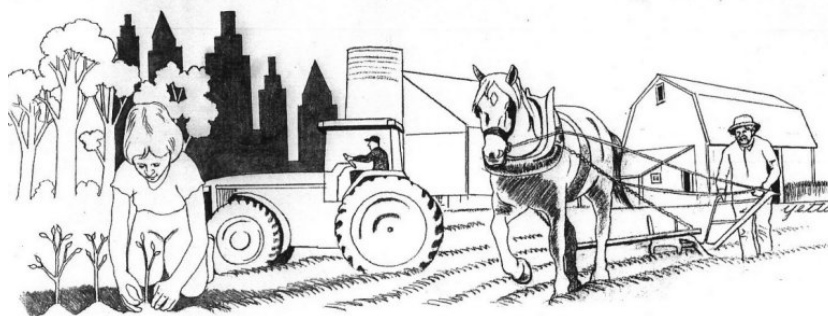


# Aggie News



Volume 17 Issue 2

June 2014

## Scholarship Fund Challenge Grant

The Essex Aggie Alumni Association Scholarship Fund Challenge Grant for 2014 will be coming to a close soon. There is still time to submit donations so that our goal of \$5,000 can be reached.

Every dollar that is donated to our Scholarship Fund this year will be matched up to \$5,000 as a matching grant.

We wish to thank each and every one of our donors for their generosity in supporting the 2014 Challenge Grant campaign so far. We are over half way there to reach the \$5,000 goal so additional donations are needed before the end of the year.

The donations received last year provided a tremendous boost to our effort to build a healthy scholarship fund. We hope to be able to offer five scholarships for 2015.

If we can collect another \$5,000 in Scholarship Fund donations this year we will be adding another \$10,000 to our Scholarship Fund. We have another chance to give back to the school that gave us all so much.

## Scholarships for 2014

Essex Aggie Alumni Association  
scholarship awards for 2014:

Santin Scholarship – Robert Craig  
(Saugus MA.) \$1000.00  
Paul Smith's College

Bennett Scholarship - Mcalah Morin  
(Haverhill MA.) \$1000.00  
UMass Amherst

Brown Scholarship - Emma Thomas  
(Gloucester MA.) \$1000.00  
University of New Hampshire

Metcalf Scholarship - Alexis Stasinos  
(Peabody MA.) \$1000.00  
Suny Morrisville State College

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## The Abbott Beech Tree

While looking through the Salem News I read an obituary notice of one Albert W. Abbott 88, World War II vet, 2 Purple Hearts, who passed away at the Masconomet Healthcare Center in Topsfield. The first time I met Mr. Abbott was in late spring or early summer of 1987 when he called the Essex Agricultural School and was forwarded to me. His story had been dismissed by others but there was a sincerity in his voice and relief that someone was interested.

Mr. Abbott told me that he wanted to donate a tree to the Aggie but the catch was that it was growing in his back yard and would have to be dug out and transported to the school. He had been growing this tree for some time and he said that it was quite large. At that point I had to see for myself. Fortunately, he lived right here in Danvers, so after school I took a ride to his house to see what we would be dealing with and hear the story. He was right, it was pretty good size, a European Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, that he had started from seed several years previously. It looked to be about 15-18 feet tall and with a trunk diameter of 4-5", maybe 6 inches. It also had a few smaller trees of the same species clustered around it. This was going to be a project but a great experience for the kids who would do the work.

He said that he had wanted to donate the tree in previous years but no one would come to look at it. He told me that he wanted it to have a home at the Aggie because his father was the first student to "receive a diploma from the Aggie". It seemed a little far-fetched but the numbers began to work and I could believe it. If you take a look at the Alumni class rosters, for 1916, you will see, William J. Abbott at the

top of the list and I am sure they awarded the diplomas alphabetically so he was most likely correct, his father was the first to receive a diploma from Essex Aggie.

So now I had to figure out how I would make the move. First, would be approval from my Dept. Head and Principal, then securing vehicles and adult personnel to assist, and then getting the kids on board and excited.

The tree had been growing in its location for several years, so we needed to cut a few roots and force it to produce new growth close in to its trunk. Now, so that the kids felt ownership, I kept the work specifically for one group. This group would be the horticulture students who would graduate in 1989. Most of the work would be done when they were Juniors during the school year 1987/88.

