



Volume 25 Issue 2

July 2022

Aggie News

From the editor.

Dear fellow Aggies, in this issue of the Aggie News we again highlight the old and the new regarding our beloved Aggie. We would like to thank the Villanti family as well as the Ross family for their contributions to this newsletter.

It is with sad news that I have to reach out to you with the passing of Charles Main. He started this newsletter 25 years ago. I regretfully say that this is the last newsletter that I will be editing due to the fact that I am facing a terminal cancer diagnosis. We are looking for a replacement editor, please reach out if you are interested. It has been an honor to to serve as your editor.

Do not forget the dues page. It is very easy to fill out and send back to Michael Gaudette, Class of 1974.

If you have a story, you that would like to share about someone you would like to see in the spotlight, please contact Michael Gaudette. michael@gaudettenh.com

Donation Bricks can be purchased at - <https://essexnorthshore.org/larkin/buy-a-brick/>

Sincerely,

Pete Tierney, Class of '75 email peter.tierney57@outlook.com phone 857-888-9924
Home address, 120 W. Grey Stone Street, San Tan Valley, AZ 85143



ESSEX TECH HAWKS

ESSEX NORTH SHORE AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 6:30PM ESSEX SPORTS CENTER

ESSEX TECH HAWKS 12-2-3 SHAWSHEEN TECH RAMS 12-4-0

FORWARDS

8 BRYAN SWACZYK
SO PEABODY
8-5-13

10 DAVID EGAN
SR BOXFORD
19-14-33

7 JONATHAN DALEY
SR SALEM
4-17-21

2 DOMINIC TIBERII
SO MANCHESTER
0-1-1

3 NICK LACONTE
SR LYNNFIELD
5-3-8

6 LOGAN CASEY
JR BEVERLY
7-9-16

15 LARRY GRAFFEO
JR LYNNFIELD
3-6-9

4 BRADY LEONARD
FR PEABODY
10-7-17

11 JAYDAN VARGAS
FR PEABODY
3-12-15

14 BEN PRENTISS
JR DANVERS
2-2-4

12 RYAN LARIVIERE
SR SALEM
3-1-4

21 LOGAN RICHARDSON
SR PEABODY
0-0-0

DEFENSE

9 CHRIS BATTEN
SR HAMILTON
1-5-6

5 CAM DOHERTY
JR BEVERLY
2-4-6

23 LUKE THIBODEAU
SR DANVERS
1-5-6

33 ARMANI BOOTH
SO PEABODY
1-6-7

17 RILEY SOBEZENSKI
SO SALEM
4-7-11

16 ETHAN LONG
JR PEABODY
0-1-1

19 DREW CARNEY
SO LYNNFIELD
1-1-2

GOALIES

30 KYLE MAHAN
JR DANVERS
1.15 GAA 7 SO'S

35 GARRETT WHITE
SO MIDDLETON
1-0-0 1.20 GAA

32 MARCO PICANO
SO READING
1-0-0 0.64 GAA

CAPTAINS

10 DAVID EGAN
7 JONATHAN DALEY
3 NICK LACONTE

NOT DRESSING TODAY

13 CHRIS MAHER SO WOBURN
18 BRANDON COLE SO PEABODY
20 ANDREW MCKENNA FR PEABODY
22 MASON SUTCLIFFE FR PEABODY

COMMONWEALTH ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Alumni in the Spotlight / David Egan Class of 2022

Reprinted with permission from the Salem News

David Egan, a senior center and team captain for the Essex Tech boy's hockey team from Peabody, was chosen as the Most Valuable Player of the Commonwealth Athletic Conference this season.

Egan led both his team and the region in goals (24) while also pacing his team in total points (40), good for third in The Salem News readership area. He finished his career with the Hawks with 54 goals, 44 assists and 98 points.

He was joined on the CAC All-Conference team by Essex Tech teammate **Kyle Mahan**. The junior goaltender from Danvers had an incredible season of his own, becoming just the second North Shore goaltender in the last 25 years to post eight shutouts in a single season. In addition, Mahan went 14-3-3 with 1.56 goals against average and .929 save percentage, the latter two both being tops in the area.



David Egan

Commonwealth Athletic Conference all-star accolades went to senior captain and right wing **Jonathan Daley**, of Salem, who had a team-leading 19 assists and was second in total points (25); senior defenseman **Luke Thibodeau** of Danvers (1 goal, 10 assists), and fellow 12th grade blue liner **Chris Batten** of Hamilton (1 goal, 5 assists). They helped the Hawks not only with the league title outright, but also a 1-0 overtime win in the Division 3 state playoffs.

The man behind the bench, **Mark Leonard**, was named the CAC Coach of the Year. Leonard piloted the Hawks to their best-ever season and their first-ever postseason triumph. His club went 7-1 in league play this season and finished 16-4-3 overall, scoring 93 goals while allowing just 38. They outshot their opponents by more than 300 (818 shots for, 504 allowed) and gave up just six power play goals in 71 times shorthanded, a 92 percent success rate.

Leonard, who has been coaching high school hockey on the North Shore for the last 27 seasons, now has an overall career record of 261-246-49, including 33-14-9 in his three years at Essex Tech.

https://www.salemnews.com/sports/essex-techs-egan-named-cac-hockey-mvp/article_44aabc50-b12d-11ec-b90a-0f864f63f971.html

Athletics School Year (1921-22)



The Athletic Association is planning for a very busy year. Besides the usual schedules in football, basketball, baseball and hockey, an agricultural and track meet is being planned. Students from the special agricultural schools as well as those from the high school departments will be in competition. This meet will be held at the school sometime during the fall and should arouse more interest in this form of athletics and also in agriculture.

For the past three weeks thirty men have reported daily for football practice under the direction of Coach Oral A. Page of the School faculty. Captain Holden has succeeded in getting a number of men of last year's team back early, among whom are Peabody, Peach, Murray, Dreano, Wainwright, Roberts and Ewing. Herman Herrick of Beverly, who played right halfback of Beverly, who played right halfback last year, has been assisting the team in getting itself into shape.

Because of the large number of men out for football, a second team has been formed under the leadership of Mr. Hammond of the faculty. One game has already been arranged with Lynn Classical High. This game will be played in Danvers, the date to be agreed upon later.

It is the plan of the Athletic Association to be able to finance all athletics at the school with the money received from student pledges. At the beginning of this year, the Association had \$150 in Liberty Bonds, but no actual cash to begin the season. About \$125 has been collected from student pledges with \$275 still due from this source. An order for football equipment amounting to \$135 has been placed, which leaves the Association again without funds. It is a good time now to settle that pledge and do your part to help support athletics at the school.

Please note that in 1922 hockey was an outdoor sport.



1961-62 Aggie Hockey Team

School Notes 2022 / ESEA Recognition

Superintendent Heidi Riccio and Principal Shannon Donnelly are pleased to announce that Essex Tech has been named a Distinguished School by a national organization for exceptional student achievement.

Essex Tech is one of up to 100 schools throughout the country that is being recognized this year by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators. The National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program highlights qualifying federally funded schools for making significant improvements for their students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides additional resources for vulnerable students and federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of public elementary and secondary education.

Schools may earn the designation for excellence in one of three categories. Essex Tech is being honored for expanding Title I services to offer reading, writing, and mathematics support for students in Grades 9 and 10.



Superintendent Riccio and Principal Donnelly cite several reasons for these successes:

- ❑ Special education teachers who were content specialists replaced paraprofessionals, and were paired with their content counterparts in a grade level academy model.
- ❑ Teachers developed new approaches and employed research-based best practices, including a commitment to an improved co-teaching model, engaging students.
- ❑ Teachers stressed and reinforced how advanced skills in math, English, and science are important to students' chosen career field.

“At Essex Tech we believe that every student has the potential to succeed both academically and in their chosen technical pathway,” Superintendent Riccio said. “Our faculty and staff embraced that vision, and have worked to offer students an authentic, supportive learning experience where all are able to grow. The proof is in our success. Because we are inclusive, Essex Tech students leave with all the skills they need to be hired in high-demand jobs upon graduation.”

“We identified students who needed additional support, and by increasing our focus on applied critical thinking and problem solving, our student gained new skills and increased confidence,” Principal Donnelly said. “You can see it in the students' faces as you walk through classrooms and program areas.”

