What a year! 2016 has brought new staff and faculty, programs, and awards to the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. I’m thrilled to share some of the highlights with you through this edition of our newsletter. This issue touches on activities within the various majors, faculty achievements, alumni updates, and student features.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize the retirement of two long-time staff members within our Stockbridge family - Bill Mitchell and Kathy Conway. Bill has played a prominent role within Stockbridge for 8 years, most recently working in Alumni Engagement and Undergraduate Recruiting. Kathy has also been an integral member of our team, working as an Advisor and Recruiter for the school for 24 years. Although they are retiring from Stockbridge, a new world is opening for them. And to those of us remaining: the strength of the foundation they helped to build makes me believe we can face the future with confidence. Congratulations to both of you, and best wishes for the next phase - it has been our pleasure to know and work with you.

We’ve had a number of alumni-geared events this year, and there will be more in the coming months. We hope to see you there. In the meantime - enjoy the newsletter, have happy holidays, and we hope you have a great start to 2017.

Wes Autio, Director

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Homecoming 2016: A rainy good time

The October 1, 2016 event, held on the Engineering Quad outside Paige Laboratory at UMass Amherst, brought in over a hundred students, faculty, alumni, and local business owners to celebrate the Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

At 8:00 am on October 1, a dreary overcast fall day at UMass Amherst, Kim Graves was all smiles. On the Engineering quad, setting up tables and organizing her Stockbridge apparel for guests to purchase, she exclaimed, “I think it’s going to be great!” And it was.

Although the weather wasn’t kind to us, our guests came through. Over 100 students, faculty, and alumni came out to see what the Stockbridge teams are doing this year. Tours were provided inside Paige Laboratory where faculty and graduate students showcased their research while Mamma's Marmalade bluegrass band wowed the crowd inside the tent. Jill Smith, instructor of equestrian training, brought horse Farrah to meet our visitors before heading off to the UMass-Tulane football game at McGuirk Stadium.

The day wrapped up around 1pm after a barbecue lunch.

Watch for information about next year’s homecoming event, which we’ll be planning next summer and early fall.
Prof. Patricia Vittum: Distinguished Service Award

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Featured news about two of our esteemed faculty.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
Two alumni open up about what Stockbridge means to them.

HAIL AND FAREWELL
A preview of our Meet A Student Mondays social media campaign.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
A summary of some happenings around campus.

HONORING MOM
One alum's generosity for years to come.

Prof. Baoshan Xing: Scholar and Author

When asked to describe his work in a nutshell, Baoshan Xing, who came to the Stockbridge School of Agriculture in 1996 after receiving his Ph.D. in environmental and soil chemistry from the University of Alberta, sums it up succinctly: clean soil for safe food.

“We try to improve soil health and to produce safe food by understanding the soil contaminants—especially those of emerging concern such as antibiotics, pharmaceutical compounds, and, lately, we are working with engineered nanoparticles,” says Xing.

Prof. Xing is particularly interested in the trophic transfer of contaminants, meaning which contaminants are bio-accumulated through the food chain. “We study from soil to plant to animal. The worm eats the plant leaves then the baby chicken eats the worm. We study all of the behavior with the goal of understanding their environmental behavior and to minimize our exposure through food consumption,” says Xing. Xing’s latest book, Engineered Nanoparticles and the Environment: Biophysical-chemical Processes and Toxicity, which was published by John Wiley and Sons in Oct 2016, covers many of these issues.

“The book explores exposure and environmental risk assessment for ENPs and how we can produce safe food when using nanotechnology. Our goal is to promote safe, sustainable, nanotechnology. We will have more ENPs in our environment. We have to understand their exposure and toxicity,” says Xing.

Next up for Xing is a collaboration with food scientist and campus colleague Dr. Lili He to develop a quick, handy technique to identify and analyze nanoparticles on vegetables. The partnership takes advantage of Xing’s early work in developing spectroscopic techniques and his growing knowledge of ENPs, which match well with He's expertise and work on surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy (SERS), a technique that is being explored for detecting all types of contaminants in food. “We are applying for a patent. We are not there yet, but hopefully we can make this available for use by the public in a few years.”

While his research accolades are important, one of Prof. Xing’s favorite parts of his work is with his students. Read more online at https://www.umass.edu/researchnext/spotlight/clean-soil-safe-food

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has named Patricia Vittum, associate director of the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment and professor in the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a 2017 recipient of its Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award, the first woman to receive it in the organization’s history.

It recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding and significant contribution in both substance and duration to the advancement of the golf course superintendents profession. It was first presented in 1932 and has been presented annually since 1975. Vittum and two other honorees will be formally recognized at the 2017 Golf Industry Show (GIS) in Orlando in February.

Vittum has conducted significant research on the biology and management of turfgrass insects, especially the bluegrass weevil, and on the effectiveness of biological control methods. An 11-year GCSAA member, she has been an instructor at GIS since 1988 and has travelled worldwide to share her expertise with other turfgrass managers.

She says of the honor, “I wasn’t expecting this. This one really snuck up on me. When I look at the list of winners, it reads like a ‘Who’s Who’ of golf course management. I am humbled to have my name added to the list.”

Wes Autio, director of the Stockbridge School and Vittum’s colleague for 30 years, says, “This honor could not have gone to a more deserving and hard-working turf professional. Pat is keenly aware of the needs of the golf course industry and is known for her understanding of insect problems and her development of good management strategies for those problems. It is a pleasure to see her great qualities recognized on a national stage.”

Her colleagues note that Vittum (continued on next page)
Alumni Spotlight: Bob Marzilli

Bob Marzilli’s passion for building landscapes began at a very young age working with his grandfather, father and uncles in their family’s landscape maintenance business. Bob learned from his family the values of trusted relationships, customer service and quality workmanship. The education and experience at Stockbridge and UMass Amherst revealed the great potential of the landscape industry. While a student, Bob’s dream of developing the most respected landscape construction company in New England was born.

As soon as classes began in September of freshman year Bob realized the focus and hard work required for success at Stockbridge - this was not high school any more. The faculty and staff clearly defined the expectations and path to follow in each class. The curriculum was challenging and the standards were high. This program of study set the work ethic that has guided Bob throughout his professional career in the landscape industry. Bob worked his way through college in the family business on weekends and school breaks earning an A.S. degree in Landscape Operations from Stockbridge in 1975 and a B.S. degree in Landscape Architecture from UMass Amherst in 1977.

In 1985, Bob struck out on his own with a handwritten list of goals, one truck, one trailer, and one skid steer. As the owner of Bob Marzilli & Company, Bob built a firm with the best people in the business by his side, especially his wife Christine. Bob and Christine actively recruit students from Stockbridge for career opportunities because they bring the best characteristics and skills to fit their team. Several employees are graduates of Stockbridge and UMass. Bob truly feels that Stockbridge is the foundation of his accomplishments.

In appreciation of his education, Bob and Christine have established the Marzilli Family Stockbridge Fund. This fund provides the Stockbridge team assistance for recruiting students and all associated expenses.

Bob is licensed in Massachusetts as a Construction Supervisor, Home Improvement Contractor and Certified Arborist. Bob proudly serves as the chair of the Stockbridge School Advisory Board.

And that handwritten list of goals from 1985? Bob still has it.

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**Alumni Spotlight:**

**Amanda Gioacchini**

“I’m grateful for the foundation that Stockbridge and UMass provided to me. Without the faculty and staff’s guidance, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

In 2009, after I was accepted into Stockbridge, I started working at a retail nursery in northeastern Massachusetts. Customers would ask me what I wanted to do after graduating and I always told them, ‘I want to be supplying this place someday.’

In the fall of 2012 I received my A.S. in horticulture and continued on to receive my B.S. in Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences with a focus on horticulture business. A few months before commencement in the spring of 2013, I accepted a position as the assistant grower at Pioneer Gardens in Deerfield, MA where I have been helping to manage 3 acres of greenhouses, growing quality perennial plugs for wholesale to growers around North America. The plugs I grow don’t only end up in that nursery I started at almost 8 years ago, but also in all of the major box stores.

My time at Stockbridge gave me the skills and the knowledge I needed in order to make my dream a reality because I was a part of a small community full of the most passionate and hardworking individuals. Getting involved as a student on the Student Board of Directors helped me make invaluable connections with my peers and also the faculty. I have stayed involved on the Stockbridge Advisory Board and look forward to the opportunities I have to come back to the school and interact with other Stockies, because it always reminds me to stay driven and passionate. I would not be where I am today if I hadn’t been surrounded by incredible professors and Stockbridge staff that helped me every step along the way. I give my best to dear old Stockbridge because Stockbridge gave its best to me.”

