

The Ager Newsletter

Waldemar Ager Museum
October, November, December 2021

TENTATIVE ACTIVITIES

Board Meetings at 7 p.m.

Third Monday of the month. Currently: masked, in person.

Open House:
Still To Be Decided



The Waldemar Ager
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Advent at the Ager

The Board decided at the October meeting to cancel Advent at the Ager for 2021. The event usually draws a crowd (not a good plan in COVID times), and the smörgåsbord (the highlight of these events) is not advised for group events. Too many chances for contamination and spreading of the virus.

So let us be satisfied for the moment with our memories of these events. Perhaps you recall the vinegary/sugary taste of pickled herring. You think of rosettes, so delicate and tasty, but often in shards before you could finish one. Cheeses, white cookies (sugar, butter, decorated with sprinkles), sandbakels, krumkake, pepparkakor, aebleskiver, nuts, gravlax, kottbullar, Jusinka, pickled beets, saffron buns, dates, raisins, stilton, gjetost, Jarlsberg.

You get the idea. Hungry yet?

President's Ramblings, by Ivar Lunde



Friends,

Season's Greetings to everyone! May 2022 be virus free and prosperous for us all, particularly for the Waldemar Ager Association!

I am reading one of Jørn Lier Horst's latest books, *Grenseløs* (Without Borders), where the action takes place in Spain and Norway. It is of course snowing in Larvik (Norway), warmer in Palamós (Spain), and the murder of an Australian woman

and a suspected murder of a Norwegian woman are mysterious. Horst is a good writer, particularly when one reads the original text. Translations are sometimes problematic. Larvik is the city where my father was born so it is doubly fascinating to me. The places where the action takes place are very familiar to me. Well, back to reality!

So what did Ager write about? Perhaps the immigrant life was his main passion. His study of people and the never-ending promotion of Scandinavian culture permeate his writings. What can we do to promote his ideals? What can we learn from his writings?

The Waldemar Ager Association Board is struggling to come to terms with new opportunities. One in particular is how to pursue the purchase of the adjacent properties so we can expand our activities. We need space. The Waldemar Ager Association Capital Campaign has been established to fund the purchase and development of two properties next door. No mystery here (no murder either). We need your support more than ever before. Renewing memberships is of course a welcome gesture, but we need serious donations to make this dream come true. And what a legacy this will be.

Our new board member, Chris Engen, has authored a strategic plan, yet to be approved, stating goals for the Association. Now we need you, our members, for support. What a Christmas gift this will be if we can accomplish the goal of raising \$300,000! That is of course for the 1st stage. The 2nd stage will include working with architects and builders. That will determine the final cost of it all.

The Ager Museum is located close to the Cannery District which is being redeveloped. It is also close to the Mayo Clinic Health Center with Midelfort Clinic and the L.E. Phillips Senior Center practically next door. You can tell I am excited about the possibilities.

The Association has several other less costly projects in the works as well. We even have an invitation to participate in a Hmong project scheduled for 2025. More announcements will follow in subsequent newsletters. One problem for efforts to communicate with members is that the membership list is getting out of date! Please keep snail-mail and email addresses current. An updated list helps us keep you up to date.

And, of course, your input is always welcome.

Best

Ivar

Breaking News

As of January 5, 2022, the Ager Museum will have a new telephone number.

NEW PHONE NUMBER

715 598 1776

BOOK DISCUSSION at the Ager Museum

On January 26, at 6:30 p.m. (CST), we will discuss Lori Erickson's *The Soul of the Family Tree*.

On March 23, at 6:30 p.m.(CST), at the Ager Museum, we will discuss Peter Geye's *Northernmost* (a novel of Norway and Minnesota).

Please join us for these discussions.

