

# Stonewall Farm B & B celebrates 20th birthday

By **MICHAEL PON**  
*The Villager*

It was once a more than one-thousand-acre farm, the largest in Hillsborough County in the 1800s. It was the birthplace of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Governor of New Hampshire, David Goodell, who invented the apple peeler. Currently it is Stonewall Farm Bed & Breakfast, which was founded by Skip and Meg Curtis in 1997.

Twenty years later, a red-tailed hawk, or several, appear to watch over the farm, and Meg has moved on from Skip's demise from Alzheimer's Disease in 2010 to repurpose part of the B&B's focus to giving respite to the caregivers who look after people failing from dementia-related diseases.

"We established that before anyone else in the United States," Meg said proudly of the program. "We're currently looking for grants that will help fund it. We started the Caregiver Respite program two years ago. Numerous caregivers have enjoyed a break here over that time, and we hope many more will."

The rolling landscape of fields and meadow that once served as farm and grazing land provide a gentle and pastoral view, a soothing escape from the pressures of the busy and pressurized world visitors come to retreat from.

When Skip and Meg took over the country dwelling, it was a two-bedroom bed & breakfast. But within a year, Skip and Meg expanded it into a five-room establishment with two additional seasonal rooms, and kept their doors open 365 days a year.

Stonewall Farm B&B has become a destination for weddings, showers, family reunions, anniversary parties, auctions, seminars, breakfast meetings, respites, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. It's main house is complimented by a large outbuilding, once a barn no doubt, with ample space for events and seasonal rooms.

"We've received many awards over the years," Meg pointed out. "The Editor's Pick for Yankee Magazine, Arrington's Bed & Breakfast Journal four years in a row for Best Breakfast in New England, and in 2016 we got TripAdvisor's Service of Excellence Award

– and got it again this year."

Of 88 reviews on TripAdvisor.com, 84 are excellent.

"We couldn't have been happier. It's a home filled with history and warmth," said one reviewer only two weeks ago. "The breakfasts are special recipe made to order breakfasts served plated - not overheated and pre-cooked buffets. The landscaping and yard and barnyard are lovely and enjoyable for kids and adults. And Meg and Ed were wonderful hosts."

Ed Sauer is the newest addition to Stonewall Farm, and has quickly become an integral part of the workings of the place, from his conversational nature with guests to his long hours of mowing the acres.

