

Fall and Early Winter, 2010



The Waldemar

Ager Association

514 West Madison Street

P.O. Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54701-1742

715 834 3985

www.agerhouse.org

Fall 2010 Calendar

Ager Board Meeting
9:30 AM
Monday August 16

**Ager Association
Membership
Open House
7:00 PM
September 10, 2010**

**Ager Association
Annual Membership
Meeting
Friday Evening
October 15, 2010**

**Language and Folk
Arts Classes
Check Page Nine for
Times and Dates**

Watch for news about
the Annual
“Advent at the Ager
House”

Syttende Mai Celebrations Throughout the World

In this issue, we feature photos and stories from Syttende Mai celebrations from four locations: Eau Claire, London, and Oslo and Fiska, Norway.

Many of us were present for the Eau Claire Syttende Mai celebration here in Eau Claire. Highlights were the appearance of the Troll, the parade, the band, the program on Norse Fiddle Music by Karen Torkelson Solgard, and—best of all—the company of old and new friends.

Norb and Helen Wurtzel celebrated Syttende Mai in London at the Norwegian Church on Albion Street. They skipped the evening dinner at Den Norske Klub, maybe because it cost \$120 each! That makes the Eau Claire Celebration a real bargain.

Jan Etnier tells us about two Norwegian Syttende Mai celebrations, one in Oslo with her husband Don and their son, Carl, and the other in the small town of Fiska with her sister and other Norwegian relatives.

These four different pictures of Syttende Mai celebrations show us what elements are always present, but also how the celebrations can be different. It is especially fun to see young people involved both here, in England, and in Norway.

Syttende Mai celebration in London

After taking the tube to the Canada Water Station, we wandered until we found the Norwegian Church on Albion Street. We attended the 11:00 a.m. Celebratory Service with members of the Norwegian community--standing room only in the church.

Following the service we joined in having waffles with jam, coffee and cakes in the small courtyard of the church. Many Norse were dressed in their bunads--even many of the children from the Norwegian School. It was an experience to see families enjoying the service, lunch and later the program in Southwark Park. We estimate nearly 1,000 people took part in the celebration. A Grand Flag Parade started the afternoon festivities. There was musical entertainment, games and races, face painting and they sold ice cream, hot dogs, flags and lapel ribbons.

We skipped the evening dinner at Den Norske Klub--about \$120.00 each.

By Norb Wurtzel



Syttende Mai in Norway: Oslo and Fiska

In the '90's Don, our son, Carl, and I celebrated Syttende Mai in Oslo on Karl Johansgata not far from the castle--the way you see pictured in all the travel brochures. Norwegian flags waved EVERYWHERE! A bunad clad grandfather pushed a cushy buggy with flag attached. I thought "That child is imprinting early on his national flag!" We stood for hours as school after school passed by. We concluded the day enjoying a big bowl of rommegrot at Kaffe Stova.

Contrast that huge celebration with 2010 celebration in the tiny town of Fiska, a 40-minute ferry ride from Stavanger. Villagers walked down a winding hill to join families in bunads gathered around a tall obelisk monument honoring a WWII resistance fighter. Huge flags provided the background as a wreath was laid in honor of all who died in that war. A brass band then led us all down the street to the school playground where chairs were assembled for the program. School windows were decorated with Norwegian flags and flowers. Children sang and short speeches were made. Coffee and sweets were served before a picnic meal. My sister and I took in all the colorful bunads on young and old. Are there any more beautiful national costumes in the whole world?

But now for the best part of that special day! Kristoffer, our cousin, and wife, Kitty, live on the very farm from which our paternal grandfather emigrated in 1880. We changed into jeans and hiking boots, hung on tightly behind the tractor and ascended partway up the mountains. We hiked for four hours, saw the peat bogs where Grandpa had laboriously dug peat 'bricks' with a shovel, placed the bricks on huge boulders to dry, then stacked them together and covered them until winter when they brought the peat down to the farm to be used as fuel.