We would like to congratulate the winners of the 2022 Alumni Scholarships.
Student Scholarship Program

Our scholarship program has expanded each year and we hope to continue that trend. The scholarships that are awarded each year to graduating students go a long way in helping Aggie grads get a good start in their careers after they leave the school. The expansion of the scholarship program is solely dependent on the amount of donations we receive.

You can find our donation form here: **Thank you for your support.**

https://www.essexaggie.org/alumni/downloads/Alumni_-_Membership_Form_2022.pdf

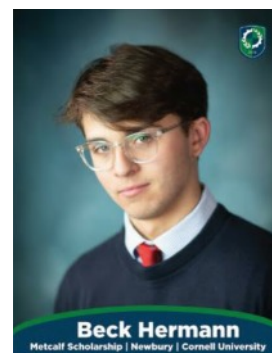
V. Byron Bennett Scholarship:

Victoria Larson \$1000, of Marblehead going to UMass Amherst.



Richard M. Brown Scholarship:

Giana Biagioni \$1000, of Littleton going to Central Wyoming College.



Ellery E. Metcalf Scholarship:

Beck Hermann \$1000, of Newbury going to Cornell University.



Patrick G. Santin Scholarship:

Thi Kayla Nguyen \$1000, of Danvers going to U-Mass Amherst.

The Larkin Gala / Lifetime Achievement Award 2022

In recognition of decades of dedication, innovation, and substantial contribution within the agricultural community, Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School is honored to present the Larkin Lifetime Achievement Award Amy O'Malley.

Amelia "Amy" O'Malley began her long career at North Shore Regional Vocational School District in 1988. She began in the District as a Speech/Language Pathologist. Subsequently, Amy became the Special Education Director in 1996, Principal in 1998, and finally Superintendent-Director in 2001 until her retirement in 2009. In total, Ms. O'Malley dedicated 21 years of her professional life to vocational education.

For anyone who knows Amy, it is no surprise that the district flourished during her tenure, changing and growing into a "state-of-the art" technical school, respected and coveted by students and families from the 17-member districts. At the time, the North Shore was in great need of technically trained, skilled workers.

"It's safe to say we outgrew our school when we moved in," Ms. O'Malley said of the building on Log Bridge Road in Middleton. "It's never been a proper school building. It's a retrofitted machine shop, no matter what we do."

At that time, North Shore Technical High School received up to 300 applications each year and had space to accept only 120 freshmen. The Peabody High School vocational program was run out of the Higgins Middle School and the high school. Over in Hathorne, Essex Agricultural and Technical High School, founded in 1913, educated students from more than fifty Massachusetts communities and was the only state-run school in the Commonwealth.

Roger Bourgeois was the Superintendent-Director at the time the school was taken over by the Department of Education, as the Essex County government was dissolved. Essex Aggie had roughly 440 students, receiving annual applications of about 270 students, with the ability to accept less than half of that at 130 students.

With an ambitious vision, and the support of people from many fronts, Amy O'Malley led the District in the process of merging North Shore Regional Vocational School District with Essex Agricultural and Technical School District along with the Peabody Vocational School in 1998. "We're talking about thousands of students who have been denied the chance to receive vocational education in their districts," said Amy. Funding was the major issue at that time. There wasn't really any strong opposition to the concept. Everyone seemed to agree that there was a need, it was just trying to find the resources.

The vision was that students from 50 communities would study everything from equine science to information technology in a new, state-of-the-art agricultural and technical learning complex. Architects projected a cost of \$140.6 million dollars for construction off Route 62 in Danvers across from the main Essex Aggie campus.

As you can imagine, this was a long and arduous process involving the Massachusetts School Building Authority, all of the local mayors and school committees, the chamber of commerce, state legislators and the Commissioner of Education. Ultimately, a bill was passed in 2011 by the Massachusetts State Legislature to facilitate this merger.

And now we know the full story: Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District is the culmination of Amelia O'Malley's long career and vision as a vocational educator.

“The key cultural shift that led to our school’s success originated in a growth mindset among teachers that our students could achieve at high levels in both academic and career technical and agricultural education.”

1. Tell us about your school’s success.

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School’s success is grounded in our mission to create a culture of technical and academic excellence committed to workforce preparation. We are in our eighth year as a state-of-the-art agricultural and technical school. We are committed to creating a transformative learning experience for our students through career pathways and an integrated learning model.

2. Talk about the greatest contributing factor(s) that promoted positive change in your school.

The greatest contributing factor was to incorporate a true inclusionary model schoolwide where special education teachers who were content specialists replaced paraprofessionals and were paired with their content counterparts in a grade-level academy model. Coupled with a multi-tiered approach to teaching and learning, teachers were able to develop new approaches and research-based best practices, including a commitment to an improved co-teaching model, engaging our students through innovation and integrated learning. Utilizing a student reading and writing strategy known as Writing With Colors has helped students grasp the understructure of good writing. Moreover, this method of reading and writing reaches across all disciplines. Furthermore, as a vocational high school, our students are able to see how math, English, and science skills integrate into authentic real-world experiences.

3. How has ESEA funding supported the school's success?

ESEA funding has supported our school’s success through the implementation of Title I services, focused on offering reading, writing, and mathematics support for students in grades 9 and 10. This increased focus on applied critical thinking and problem solving for those students identified as needing additional support increases their confidence and self-efficacy. We believe that when students acquire the skills through practice they will become more successful and this has proven to be true for us.

4. What professional development activities were used to improve teaching and learning?

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School teachers spent a great deal of professional development time working on our co-teaching model. Over time, staff explored the six types of co-teaching to identify and implement the strategies that would work best in the classroom. The school modified its schedule to provide common planning time during the school day and offered professional learning opportunities every Wednesday morning through a delayed opening for students. This investment in focused collaboration offers students an authentic, supportive learning experience where all are able to show growth. Our commitment to professional learning related to differentiated

instruction, collaborative teaching, and data-informed practice is evident in our student growth patterns. We continue to monitor and address gaps in learning with a growth mindset.

5. Talk about the cultural shift leading up to your school's success.

The key cultural shift that led to our school's success originated in a growth mindset among teachers that our students could achieve at high levels in both academic and career technical and agricultural education. Over the years, best practices were shared in collaborative meetings and were quickly transferred to the student instructional level to leverage learning strategies that showed promise. This shift was affirmed by various benchmark measures of student achievement and growth and resulted in teachers working to develop additional approaches that would benefit all students.

6. How has community involvement strengthened your success?

Our students come to Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School from over 55 different communities and across three counties. We have a dedicated Program Advisory Board that ensures each career technical area is current to industry standards. Through cooperative education placements beyond the school building, our students are able to spend time working in their respective fields. These employers allow our classrooms to reach far beyond our campus buildings and provide an invaluable real-world learning experience for our students. Most importantly, these community partners ensure that our students are workforce-ready and serve as a bridge for our students upon graduation.



School Notes 1922
From the Andover Townsman, Friday, April 14, 1922

The school has developed a fine herd of dairy animals and is now producing 160 quarts of milk per day. All of the work in the barn and dairy room is preformed by the students. The poultry division is hatching a large number of chicks and the laying hens are holding a record for production. The students will work in this division. The Fruit and Grounds Division will employ students in carrying out all of their work.

