an amazing year! Last September I began my first year as President of the Waldemar Ager Association, and over the course of this year I am continually amazed at the generosity and support of our friends and members.

Recently, I was approached by members concerned that not enough people know about our Association. Underlying the obvious issue of sharing our Association's message was a glimmer of hope and excitement. These members were genuinely interested in the good work the Association does and want other members of our community to know about, and support, this good work. I suspect the issue of generating interest in and knowledge of our Association is something that past Association Presidents and board members also grappled with. I know it is an issue the current board discusses. I believe our members can play an important role helping us share information. I want to encourage all of you to share and discuss the Waldemar Ager Association with your friends and neighbors. Every year the Association does amazing things, and if there is an opportunity for you to share this information with another party, please do so.

At 25 years old, the Ager Association is still only beginning its journey to share Waldemar Ager's story, celebrate Nordic culture, and explore the lives of immigrants yesterday and today. At our member meeting in September we will learn more about the early years of our Association and take a moment to look forward to the future. This panel presentation will be open to members and non-members, so if there is someone who you want to share our story with please bring them along! More information about our member meeting in September can be found in this issue of our newsletter.

The year ahead promises to be as amazing as the previous one. Our program committee is busy developing new ideas for programs that will continue sharing our Association's message. I hope that you will consider giving your time, attending a program, or supporting the Waldemar Ager Association in another manner during the year ahead. Thank you!

If you have any questions or would like to leave other feedback regarding the Waldemar Ager Association, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I would love to hear from all our members and can be reached easily by e-mail, kockeng@uwec.edu. **Thank you for being part of something special.**

Thanks, Ella!



Ella Fossum retires after 10 years as editor/publisher of the Ager Association newsletter. In the course of those years, she developed the format, increased coverage of activities, and sprinkled the pages with colored photos.

To say nothing of shaping the material to the pages of each issue, arranging the photos for classy impact, and assuring that the folds of your newsletter would be tucked together with those invisible circles of "tape" that make it easy for mailing. And then, of course, she sent the issues out, complete with necessary postage and her best wishes.

We know you appreciated each copy. We hope to live up to the standards that Ella set. When you see her next, at Christmas or Midsommar, give her an expression of your appreciation. *Doug Pearson*

What Happened at the Nordic Camp for Kids?



Fantasy Fish, Complete with
Compass Guts



Bird Paintings



Assistants Cooper and Amelia

The fifth annual Nordic Camp for Kids completed its four-day run on Thursday, August 8, with a lunch with parents and grandparents. The kids all had a hand in it—literally. They cut and mashed the potatoes, grimaced when they passed the herring, and wondered what the lingonberry sauce was for as they poured gravy over their mashed potatoes and meatballs. But they enjoyed the watermelon, cake (another celebration of Waldemar Ager's 150th birthday), and ice cream that concluded the lunch.

Our themes this year were fish, fishing, and travel. On Monday, Sue Pearson encouraged the six campers to create a fantasy fish out of paper, leaving room inside the fish for the guts. Mary Elworthy shared a fairy tale that used images that were posted in the basement.

On Tuesday, the group toured the Chippewa Valley Museum's exhibits of fish and fishing in Wisconsin. At the end of the tour, each camper reeled in the paper fish they had created the day before. When they "cleaned" the fish, they discovered that the innards included a compass. Before we used the compasses for the hike in Carson Park, each camper put on a smock and painted a cutout, wooden fish that they mounted on a dowel attached to a base.

On Wednesday morning, Mari Carlson continued lessons in Norwegian. The group also rehearsed a script (prepared in English and Norwegian) about a family planning to fly from Oslo to Stockholm for a visit to the Swedish exhibit of the *Vasa*. Amelia, a camp assistant, managed all her lines in Norwegian. The final performance of the skit followed the Thursday lunch.



(mother tongue), *det norske sprog* (the Norwegian language), *hjemmets sprog* (language of the home), *Americkanisme* (Americanism), and *Norskdommen* (Norwegiandom) were terms that led Moquin to develop her focus on two topics: Language and Morality, Language and Identity.

On July 22nd, before an audience of about a dozen at the McIntyre Library, UW-Eau Claire, Greg **Kocken** and Laura **Moquin** offered insights about *Reform*: its history, how to access the digital version of the newspaper (Kocken), and how Ager used the paper to shape his ideas and influence the public (Moquin).



Moquin used PowerPoint slides to identify quotations, offered in Norwegian and English translations, to show that these topics were much used in the

press and the subject of much controversy about justice. Iowa's governor issued an order that "those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes." Which led to rejoinders that noted Catholics used Latin instead of English to practice their religion in local churches. Why should Norwegian speakers, for example, be discriminated against?

Moquin counted Ager among the many writers and speakers who articulated a key belief: "The use of the Norwegian language in speech and writing is necessary for the preservation of Norskdommen."



We watched Kocken use his computer in real time to get to the digital version of *Reform*, search it, translate an excerpt, and clip it for possible use in a research project.

The keyword functionality of the software may well be the tool that makes the digital version useful for historians and genealogists alike.



Moquin teaches Norwegian in the Department of Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison. Her

discussion followed neatly on Kocken's presentation. Moquin revealed some of the **key words** she used in her search of the digital archive of *Reform*. For example, *morsmaal*

Speaking of books?

Join the **Book Discussion Group** (see calendar) Book for September 23 at 6:30
Karin Fossum's **The Whisperer**

□

Classes: September and November

Rosemaling, taught by Patsy Vork

Three class periods of instruction for beginners and experienced painters.