Climbing over streams (and sometimes through tiny riverlets) kept our boots wet. The land was desolate with very few trees. Kristoffer showed us a stone covering a cross marked in a boulder. This was the survey marker for one corner of the farm. We looked out over the islands to the sea knowing that our Grandpa had seen these same scenes.

We stopped to see the hytte in the mountains before Kristoffer led us down a VERY steep mountain. Thankfully there were trees and shrubs to grab. We looked back and wondered how we did it. Kitty had a delicious meal waiting which we enjoyed with their four sons!

One of our goals for this trip was to climb Prekestolen, the huge flat rock high above Lyse Fjord, which was only a couple miles away. But the only day we could have done that was foggy and very rainy--not safe for mountain climbing. But Kristoffer said we climbed as high as Prekestolen so we felt gratified. Cross that off the bucket list!

Celebrating Syttende Mai in both Oslo and Fiska are unforgettable, treasured memories.

By Jan Etnier

Scenes from the 2010 Eau Claire Syttende Mai Celebration



Ellie Paulson with her Hardanger



Ev Krigsvald in her Blue Bunad



Is This Troll is Running for Office?



Playing for the Parade

Waldemar Ager At Work

Introduction: Most members of the Ager Association know that Ager was a passionate advocate of "Reform." He was frequently invited to lecture on reform topics—temperance, the rights of women to vote, and free public education for all through age eighteen. He was an eloquent advocate of affordable health care for all, especially pregnant women. Below are excerpts from a speech he delivered in Eau Claire on September 9, 1915. On September 11, he delivered a version of this same speech in Norwegian. The complete text of his speech in English appeared in both the Eau Claire Leader and the Telegraph, and Norwegian in the Reform.

Europe Ahead of the U.S. in social Reform

Waldemar Ager Address Opens Eyes of Many:

"Poor and Needy Far Better Cared for in Norway Than in Free America"

Going abroad, you may travel with your eyes shut and senses dulled so you do not make any comparisons, but if you do make comparisons, it will probably be to find our where your own country is long, the other countries short . . . When I visited Norway last year, I was trying to learn something—that is, I was more interested in where we were short than where we were long. Comparisons are odious—probably—but only when they prove you short. If they prove you long—they have a fine odor.

I started making comparisons right away. In the city of Christiania nearby where I lived, a big building was going up—a beautiful structure. I asked what it was and was told that it was a new public maternity hospital.

I was informed that a woman in a confinement case could go to this institution and receive the best medical care that modern sciences can afford for a small sum of about \$7. That includes everything until a woman is strong enough to go back to her work.

She could go to other hospitals and have her own doctor and nurses and pay any price she could afford, but nowhere could she get better care or more efficient attention than the poor mother received at this institution. If a mother was too poor to pay anything, she was admitted free, of course. Un married mothers are given the same care as the married.

Who could help making comparisons? I believe that the most important thing that can take place in a family or community is the entrance into the world of a new human soul and body. I know of nothing that concerns us more than the baby and its mother. . . Then—what are we doing for her? What are we doing for her in our own town?

I venture the opinion that three out of every four children born in Eau Claire are born under conditions not much different from those on the frontier a hundred years ago . . . most of the mothers in our city have not been better off during confinement than their great grandmothers.

I know that there is proper treatment to be had if you can pay for it. But the hope of the human race is with the poor mother. If a workman should get the proper care for his wife it would far exceed his ability to pay. He cannot afford it. And the hospitals are unable to make room.

I do not exaggerate when I say that a great number of our children, born right in our city, are born under the most unsanitary conditions—often without even the clothes they need.

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We have a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, but the expectant mother will have to take care of herself and muddle through somehow as her great grandmother did. All of the untold sufferings and hardships that such a woman will have to go through with the lack of proper care do not seem to affect us. Hundreds of mothers right here in our Eau Claire have had no other care but what the husbands could give morning and evening and what help good neighbors would offer.

And yet—there happens nothing of more importance in this city than the birth of a child—none that concerns us more.