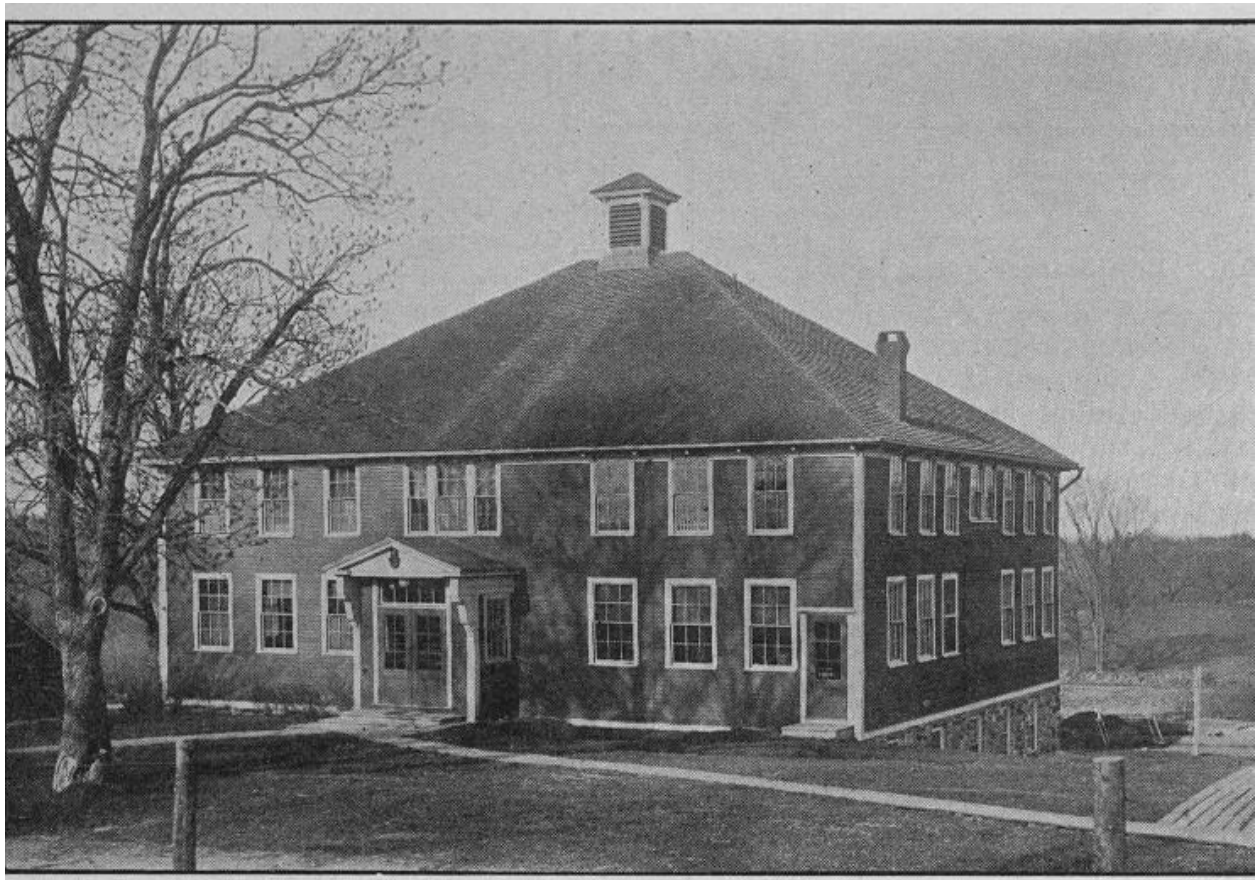
Special emphasis will be given to operating the school farm this year with regular students of the school. This is a plan which was instituted several years ago and will be carried out more completely this year than ever before. From fifteen to twenty young men, members of all four classes, will remain and work in the various divisions.

The vegetable garden division uses the largest number of students, and these will be mostly first-year students. The frames are now filled with vegetables plants such as lettuce, cabbage, beets, tomatoes, peppers, and celery. The students are now digging and sorting a fine crop of asparagus plants.

It will be thus seen that students have an exceptional opportunity to get practical experience in all the different operations connected to a large modern farm.

In photo below; Essex Aggie Student on Project, 1922





The Homemaking Department (see photo above) re-opened April 10th, after a week of vacation. The beautiful location in which the school is situated makes these spring days very attractive for students, and they are entering the last term of the year with enthusiasm and interest. Already many of the girls have planned their summer projects, which are a required part of the year's work.

Instructors Millard and Miss Browne spoke at the meeting of the Lynnfield Center Improvement Society on April 11th.

Instructor Meigs is co-operating with Extension Specialist Van Meter in grafting and pruning demonstrations throughout the county this week.

Director Smith will speak before Chebacco Pomona Grange at Riverdale, Gloucester, April 19th, subject "Successful Small Fruit Growing".

James R. Lord, Class of 1921, is now herdsman on the large dairy farm of William M. Wood of Andover. Lord worked at the school dairy for several months after graduation and is successful in the management of fine dairy cattle. Winslow Dunnells, a junior at the school is also employed at the same place.

Alfred Bryer and George Woodman, members of the present senior class, have accepted positions as herdsmen at the Worcester City Home Farm. This farm has a purebred herd of 57 registered Holsteins. The positions were offered to the boys by State Department of Agriculture.

School Notes / Brunt Workwear / 2022

Superintendent Heidi Riccio is pleased to share that Essex Tech students are receiving free work boots through an emerging partnership with a North Reading manufacturer.

Representatives of Brunt WorkWear arrived at Essex Tech on Thursday, March 24, in two trucks holding about 400 pairs of boots. Brunt has made four previous donations to the school of about 100 pairs of boots each time.

Founder and CEO Eric Girouard grew up in a working-class family, and started the e-commerce company three years ago after more than a decade in leadership positions at several businesses. Girouard collaborated with friends from his hometown in Connecticut to design six styles of boots and several types of apparel that meet the needs of workers in specific trades. (He named the items after those friends.)

He began working with Essex Tech through a connection to the school's Landscape & Turf Management Advisory Committee.

"As a company, we want to have an impact globally," Girouard said. "To do that we have to start by making an impact locally. These students are the future of the trades, so this is an important event for us."

Students in the Carpentry, Construction Craft Laborers, Electrical, Landscape & Turf Management, Masonry & Tile Setting, and Plumbing pathways lined up to request boots; if they liked the fit, they kept them. Students who could not receive the boots of their choice will obtain them at a later visit.

"It's a great program, and a great opportunity," Director of Career Technical Education Donald Ducharme said. "Safety is always a priority for our school, and this reinforces the importance of safety as they move on in their careers."

"The need for social impact is significant. Eric understands that," Superintendent Riccio said. "One thing COVID-19 taught us was the importance of local businesses. He is helping our students get their start in the trades, and stay in the trades."

Superintendent Riccio added that the donation also teaches students about the importance of having high-quality equipment.

"If you are on your feet eight hours each day, you need a good-fitting boot," she said. Girouard intends to visit Essex Tech several more times this school year, and provide a pair of work boots to every one of the 1,600 students who would like them.

"We want you to be healthy, and build long and successful careers," Girouard told students.



Eric Girouard speaks to Essex Tech Students, his company donated 400 pairs of work boots

Alumni in the Spotlight / Richard Bourgault Class of 1968

Reprinted with permission from the Friends & Alumni of UMass Equine Program

Richard originally hails from Danvers, MA. He has fond memories of riding all over town with friends since the age of 7. At age 8, he bought his first horse with money he earned working on a vegetable farm! He is a 1968 graduate of Essex Agricultural & Technical Institute in Danvers, where he majored in Animal Science. He studied all aspects of the industry while also working at a thoroughbred breeding farm.

Richard is the oldest of 5 siblings, who paid his way through UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He majored in Agricultural Business Management and minored in Animal Science. His goal was to supplement his high school and work experience with a business education. In his words, he told me “I’m not just a student who went to class! I worked behind the scenes in every way.” Given his phenomenal work ethic, developed as a young child, it is not surprising that in addition to attending classes, he simultaneously worked at 3 jobs!

His first job was as a “stableman.” He was one of 3 students who worked under Tony Borton and directly for his mentor and barn manager, Wayne Hipsley. He got up daily at 4 a.m. to feed and water at the barn in central campus. From there he headed to the old Tilson Farm to feed, water, clean straight stalls, and groom horses for Linda Jaskiel (now Brown’s) 8:00 class. His second job was working for Woody Henry at Bobbin Hollow Farm in Belchertown, MA. He was recommended by George Hawthorne, the #1 stableman at UMass, for the job there, where he became resident assistant trainer.

His third job was on Thursday nights and Saturdays at Agway in Northampton, where he learned the feed business.

In his “spare time,” he rode on the first IHSA (Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association) Team with Linda Jaskiel Brown. He remembers well riding to shows in a station wagon with all girls! He was also a member of the first IHSA Judging Team, coached by Wayne Hipsley. The team had only 30 days to prepare for the event, which was attended by just 12 teams. UMass finished 2nd behind host, Ohio State. In addition to his equine-related activities, he was a member of the Stockbridge School of Agriculture’s fraternity, Alpha Tau Gamma.

Richard describes his years at UMass as “some of the best years of his life.”

