

# *The Ager Newsletter*

## July August September 2024

### ACTIVITIES

**Board Meetings at 7 p.m.**  
Third Monday of the month.

#### **Open House--Tours**

September 1 1 – 3

September 14 2 – 4

September 28 2 – 4

October – December

Second and Fourth Saturdays

From 10 - 2

Or by appointment.

715 598 1776



The Waldemar Ager  
Association  
514 W. Madison Street  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
54702-1742

715.598.1776  
[www.agerhouse.org](http://www.agerhouse.org)

### Coming Soon

**Tuesday, September 10**, at 6:30 pm  
Kent Syverson talks about  
Norwegian Fjords and Glaciers.

#### **Book Discussion**

Menning Mankell

*Depths*

**Wednesday, September 25**

starting at 6:30.

Location TBD.

**Tuesday, October 8**, at 5:30

#### **Annual Meeting**

Light Supper at 6

#### **Program at 6:30**

Jan and Miriam Hansen talk  
about contemporary Norwegian  
Life and Culture.

**Saturday, November 30**

Art and Craft Sale 9 - 1

Norwegian Baking Demo 1:30

**Sunday, December 1**, from noon to 4  
Advent at the Ager

## Donations

In recent months, the Ager library has received several donations of books. Waiting to be catalogued, the books rest in stacks on the Library Committee's work bench. Recently, the workload got even bigger. Life Member Johanna Shager Hocker delivered several boxes of books and other materials. When the Library Committee has curated these potential additions to the collection, they will catalogue them. Shelving the books comes next. Then comes the challenge of finding room on the shelves for these wonderful additions to the collection.

Yesterday, Karen Buelow contacted Gordy Thorpe to arrange the delivery of some materials associated with her family history. Gordy and Doug Pearson met Karen at the Ager Museum. She carried a box of treasures that she unveiled at the dining room table. The first item was the structure of a mini-parasol. Opened, it ribs would just about cover a new hair-do. Folded, it has no fabric to offer shade. The story concerning the parasol is quoted below (in italics). The donated items are from Dorothy E. Olson and Harold K. Olson.

*"The parasol was given to my mother Berntine Dorothea Erickson Hanson by her mother Ingeborg (Engebrets Dotter) Wold Johonson—who died at age 32 in 1876, when mother was 9 years old. Her mother's mother (whom she lived with) died the same year. She was adopted by her great aunt & husband Dorothea & Bernt Tortenson. Fred & Marilyn's babies are on their grave lot.*

*"The parasol was a bright blue & black silk—alternating panels. This sheet of paper [the paper she is using to write this note] came from a book my Dad kept a record of what was bought in 1906."*

Wilma Sept. 24, 1976



Here are some other items from Buelow's contribution.



A knitted shawl



A Ship captain's "laptop"



Underskirt for bunad

# Presidential Ramblings by Ivar Lunde

August 21, 2024



Some years ago, a long time ago actually, I had an argument with my department chair. It was about student recruitment. He made the comment that it was the program offering that attracted students. I argued that it was the faculty. People make the course offerings come alive, I tried to say. My teacher of chemistry encouraged me to take part in the new possibilities of energy exploration. My area of concentration was the natural sciences. That was not to be of course. I was heading for a medical career. That did not work out either.

Looking back, I think of my teachers, not so much the topic. I was reminded of that when I was present at last night's Ager Association Board meeting. It is the people! I looked around the table and found attentive individuals totally committed to our association. Although many organizations are losing members, we seem to have a steady membership. Our numbers may be growing. Each member contributes in their own way to make the Waldemar Ager Association prosper. For that I am very grateful. Members of the Ager family have also contributed over the years. One was a guest at last night's meeting

We also have a MISSION. Not only is the mission to preserve the literary works of Waldemar Ager, but also to preserve the legacy of the house, built by the Norwegian carpenter Brede (Brady) Andersen. It is also to celebrate the early immigrants arriving from Norway and the other Scandinavian countries. Social conditions in Norway were not particularly friendly to the "working" families. Many worked the land, but they were not owners of the land. And let us not forget that much of Norway is mountains. Tillable land was and is scarce. Recently, Norway has been able to sustain much wealth through the production of energy. Hydro power was the big thing when I lived there. Today it is oil and gas production, and ,to some degree, harnessing wind power. Hydro power is still important of course.