Under the Norwegian system of caretaking, the hospitals are open to everybody, and the expenses adjusted according to your means so you to pay only a small sum or nothing at all if you are a workingman or belong to the class insured by the compulsory sick benefit law. The care of the sick is considered part of the public expense and is carried by all the taxpayers. Each community has their own hospital and hires doctors and pays them a yearly salary for taking care of everyone within their district. This gives a man, if he is poor, practically free doctor and free hospital. In Eau Claire, it costs a great deal to be sick—so much so that some people are afraid of calling a doctor for fear that he shall order hospital treatment, If the poor man gets well, and he sometimes does, then he will for years have to work off the debt contracted during his sickness. We have forgotten that it is altogether too expensive to be sick nowadays, and that the poor people are not “in it”—to use slang.

Memorials and other Special Contributions

IN MEMORY OF GERDA CAVANAUGH

Amy Thurston

IN MEMORY OF A. EDWARD HEINS

Susan and John Heins

IN MEMORY OF MARGARET JOHNSON

Borgny Ager
Barbara and Fritz Culver
Ev Krigsvold
Sue and Doug Pearson
Helen and Norb Wurtzel
Lynne and Ken Ziehr

IN MEMORY OF HILDUR AGER

NICOLAI

Sherene and Rick Nicolai

TO HONOR ROALD A. AGER

Waldemar T. Ager

THANK YOU TO THESE PEOPLE:

Borgny Ager: A book entitled *Norwegian-Americans in the Midwest*. Newspapers and archival documents relating to Waldemar and Eyvind Ager

Walter C. Clark: A 25 page letter entitled, *Memories*, written by his great grandmother, Camilla Ager to her grand daughters about her early life with her brother, Waldemar

Jan Etnier: Coffee for the kitchen

Eleanor Hesse: A large number of books dealing with Scandinavian culture and history

Marion Klish: Jo Sonja's folk art videos *Presenting a Peasant Face and Stroke Florals*

Bill Klish: Framing of a rosemal painting by Irene Lamont

John Peterson: A framed wall tapestry, handmade by a relative, of the Coat of Arms of Norway, and translations from the 1924 Jule-Hilsen

Meet Our Library Automation Interns Sam Brown and Alana Peck



The Ager Association Board recently voted to purchase a software package to automate our library with the goal eventually to make the catalogue for our collection searchable online. The Board also created two internship positions to help us learn how to use the software and to assist with the cataloguing. The Board selected Alan Peck and Sam Brown to be our interns. They both have been working with members of the library committee throughout the summer.

An Eau Claire native, Sam Brown graduated from St. Olaf College in May 2010. He majored in history, with an emphasis on museums and archival work. Some of you may know Sam through his work as a volunteer for many years at the Chippewa Valley Museum.

A lifelong Altoona resident, Alana Peck has completed her first year at the University of Wisconsin Madison. Alana is also interested in history and libraries. Both she and Sam come to us with extensive knowledge and experience with computer technologies.

The Ager Library Automation Internships are unpaid positions, so we especially appreciate the skill and hard work Alana and Sam are providing us. We will be much further along in our efforts to automate our library because of their work this summer.

Fall 2010 Language and Folk Art Classes

Beginning Norwegian: An 8-week 1-1/2 half-hour class on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM beginning September 7th and continuing through October 26th

This class is designed for beginning Norwegian language students and those who wish to “brush up” on the language learned in the beginning class before progressing to Intermediate Conversational Norwegian. Limited to 12 to 16 students.

Jan Hansen, instructor.

Fee is \$70.00 for the 8 week session + cost of book and materials.

Estimated cost of the book “**Norwegian in 10 Minutes a Day**” with CD by Kristine Kershul is between \$25.00 and \$27.00, payable at the first class session or at Scandinavian Imports, 15 South Barstow.

Intermediate Conversational Norwegian: An 8-week 1-1/2 half-hour class on Thursday evenings from 7:15 PM to 8:45 PM beginning on September 23rd and continuing through November 11th.

This class will build on the lessons learned in Beginning Norwegian. The text used will be the first chapters of “**Norsk**”, by Kathleen Stocker. A minimum of 6 to 8 students is required for this class.

Eldjborg Tobin, Instructor

Fee is \$70.00 for the 8 week session + cost of the book and materials

Estimated cost of the book “**Norsk**” by Kathleen Stocker is between \$23.00 and \$25.00, payable at the first class session.