When I asked him about his favorite memory, he described the time he asked Wayne Hipsley about working with a stallion named “Bay State Flintlock.” The horse was 11 at this time and had been used just for breeding purposes the previous 5-7 years. Wayne was the only one who had handled him, but he very reluctantly agreed. Richard put him on the crossties and then hooked him up to a buggy. He then proceeded to drive him as if the horse hadn’t missed a day!

After graduation in 1970, Richard was referred by Wayne Hipsley for a position at Al Marah Arabians in Barnesville, Maryland. Missing the morgans, he soon returned to MA where he was a trainer at Orcland Farm in West Newbury, MA, until 1972.



Richard Bourgault



***First time behind a Morgan horse in about 40 years.
I sure had fun.***

From 1972-1977, he worked for Agway, Inc. in various locations. Not wanting to pursue Agway's business management program, he moved on to New Holland Supply covering the Hudson Valley in NY, CT, and VT, from 1977-1981 and Mohawk and Valley-View Harvestore Systems in VT and the Hudson Valley, NY, from 1981-1985.

During this time period, he settled in Bennington, VT. Working with many dairy farmers and selling silos, manure systems, etc., he learned lots about the dairy business. Through Linda Jaskiel-Brown, he connected with Henri Van-Schaik for lessons and did clinics with Denny Emerson, Tad Coffin and Eric Horgan. He kept his horses with Henry and Janet Schurink. (Jerry Schurink

would have been just out high school and heading for UNH at the time.) Henry taught him to shoe, which led him to farrier training at Penn State and to a second job shoeing 20 horses on weekends!

In 1985, Richard came back to MA where he worked for a year at Shearson-Lehman Brothers in Newton Center, followed by a year at New York Life. Realizing that he missed being outdoors, he applied to Farm Family Insurance in Littleton, MA in 1987. He was hired immediately and remained there for 23 years.

In May 2010, Richard founded his own independent company known as A&B Insurance Group, LLC. where he continues to run a highly successful business to this day. The company grew immediately with many Farm Family customers following him. There are 2 offices in Westford and S. Deerfield, MA.

He states that he has been back to farms in NY and New England and is proud to be welcomed back to all of them after 30 years.

He feels blessed that he has good clients, good health and is still able to ride. He is also happy that his wife Tina is able to work with their horses full time now. He speaks fondly of his 17 hand Lusitano gelding, "Jasper CL," aka "Fig," who he will start showing grand prix this year. He bought him as an unbroken 3-year-old and feels he is one of those special horses both in mind and movement.

He cherishes the lifelong friendship and support he shares with Wayne Hipsley, Woody Henry, and Linda Jaskiel Brown. For him, reconnecting with friends is the best!

Richard is now a Principle at A & B Insurance Group which is now the Massachusetts Farm Bureau insurance provider specializing in Agricultural and Horticultural risk. Any student that thinks they may have an interest in a career in Agriculture insurance, working daily with farmers, should call Richard at 978-399-0025 to talk about opportunities available both before and after graduation. A & B Insurance has two offices, one in Westford and another in Deerfield, in April 2022 they will open a third office in Marlboro at the Massachusetts Farm Bureau building.

Many thanks, Richard for sharing your story with us. We hope it will inspire many other alumni to consider submitting their stories to us for future articles.

Essex Tech Awarded \$150,000 State Grant to Support Health Assisting Programs

HATHORNE – Superintendent Heidi Riccio is pleased to share that Essex Tech has received a state grant to support its Health Assisting program offerings.

The Skills Capital Grant of \$150,000 will expand opportunities for daytime students, and allow Essex Tech to add a health-care option for adults in the NightHawks Adult Education Program, which serves adult learners and those who are unemployed or underemployed adults. The grant will also support the expansion of the current After Dark Partnership Program to include Health Assisting as an additional option for students from partnering districts.

Students will have the opportunity to earn their Certified Nursing Assistant, First Aid, CPR, Dementia Care, Home Health Aide, and OSHA 10 certifications, positioning them to obtain employment in high-demand fields upon graduation.

Skills Capital Grants are awarded to educational institutions that showcase their partnerships with local businesses, and whose curriculum and credentials seek to meet the demand of growing industries in the Commonwealth.

Through its Skills Capital Grants, the Baker-Polito Administration has worked to increase the number of students enrolled in programs where they can learn and train for occupations in high-demand careers. More than 300 educational programs have received financial support from the Skills Capital grant initiative, which has awarded approximately \$92 million and is overseen by Gov. Baker’s Workforce Skills.

“The Baker-Polito Administration has been a consistent supporter of both career technical education and of Essex Tech,” Superintendent Riccio said. “Once again we are grateful for that support, and for ensuring our students will be career-ready upon graduation.”

Essex Tech Health Assisting Students Volunteer For A Good Cause

The freshmen students of the Essex Tech Health Assisting program volunteered at the Friends of Hathorne 5K to benefit the Hogan Center. Essex Tech and Hogan collaborate in a partnership where students engage in a clinical experience during the students’ sophomore year.



FFA School Notes July 2022

It has been an exciting year for the Essex FFA Chapter! We kicked off the start of school by choosing our officer team and welcoming many new members! September was busy preparing for the Topsfield Fair, where the chapter reopened the cider stand and enjoyed the beautiful New England fall weather as we raised money for the upcoming year's events. We hosted our annual poultry auction at the end of the fair and had an amazing turnout of regular supporters as well as alumni!

Meanwhile back in the building, CDE (Career Development Event) coaches worked with students who placed first in the state back in March as they prepared

to compete at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in late October. Our Natural Resources and Environmental Science team placed silver as a team with Kassidy Gamerdinger, Erin Morgan, and Jessica Hickey placing bronze individuals and Nathan Hammerschmitt-Le Gal placing as a silver individual. Savannah White placed Bronze in the Prepared Public Speaking CDE. We also had three alumni receive their American FFA Degree - the highest degree in FFA, which less than 1% of members receive. The alumni are Kristen Kish, Brian Curley, and Andrea Morin, who are all from the Class of 2019.

As fall continued, the chapter focused on our favorite service project - the turkey drive. Our chapter officers competed against each other along with the advisors to see who could sell the most "turkeys"! The team did a phenomenal job and sold enough turkeys to raise \$1,400. Working with our guidance department, families within the Essex community in need were identified, and we were able to provide 14 families with a \$100.00 gift card to Market Basket to help make their Thanksgiving dinner possible.

As we headed into the winter season, our CDE teams ventured out, and our Horse Judging Team won first place in the state. Shealagh Crowley received 2nd individually and Ameila Fisher, Kyleigh Lane, and Murphy Langevin completed the team. They are headed to Nationals in the fall. In February, the chapter hosted its annual FFA Week from February 14th through the 18th - a week full of activities. Monday was

Post an Ag Picture Day where students were invited to post an agricultural-based picture on Instagram. Tuesday was *FFA Spirit Day* where students wore the classic blue and gold of FFA. Wednesday was *Woodsy Wednesday*, a day where students wore camo, and we couldn't see any of them! They blended in so well! Thursday was *Teacher Appreciation Day* where the students took a day to appreciate all those teachers do for them. Friday was *Flannel Friday*, where students got comfortable and wore anything flannel.

Finally, March arrived, and the chapter headed to the state convention held in Sturbridge, MA, and it was in person for the first time in two years!! We are excited to announce that Equine



Written by:
Clarice Menesale

Class of 2021 Alumni Eva Scollo was elected as the 2022-2023 State FFA President. Companion Animal Class of 2022 senior Kayla Dundon will serve as the 2022-2023 State FFA Vice President. Kayla, along with Shealagh Crowley and Amelia Fisher, have also applied for their Bay State Degree - the 2nd highest degree that can be earned in FFA. Below find the other placings from competitors.