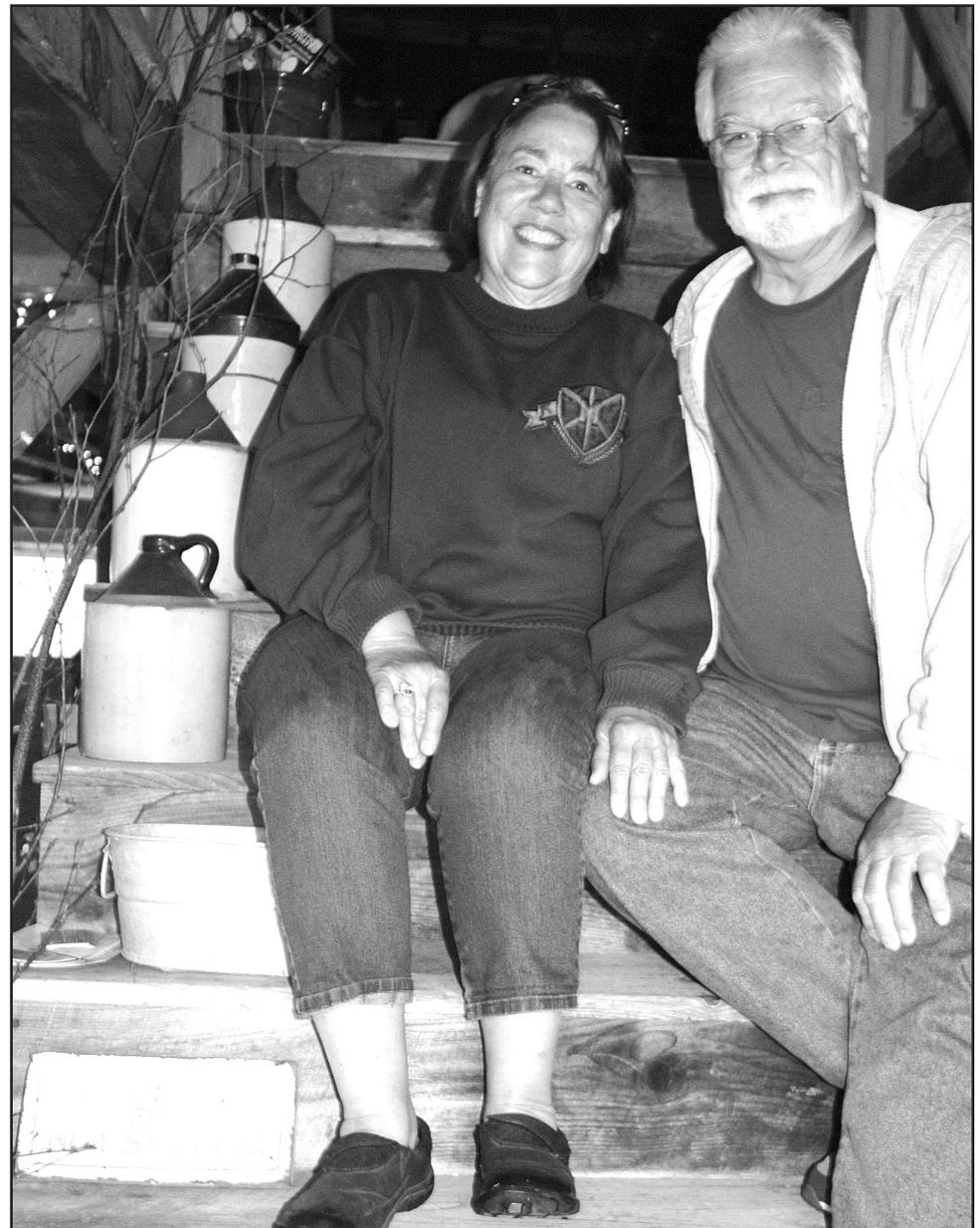
"My favorite part about it are the guests who come from around the world with their children to drop them off at the summer camps down the road," said Ed. "I get my geography lessons by listening to these people describe the countries and other states in the U.S they live in. We are both people-persons and we enjoy talking with our guests."

"Ed is the other co-innkeeper," said Meg of the new man in her life. "He has taken this on with me with the same passion that Skip had, quite frankly. He loves to cook. He loves to work in the yard. And he loves people. And that is the first requirement for a B&B. You have to love people."

"I've been involved a couple of years. Meg and I met online, and to our surprise we were only eleven miles apart, Hillsborough and Lempster," said Ed. "We had a lot in common, a lot of the same ideas, so it has turned out to be both a business partnership and an engagement."

Ed likes the daily routine, cooking in the morning, mowing in the afternoon, painting the out buildings, tending to the few animals they have, and keeping track of the red tailed hawks that frequent the farm.

"The Hawk of Stonewall Farm, which is also going to be the title of Meg's book when she writes it, all started a week or tow before Skip's death," Ed explained. "Native American lore has it that the red-tailed hawk has great spiritual power. About two weeks before Skip's death the family was sitting on the deck and this



Stonewall Farm Inn Keepers Meg Curtis and Ed Sauer embrace the rural lifestyle of life with a bed & breakfast in Hillsborough's back country. (Michael Pon photo)

hawk kept swooping down towards the deck. It made its presence known. Then once they had the Celebration of Life ceremony, the hawk was there all that day, protecting grounds."

Since then it appears the red-tailed hawk has made Stonewall Farm its residence.

"We all assume that it is some sort of message coming across from the spiritual world the hawks are connected with," Ed explained. "Last

week, when we were talking to a guest about Meg's potential book, the guest pointed out the kitchen window at yet another red-tailed hawk. It has become the spirit guide of the farm."

Built in 1785, Stonewall Farm has seen many generations of changes over its 237 years, with countless people walking through its doors. Embedded in New Hampshire history, it has a heart, and a hawk, of its own.

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## Villager

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