Tahoe family copes with pancreatic cancer diagnosis

By Denise Rury

It’s November, which for my family means its Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, a time of remembrance, not just awareness. It was 2½ years ago that my mother, Jeanette Criner, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The gravity of this announcement was even more devastating because her father was also diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died within three weeks.

Despite what little she knew, really what most of us know about pancreatic cancer, she knew enough to know what a formidable enemy she was up against. The statistics are pretty dismal. Pancreatic cancer has the lowest survival rate of all cancers tracked by the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute: 94 percent of pancreatic cancer patients die within five years of diagnosis and only 6 percent will survive five more years. Seventy-four percent of patients die within the first year of diagnosis.



Jeanette Criner

Jeanette was diagnosed with stage one pancreatic cancer, which gave her the option of having one of the few tools available in treating this cancer – surgery. The surgery, known as the Whipple operation, where the head of the pancreas, a portion

of the bile duct, the gallbladder and the duodenum is removed. It is a complicated and long surgery, but at this point it was the best option available. Tough Jeanette was understandably fearful, she was determined to do whatever it took to fight this.

The surgery seemed to have gone well, but unfortunately a few cancer cells were found outside of the pancreas and perhaps when she recovered from the surgery, gained some weight and was ready, chemotherapy was on option. This was late August 2008 and despite all the efforts of Jeanette with physical therapy, the care and attention of her medical staff, the love and support from her family, she continued a downhill battle that lasted seven months.

I watched my mother having gone from an active woman that at the age of 72 still worked, baked, tended to her garden and enjoyed hikes in and around her beloved Lake Tahoe to becoming a frail, depressed patient who lost hope when it became obvious that her best efforts just weren't working. Jeanette spent her last couple months surrounded by family, at various times from all across the country, even the world, which was of great comfort. She had the love and support at all times of her family here in Tahoe and would still get out and about to enjoy another favorite activity – coffee with her children or grandchildren to chat about the funny or mundane, anything but pancreatic cancer.

As her health continued to deteriorate, she made the decision to stop cancer treatments and start hospice care. I remember the last time she was outside, taking in the beauty of the lake and knowing it was the last time she would ever see Lake Tahoe. I remember how hard, even in the face of the obvious, trying to encourage her to keep fighting, have a reason, some reason to still be here but that day, with her staring out the window, looking at the lake, it was apparent that this was it. It was only a week or so later that she left for good.

Denise Rury is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Douglas County deputies enforcing seat belt rules

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office will be participating in the fall 2011 Click It or Ticket mobilization period Nov. 14-22.

This enforcement detail is partially paid for by a grant from the state Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety.

National traffic studies have shown regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle accidents. When worn correctly, seat belts have been proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45 percent in cars, and up to 60 percent in trucks, SUVs and minivans.

Seat belts are the single most effective piece of safety equipment in a vehicle, yet National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studies show that nearly one out of five Americans still fail to wear a seat belt when operating or riding in a motor vehicle.

Kirkwood expanding options for backcountry junkies

By Kathryn Reed

With more than a foot of snow on the ground before this weekend's storm arrived, Kirkwood is eager to power up the chairlifts to get people to all that powder.

"We haven't announced an early opening. We don't intend to do so until after this weekend and we see what kind of weekend it is," Michael Dalzell told *Lake Tahoe News*. With the forecast for the storm to go south, that bodes well for Kirkwood.



Skiers flocked to Kirkwood through late spring this past season. Photo/LTN file

Dalzell, spokesman for Kirkwood Mountain Resort, said Thanksgiving weekend is the targeted opening date so far. But, he added, fingers are crossed it will be top to bottom riding just like last year – which ended with 781 inches falling at the resort off Highway 88.

The bulk of the $6 million in improvements at the resort went to rebuilding the Mountain Club, which caught fire in May. It will open later this month.

Most of the units evolved from hotel-like units to two-bedroom condos. The Mountain Club includes a full workout room, spa, sauna and steam room. It is a freestanding building in the village that operates on a one-eighth ownership.

Besides the lodging, the bottom level has been overhauled as well as a result of the fire. This includes the popular Monte Wolfe's. A few food items will be changed, but for the most part it will be the same restaurant.

Guest services and the ticket office are new, too.

Across from Chair 6 is the $1 million Expedition: Kirkwood Outfitters building.

While Expedition Kirkwood has been in existence for years, it never had a great place to operate out of. The new facility is designed to be a gathering place, somewhere to get information about avalanche conditions, hire a guide on a whim or just hang. It's from here that cat skiing, avalanche clinics, backcountry programs and all things beyond basic school begin and end.

Meeting space allows for gatherings or classroom time. Retail, demo equipment – it will all be in this one building.

Three times as many cat tours are expected to go out this season. Improvements during the dry season to the winter road to the Martin Point terrain will allow snowcat access almost every day. Expedition Kirkwood also intends to expand nighttime cat tours and hiking tours to new areas.