Nathan Hammerschmitt Le Gal- 1st Place Agriscience Fair - Social Systems

Savannah White - Employability Skills - 1st Place

Colleen Kielbania - Creed Speaking - 2nd Place

Floriculture - 3rd Place Team

Sandra Dennis
Adrianna Neville
Emily Belski
Kaleigh Breen

Horse Judging - First place team

Shealagh Crowley - 2nd Place individual
Amelia Fisher - Bronze Individual
Kyleigh Lane
Murphy Langevin

Horse Showmanship

Amelia Fisher 10th Place Individual
Murphy Langevin 7th Place individual

B team members - sophomores

Kyleigh Lane 2nd place individual
Delia Beaupre 4th place individual

Vet Science - 2nd Place team

Renee Cianciulli - Bronze Individual
Carmella Thompson
Giavanna Smith - 3rd Place Individual
Ryan Ciulla - Bronze Individual

Ag Sales - 2nd Place Team

Samantha Lord
Jillian Tanner
Sofia Dibattista-Kodis
Sam Fecteau



School Notes August 1946, Essex County School Trains Veterans

Harold A. Mostrom, Director

Reprinted with permission from The Agricultural Education Magazine

More than 50 veterans of World War II are now in institutional training in the Essex County Agricultural School at Hathorne, Massachusetts. For the most part they are desirous of training which will fit them to operate their own farms. The range of interest is wide, including objectives such as poultry, dairying, market gardening, fruit growing, and other more specialized fields.

Two principal types of training programs are offered. The first resembles the regular school program in that the veteran spends the fall and winter months in assembled instruction at the school, followed by placement training on a job in his field between April and October.



Charles E. Ross, right, with Instructor H. L. White

The other is what is known as institutional full-time placement. In this latter program the teacher takes the instruction to the veteran on the job. He is employed full-time on suitable farm which will offer the opportunity for development of the skills which he needs. A course of study is prepared for his individual needs and is carried out by the instructor and student with the cooperation of the employer.

Under this training program, similar to in-service training, the veteran is entitled to compensation from the employer which, together with his training allotment from the Veteran's Administration, generally approximates the wage of a skilled worker in the field.

At least 48 hours a week must be put into the job, and the trainee agrees to study an hour or more per day in carrying out the training program. The school guarantees at least 150 clock hours of instruction on the job throughout the calendar year.

A vital part of the program for those who desire to be established on their own farms consists of locating a farm at the proper time in the training program, arranging for the financing of it, and continuing the training on the veteran's own place. Under this program a longer training period is established then where a veteran is simply training for employment.

Two factors will limit the number of veterans who can be trained at the institution. First is the number of training farms available within a workable distance of the from the school. The other is sufficient teaching personnel to permit the proper attention to each trainee. Recently the trustees of the school approved the appointment of up to three additional teachers to give full time to this work. Veterans are accepted for instruction only after a personal interview at the school.

Case Studies of Training Offered

Case Number 1 – Navy Veteran

Charles E. Ross, 28, single, Lincolnville Center, Maine. Applied for and received approval for a four-year training program at the Essex County Agricultural School, beginning January 14, 1946, and ending January 13, 1950. Program stages were arranged, including instruction on assemble day-school basis, 18 months; institutional full-time placement training on employed basis, 12 months; establishment in his own business, 18 months.

As part of his day-school program for the first 18 months, Mr. Ross is on placement training in the greenhouse of the school, receiving instruction in job skills thru the summer of 1946. He will return to assembled classroom instruction in October, and in April 1947 will be placed on employment for one year.

The entire program will continue under the supervision and instruction of the school throughout the four years. Mr. Ross fully expects to be able to finance, with some assistance, the beginning of his own establishment by the fall of 1948. As a single man he receives the subsistence allotment of \$65 dollars monthly under the G.I. Bill.

Case Number 2 – Army Veteran



Philip W. Haffeke

Philip W. Haffeke of Hamilton, Massachusetts. Married with three children. Wife a Vermont-bred farm girl. Applied for training in May 1945. Placed in the poultry department of the school farm and studied there from May 21, 1945, to August 13, 1945, began operation of his own in West Newbury.

This was a most unusual opportunity, as a man with a fully established, paying poultry farm had to leave because of ill health. Thru the cooperation of the Farm Security Administration, ownership of this farm was made possible thru real-estate and equipment loans. The training program continued without interruption from the employment status to the ownership status.

Instructor J. Stanley Bennett visits once a week to carry out the program on instruction as established by the Veterans' Administration and the Department of Education. This program will presumably continue thru May 1947.

Mr. Haffeke received \$90 subsistence allotment under the G.I. Bills of Rights. The school gives approximately three hours supervision and instruction on the job weekly, and the student gives one hour daily of assigned home study in carrying out the requirements of the course of study.

Sadly, Philip passed away at the age of 45. He loved the outdoors and much of his time fishing, swimming, and camping.

School Notes August 1947, Our Post War Specialty is Veteran Training

James F. Gallant

Reprinted with permission from The Agricultural Education Magazine

The training of world war veterans has become our post war specialty at Essex County Agricultural School in Hathorne, Massachusetts. An average of about 110 veterans is under instruction, some on the assembled basis and others on full-time placement training. In a previous article (August 1946) two cases of veteran training on the assembled basis were described.

The other type of program calls for placement of veterans on a full-time employment basis. A special corps of instructors, who do nothing but train veterans on the job, is employed for this work. Two case studies of this type of training program are presented herewith.

Case Number 1, Harold M. Kelly

Harold M. Kelly of Beverly, Massachusetts, was graduated from the Essex County Agricultural School in 1942. After a period of service in the Navy, he took action on plans for training in agriculture. While in the service he inherited a New Hampshire farm which had previously carried poultry and fruit enterprises. Feeling that he was not quite ready to operate the farm on his own, he signed up for a four-year training program under the school. The first two years of the program are on a placement training or employed basis where he can obtain the necessary high-level operational and management skills necessary to carry on successfully the business he contemplates in New Hampshire. The last two years of the program will be on an establishment basis on his own farm.



Harold M. Kelly

Veteran Kelly now works for a leading fruit grower in Essex County. On this farm he is getting the kind of experience that he will need when he operates his own fruit business. On this farm up-to-date methods are employed, modern machinery is used, and the employer is of the highest grade and cooperates fully. Kelly performs all the jobs to be done on the place, and many of them are of a managerial nature. He is given a good deal of responsibility, such as handling harvesting and packing labor, doing spraying, and dusting jobs, and selling fruit. He is consulted on the important problems, and, as a matter of fact, the employer, the student, and the agricultural instructor frequently confer on current problems on the farm.

Each week Mr. Kelly receives a visit from Clarence M. Wood of the school staff. This visit features a three-hour lesson, and is conducted at a specific time on a given day. The time may be changes (although this rarely done) by either the instructor or the student for good reasons, such as the pressure of seasonal work, if sufficient advance notice is given.

The lesson usually deals with a current problem on the farm. Mr. Kelly spends a least seven hours each week in study, preparing for the lesson. He writes up each lesson in a large-sized loose-leaf notebook for Mr. Wood's inspection and rating. Discussion follows and questions are answered, and demonstrations and other instruction are given. The lessons are labeled, numbered,

dated, and indexed. Mr. Kelly also keeps in a small pocket-sized notebook a record of the daily jobs preformed, hours worked, money earned, and other important observational notes for future reference. Instructor Wood records on the visit slip the highlights of the instructional period and notes the assignment for the next lesson. Besides textbooks, the study material includes federal and state bulletins, publications, and periodicals. Current clippings from periodicals loaned by the instructor have been useful as collateral reading to stimulate interest, broaden perspective, and indicate sources of information. Veteran Kelly has attended many county and state fruit growers' meetings in Essex and neighboring counties.

Case Number 2, Dominick A. Villanti



Dominick A. Villanti

Before the event of World War II, Dominick A. Villanti of Ipswich, Massachusetts was an engineer in New York State. He raised pigeons and squabs has a hobby, he looked forward to the day when could operate a poultry business of his own. After serving as a locomotive engineer in the E.T.O. (European Theater of Operations) during the war, Villanti was able to take the first step on his road to establishment as a poultry man.

In May of 1946, Villanti enrolled at the Essex County Agricultural School for a four-year program, with two years placement training and two years establishment. Thru the cooperation of the Marini Farm in Ipswich, Villanti is making amazing progress in acquiring the necessary skills for successful, high-level management of a poultry farm. He took over the management of 2,000 layers, 1,000 broilers, 1,500 capons, 3,000 pullets and cockerels for breeding on range, and 300 turkeys. He soon learned procedures for killing and dressing (semi-scald machine picking) of fowls, broilers, roasters, and turkeys, as he had to keep a fresh supply in the farm freezer throughout the season.

According to Mr. Louis M. Moseley, his visiting agricultural instructor, he successfully used sulphaguanidine against coccidiosis. He has persistently maintained low mortality and high production (75-80 percent).