First thing in the fall, we went to the location and "root pruned" the tree. We mulched the tree heavily and soaked the soil with water, adding peat moss to keep moisture close by during the winter. We had calculated that we would need to create a root ball about 5 feet in diameter to bring enough roots along to keep it going.

We returned in the spring to dig the tree. The students, tools and supplies were all transported in a school van and it took two 3 hour class periods to "ball and burlap" the tree. A hole was dug for the tree back at campus using a backhoe.

On the day of the move, we took a van for the students, a dump truck pulling a flat bed equipment trailer and a front end loader.

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## News From The Classes

### Joan and Dave Townley '61

Endicott Park Rangers Joan and Dave Townley from the class of '61 have been stewards of the 165-acre park for more than 40 years. They both retired last January and moved to their home in Conway, NH.

The Townleys have not only made the park their home, living in the six-room, upstairs apartment in the carriage house visitor center, they have made the 165-acre park into a place where young people can learn about nature.

Endicott Park attracts nearly 160,000 visitors a year, who can take long walks down the trails, bring children to the playground, go snowshoeing and sledding, or pet the animals in the barn. There are community garden plots and monthly nature programs.

For more than four decades, the Townleys have been live-in stewards of the park on Forest Street, watching over the animals in the barn and maintaining and caring for the grounds and buildings, which include the carriage house and a large hay barn. They raised their three children at the park.

Dave, who has been on the job for 41 years, retired as park director and chief ranger, while Joan is retired as the wildlife biologist and interpreter. In their early years at the park, Joan was raising her children but was also a full-time "volunteer." She worked the family's Christmas tree business for a number of years and became a full-time ranger in 1996. Five rangers oversee the park. As park rangers, they are law enforcement officers and trained EMTs, responding to medical aid calls within the park. They also greet schoolchildren and give educational talks.

The town acquired the property from R.S. Robie Realty Co. and Richard Robie in 1961 for \$330,000. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Danvers had large truck farms along Route 114. "There were people in town who did not really see the value of buying an old farm," Joan said. Those at the time like Ralph Goodno, who was a member of the Conservation Commission and a teacher at Essex Aggie, and others had the vision that open space would someday be valuable, she said. The purchase spared the park from becoming a 250-home development. The park also

encompasses 11 acres owned by the Danvers Historical Society.

The Townleys, who have been married for 49 years, met at Essex Aggie, where Joan studied animal husbandry and Dave studied forestry, park management and natural resources. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in forestry and park management from the University of Georgia and a master's degree in outdoor education from the University of New Hampshire.

He taught for 18 years at Essex Aggie, and in 1972 the Townleys were hired to do a master plan for the park. It had pretty much been left alone since the town bought it.

Under the Townleys, Endicott Park became a place dedicated to environmental education, with programs that include monthly nature presentations, crafts and others programs.

"The master plan was to make it an environmental education center," Dave said. "We've been working toward that all these years."

"The wilderness is great, but if you can't get in there, it doesn't mean much to you. So, it was to facilitate bringing the open space and the people together in a comfortable atmosphere," Joan said of their vision for the park.

Dave said he's going to miss "the excitement of the children," while Joan will miss "most of all the people, because they are like a huge family now. We see people here, we see them in the grocery store, and we stop and we chat. We have wonderful volunteers who have come in and just made a huge difference."



**Dave and Joan Townley**

## Deceased Classmates

### **Miriam S. (Stone) Bennett, Class of 1925**

SOUTH HAMILTON - Miriam S. Bennett, 105, formerly of South Hamilton, died peacefully in her sleep on March 12, 2014, as the oldest resident in the West Acres Nursing Home in Brockton. Prior to West Acres, Miriam had lived with her daughter in Bridgewater since 2003.

Born in Rockport on July 5, 1908, she was the daughter of the late Henry A. and Myrtie V. (Dorman) Stone. She was educated in Ipswich Public Schools, and was a 1925 graduate of Essex Agricultural School. Married in 1932, the Bennetts lived in Danvers for a short time, before moving to South Hamilton, where they lived for 62 years. In addition to her family, she enjoyed spending time at the beach, particularly West Beach in Beverly Farms, where many family memories were made. She enjoyed sewing, knitting, making draperies and upholstering furniture, and made braided and hooked rugs.

