

The Ager Newsletter

January February March 2024

ACTIVITIES

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

Open House--Tours

April 13 and 27

May 11 and 25

June 8 and 22

Or by appointment.



The Waldemar Ager
Association
514 W. Madison Street
P.O. Box 1742
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
54702-1742
715.598.1776
www.agerhouse.org

Coming Soon

Book Discussion

Edward Hancox

Iceland Defrosted

Wednesday, March 27

starting at 6:30.

At the Ager Museum.

Tentative Annual Programming

April 14 CultureFest, UWEC

May 16 Syttende Mai, Holiday Inn South

Possible schedule of one-day classes in
the summer for kids and/or adults:

rosemaling, weaving, genealogy, more?

July 20 The Tusenbeiner

September Norway's Fjords

October Contemporary Norway

November 30 Baking Demo

and Craft Sale?

December 1 Advent at the Ager

Syttende Mai

Celebrate Syttende Mai this year on **Thursday, May 16**, at the Holiday Inn South, Eau Claire.

Tickets may be purchased online at agerhouse.org
or from Festival Foods, Mall Drive only, Eau Claire.

Tickets available starting in mid-April.

Sales of tickets end on May 10. Tom and
Debbi King will talk about their Norwegian
heritage and the *Friluftsliv* so many
Norwegians practice.



2023 Honorariums

Heidi and Kathryn Johnson
Carol & Peter Anderson
Meg Nord & Paul Kaldjian

In honor of Edith Kling
in honor of Ella Fossum
in honor of Øyvind Gulliksen

2023 Memorials

Pat and Tom Tompkins
Janice Bogstad & Philip Kaveny
Ella B Fossum
Susan Avery
Vickie Froseth-O'Meara

in memory of Bob and Avey Osterhus & Rod Johnson
in memory of Joseph Ole Bogstad
in memory of Karren Bloom, Beth Bitney and Wally Ager
in memory of Waldemar (Wally) Ager and Roger Ager
in memory of Victor C Froseth

In Memory of Borgny Ager

Barbara Culver
Gloria Ager
Astrid Nilsen
Louise Koxlien
Helen & Norb Wurtzel
Patricia Henke

Geraldine Block
Robin & Robert Fossum
Susan Avery
Ella B Fossum
Gordon Thorpe
Anonymous

Sue and Bob Nelson
Ed and Mary Elworthy
Carol & Peter Anderson
Linda Ager
Hildur Gleason
Sherene and Richard Nicolai

In Memory of Brad Larson

Derek and Melissa Granberg Family
Helen and John Eidem
Linda Monge
Jane Pedersen and Ron Mickel
Lois and Mark Helland

Robert Wilke
Sandy and Harvey Olson
Gordon Thorpe
Claudia and Tim Braun
Brad Larson Family

Ted Wachholz
Sarah & Greg Kocken
Amy & Carl Leer

In Memory of Carolyn Barstad

Nancy & Todd Knutson
Heidi Gunderson
Borgny Ager

Ann Heywood
Connie Turner
Raina Pfundheller

Rozanna Bejin
Elizabeth Atkins
Kathy Trzecinski

Barbara Culver

In Memory of Fritz Culver

Borgny Ager

Lynne and Ken Ziehr

Barbara Culver

In Memory of Jack Best

Barbara Culver

Kim Finlay

Borgny Ager

In Memory of Ray Larson, Jr.

Borgny Ager
Gordon Thorpe
Mary Sabin
Charles Sweeney

Janet Winsand
Sarah Robertson
Leasum Family
Angela & David Walter

Barbara Arnold
Lila Johnson
The Advocate Group
Patricia M Cigan

Rosemary & Jerry Everson
Christie & Donald Blink
Nanette & Ivar Lunde

2023 Undesignated Donations

Tryg Ager
Cindy & David
Rasmussen
Carl Leer
Tim Hirsch
Gwenn Nyhagen

Joe Turner
Cindy Zahn
Jan and Mariam Hansen
Paul Loomis
Harold & Genevieve Hagen
Family Foundation