Showing outstanding interest in work and study, he has learned from every available source, i.e., specialists from the school, specialists from the feed companies, and from standard reference textbook and poultry bulletins. Villanti is probably one of our most aggressive students. On September 28, 1946, with short notice, and no special preparation, he took and examination and is now qualified to select breeding stock on farms where eggs are sold for hatching under the selective breeders' program.

Just recently he began to practice caponizing, and Mr. Moseley plans to give him several demonstrations during the season to prepare him for his job of caponizing 1,000 six-weeks-old cockerels this year. Mr. Moseley noted four improved practices which Villanti has put into effect on the Marini Farm.

Improved Practices

1. Trays installed at entrance to all brooder and growing pens with disinfectant mats (for checking spread of disease).
2. Effective use of hydrated lime in deep litter. Kept litter dry (in fact, he started with wet litter which he treated with hydrated lime and then spread on a layer of lime) on floors that have previously never been dry except by complete change.
3. Constructed disposal pit (sanitary disposals of dead and diseased birds).
4. Cod-liver oil in scratch was fed to pullets when first confined to laying quarters last fall, and for the first time on the farm no soft-shell pullet eggs were dropped. (This may be a coincidence, but the theory is that the calcium was more readily assimilated.)

Starting on September 1, the Marini brooding program called for 1,500 chicks per month. Villanti has full responsibility for the poultry interests on the Marini Farm, and to date he has successfully reared 13,400 chicks, and more a coming each month. Mortality has rarely exceeded 2 percent per batch.

Now has the program expands, involving dressing of broilers and roasters, cleaning brooder houses for new batches, etc., Villanti would be swamped but for the assistance of Johnnie Lee Jackson, a negro veteran from Georgia. Jackson is training on the same program, but is taking a more general course, including vegetable growing, fruit production, dairying, and poultry, and he is dependable in the field, in the dairy barn and with poultry. Recently due to the pressure of Villanti's work, Jackson has taken over the management of 2,000 layers. Production has been maintained, and all work done promptly, even allowing Mr. Marini to spend several weeks on his farm in Florida.

Villanti is now ready to take the second step towards establishment. He has started the construction of a turkey platform and shelter on his own place and plans, with the help of Mrs. Villanti, to raise 300 broad-breasted bronze turkeys this summer.

Class Representative of Entire Program

The veteran training program just described are fairly representative of the 58 veterans we now have, as of this date, on full-time farm placement training. Most of them are at present in the employment stage. Others like Villanti have stepped up to the employment-ownership stage. Still others are operating farms on a partnership basis, and few have established firm footholds as owners. Other veterans are being guided to profitable establishment as managers, foremen or skilled workers in agriculture or related occupations. All have streamlined programs, tailored to meet their individual needs in the field of agriculture common to Essex County. Typical training objectives are in the field of dairy farming, milk processing, field crops, poultry farming, large fruit growing, small animal farming, ornamental horticulture, greenhouse production, and flower shop management.

Veterans on full-time placement training receive a yearly of 150 hours supervised and instruction on the job, 250 hours assigned related home study, and 2,400 hours job experience.

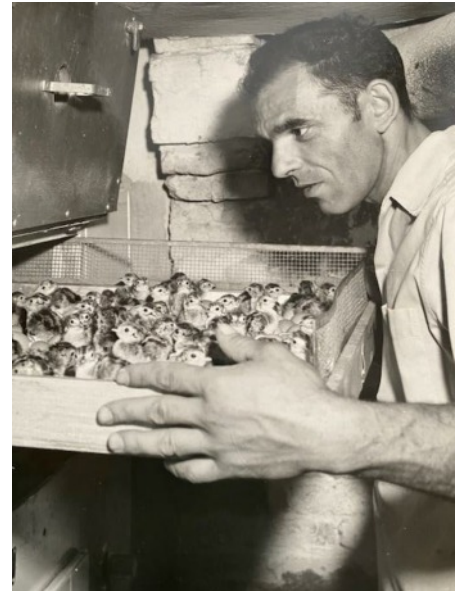
Alumni in the Spotlight / Dominick Villanti / Veteran Program 1947

Dominick A. Villanti was born in the Bronx, N.Y. on April 11, 1914. He attended public schools and graduated from the all-boys DeWitt Clinton High School in 1933. After high school, Dominick traveled to Rome, Italy to continue his education at the University of Rome.

In 1936, he returned to the U.S.A. because the Italian government considered him an Italian citizen and therefore, in danger of being drafted into Mussolini's army.

During the summer of 1936, he visited Beverly, Massachusetts where he met Sophie Clemenzi who would become his wife in 1940.

The newlyweds moved to an apartment in the Bronx where they remained until early 1943 when Dominick was drafted into the U.S. Army.



He served in Germany, France, and Holland, working on the railroad, and returned stateside in 1946. After the war, Dominick and Sophie relocated to Ipswich, Mass. and Dominick began working at the Marini Farm. In addition to his job at Marini's, he also studied at Essex Agricultural School and started his own small business raising turkeys called Willowdale Turkey Farm. Dominick entered turkeys in the Topsfield Fair, winning "Best Turkey in Show".

Dominick and Sophie remained in Ipswich on Linebrook Road, raising their three daughters, Catherine, Maria, and Angela. In 1962, Dominick became interested in real estate and obtained his broker's license. He then began working for his brother's Philip Villanti and brother-in-law, Angelo Clemenzi's business, Anselmo Realty.

In 1963, Dominick moved his family to Beverly so that his wife, could care for her aging parents.

When Anselmo Realty was dissolved, Dominick began working for Frisch Realty until his retirement in 1985. Dominick passed away on April 26, 1987, at the age of 73.

***Alumni in the Spotlight / Charles Ervin Ross / Veteran Program 1950
Merry Gardens: A Dream Come True***

Reprinted with permission from the Camden Herald July 26, 1984

Childhood dreams rarely come true. Perhaps because of their innocence, children are more subject to the inevitable transitions of growth; change is at best difficult and frustrating. Though frequently lost to other diversions, or simply forgotten, their dreams are sometimes shattered in the wake of a reality they are not capable of understanding. Society, it seems makes demands on us all; distribution of responsibility and obligation is impartial.

Yet, while those dreams are alive, they are the purest gold of adolescent idealism, where the fears and pains of a grownup world are replaced by heroic adventure and immortality. Cardboard boxes become castles, sleeping dogs become trusted and loyal horses, and trees are often attacked as fire breathing dragons. Imaginary friends, mad-hatter tea parties, and six-foot white rabbits are all part of the fun. Refining fire of childhood dreams has warmed us all with the uninhibited wanderings and creations of our imaginations. The world takes on a beauty that is fragile and delicate; but the fire is all too often lost, the light slowly fading in the shadow of society's institutions.



Mary Ellen and Ervin Ross

For a luck few, however, the ability to dream has never been completely obscured and some have learned to tamper imagination with reality. Mary Ellen Ross of Camden has been one of the lucky individuals who has spent a lifetime pursuing her dreams and working to make them a reality. Together with her husband Ervin, they have owned and operated Merry Gardens on Mechanic Street since 1947.

What began as a dream for Mary Ellen at an early age, is now a thriving business, internationally recognized for the mail order of rare and exotic plants, a diverse collection of organically grown herbs, and perhaps most important to the Rosses, a place where dreams do come true.

Mary Ellen was one of five sisters and seven brothers that grew up in their father's business: Logee Greenhouse of Danielson, Conn. At an early age, when they were big enough to walk and small enough to fit under the greenhouse's benches, all of the Logee children helped with the daily work. At four or five years of age, Mary Ellen started picking "inch plants" for her father's bouquets. Later when she was tall enough, she worked with her father at the benches sorting violets.

The specialized flowers and their delicate aromatic smells were part of her life. She was survived by the aromas of carnations, sweet peas, and heliotropes. By the time Mary Ellen was 16 she had stopped going to school, was working full-time in the family greenhouses, and was developing a devotion for life among the plants. It was a chance meeting with F.F. Rockwell, an author of a book on rock gardens that significantly influenced her life. Rockwell sent Mary Ellen

his book and with it in hand, she asked her father if she could build a rock garden along the side of the house. Her father consented, suspecting nothing more than a small adolescent adventure.