Ager describes the lives of the immigrants when arriving in Eau Claire. Some came only to make money to bring back with them when returning to "the old country." Many ended up lumber jacks, some as maids in established homes. Those were not easy times. People are still flocking to this country. What can we do to help?

At Board meetings we almost always talk about the future. Please consider being part of our mission. And please take advantage of the lectures we present this fall!

Have a great rest of the year!  
Ivar

Editor's Note: Two things. This issue is being posted about one month early. We want members to know about events coming in September and October. Publishing in September would be too late. Also, Ager events and activities require helpers. We need more docents , and we always need greeters at events or cleaners at the museum. Please let us know what you are willing to do. Send a note to the editor: pearsoda@uwec.edu.

# Program in September

**Lecture Title: The Formation of Norwegian Fjords and My Adventures in the Fjords of Glacier Bay, Alaska**  
**By Professor Kent Syverson, Dept. of Geology and Environmental Science, UW-Eau Claire**

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., no charge**

**Riverview Room, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, 400 Eau Claire St, Eau Claire, WI 54701**

**Sponsored by the Waldemar Ager Association**



## ***About the talk***

Fjords are the most spectacular landform in Norway. Glacial geologist Kent Syverson will explain how glaciers create fjords. In addition, Syverson conducted his PhD research in the fjord region of Glacier Bay, Alaska, as part of the National Geographic Society's Burroughs Glacier Expedition. In 1989-90, he spent two summers living 50 miles from the nearest human outpost in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Syverson, who was then a young graduate student, made numerous mistakes and learned many things through hardships in the wilderness. In his presentation, Professor Syverson will tell his favorite (and humorous) adventure story excerpted from his book "*Adventures in Glacier Bay*," talk

about living "off the grid" in the Alaskan wilderness, briefly discuss some of his research in Glacier Bay, and reflect on life lessons learned in the backcountry. No geological background is necessary to enjoy his talk! Signed copies of ***Adventures in Glacier Bay*** will be available at his talk (\$25, cash, check, or PayPal).

## **About the Speaker--Kent M. Syverson**

Kent M. Syverson is a Professor of Geology and Environmental Science at UW-Eau Claire and a talented storyteller. He grew up in northern Minnesota, received his BS in geology from UM-Duluth, and earned his MS and PhD in glacial geology from UW-Madison. He has conducted glacial geology research with UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students in Maine and Wisconsin, including projects along the Ice Age Trail in western Wisconsin. He also mapped the glacial geology of Chippewa County for the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Syverson is the 2012 recipient of the UW-Eau Claire Excellence in Teaching award and author of the book "***Adventures in Glacier Bay***" (2020, Amazon).

# Annual Meeting Tuesday, October 8, at 5:30 pm

The Waldemar Ager Association's annual meeting will begin at 5:30 on Tuesday, October 8. The agenda will include a brief review of the year's activities and a vision of the future for the organization.

We will meet in the Riverview Room. L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, 400 Eau Claire Street, Eau Claire, WI.

A light supper starts at 6 pm and ends at 6:25. A program by Miriam and Jan Hansen follows, from 6:30. to 7:30. No charge.

## Program Title

Norwegian Culture Today: A Look at the Media, the Pastimes, and the Values of Contemporary Norway



News of the day--1905



The headline in *Aftenposten*—"Jeg har vært fryktelig dum," meaning, "I was stupid!" Sorry, I don't have the context!



Miriam and Jan in Oslo, doing research



Love of sport

## Book Review

*Westward We Came: A Norwegian Immigrant's Story. 1866 – 1898*

Harold B. Kildahl, edited and organized by Erling E. Kildahl

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Available at Purdue University Press and on Amazon or at Barnes and Noble

This book is a son's tribute to his father's efforts to chronicle a life transformed by the decision to leave Norway for a new life. Erling E. Kildahl has collected, organized, and made coherent the notes his father made about the various phases of the family's saga, including leaving a farm west of Trondheim fjord. And ending with a family of farmers, pastors, and scholars.