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(continued from page 2)

is a woman of varied interests who played field hockey, basketball, tennis and volleyball at the College of Wooster, Ohio, where she is a member of its athletic hall of fame. She plays the flute and sings soprano with a group that has travelled widely. A native of western New York, she studied at Cornell University where she earned a Ph.D. in entomology in 1980 before joining the UMass Amherst faculty the same year. Vittum currently teaches classes on the use of pesticides and turfgrass management. Among her many awards are the 2004 Excellence in Teaching Award from the Entomological Society of America Eastern Branch, the 2015 USGA Green Section Award for work with turfgrass and the 2016 GCSAA of New England’s Distinguished Service Award. Read more online at http://ag.umass.edu/caffe/news/umass-amherst-turfgrass-expert-wins-national-honor
Hail and Farewell

Warmest Welcome

Earlier this year, the Stockbridge team hired a new Director of Communications, Allison Thorpe. Allie's background includes four years as a U.S. Navy journalist (she enlisted after 9/11). She has experience in public relations, journalism, media outreach, and event coordination. She studied digital media and website development and has worked as a website producer. She is currently just two classes away from her Master's degree in Communications and Information Management and graduates in May.

Of her time at Stockbridge so far, Allie said, “Over the past couple of months, I’ve been getting to know the culture and people that make up this special community, and I just want to say how genuinely proud I am to be a member of the Stockbridge team. I look forward to getting to know many more Stockies, and learn how we can work together to make this the strongest possible organization for all of our constituents. I have big hopes for Stockbridge and together, I know we can do great things for a great place.”

Please feel free to reach out to Allie with any ideas, concerns or questions. Her e-mail address is abthorpe@umass.edu and she can also be reached at 413-345-6766.

She plans on attending the March 23, 2017 Stockbridge alumni reception in Wellesley so be sure to come by and say hello!

Saddest Goodbye

Gordon S. King, of Livingston, New York, formerly of Leverett, Massachusetts, died on Monday, October 17, 2016. He was 98 years old.

Born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, he was the son of the late James and Sarah Ellen King and the husband of the late Frances (Jolly) King. He attended the University of North Carolina and Michigan State where he earned a bachelor degree in Urban Forestry. After graduation, one of Mr. King’s first jobs was managing a 5000-acre rubber tree plantation in Liberia for Firestone as it geared up for America’s anticipated entry into World War II. While in Liberia, he met the late Frances Jolly who was a missionary engaged in building schools and educating young children. During her time in Liberia she was approached and enlisted by the Office of Strategic Services to covertly track the timing and volume of German shipping. The two were married while still in Liberia.

Upon their return, Mr. King joined the faculty at the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he headed up the two-year Arboriculture and Park Management Program at the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, a position he held until his retirement in 1983. Prof King, as he was thereafter known, took a keen interest in his students and became a dear friend and mentor to countless individuals over the years. He and his wife Frances had endeared themselves to his students was evident in the countless friendships that endured long after graduation day. Following Frances’ passing, Gordon became very close to Barbara Hamilton, a long time friend.

Professor King was an energetic individual who worked with numerous organizations to promote the professional development of the arboriculture industry, including working with The Massachusetts Arborists Association, The International Society of Arboriculture (President 1980) and the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association. In his spare time Professor King ran a “pick your own” blueberry farm and Christmas Tree Farm on 35 acres of land that he owned in Leverett, which he eventually donated to the town.

Professor King had a strong sense of civic responsibility as well and served as the volunteer Fire Chief in Leverett for over 35 years. He also helped to found the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust to help preserve open space within the Town of Leverett. In 2010 he was honored by the Trust for having formed and led a group of volunteers that collected over a million returnable bottles and cans that raised more than $50,000 over a twenty-year period. These funds were used entirely to support the group’s land preservation efforts.

Professor King is survived by a son, John King of Alva, Florida and a daughter, Muriel Laverty of Nicaragua. Another son, James King, predeceased Professor King. His granddaughter Elizabeth Walter of Schodack, New York who along with her husband Paul provided loving care for him in his later years, also survives him. Numerous other grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews mourn his loss.
Hannah Miller

Hometown: Sterling, MA
Favorite color: Yellow
Favorite food: Peanut butter & jelly
What year are you at UMass? Junior, double majoring in Sustainable Food & Farming and Animal Science.
Favorite thing(s) about Stockbridge: 1) getting to know professors and instructors on a first name basis, and forming connections with them. 2) Being a part of the UMass Student Farm!
What do you do for fun? In my free time I like to go hiking and bowling.
Fun Fact: I work on a goat farm and make goat cheese.

