

Issue#21 • Spring 2021 • FREE

# Home

at Spring 2021

Celebrating the homes, gardens & places of the tri-state area of NH, VT & MA

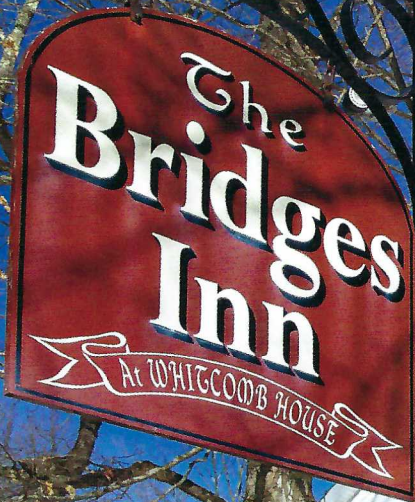
An Artisan  
Couple's  
Forever Home

Plus:  
*The Bridges Inn  
Outdoor Spaces  
& More!*

Spruce Up for Spring!  
Special Advertising  
Section



By Robert Audette/Photography by Beth Pelton



**T**here's only one thing more New England than a covered bridge, and that's a 1792 white clapboard home-  
stead next to a covered bridge.

So, a person coming to New Hampshire, say for foliage or maple sugaring season or to get pictures of the state's many covered bridges, might consider staying at Bridges Inn in West Swanzey.

"I have always had this fantasy, this dream, to own a bed and breakfast," said Susan Schuster Karalekas, who bought the inn in 2006.

When Susan moved to West Swanzey from Keene with her family, she was newly divorced and working at Markem-Imaje.

"I moved here with my adult children, my daughter and her husband, and my son, the chef," she said. "My kids ran the inn at the time, and this eventually became my son's full-time job."

Susan was born into a family that owned restaurants in Maine, and she worked in restaurants and food service

throughout her high school and college years. She also traveled across the United States and around the world, which allowed her to see the hospitality industry through the eyes of a tourist.

Three years after she bought the inn, she remarried to Nick Lupinin. When the kids moved out to pursue their own dreams, she and Nick took over managing the inn and preparing the meals for their guests.

"This has been a delightful fulfillment of my dream," said Susan.

The historic house has also been known as the "Old Mansion" and "Stratton Place."

It was built by Richard Stratton, the wealthy owner of a cotton and woolen mill in the village of West Swanzey.

Stratton's son, John, married Susannah Whitcomb, and they lived in the "Old Mansion" until it was sold to Roswell Whitcomb. George E. Whitcomb later became the >

Top: Exterior of The Bridges Inn, located in West Swanzey. Inset: Bridges Inn owners, Nick Lupinin and Susan Schuster Karalekas. Next page: One of the guest rooms at the Bridges Inn.





bridge in the area, and the walls are adorned with pictures of covered bridges. Shelves and tables are festooned with memorabilia related to covered bridges, too. Each of the rooms has a modern, private bathroom and air conditioning and wifi and cable TV.

"During fall foliage season, we have people here from all over the world," said Susan.

Many of them stay at Bridges Inn as part of a route through New England that often includes Boston, Maine's coast, and the mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont.

They also come for outdoor recreation, watch a loved one graduate

from Keene State College, or attend a wedding.

"But some just come for a getaway," said Susan. "We've had people come from Australia, Israel, Hong Kong, Germany, England, Africa and Canada."

## atHOME with History (continued)

owner, and upon his death, the house was inherited by his children, Edna Clementina Whitcomb and George E. Whitcomb Jr., known as "Ellie."

The building has five rooms, each named after a covered

## Save the Date!

The 10th Annual Hospice at HCS Butterfly Release

Thursday, June 10, 2021

To allow for social distancing, reserved time slots will be offered between **10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

**320 Marlboro Street, Keene**



*During this time of remembrance and gratitude, spend quiet moments in Butterfly Park releasing your Monarch in honor or memory of a loved one.*

Monarch butterflies can be reserved for a donation of \$10 each. Please contact Marianne at [mmcgauley@HCSservices.org](mailto:mmcgauley@HCSservices.org) or 603-352-2253 for time slot and butterfly reservations. Visit [www.HCSservices.org](http://www.HCSservices.org) for complete event details coming soon!



Proceeds from this event benefit Hospice at HCS — providing end-of-life care in southwestern NH with offices in Keene, Peterborough & Charlestown

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Susan said she loves meeting people and chatting with them, and some of her guests have become friends after repeated visits over the years.

"People who want to come to a BnB tend to be educated, articulate, worldly and culturally diverse," she said. "They are looking for a real New England experience. They want to see how people live and not just a superficial view."

Susan and her husband live in the attached barn, which they renovated to include bedrooms for their children and grandchildren. They cook and clean and are also available to answer questions or just listen.

"There is a psychological aspect to being an innkeeper," she said. "Like talking to a barber or a hairdresser, people just want to talk and aren't really looking for answers."

Because of the pandemic, though, they haven't been able to host the multi-guest breakfasts that bring people from around the world together around the dinner table.

"I still cook up a full breakfast with eggs, maybe an apple crisp, lots of fresh fruit, potatoes and unlimited coffee and tea," she said.

But she misses those days when her customers could rub shoulders during the communal breakfast time.

"I just love what I do," he said. "I absolutely love the people, and I look forward to them coming back."

And while business has been slow this past year, Susan and her husband have been counting their blessings.

"You read about people who are in horrible situations," she said. "But we have potable water, heat, a roof over our heads and enough to get by. We are doing OK." 🍷



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A Project of the Arts Council of Windham County

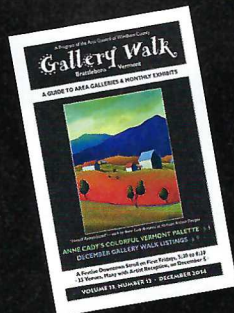
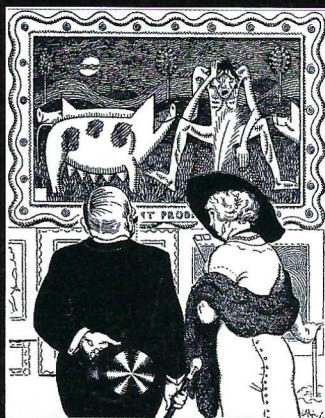
# Gallery Walk

**BRATTLEBORO'S MONTHLY FIRST-FRIDAY  
CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS**

... 5:30 to 8:30 ...

30 to 40

**Exhibits & Events,  
some with  
live music and an  
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[www.GalleryWalk.org](http://www.GalleryWalk.org)

Guide available online  
and at most venues.

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