Course meets at the Ager Museum on three successive Saturdays in **September**: 7, 14, 21, from 9:30 – 12:30.

Cost: \$60 for current (2019) members of the Ager Association. For nonmembers: \$65.

Registration forms are at agerhouse.org.

Advanced Norwegian, taught by Eldbjørg Tobin

Eight class periods. According to Tobin, the Advanced Norwegian class will work with the textbook, *Norsk, nordmenn og Norge*, by Kathleen Stokker, starting at chapter 25, p. 419. Study will include vocabulary development, translations, and speaking the language.

Class meetings at the Ager House for 60 - 75 minutes, Thursdays at 5 p.m starting on September 12 and continuing on **September** 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. Enrolling for this class assumes considerable familiarity with Norwegian.

Cost: \$80 for current (2019) members of the Ager Association. For nonmembers: \$85.

Registration forms are at agerhouse.org.

Games and Song: Having Fun Learning Norwegian, taught by Mari Carlson

Five Mondays from 10 – 11 a.m.: November 4, 11, 18, 25, and December 2. Beginners welcome.

Cost: \$40 for current (2019) members of the Ager Association. For nonmembers: \$45.

Registration forms are at agerhouse.org.

Music at the Ager Museum

On July 17, mother-son team Ian Holzman and DoAnn Holzman played traditional Scandinavian tunes on dual nykleharpes made by local craftsman, Earl Holzman.

On August 21, Perendosi Quartet--Rob Kutcha, Dean Langby, Mari Carlson and Laura Jensen--played the five Novelettes quartet by Alexander Glazunov, a Russian contemporary of Ager.

Coming

September 18, Rob Kuchta discusses Norwegian violinist and composer Ole Bull and plays Ole Bull's music.

October 16, Robin Fossum plays the Norwegian national instrument, the hardingfele, and Mari Carlson and Bruce Sorensen play traditional and contemporary Scandinavian tunes learned from Scandinavian music camps they've attended together.



Open House

A few years ago, the Ager Association started referring to the house as the Ager Museum. Bill and Marian Klish provided the funds for the new sign that announced to the public that we are a museum. We have artifacts from Ager's life and family times in the house, and we have the full collection of *Reform* in what we sometimes refer to as the newspaper room.

We also house a significant, fully catalogued research library (about 1,500 volumes now) of Nordic literature, history, art, music, and scholarship. Some of it is in original languages (many books are in Norwegian), but there are also many books in English. In addition, there are useful tools for genealogical research and a small collection of literature and language learning books for children.

As a museum, we are open to the public regularly, three times each month: 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 10 – 2 and third Wednesdays from 4 – 7.

Enhancing interest in a museum requires member support and creativity. If you have an interesting special exhibit that might be featured at the museum, or if you have suggestions for exhibits or special themes, please let President Kocken know about it (kockeng@uwec.edu).

Then . . .



WALDEMAR AGER HOUSE EST. 1868

Docents

In 2015, regular open house days were established. Members met to outline the nature of a tour in the house and to establish the procedures for opening and closing the house.

Over the years, many docents have served numerous times, but it has become difficult some months to open on our regular schedule.

We just need more docents. Here's a brief overview of the job. Open and close the house according to announced schedule. Greet visitors, ask them to sign our guest book, give them a tour. The tour requires knowing some key things about Waldemar Ager and some things about the house history and the Ager Association. We have lots of support material in the house. And then there's being charming, welcoming, and informative. Simple. Right?

If you have time in your schedule to be a docent, please come to a training session (it won't take more than an hour). Here are two opportunities:

**Training Session I Monday, September 16,
from 5 – 6.**

**Training Session II Thursday, September 19,
from 3 – 4.**

Now . . .



**The Ager Association
2019 Board of Directors**

Greg Kocken, President
KOCKENG@uwec.edu

Vice President, open

Florence Weise, Recording Secretary
dfweise@chibardun.net

Bob Gough, Treasurer
Robertgough10@gmail.com

Oscar Brandser, Director
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Kathryn Larson, Director
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Mari Carlson, Director
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Robert Fossum, Past President
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Doug Pearson, Newsletter Editor,
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Steve Loken, Webmaster
bravo@sjloken.com

**Items for next newsletter must be
received by November 16, 2019.**

**The newsletter is also available on line
at agerhouse.org where you can also
learn more about the Ager Museum.**

**If you have a story or an idea you
would like to share, please contact us.
We would like to hear from you.**

—Doug Pearson

Members and Friends:

New Members

Andrew and Avonlea Hanson

Mark and Lois Helland

Patricia Lindholm

Taylor Struwe

Martin R. Zens

Transitions

Jeanette Fredrickson, 1942 – 2019, is remembered for her charming smile and can-do attitude. Through friend and Ager Association member Miriam Hansen, Jeanette and husband Stan became members of the Ager Association. Jeanette served on the Library Committee and was a regular docent at Ager Museum Open House days, a Program Committee member, and someone who helped out. She is survived by husband Stan, formerly treasurer of the Ager Association, and son Steven Eric and daughter Karen Marie.

Contributions

**Estate of and gifts in honor of Wally Ager, Via Susan Avery
Dennis and Carla Yakesh**

Randy Albrecht

Corey and Kari Lewis

Louise Koxlien

Jane and Roger Dale

Bernice Pecare

Muriel Shervey

Borgny Ager

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Campers at the Ager Museum 2019