Sarah Berman
Hometown: Boise, Idaho
Favorite color: Turquoise/purple
Favorite food: Sweet potato sushi from the campus center!
Favorite band: Tupac
What year are you at UMass? Senior in the PSIS program
Favorite thing about Stockbridge: The people; they are so warm, kind, intelligent and truly amazing human beings
What do you do for fun? Sewing, aquascaping, Minecraft, ziplining.... so many things!
Fun fact: I had my first dirt bike when I was 7 years old.

Evan Rees
Hometown: Lexington, MA, but was born in Cooley Dickinson Hospital and lived in NoHo ‘til I was 4.
Favorite color: Green (plants and all); blue, orange, and purple are great too.
Favorite food: Sweet potato! Mashed, fried, you can even make sweet potato brownies.
Favorite band: Hard to pick favorites! Just discovered The Go! Team, and Warpaint so they’ve been in pretty heavy rotation along with St. Vincent, the Joy Formidable, and Tame Impala. Also a lifelong Metallica fan.
What year are you at UMass? Senior, but I transferred here in fall 2015 so this is only my third semester.
Favorite thing about Stockbridge: Pretty much everyone (students AND faculty) is willing to nerd out about plants.
What do you do for fun? I make music! I’m a longtime drummer and crappy guitarist. I play when I can and get my fix from local shows when I can’t.
Fun fact: I used to drive a pedicab in Cambridge. Definitely recommend it as a summer job, just have to find a way to combine it with plants...

Meg Whaley

Hometown: Shrewsbury, MA
Favorite color: Yellow
What year are you at UMass? 2nd year at Stockbridge in the Equine Management program
What do you do for fun? Ride horses
Fun fact: I ride for the UMass Equestrian Team.

Alan-Michael Turner
Hometown: Charlton, MA
Favorite color: Green
Favorite food: Salmon
Favorite band: The UMass Minuteman Marching Band!
What year are you at UMass? Senior.
Favorite thing about the Stockbridge: Having much smaller classes than a majority of other majors on campus gives us an advantage to form closer relationships with faculty members, aiding in our success as Stockbridge students. The networking advantages that are available to us give us a greater chance at finding quality employment opportunities after graduation.
What do you do for fun? Marching Band, University Chorale (singing), bike, read, photography
Fun fact: I’m the only turf student who is a member of the marching band, a bus driver, and in a men’s music fraternity. Aside from my love for my major, I spend a majority of my time in the music department.

Nicole Reiner
Hometown: Westchester County, New York.
Favorite color: Pink
Favorite food: Tuna sushi
Favorite band: Mumford and Sons
What year are you at UMass? Second year at UMass, about to earn an associate’s degree in the Equine Management program, and will continue for my bachelor’s in the BDIC program.
What’s your favorite thing about Stockbridge? I love that it’s like a tiny community within a big school. Even though I haven’t met most of the people within the school, I feel connected to them. It’s more rare to find someone in the school because they offer such unique majors, so when you do meet someone, you’re more excited than when two Communications majors meet, for example.
What do you do for fun? Ride horses, but I honestly spend most of my time rewatching movies, napping, and reading books.
Fun fact: I have a tiny umbrella tattoo for no reason, other than that I love rain.
A Word About Our Programs
Short happenings around campus

Arboriculture & Community Forest Management

For the past three summers, UMass and Stockbridge have offered a “pre-college” course in Arboriculture & Urban Forestry for high school students. In the course, students get an overview of the Arboriculture & Urban Forestry curricula that two- and four-year students at Stockbridge and UMass take. We hope to offer the course again this summer, but we need enough students to cover the costs. The course will run for one week (35 hours of training—in the classroom and in the field) in July 2017.

During the course, students learn the importance of safety, basic tree biology and soil science, how to identify trees, how to manage insect and disease pests, how to prune and fertilize, and of course, some basic tree climbing skills. Typically, we spend the mornings inside, in a classroom, and then the afternoons outside climbing and learning how to identify trees. In addition to the course itself, UMass provides a typical college experience for students, who live in dorms (unless they choose to commute from home), eat at the dining commons, and participate in supervised social activities with classmates. There are several other pre-college programs going on at the same time, so there are lots of other high school students to meet and make new friends.

All of the previous students who enrolled really enjoyed their experience. We think the course is an excellent introduction to our profession, a way to attract young people to a great career, and a good way to recruit students to attend Stockbridge and UMass. We need your help to reach out to high school students and encourage them to participate. Students don’t have to have any experience or special skills, just a good attitude and an interest in learning about trees and being outside. Learn more by visiting “Urban Forestry”, at this website: http://www.umass.edu/summer/precollege.html or by contacting Brian Kane at bkane@eco.umass.edu.