Thanks to Our Donors and Volunteers

Member Donations

Gloria Ager
Tryg Ager
Oscar & Beth Brandser
Jim Campen
Walter Clark
Frank Derge
Judy Evenson
Jan Etnier
Ella Fossum
Marilyn Jones
Ann Kuhlman
Brad & Kathryn Larson
Ivar and Nanette Lunde
Robert & Suzanne Nelson
Richard & Sherene Nicolai
Gwenn Nyhagen
Sue and Doug Pearson
Jane Pederson and Ronald Mickel
Cindy and David Rasmussen
Roger and Marilyn Skatrud
Helen and Norb Wurtzel

Memorials and Honorariums

Tryg Ager & Judy Nyquist, in memory of Karren Bloom and Wally Ager

Pete & Carol Anderson, in memory of Phyllis Kurtz

Susan Avery, in memory of Wally Ager, Roger Ager

Kristine Bejin, in memory of Charlotte Yakesh Ager

Ray and LeAnn Bloom, in memory of Karren Bloom

Janice Bogstad and Philip Kaveny, in memory of Joseph Bogstad and Erma Bogstad

Fritz & Barbara Culver, in honor and memory of Gudrun Ager Bergh, Milo Bergh, and Karren Bergh Bloom

Excel Energy, in honor of Oscar Brandser

Daniel F. Johnson, in memory of Carolyn Johnson

Thanks also to the many **volunteers** who helped maintain the museum and its grounds (Marty Zens, Brad and Kathryn Larson, the landscaping crew who transformed borders around the house last May, and to the members of the Board for their continuing efforts to keep the house safe and secure and to tackle ideas for the future. Long- and short-range planning are part of their regular agenda.

A Cosmopolitan World

by Mari Carlson

You met Mari Carlson in the summer issue of The Ager Newsletter. She sends this letter from Washington DC, where she is currently living.

Greetings from the nation's capital! So far, I'm having a great time in my new-old home.

Ager addressed the "melting pot" in several of his writings. The metaphor gained popularity in the early 20th century, but Ager argued against melting, in favor of coexisting nationalities maintaining distinct flavors. What I experience here in suburban DC is that while most everyone speaks English, dresses "American," drives American, and strives after the elusive American dream, there's lots of evidence that ethnic groups carry their own culture into this land of opportunity. Take the studio where I teach violin lessons, for instance. It's sandwiched between a Polish grocery store (and European delivery

service) and a Japanese grocery store, both of which are MUCH busier than the folk music school, with customers chattering away in native tongues. The smells alone are enough to distract hungry students and teachers alike. I often stop before or after lessons for specialty chocolate and cookies, teas, or sausage. Next to the Polish place is a Jewish mortuary and next to the Japanese place is a Peruvian restaurant. None of my current students is a "pure blooded" American. One's dad is African, another's dad is Malaysian, and the third's mom is Japanese. This all makes me delight in the wonderful American soup offered to me every day.



In addition to teaching, I play with a few folk music ensembles, among them the DC Spelmanslag (fiddle club). I've been a member of this group through Covid, as I could jam with them over zoom. What distinguishes this group from groups I've played with in Minneapolis and Eau Claire is an emphasis on the living tradition. The American Swedish Institute Spelmanslag focused on preserving the music of immigrants, as do most Eau Claire Scandinavian players. We don't worry too much about preserving the past in the DC group, as we have several - live - Swedish players. Two are wives of diplomats. Another is a Boston native who figured out how to live in Denmark, his favorite place, in retirement. Another is a Swedish resident required to live six weeks a year in Sweden, a feat she accomplished even during the pandemic. Our artistic director focuses on how to get the "svikt" or groove in our playing by focusing on specific techniques. She, like several members, has studied at the Eric Sahlstrom Institute of Folk Music in Tobo, Sweden (<http://esitobo.org/eng/>). As a group, we take online workshops with Scandinavian musicians keeping the craft vibrant and connected to other

traditions, like Celtic, jazz, bluegrass, and even klezmer. They are well supported by their governments' arts agencies, keeping costs lower on our end.

If DC is a melting pot (or a simmering soup canteen), it is just as much a fastfood lunch counter, a stopover more than a destination for many transients. Some members, who lived in DC for some job or other, have returned to the group now that it's largely virtual. One member joins from Germany. He learned about the group from a friend of a friend. Yes, it's a big, complicated world filled with jet setters and world economies and divisions, but it's also so connected as to be small, especially when one is "into" a niche interest like Scandinavian folk music.

If you want a taste, join the Christmas Eve service at Augustana Lutheran Church in Washington DC 2:30 EST. We'll be playing 8 selections during the service. Later in the day is a Spanish liturgy. One house, many rooms. [The editor apologizes. You missed this event because the editor missed the deadline for printing this issue—by a lot!]