Leon Salander
Mary & Ed Elworthy
Tryg Ager
Dixie Hansen
Helen & Norb Wurtzel
Janet Etnier

Stacey and Jeff Culver
Thomas Bruckner
Ann Kuhlman
Leon Salander
Charles Enwald
Ella Fossum

2023 Designated Donations

Ann Kuhlman
Gwenn Nyhagen
Barbara Arnold
Lois Gruetzmacher
Ron and Kathy Jensen

Nordic Children's Summer Camp 2024
File cabinet for the library
Advent at the Ager
Hardanger and Tatted pieces
Nordic Book Collection

Ivar Lund
Barbara Culver
Borgny Ager
Susan and Doug Pearson

General Fund
Ager Family Heirlooms
Ager Family Heirlooms
General Fund

Presidential Ramblings by Ivar Lunde

March 7, 2024



Presidential Ramblings

It is strange to sit and watch Norwegian (NRK) TV in the north woods. This weekend I have spent a lot of time watching “*Hans Majestet Kong Harald*” being flown from Malaysia to Oslo, from the military section of Gardermoen airport to *rikshospitalet* in Oslo by ambulance and lots of police. By TV, I mean my iPhone of course. The King had developed health issues while on vacation. He is after all 87 years old. The latest information is that he is doing well. Time for a pace-maker apparently!

After a very successful “Art of Water Show” at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, the program committee, under leadership of Doug Pearson, is pondering the programs for this year. Preliminary reports are promising.

The library show that just ended featured local artists and several speakers. The art works were on display on the library’s third floor. Participants included Mary Elworthy, Susan Pearson, Anders and Barbara Shafer, Maureen Skroski and Bruce Warren.

The presenters, all with the theme of water, included Sean Hartnett (A Geographic Overview of the Lower Chippewa River from Eau Claire to the Mississippi), Ken Szymanski (Three Rivers, Two Kayaks, and One Mission: Two summers spent traveling from Eau Claire to the Mighty Mississippi), Sarah Vitale (The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin), Ingrid Lyons (Protecting Canoe Country: Local Roots to National Impact), Synne Borgen (Observations on Ice) and True Vue (The Story Cloth--Crossing the Mekong River).

It is wonderful that the Ager Association focus on contemporary issues. Waldemar Ager would have been delighted. He fished the Eau Claire river.

We will also, by the time you read this, most likely have demolished the properties of 1610 and 1616 Whipple street. What a trip. My heart rate must have been exceptional at times--dealing with telephone trees, people not available, calls not returned, mail not received and “normal” bureaucratic entanglements. Xcel will remove gas and electric connections on March 14. The yellow flags are up.

Now we will begin in earnest to focus on plans for a new library and meeting building, a home for all the Scandinavian interests. Have a great summer!

Ivar

The meander of the Chippewa River



The Art Exhibit

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Six local artists provided five works each for "The Art of Water." From L to R: Barbara Shafer, Maureen Skroski, Sue Pearson, Anders Shafer, Bruce Warren, Mary Elworthy.

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Pastel, Skroski



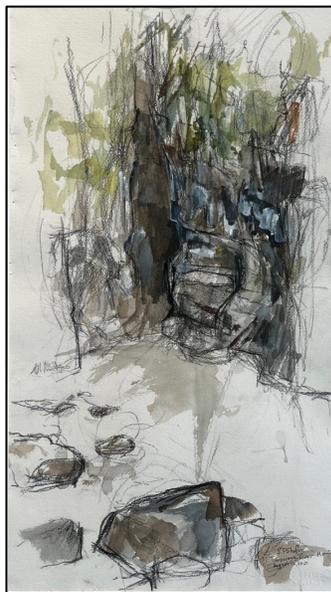
Watercolor, Elworthy



Watercolor, A Shafer



Assemblage, Pearson



Drawing/wash, B Shafer



Photography, Warren

A Water Journey



Local Issues. Ken Szymanski (left) and Sean Hartnett (right) spoke on January 29. Sean revealed the bathymetric details of the run of the Chippewa River from Eau Claire to the Mississippi. Ken talked about river trips as therapeutic summer fun (sometimes work, if the wind was pushing upstream). About 130 people attended this event in the Riverview Room of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library.