Kirkwood and K2 believe the snow and terrain are so special the ski manufacturer has created the Expedition Kirkwood K2 Sidestash. It is an all-terrain shovel rocker adventure ski. And only 300 pairs exist.

The price of an all day lift ticket has not been set, but it will be just less than $80, according to Dalzell. What the

resort is touting is the inaugural year of having passes that allow riders to jump between Kirkwood, Homewood and Alpine.

Many of Kirkwood's signature events are returning, like the North American Freeskiing Championships. But new is the Freeride Snow Festival on March 23-25 – which is billed as a winter version of Wanderlust. Women's clinics have been expanded to a weeklong shindig – March 3-11.

All events and details about Expedition Kirkwood are online.

Whittell volleyball 2nd in state, Truckee wins its division

In a rematch from a year ago, Whittell High was hoping for a different outcome. Instead, Yerington is the repeat state volleyball champs for Division 2A, with the Warriors again second best in the state.

Yerington won the competition Saturday in Las Vegas in three straight games, 25-19, 25-13, 25-17.

Whittell has a rich volleyball tradition, winning 11 state championships. Moapa Valley and Pahranagat Valley, both with 14 titles, are the only two schools with more wins than Whittell.

Truckee High won the 3A Division with a 3-0 (25-16, 25-17, 25-19) win over Boulder City.

This means three state titles in a row for Truckee.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

South Tahoe girls soccer team claims state title

State champions. That’s what the South Tahoe High School girls’ soccer team is for the second consecutive year.

With a 3-0 win over Elko on Saturday, the Vikings conquered the 3A Division. The girls reached the final round by beating Boulder City 2-0 Friday afternoon.

On the boys’ side, Truckee High lost 1-0 to Sparks in the championship game Saturday.

Both finals were played at Fernley High School.

It has been a good fall for South Tahoe athletic teams. The boys’ cross country team is state champs, while the girls are runner ups.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe had the highest gas price in California, at $3.99 per gallon, according to AAA's monthly review of prices throughout the state.

• The 25th annual Santa Paws Benefit is Dec. 3 from 11am-4pm. The website has more info.

• Barton Auxiliary blood drive is Dec. 5 from 11am-6pm at the South Lake Tahoe library (1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.).

• Three South Lake Tahoe residents competed in the Nov. 6 New York City Marathon – Sherry Lindner, Ann Fountain and Lisa Kern.

• North Lake Tahoe Visitors Bureau, a marketing cooperative between the Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau and the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, was selected by *Smart Meetings* magazine as one of its Platinum Choice award-winning organizations, while *Meetings & Conventions* magazine recognized the group with its Gold Award.

Walk-in flu clinic in South Tahoe

To help the Lake Tahoe community stay healthy this season, Barton Health is providing free seasonal flu vaccines to children ages three to 18 residing in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 19 from 1-5pm at Barton Family Medicine, 1090 Third St., South Lake Tahoe.

Anyone 19 and older may receive the flu vaccine for $20 and the pneumonia vaccine for $35. There is no appointment necessary to receive the vaccination(s); individuals will be treated on a walk-in-basis. Both vaccines are reimbursable for standard Medicare patients. Medicare HMOs cannot be billed.

Questions can be e-mailed to publicrelations@bartonhealth.org or call (530) 543.5615.

Burning Man 2012 tickets to be doled out via lottery

By Brian Duggan, Reno Gazette-Journal

After selling out of tickets for the first time in its 26-year history this year, Burning Man organizers have decided to start a lottery system instead of selling tickets on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The news was announced Friday in the organization's newsletter, known as the Jack Rabbit Speaks. Black Rock City, home to the annual Burning Man event in the Black Rock Desert about two hours north of Reno, is regulated by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which imposes a population cap of 50,000 people, on average, over the course of the eight-day event.

The peak population this year surpassed 54,000 people. Meanwhile, Burning Man organizers are still trying to get a new BLM permit approved that would allow the population cap to increase to 55,000 in 2012 and reach 70,000 by 2016.

Burning Man 2012 runs from Aug. 27 through Sept. 3.

Read the whole story

Holiday in History

The Lake Tahoe Historical Society will host the third annual Holiday in History on Dec. 2-4 at the Lake Tahoe Museum (3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe).

On that Friday the museum will be open from noon-8pm with activities all afternoon, holiday music, take pictures in front of the Victorian tree, tour the 1930s cabin, shop the bookstore for gifts – DVDs, posters, photo reprints, cards and find treasures on our bargain table.

On the Saturday and Sunday the same activities take place form 11am-3pm.

Admission is free.

Weather spotter training course

The National Weather Service is hosting a Weather Spotter training course at the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District on Nov. 30 from 6-7:30pm.

The training will highlight how spotters help the National Weather Service issue life saving weather warnings and includes topics such as severe thunderstorms, flash floods, winter storms, and other extreme weather.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer weather spotter is

encouraged to attend.

The training will be in the Incline Station Training Room, located at 863 Tanager, Incline Village.

For more information on the class, contact Rhett Milne at the National Weather Service, (775) 673.8100, ext. 223 or Rhett.Milne@noaa.gov.