### **James A. "Red" CAMERON, Class of 1956**

Danvers - James A. "Red" Cameron, 77, passed away on January 6, 2014, in Beverly Hospital. He was the husband of Virginia (Doherty) Cameron, with whom he shared 53 years of marriage.

Born in Somerville on August 9, 1936, he was the son of the late James M. and Nina (Geddes) Cameron. Red was employed with the Essex Agricultural and Technical High School in Hathorne for 37 years, holding various positions. He also was employed with Endicott College for 13 years. Red enjoyed social clubs and was a member of the Elks Lodge in Salem and Beverly, the American Legion in Beverly, the Vittori Rocci Post in Beverly, the Elm Club in Danvers, and the Polish Club in Danvers. He took great pride in his grandchildren. He also enjoyed making flower boxes and bird houses, and loved spending time in his yard.

### **Gordon P. Begin, Class of 1983**

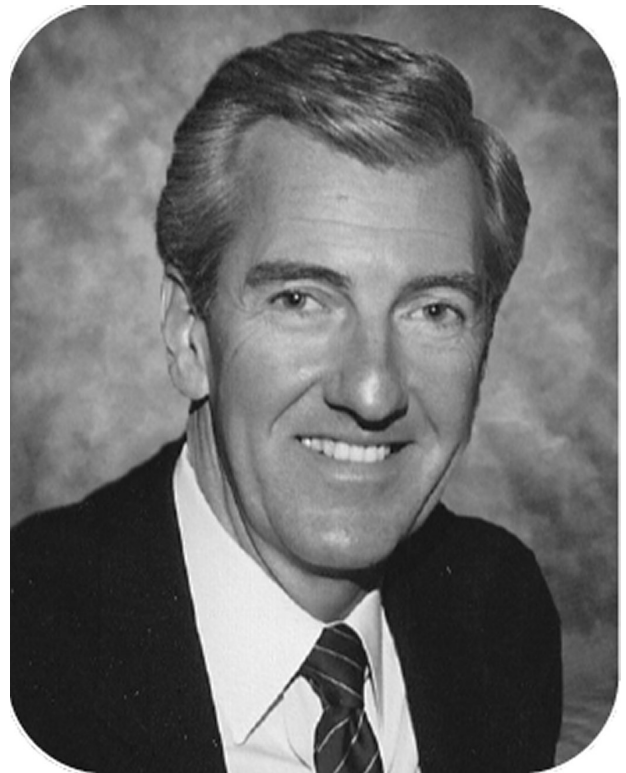
Haverhill - Gordon P. Begin, 49, of the Bradford section of Haverhill, died January 31, at the Holy Family Hospital in Methuen, after a lengthy illness.

Born in Salem, he was the son of Omer J. Begin Sr. and Diane M. (Judd). Gordon attended public schools in Salem and Beverly and Danvers. Moving to Haverhill in 1976, he was a graduate of Essex Agricultural High School, Class of 1983. Mr. Begin was employed as a carpenter and roofer for many local contractors throughout Essex County. Working with his brother in the HVAC business, he became EPA certified.

### **C. Joseph LaBonte', Class of 1958**

Rancho Santa Fe, CA - C. Joseph Labonte', 75 passed away on February 28, 2014. Growing up in Salem, Massachusetts, the fourth of five children in a working class family, he learned life lessons of hard work and caring that served him well on his path to many accomplishments.

Undoubtedly, the most successful graduate that the Aggie has ever seen, his kindness and generosity toward others was beyond outstanding.



**Joe LaBonte'**

(Continued on page 5)



## Reunion News

### **Class of 1983/84 to host a reunion for all classes on July 19**

### **American Legion, 1314 Main Street, Haverhill, MA Starts at 1:00 pm**

Members of the Class of 1983/1984 are planning a reunion for all Aggie Grads, regardless of the year you graduated.

As you know, the Essex Aggie we all knew and loved is now on the process of being assimilated into a much larger school.

What a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and reminisce on the School we attended and loved so much, with the people who made that time so special. Let's see how many classes we can get represented!

This will be open to all former students and their spouses from different years. We are asking that people pay \$15.00 per adult to attend, (to defray the costs associated.) children are free and we would love to see them!

We ask that checks be made out to: David W. Langlois, and sent to 125 South Main St. Bradford, Ma. 01835.

Please tell every one you know or stay in touch with, who is a grad or teacher, to attend.