Regional Issues. Sarah Vitale (left in photo at the right) is the UW-Eau Claire representative to the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin. The organization works to “ensure that Wisconsin’s water systems are healthy and reliable for generations to come.” Ingrid Lyons (right), spoke on behalf of “Save the Boundary Waters,” an effort to preserve the integrity of the lakes and streams of northeastern Minnesota. Introducer Ella Fossum is in the middle.



Hmong garments and story cloth.

Below is a story cloth depicting warfare and escape. The Mekong River bisects the work at a point where past meets present and future.



The Global View, Arctic Norway. Pictured are Norwegian writer Synne Borgen with Norwegian-born Ager President Ivar Lunde. Borgen offered views of the grandeur of giant ice bergs and glaciers and the contrasting layers of gravel found across the Svalbard Archipelago. What she found in the Far North was mountains that “look porous, caught in the middle of disintegrating.” Her residency on an explorer ship led her to realize that “a landscape is a text that slowly becomes legible.”



Hmong History: The Water Story. True Vue (left), Executive Director of the Hmong Mutual Aid Association, told the story of Hmong history as revealed in the story cloth. Even though the creation of story cloths was initially a money-making, artistic enterprise, it was clear in the imagery that Hmong culture and history are tied to bodies of water such as the Yellow River in China and the Chippewa in Eau Claire. Tim Hirsch (right) introduced Vue.



Vue discussed other Hmong fabric arts at the table of exhibits she brought to the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library.

Thanks to our co-sponsors.



Chippewa Valley Writers’ Guild
Department of English,
UW-Eau Claire

Advent at the Ager 2023 Sunday, December 10, from 1 -4.



Thanks to everyone who cooked or baked for Advent at the Ager Museum.

Open House at the Ager

The Ager Museum is open twice a month, on second and fourth Saturdays, from 10 – 2. So far this year, we have been having good attendance. In addition to the regular schedule, tours may be arranged by appointment: pearsoda@uwec.edu. Usually, visitors leave a small donation. In December, we received a \$100 bill!

On January 9th, several Urban Sketchers camped out in various places in the house to sketch desks, bookshelves, lamps, etc. Below you see one sketcher leaning into his work.



Book Discussion 2024

January 31	<i>The End of the Ocean</i> , Maja Lunde
March 27	<i>Iceland Defrosted</i> , Edward Hancox
May 29	<i>In the Darkness</i> , Karin Fossum
July 31	<i>The Torso</i> , Helene Tursten
September 25	<i>Depths</i> , Henning Mankell
November 27	<i>Far North: A Novel</i> , Marcel Theroux
	OR
November 27	<i>Hunger</i> , Knut Hamsun

Unless otherwise announced, all discussions are at the Ager Museum at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

The Pop-Up Ager Book Club By Martha Frey

Last October my neighbor Anne Hansen said, “You should visit Ager House on your next trip to Eau Claire. It is a sweet museum.” Anne’s suggestion sparked my interest. I am a fan of historic homes, especially those where famous writers lived.

In December, my husband and I visited the Waldemar Ager Museum. When I saw the display of St. Olaf medals given to Ager by King Haakon of Norway, I decided I needed to read a book by this Norwegian-American author.

I told several friends about *Sons of the Old Country*, and we met for a pot-luck lunch and book discussion in the Madison area.

We agreed that Ager’s description of the immigrant experience is timeless and universal. We liked Fredrick’s coming-of-age story. One person “never expected this book to be a love story.” We also enjoyed the description of the Christmas dinner at the logging camp, and we were surprised to learn so much about the Civil War from this novel.

We are looking forward to reading more Norwegian-American literature.

Building Plan—Phase 2

We suggest that you **celebrate the recent anniversary of our 30th year and the plan for expansion.** Please consider a donation to the capital campaign. Consider these possibilities:

\$30
\$300
\$3,000
\$30,000
Or more.