News from Scandinavia

Norway

14 december 1911

It was on this day that Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen and his team became the first people ever to reach the [South Pole](#) on the continent of Antarctica, the last continent on earth to be explored by people. People weren't even sure that there was land under the ice in Antarctica until the 19th century. Amundsen was in a race with the British explorer Robert F. Scott, and he won the race largely because he was willing to use sled dogs as his primary mode of transportation, whereas Scott believed that traveling by dog sled was undignified.

To reach the pole, Amundsen's team had to travel about 800 miles into Antarctica's interior in weather that occasionally reached 70 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, cold enough to freeze the liquid in their compasses. They had to eat some of their dogs as food, got caught in a blizzard, and they all suffered from frostbite. But on this day in 1911, their calculations and their compasses told them that they had reached the geographical South Pole, and they planted their Norwegian flag. Scott's party reached the South Pole a little more than a month later, traveling by foot, and they froze to death before they ever made it home.

Quoted from "The Writer's Almanac," December 14, 2021. Founded by American Public Media and hosted by Garrison Keillor, the "Almanac" is a daily feature online, still hosted by Keillor.

Sweden and Denmark

In November, *Smithsonian* published "The Dive to 1495," by Jo Marchant. Marchant begins the article, "in the frigid Baltic Sea, archaeologists probing the surprisingly well-preserved remains of a revolutionary warship are seeing the Age of Discovery in a new way."

In her review of the various discoveries related to the underwater search (the ship lies only 29 meters below the surface in waters off the southern Swedish coast), Marchant discovers the work of Niklas Erickson, who claims that medieval Denmark was a global power in exploration and trade. So far, divers have brought up, among other things, silver coins of Danish origin, chainmail and lead shot from Germany, wood from the Baltics, exotic spices from the Far East.

Marchant also reports the conclusion of Per Seesko, "'We have this dynamic, forward-looking king [Hans]'" and Brendon Foley's claim that "'Hans was trying to do something new. . . . He was trying to empire-build.'" *Gribshunden* was built "to be a ship of discovery itself, with a mission to reach across the northern Atlantic toward an unknown world."

In *Golf Digest* recently, John Huggan introduced Denmark's new impact on the world of golf. Danish twins Nicolai and Rasmus Hojgaard, only 20 years old, have already won tournaments on the European professional golf tour.

Huggan also writes that two young Danish women were part of the European Solheim Cup team that beat the USA in September.

Anyone who keeps up with the sport of golf knows that Swedes lead the Scandinavian nations in numbers of golf courses, players, and success stories on professional tours. No one among them is more impressive than Annika Sörenstam. She had 72 victories in more than 20 years of competition and won almost \$23 million dollars. She is 51.

Ager Association 2022 Board of Directors

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Items for the Next Newsletter
Send to pearsoda@uwec.edu by
March 19.

Messages
For the Ager Association
Text or call 715.598.1776

MEMBERSHIP

Doug Pearson

The mailing label on your copy of the newsletter notes the year of your membership status. Some members have already made their membership donation for 2022. We think we have correct information in our data; however, if you have paid for 2022 but still have a 2021 or earlier notation, please contact us so that we can get the record straight.
agerassociation@gmail.com

To make things easy for members to renew or for new members to join the Association, we are enclosing the Ager Association donation envelope. Use it for your membership donation or for other contributions to the work of the Association. You may also join or donate online: agerhouse.org.

Your financial contributions are the funds we use to maintain the museum, support programs, and develop the growing library of Scandinavian literature, history, language, and culture. Keep keeping us on in your donation plan. Thanks very much for your support.

Rejoin online: agerhouse.org

OR send a check in the enclosed envelope:

Waldemar Ager Association
PO Box 1742
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\$30 General Membership
\$60 Sustaining Membership
\$120 Supporting Membership
\$1000 Life Membership

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In the translation of excerpts from *Reform* (this interesting book is available at the Ager Museum and online at agerhouse.org), the following item described an early January event in 1906.

9 januar 1906

The St. Olaf College Band held its concert Friday evening at Fournier's Academy which was packed full of people. The band played very beautifully and exceeded all expectations. We thought they played "Norwegian Rhapsody" the best, a number composed by their instructor, Professor Christiansen himself. Schuman's Traumerei" was played as an encore, and was one of the most beautiful we have heard from the band.