The chapters of the book emphasize the geographical relocations and consequent adventures that defined their lives. There are moments of stress and notations of small successes. Very near the beginning of the narrative, when the immigrants are on their way to a train that will take them to the west, they learn the hard way that "immigrants were considered easy marks by confidence men, even those who were recently-arrived newcomers themselves."

In the introduction, Kildahl mentions that the family lived in hillside dugouts and shanties but eventually lived in houses or cabins in cities and on farms, ending up in North Dakota where they obtained land, developed it, and established farms and roots.

The process of obtaining land is complicated. It requires strategy, resilience, intelligence, luck. Choosing the right land is guesswork. Will it be farmable? Can they validate a stake? Will they have to compete with others for desirable property? Fortunately, the family has skills and motivation enough to succeed, even though the father in the family falls ill and fails to be a leader in the process. Kildahl's mother wants to farm. Fortunately, Andrew, an elder son, develops skills as a carpenter, a leader, a deal maker, and a teacher. He earns enough money for the family to make moves to more desirable locations and opportunities. A daughter also tends to the development of the farm. One son goes off to get an education and become a pastor. Eventually, in 1899, he becomes the second president of St. Olaf College.

Harold, the note-taker whose words shape most of the factual elements of the memoir, also wants an education. Circumstances prevent his leaving the farm until he is 26 years old.. Then he enrolled at St. Olaf, having had just two years of schooling. In four years, however, he learns quickly, earns a degree and marries Carrie Olson..

We learn that Erling's father had various administrative jobs. In 1937, he became the Executive Secretary of the Anti-Saloon League and then head of the United Temperance Movement from 1942 - 1943, Harold died in 1945, the last years of his life spent as a visiting pastor in various churches. St. Olaf College honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

## The Tusenbeiner 2

On July 20, at 5:30 pm, runners and walkers started a 2K or 5K tour of the city trail in the Carson Park vicinity. By 6:30, they had returned to the starting point and gone off to the Ager Museum for a picnic.

THANK YOU to those who made this event possible.

- The Participants
- The Sponsors: Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture, City of Eau Claire, Parks and Recreation, Mark Douglas Pearson, Eau Claire YMCA, Indianhead Track Club, Kleven Real Estate, Debbie and Bob Gough, Fleet Feet on Water Street, Mckinley Money, LLC, Miriam and Jan Hansen.
- The Volunteers: those who helped on the course and those who produced the picnic.



## New for Christmas

Seeking 6 artists and crafters to sell their wares at the Ager Museum on Saturday, November 30, from 9 – 1. Participants are expected to donate 30% of their earnings to the capital campaign of the Ager Association.

If you want to be among the six, please write to [pearsoda@uwec.edu](mailto:pearsoda@uwec.edu) to be considered for this event. Include information about what you will sell. Also state that you agree to the donation plan.



## Membership

It is not too late to renew your membership for 2024. The label on this newsletter indicates the year of your most recent membership status. If it doesn't say 2024, then you are not currently a member. Membership is important not only for the financial support it provides. Granting agencies and external donors want to know how strong the organization is. Membership is an important measurement of stability and potential.

Consider one of these levels of membership: \$30, General Membership, \$60 Sustaining Membership, \$120 Supporting Membership, \$1000 Life Membership. You may also make additional donations in memory or honor of someone. Membership payments and donations may be sent to

The Waldemar Ager Association and Museum  
PO Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742

Checks should be paid to the order of the Waldemar Ager Association

The Waldemar Ager Museum  
Center for Nordic Culture  
P.O. Box 1742  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742  
  
Physical Address  
514 W. Madison Street  
Eau Claire, WI 54703

## Make a Capital Campaign Gift

We encourage you to celebrate the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Ager Association. **Please consider a donation to the capital campaign.**

Please **designate Phase Two** on your check.

Consider these possibilities:

<b>\$31</b>	<b>Send donations to</b>
<b>\$311</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>\$3,111</b>	<b>Waldemar Ager Association</b>
<b>\$31.111</b>	<b>PO Box 1742</b>
<b>\$311,111</b>	<b>Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742</b>