Send donations to
Treasurer
Waldemar Ager Assn.
PO Box 1742
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742



From the Library, by Bob Gough

Member of the Library Committee and of the Board

The Ager Association is an Affiliate Member of the Wisconsin Historical Society. One of its membership benefits is receiving the quarterly *Wisconsin Magazine of History (WMH)*, back issues of which are in the Ager Museum library. The winter 2023 issue included “A Parsonage in New Hope” by Marianna Farseth, an article of interest to many Association members.

Marianna’s father, Olaus, brought his family to the United States in 1883 from the island of Vega in Helgeland in northern Norway. Olaus moved several times around the Upper Midwest over the next decade as he tried to farm. Eventually, he shifted goals and in 1887 became a Lutheran minister. Marianna, the youngest of eight children of Olaus and his wife, Kathrina (or Nicole), was born at Thor, Iowa, in 1894. The Farseth family moved to New Hope, Wisconsin, in 1900 from Wittenberg when Olaus became pastor of the Norwegian Lutheran congregations at New Hope and Alban in a Norwegian-American neighborhood in Portage County. The piece in the *WMH* is a memoir of Marianna’s six years in New Hope, written in the late 1950s.

The narrative is a fond recollection of adolescence. Marianna recalls a beautiful landscape with lakes; the family’s pet rabbit, Gullick; and visits from neighbors. The text and accompanying photographs suggest a warm relationship with her five older siblings, who were still in the household in 1910. Interestingly, perhaps out of discretion, Marianna does not mention Jear Knutson, the “hired boy” of her identical age, who was also part of the household. Marianna does acknowledge that while in New Hope she “learned to enjoy reading novels in Norwegian “from a “musty and old-fashioned” circulating library in her father’s church. The books were “sentimental and romantic . . . but how I loved them!”

Her account in the *WMH* ends in 1910, but we know a bit about the rest of Marianna’s life. She left New Hope with her family in 1910 when her ailing father, who would die in 1913, accepted a less-stressful position at Concordia

College in Moorhead, Minnesota. She graduated from Fargo High School in 1912 and St. Olaf College in 1916. For the next few years, she was a teacher and administrator at Fargo-area schools. In 1921-22 she taught “Norske” at St. Olaf; her department chair, Ole Rolvaag, must have favorably remembered her as an undergraduate. Probably shortly thereafter, the family moved to Minneapolis and lived in a modest three-bedroom bungalow at 4024 Elliot Ave. S. (extant) in the then Scandinavian-American neighborhood of Bancroft. Doug Pearson, former president of the Ager Association, grew up in the neighborhood during these years. Marianna, her love of literature sparked while at New Hope, taught English and Spanish at Roosevelt High School until retirement in 1962. Marianna was still teaching during Doug’s years at Roosevelt.

Even after Kathrina died in 1938, the family bonding evident in New Hope persisted, and the Farseths continued to live at 4024 Elliot. Marianna’s elder sister Pauline, also an alumna of St. Olaf, taught foreign languages at North High School in Minneapolis. Their brother Carl, bound to a wheelchair because of boyhood polio, worked as a newspaper proofreader. Living elsewhere, their brother Harald, after graduating from St. Olaf in 1909, had become a well-known Lutheran pastor in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He returned to Alban in 1952 and New Hope in 1957 to speak at reunion celebrations, showing the continued importance to the Farseths of their time at New Hope a half-century previously.

Come and read Marianna’s memoir yourself at



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

Recommendation

Read "Observations on Ice," by Synne Borgen. Find the article at *The Sun Magazine*.
Google thesunmagazine.org. Search for "Observations on Ice."

The Language of Love (a belated Valentine's wish)

With apologies to John Donne

The parking lot's a fine and open place,
But none I think should there embrace.
Instead, prefer the privacy of home
Where few are likely there to roam.

Delight each other in dance and song
At home where nothing goes amiss or wrong.
Expect your tenderness to be the reason
You speak of love in sweet Norwegian.

Doug Pearson

The Ager Museum telephone
number.

715 598 1776

We'd love to hear from you.
Leave a message.