

VILLAGE VOICE

March potluck • Bergen



Center: Bette and Charlie Carcano
Bottom: Board Members Pete MacKay, Brian Vitello, and Gerda Ceremsak

Meet Susan Lewis



“Life is good for stories,” says Susan Lewis – and she has a few to tell!

The Ann Arbor native grew up in the academic hub that boasts of 45 colleges within 50 miles. The student population was about the same as the population of the city, she recalls. Her father was a university professor there.

Susan was Number Two in a string of four children. Her maternal grandparents had come from “huge families” in Northern

Michigan, so a good deal of time was spent there during her formative years.

“I wish I could have brought Ann Arbor to Evergreen,” she adds, referencing the diversity, vibrancy and endless opportunities of her hometown. “There are lots of parks but not a lot of sunshine in the winter. It’s very gray with most of Michigan being surrounded by water. A lot of people are snowbirds who escape to Florida (or buy blue lights).”

The schedule of a university professor enabled the entire family to travel a lot on extended vacations, as he’d often take a summer job elsewhere – like Aspen or California. He took a sabbatical in Switzerland for a year, and the kids attended local Swiss schools. “My parents were awesome people – they wanted us to have a real local experience.”

“We travelled a lot.” She was fluent in French by the time she was 10 because of having attended Swiss schools. As an adult she would return to Switzerland to call it home for 8 1/2 years before moving back to the States to live in Evergreen.

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WELCOME

- Paul Fontana • Bergen 314

REMINDER: Birdseed attracts rodents so bird feeders are not allowed – only those for hummingbirds.

Interested in reserving one of the Guest Suites?

New guidelines have been posted in each of the signup books. Changes include: \$65/night; owner or renter can book just once per 6-mo. period; maximum stay 7 days; no pets allowed; reservation required.

That urge to travel stayed in her blood, and Susan took a 40-foot boat from Long Island to the Virgin Islands in the days prior to using a GPS. “We were just out at sea.” She longed to sail around the world but never got to do it, with 10 days offshore being her longest stretch.

Her passion for travel was matched by her love for animals, despite the fact that her younger sister’s allergy to fur and feathers had kept her from being around a lot of animals as a youngster. She admits it might have been the writing talents of author James Herriot (the personality behind the British TV show “All Things Great and Small”) that lured her into wanting to be a veterinarian. She earned a degree in veterinary medicine from Michigan State, graduating at 24.

That’s when some of the more extraordinary stories began – treating exotic animals from frogs to baboons to owls to tarantulas and a rattlesnake-bit dog. She’s even given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a rat! She learned she enjoyed working most with large animals, loving horses.

“I need big fun,” she says after having had her own clinic in Michigan. Piggybacking on the experiences of a friend who’d always been broke but still found a way to travel to Europe each year, Susan and the friend travelled Europe on the cheap – three weeks for just \$500. They stayed in hostels for \$15/night and shared the cost of gasoline.

Her first job as a vet was in Washington State on the Columbia gorge across from Oregon, a year before Mount St. Helens erupted. She also lived in Annapolis, Maryland, where both of her sons were born. One now lives in Evergreen, thus her gravitating to our mountain town.

“I wanted to live in a tiny house,” she explains. Having lived aboard a sailing vessel, Susan liked the challenge of living in tiny spaces. In July of 2022 she settled for a small condo at Rocky Mountain Village instead, finding it the perfect location for commuting down the hill. Currently, she works at a veterinary clinic in Golden but also finds the location perfect for heading to the slopes where she skis as often as possible, hiking mountain trails, and babysitting her two-year-old granddaughter, so her spot in Bergen House has proven to be “just right,” as Goldilocks might have said of her small bed.

One of the other benefits she considered when choosing Rocky Mountain Village was that it provided a community for her to get acquainted with other residents. And she’s done just that.

Article and photo by Linda Kirkpatrick