Two years later, Mary Ellen had taken over the whole hillside. She had created fountains, brooks, pools, and walkways, all intertwined with special boulders and plants brought in for the overall specific design. Between the ages of 16 and 18, Mary Ellen spent every free moment, designing, planning, studying, and building. To this day this remains a significant event in her life, one which started her dreaming of earning a living raising plants.

Fate, however, was pushing her towards a teaching profession and she moved to San Francisco to live with a sister and to finish high school. A visit to the famous Robinson's Begonia Gardens renewed her interest in plants, and she decided to pursue a life in horticulture. "It was there" says Mary Ellen, "that I realized I needed a solid foundation in horticulture to get anywhere in business. I finished high school in a very short time and rushed back east to apply to the Rhode Island State University."

Mary Ellen enrolled in the school of agriculture with a major in horticulture. Because of her many years' experience with overall knowledge of plants, special courses were set up and she was permitted to carry out experiments in the campus greenhouses. During the summer she did a verity of jobs, such as picking strawberries, continuing to work in the greenhouses and building a rock retaining wall for a professor. At this time, she also was working with her family expanding the Logee business with mail order services, which specialized in begonias.

Before graduation from college, she realized there was already enough family involved in the Logee business, so she decided to strike out on her own. She had selected a general area on the north shore of Massachusetts, where she could continue working and study the nursey business. On her way to a job prospect, she drove by a beautiful little private nursey in Magnolia. She stopped to admire the landscape and in time she found there might be a position opening. She immediately pursued the owner and by graduation she was working in Magnolia. This was in 1940 and Mary Ellen was the first woman to ever graduate from the school of agriculture at the Rhode Island State University.

In the years that she spent working at the private nursery, she was given free hand to pursue her own interest in rare plants. Her benefactor was similarly interested and with his help, she started raising the plants to be sold in a small mail order business. "It was during this time that I became interested in scented geraniums and met R. C. Allen, a current writer on the subject, at a floral shop course at Cornell University. We stayed up nearly all-night studying and categorizing his scented geraniums. From what I learned that night I was able to publish my first article which appeared in the *American Horticultural* magazine."

Another of Mary Ellen's dreams was to write, and when she was very young, she began to record her observations and thoughts about her life and work. In time the combination proved to be a rewarding idea and led to a long list of publication credits. The result of her first success led, some years later, to a series of about 15 articles over several years for the *New York Times*. Throughout her life she continued to publish regularly and was instrumental in starting the International Geranium Society.

During WWII, most of the men had left the nursery in Magnolia and the work became too much for Mary Ellen. After much thought and reflection, she started to look for a small nursery of her own to buy. A traveling seed salesman told her about a nursery in Maine, and for two reasons

it seemed a good place to start. First, the Japanese Beetle could not survive in the climate north of Bath, and for the mail order business this would preparing and shipping plants much easier, and second, the climate provided the cool moist environment needed for the plants she intended to grow. A third reason, not as important but equally motivating, was the book "Come Spring" by Ben Ames Williams. Mary Ellen had just finished reading it and the Rockland – Camden area, with its picturesque hills meeting the Atlantic Ocean, was particularly appealing.

In 1943, Mary Ellen went to look at a greenhouse in Rockland that was for sale. The price was too steep for her to afford so she talked the owner into letting her manage it. For two years she managed Silsby's Greenhouse as if it were her own. She hired and fired the help, selected, and ordered the seeds and stoked the old coal furnaces. "After some inquiries" says Mary Ellen, "the owner realized I knew how to run a greenhouse, so she gave me a checkbook and said go to work. It was during those years that I learned a great many things about efficiency, planning and organizing. If you drive by Ames Department Store in Rockland, you can see where I used to have my pansy fields."

It was also during this time that Mary Ellen discovered that children had an innate interest in working with plants and soil, and that she enjoyed working with children. Because of the war, children as young as eight years old were often employed. With a little guidance, they could be taught to fertilize and mix soil and would actually enjoy the work.

Following the war Silsby's was sold, and Mary Ellen pursued her dream of owning her own business. While vacationing for a month at a camp on the Hosmer Pond, she rode her bicycle past a small house that was everything she wanted in a home and land. There was no "For Sale" sign at the time so she continued past, soon forgetting about it. A few months later, she and another nursery man were considering a joint business venture and were looking at properties in the Camden area. As it turns out, her dream house was one of the properties. In the fall of 1945, Mary Ellen and the nursery man parted company and with the help of her brother, she purchased the house and the land that she lives and works on today.

At the closing, when the papers were signed, the banker remarked that Mary Ellen looked like a person that could start a business and make it work. She had invested all of her savings of \$1,500 on the property and the banker if she had enough money to start her business and pay the mortgage. Mary Ellen assured him that she had plenty of money and there was nothing to worry about. When she left the bank, her entire net worth was around \$30, all of which she would spend on seeds for next spring.

That winter she worked at her father's nursery and with what she brought back in the spring, the plants she still had at Silsby's in Rockland, and her \$30 of seeds, she started her nursery. Pansies, forget-me-nots, fox glove, and Sweet William were a few of the biennials that were planted early and were expected to give a quick return. Advertisements for the mail order plants were placed in a florist wholesale newspaper, and because Mary Ellen had something that was needed in a post war economy, she was soon taking in over \$100 a week. By September, she had paid off her new bathroom, paid all of her debts, and had plenty of money to begin to expand her new business.

In June of her first year in business, Mary Ellen traveled to Connecticut to attend a begonia symposium held at her father's nursery. While there she met a tall, handsome man by the name of Ervin Ross, from Lincolnville, Maine, who was studying horticulture. When Mary Ellen learned



Ervin Ross

of his plans to return to Maine upon completion of his education the following year, she tentatively offered him a job. The next winter Mary Ellen returned to her father's nursery and by January, Ervin had proposed. They were married in April and returned to Merry Gardens as partners.

For 38 years, the Rosses have been working together at what they know and love best. Mary Ellen had planned only a small backyard business when she started, but Ervin contributed an equal amount of money, and they built their first greenhouse. Since that time, they have continued to expand to a point where they are now internationally recognized. They have appeared in *Yankee Magazine*, *Down East*, and *National Geographic*. Mary Ellen continues to publish frequently and has traveled widely to visit other gardens to further her knowledge and experience. She has spoken before special symposiums, has participated in the Boston and New York Garden

Shows. Over a thousand varieties of plants are available to the Rosses' customers, including over 300 varieties of geraniums, their famous star of Bethlehem, and their Maine calla/lily begonia, now grown all over the world. Organically grown herbs have also become a large part of their business as well as an entire building filled with different varieties of fuchsias, another of Mary Ellen's dreams come true.

At one time they were members of 20 different plant societies and are still used as information sources by people who are writing books. The Rosses have named a variety of geranium, Merry Gardens White, and another Rogers Delight. E.B. White's wife, Catherine did an article for the *New Yorker*, which according to the Rosses, "really put them on the map." Mary Ellen was honored by the International Geranium Society with an all-expense trip to Los Angeles as guest of honor and keynote speaker, and was presented with a life membership for contribution to horticulture. She is also a life member of the Camden Garden Club and served on the board of directors of the Garden Writers Association of America.

Erwin and Mary Ellen Ross have fulfilled their dreams beyond their wildest imagination, but in the course of their journey, they have discovered new ones. During the Korean War, Merry Gardens was short of help and falling behind on their orders, so Mary Ellen again turned to the children for help. At first, they were only interested in older volunteers who could take on responsibly, but in time they realized that children as young as 11 were interested and trainable. Each succeeding year they would hire local children for the summer who were interested in horticulture, and the same ones would inevitably return year after year.

In time, rambunctious children who might have been out of control when they first joined Merry Gardens would mature to become respectable students on their way to college. A shy retiring child unable to speak more than one-word sentences, became alive with questions about the world. "Horticulture," according to Mary Ellen "is therapy. They came to us when we needed

help and we in turn were able to help them. We discovered how wonderful they were when working in the gardens and began to dream of ways to help others. We had a debt to pay.”

In 1970, the Rosses, in conjunction with the Camden Garden Club, started a school of horticulture: The Tender Loving Care Club, where children could learn about growing plants. A large section of Merry Gardens was set aside for various projects and with the help of members, the projects continued all summer. For eight years the Rosses provided plants, soil, space, tools, loving care, and a great deal of patience. Also, at this time Mary Ellen began a 4-H Club for eight neighbor boys who always seemed to be on the fringes of getting in trouble. In time a positive rivalry between the two organizations developed, and one year the 4-H Club members won awards for exhibits at the Union Fair, with Mary Ellen being recognized publicly for her contributions to the young people.