Equine Management

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Equine program is proud to offer high-quality Morgan and Hanoverian horses for your consideration. The purpose of the horse sale program is not only to generate revenue to help cover UMass’s breeding costs, veterinary care, tack and equipment, etc, but it also provides a hands-on learning experience for the Stockbridge students when it comes to marketing, breaking and training a young horse, and reproduction. The school’s retired school horse adoption program also allows the opportunity for UMass’s retired horses to be given a new home where they can be loved by an alumni or UMass supporter and live out their days in a quieter environment. To learn more about this program or how to buy or adopt your own UMass horse, please visit https://stockbridge.cns.umass.edu/academics-equine-management/horses-sale or email us at horsesales@umass.edu.

New to the UMass Hadley Farm this Spring is a course offered to those wishing to make a difference for individuals with mental or physical disabilities. The Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies course (STOCKSCH 296E) is a student run program, established in cooperation with Transitions In Motion LLC. Goals of the program include teaching horsemanship and horseback riding skills to individuals with a disability, along with training students in equine-assisted activities under the guidance of certified and licensed instructors Patricia and Leora Barry. This course is available to current Stockbridge students and non-degree students from the community through Continuing Education.

To learn more about the UMass Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies program, please contact the Director of Equine Management, Dr. Cassandra Uricchio, at curicchio@umass.edu or 413-345-0183.

Landscape Contracting

National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC) is an annual three-day competitive event among students enrolled in landscape and horticulture programs from universities and colleges across the country. Each year, between 60 and 70 colleges and universities attend the NCLC bringing over 800 students. Students have the chance to compete in events that are directly related to the skills necessary for a career in the green industry.

The UMass NCLC team, comprised of 15 Stockbridge students, returned from Mississippi State University this past March with some impressive results. For the forth year running our Arboriculture team, Nicolette Eicholtz and Shayne Bradford, took first place in Arboriculture Techniques. Genevieve Shepard placed 5th in Exterior Landscape Design while Daniel Nelson placed 7th in Maintenance Cost Estimating. Alex Hentnik and Sean Monahan placed 7th in a hard fought Hardscape Installation event and Connor Reardon earned 9th place in the Computer Aided Landscape Design event.

Overall the UMass team placed in the top 10 or 20 in 15 of the 20 events they competed in, showing the strength of their education, all the while representing the Stockbridge School of Agriculture with professionalism.

Below is a photo of the UMass team at Mississippi State.

To learn more about Stockbridge programs, visit our website: http://stockbridge.cns.umass.edu
Honoring Mom by Helping Stockbridge Students

Like all Stockbridge alumni, Eric Nelson ’72 works hard every day. He single-handedly tends to his 40-acre farm, Winimusset Brook Tree Company, in New Braintree, MA. Eric grew up in Worcester, the son of a firefighter. He credits his strong work ethic to both of his parents, and the depth of his agricultural knowledge to Stockbridge. Of his time at Stockbridge, Eric said, “I was taught by experts like Dr. Troll and Alden Tuttle who were very invested in helping students learn the material and understand the concepts. I vividly recall Professor Mosher leading us on walks through the woods during snowstorms and warning that the entire class will fail if he got hit with a snowball. We had many good times that I’ll always remember.”

It was Eric’s appreciation for Stockbridge that led him to bequest a gift to Stockbridge in his will and to share this news with the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. After discussing the many options, Eric decided to create a scholarship with his bequest in honor of his mother. The Elizabeth Marguerite Nelson Scholarship will be awarded by the Stockbridge team to students who are in urgent need of financial assistance in order to remain enrolled and achieve their Stockbridge degree.

While the majority of the funding for the Elizabeth Marguerite Nelson Scholarship will be received after Eric passes away, he chose to also make modest present day donations so the Stockbridge team could begin to distribute the scholarship during his lifetime. In the three months since he created the scholarship, two Stockbridge students have already received this much needed funding.

“My mother was always there to give us some cash here and there to help us get by,” Eric shared. “It feels good to help others exactly as she helped us.”
Quit horsing around and purchase your Stockbridge apparel today! T-shirts, sweatshirts, quarter-zips, fleece vests, hats, and mugs all available for purchase. Prices start at $15. We can ship to you! Pay by credit card over the phone! Call 413-545-2222 or email Kim at kmgraves@cns.umass.edu to place your order today!

SAVE THE DATE! March 23, 2017
We are hosting an alumni event at The Gardens at Elm Bank in Wellesley, MA. For more information, watch our Facebook page or call Kim at 413-545-2222.