Any excess funds will be donated to the American Heart Association.

If someone wishes to make a donation for decorations etc, money or time is appreciated.

### **C. Joseph LaBonte` (continued)**

Some of Joe's noted accomplishments include; President of the 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation, president and chief operating officer of Reebok International, president and chief executive officer of Jenny Craig, Inc., founder and president of The Vantage Group, a California-based venture capital and mergers and acquisition firm.

## **News From The School**

### **New Construction**

The main building of the \$135 million new school has reached 90 percent completion and construction is on time and on budget. The furniture is scheduled to be installed this June and July.



Foyer near main entrance



Restaurant area

### **The Abbott Beech (cont.)**

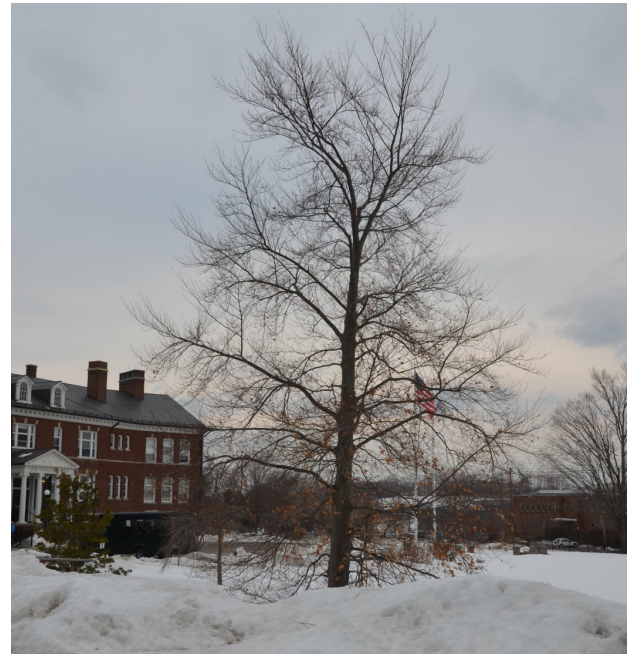
The tree was loaded on the trailer, tied down and wrapped for the trip back to campus.

And now in the year 2014, the “Abbott Beech “ is still there, located on the main front lawn just to the southeast of the tent that is set up for graduation each year. Fortunately, it is located on the side of the campus not being torn up by the construction of the new school building. Today, this tree has to be close to 35- 40 feet tall, maybe more.

The younger Mr. Abbott never made any mention about wanting a plaque on the tree or any notoriety, so I never put anything on it. But 4 short years after planting it, one of my students who worked to move the tree, died suddenly from a tumor of some type, in his abdomen, I believe. And in the years to follow, several of his classmates when they saw me would say that they wanted to plant a tree and dedicate it to Jason (Hussey) and each one I would tell that there is already a wonderful tree that Jason helped to plant and that they could place a plaque there, but none has arrived.

I have told this story to some of the school personnel who continued on after I retired. The story went along with a folder containing information including sales receipts for shrubs and trees planted and their location. I don't know if any remember the story.

Gene N. Demsey, MCH  
Horticulture Instructor 1979- 2005 - Plant  
Science Dept. Head and Vice Principal  
2005-2007 Principal 2007-2010



The Abbott Beech (2014)

### **Our 2014 Scholarship Award Winners**



Robert Craig (Santin scholarship) Mcalah  
Morin (Bennett scholarship) Alexis Stastinos  
(Metcalf scholarship) Emma Thomas  
(Brown scholarship)

Essex Aggie Alumni Association is proud to be able to support these outstanding students and we wish them well in their future studies. Scholarship Fund donations from our members have made these awards possible and we thank them all for their generous support!

# Essex Aggie Alumni Association Membership Registration Form 2014

Membership dues for 2014 will 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 and/or donation for 2014

I am enclosing my check for \$20.00 for 2014 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 E. 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 Charles Main**

**643 Main Road**

**Phippsburg, ME 04562**

☐

Please deliver my newsletters via email at the email address indicated above.

☐

Please deliver my newsletters via regular mail at the postal mailing address indicated above.

## The Aggie News

Essex Aggie Alumni Association

c/o Charles Main

643 Main Road

Phippsburg, ME 04562

*"Getting old friends and classmates together"*

[www.essexaggie.org](http://www.essexaggie.org)