In 1973, Merry Spring, another Ross dream, begun. Located on 66 acres on land west of Route 1 are fields, wooded knolls, hillsides, and low-lying areas adjacent to the Goose River. Interested citizens, volunteers, and donations were solicited to purchase the property and turn it into a park. Merry Spring was officially in June of 1974 as an educational environment providing numerous workshops on house plants, wildflowers, herbs, and vegetable gardening. High school and college students in conjunction with local organizers have worked over the years clearing paths, building nature trails and gardens. Merry Spring is for the young and old to come and learn about horticulture and enjoy its therapeutic benefits.

Ervin and Mary Ellen continue to work their Merry Gardens and can be seen as early as 6:30 a.m. and sometimes late into the night, working in their greenhouses. Mary Ellen still manages to organize a 4-H Club once a week as well as provide time for the Costal Workshop, an experimental horticultural class for the retarded. The Rosses have had rare good luck in fulfilling their dreams; by working hard and giving of themselves they have been able to make a reality of their childhood fantasy. Perhaps more importantly, they are helping children become better adults and indirectly helping them realize their own dreams. Mary Spring is a gift to children of all ages and if the Rosses' last dream is to come true, Merry Gardens will continue as a school, teaching the joys of horticulture long after they are gone. For horticulture is a gift they share with us all, and the realization of their dreams should be our inspiration.

Written by Jeffry V. Slack, freelance writer and photographer.



Ervin and Mary Ellen Ross



Photograph by Frank Claes,

Bonding Over Begonias

From “Maine’s Merry Gardens” by George Taloumis, in our April 1963 issue.

With her enterprise already started in 1946, Mary Ellen Logee went home to Danielson, Connecticut, to attend a begonia meeting, for which the Logee Greenhouses, now operated by a sister and a brother, have become a well-known center. Also attending the meeting was a group of students accompanied by a professor from the Essex Agricultural Institute in Hathorne, Massachusetts. One of the students was a tall, soft-spoken young man named Ervin Ross, who was particularly interested to hear of Mary Ellen’s new greenhouse in Camden, because he was a native of nearby Lincolnville Center. He confided that he hoped to practice horticulture in his Maine homeland after completing his course as an ex-Navy man under the GI bill. “If you’ll come to Camden to see me when you’ve finished,” Mary Ellen said with interest, “perhaps by that time I can offer you a position.”

In telling the story, Mary Ellen laughs, “I never did give him a position, because he married me in April 1947, just a year after I’d started Merry Gardens. With his savings — as much as my original investment — we built our first greenhouse in the fall, and from then on we’ve operated the business as equal partners.”

Mary Ellen and Ervin Ross operated their nationally recognized mail-order plant business for 54 years. In 1974, Mary Ellen founded Merryspring Nature Center, a 66-acre preserve and education center that still welcomes students and solitude seekers in Camden. She spent her final years in Connecticut, where her family still runs Logee’s, a 125-year-old plant supplier (favored by none other than Martha Stewart). (Editor’s note; I tried to contact George Taloumis’ estate for permission to reprint, but could not. Due to the nature of the article, I would think that they would not mind.)

"Old Rivers"

How old was I when I first seen old Rivers?
I can't remember when he weren't around
Well, that old fellow did a heap of work
Spent his whole life walking plowed ground.

He had a one-room shack not far from us
And well, we was about as poor as him
He had one old mule he called Midnight
And I'd trailed along after them.

He used to plow them rows straight and deep
And I'd come along near behind
A-bustin' up clods with my own bare feet
Old Rivers was a friend of mine.

That sun'd get high and that mule would work
Till old Rivers'd say, "Whoa!"
He'd wipe his brow, lean back on the reins
And talk about a place he was gonna go.

He'd say, one of these days
I'm gonna climb that mountain
Walk up there amoung the clouds
Where the cotton's high
And the corn's a-growin'
And there ain't no fields to plow.

I got a letter today from the folks back home and
They're all fine and crops is dry
Down at the end my mama said, "Son
You know old Rivers died."

Just sittin' here now on this new-plowed earth
Trying to find me a little shade
With the sun beating down 'cross the field I see
That mule, old Rivers and me.

Now, one of these days
I'm gonna climb that mountain
Walk up there amoung the clouds
Where the cotton's high
And the corn's a-growin'
And there ain't no fields to plow.

With the sun beating down 'cross the field I see
That mule, old Rivers and me...

Aggie Alumni who passed away

Brenda J. (Eafalla) Azzarito, Post Grad

<https://www.driscollcares.com/obituary/Brenda-Azzarito>

Catherine A. (Genovese) Baptista, Post Grad

<https://obituaries.gloucestertimes.com/obituary/catherine-baptista-1084271511>

William M. Blanchard, III, Post Grad

<https://ccbfuneral.com/obituaries/william-m-blanchard-iii-14/>

Richard Caram, Sr. Class of 1960

<http://thelocalne.ws/2022/01/18/richard-caram-sr-obituary/>

Lois M. (Hautala) Cilluffo, Post Grad

<https://obituaries.gloucestertimes.com/obituary/lois-cilluffo-1084676365>

David E. Corthell, Class of 1979

<https://obituaries.eagletribune.com/obituary/david-corthell-1083389084>

Joseph B. Deegan

<http://www.nicholsfuneralhome.com/obituaries/joseph-b-deegan.html>

Albert Michael Dimmock, Sr. Employee of the School

<https://obits.phaneuf.net/albert-dimmock-sr>

Abigail T. (Adams) Ferrell, Post Grad

<https://obituaries.gloucestertimes.com/obituary/abigail-farrell-1084015195>

Charles M. Main, Class of 1956

<https://www.pressherald.com/2022/05/20/obituarycharles-m-main/>

Anthony (Tony) Barry McCann, Class of 1955

<https://obituaries.eagletribune.com/obituary/anthony-mccann-1084094524>

Joseph R. Melanson, Class of 1950

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/joseph-melanson-obituary?id=32838109>

Cathy E. Mscisz, Class of 1993

<https://www.contefuneralhomes.com/obituaries/Cathy-E--Mscisz?obId=23188735>

William “Bill” Nelson, Class of 1980

<https://obituaries.eagletribune.com/obituary/william-nelson-1084110862>

Robert A. Rowton, Class of 1959

https://hosting-6792.tributes.com/show/Robert-A.-Rowton-108531364?active_tab=condolences

Paula Mae (Noyes) Schrempf, Post Grad

<https://obituaries.newburyportnews.com/obituary/paula-mae-schrempf-1084324711>

Josephine M. “Jodi” Wall, Post Grad

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/23636944/josephine-m-jodi-wall>

Joseph P. Wojtowicz, Post Grad

<https://obituaries.gloucestertimes.com/obituary/joseph-wojtowicz-jr-1084172286>

Helen I. (Godlewski) Woytowicz

<https://obituaries.salemnews.com/obituary/helen-woytowicz-1084377190>

Essex Aggie Alumni Association Membership Registration Form 2022

Membership dues for 2022 will still be \$20.00

Term of membership is Jan 1 to Dec 31

Please fill out the form below

We need your support



Member Name and Address: (Please Print)

Class of _____ High School Division (____) College Division (____) School Staff (____)

First Name _____ Maiden Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____ Cell Phone (____) _____

E-Mail _____

Please register my membership for 2022

I am enclosing my check for \$20.00 for 2022 Membership: \$ _____

I would like to donate to the General Fund: \$ _____

I would like to donate to the General Scholarship Fund: \$ _____

I would like to donate to the Richard M. Brown Scholarship Fund: \$ _____

I would like to donate to the V. Byron Bennett Scholarship Fund: \$ _____

I would like to donate to the Ellery Metcalf Scholarship fund: \$ _____

Total amount enclosed for membership & donations: \$ _____

(Essex Aggie Alumni Association is a 501(c) 3 organization and donations are tax deductible)

Your membership is important, and we hope you will send your dues today!

Check should be made out to: Essex Aggie Alumni

Mail this form to:
Essex Aggie Alumni Association
c/o Michael Gaudette
322 Durgin Hill Road
Freedom, NH. 03836-5044

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