Continuing Norwegian: An 8-week 1-1/2 half-hour class on Thursday evenings from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM beginning on September 23rd and continuing through November 11th.

Eldjborg Tobin, Instructor

Fee is \$70.00 for the 8 week session + cost of the book and materials

Estimated cost of the book “**Norsk**” by Kathleen Stocker is between \$23.00 and \$25.00, payable at the first class session.

German I: A 1 -1/2 hour 8-week class on Monday evenings 7:45 PM to 9:15 PM beginning on September 13th and continuing through November 1st.

Minimum class size is 12 students. No prerequisite.

Angela Gunn, Instructor

Fee is \$70.00 for the 8 week session + cost of book or materials.

Estimated cost of the book “*Your First 100 Words in German: German for total Beginners Through Puzzles and Games*”, by Jane Wightwick and materials is between \$15.00 and \$18.00, payable at the first class session.

German: II : A 1-1/2 hour 8-week class on Monday evenings from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM beginning on September 13th and continuing through November 1st.

Minimum class size is 12 students. Prerequisite German I or 1 semester of high school German.

Angela Gunn, Instructor

Fee is \$70.00 for the 8 week session + cost of book or materials.

Estimated cost of the book “*German Made Simple: Learn to Speak and Understand German Quickly and Easily*”, by Arnold Leitner and materials is between \$14.00 and \$17.00, payable at the first class session.

Chipcarving: A six-week class on Thursday mornings from 9:00 AM to noon beginning on September 9th and continuing through October 14th

Virginia Van Vuren, Instructor

The fee for this class is \$38.00.

Hardanger embroidery: A five-week class on Thursday afternoons, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM beginning on Thursday, September 16th and continuing through Thursday, October 14th. Limited to twelve students.

Louise Koxlien, instructor

The fee for this class is \$38.00.

Rug Hooking : Learn a new skill, or refine an old art. Hook for a pillow or for a purse front. A complete kit will be provided to complete your project. Classes will meet from 1:00 to 4:00 PM for six weeks. The fee for class and materials is \$35.00.

Call Ev Kringsvold at 715.835.8718 if interested or for additional information about any of these classes.

Drop-in rosemaling: Drop in each Friday of the week from 10:30AM to 4:00PM to join other rosemalers from beginners to gold medalists to work on you rosemaling project and enjoy the camaraderie of others. No formal instruction, but receive help and support from others experienced in this folk art. Suggested donation is \$5.00 per day for each time you attend.

Call Mary Beth Wold at 715.456.5219 or 715.835.7410 for additional information on drop-in rosemaling.

**All classes are held at the Ager House, 514 West Madison Street, Eau Claire
Send Registration and Fees to: Registration, Waldemar Ager Association
PO Box 1742, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1742**

Call Ev Kringsvold at 715.835.8718 for additional information.

The Waldemar Ager Association
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NEWSLETTER AND MARKETING

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Inga Ager's Famous Krum Kage Recipe in Her Own Hand
[Do you have a recipe you would like contribute?]



Mum Kage
Inga Ager
1 cup sugar
1 dm can evaporated
milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/2 cup flour or more depending
on the size of eggs. 1 c. butter melted
Beat eggs and sugar together beat
enough to mix well.
Add rest of ingredients and blend
thoroughly.

Spread as thin as possible on iron and
bake until light brown. Roll on
corn while warm to shape. Fry about
a top. If too thick add rich milk.
Good Luck

**Ager Association Membership Open House
September 10th at 7:00 PM**

It is time to get the word out to others in the community about Waldemar Ager, the Ager Association, the house, the Ager Resource Library, and all of the great classes and programs sponsored by the Association. The board is inviting potential new members to an open house on Friday September 10th at 7:00 PM with tours and an opportunity to share the word over desert, coffee, and other beverages for those who are not coffee junkies.

We ask each member to invite a friend or acquaintance to the event to welcome and share the hospitality and enthusiasm of our group with new faces and encourage them to become members of the Association.

The Ager Association
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