Incredible food makes cycling tour worth the ride

By Kathryn Reed

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS, Vt. – *A cycling vacation?* Yes.

Really? Yes.

What else is involved? Food, incredible accommodations, being able to go at your own pace, meeting new people, returning to New England for the first time since college, and seeing Sue's hometown.



Dinner is served family style at the October Country Inn. Photos/Kathryn Reed

OK, I'm in.

As wonderful as the Bike Vermont tour was, I'm just not a big cyclist. Still, I highly recommend this outfit. And although I may one day go on another bike tour, I definitely know I'd like to return to the October Country Inn.

This Vermont bed and breakfast run by Edie and Chuck Janisse is that rare blend of personal service in a relaxed

atmosphere, with food I want the recipes for.

Several of us asked for the Maple Scone recipe. We were all denied. None of us could pinpoint the ingredient, beyond the pure Vermont maple syrup, that made them so outrageously good. We were told seldom is the same thing served on back-to-back days, but I think there could have been a riot if they didn't emerge from the kitchen the second morning.

So much food appeared for the morning and evening meals that it was a good thing cycling was involved. As a vegetarian they prepared a tofu dish each night as my protein. Although I knew I needed it for the next day's ride, there was enough food on the table to eat that I did not need the tofu.

The eggplant Parmesan that was served on night No. 2 was fabulous. I'm not usually a big fan of eggplant, but I had seconds of this dish. And it is a recipe the Janisses would share and didn't mind having published. The recipe is going to fill several 9 x 13 pans.

October Country Inn's Eggplant Parmesan

Tomato sauce ingredients:

9 T olive oil

3 C onions, finely chopped

3 T garlic, finely chopped

1 # 10 can of Italian plumb tomatoes, seeded, and coarsely chopped, but not drained

18 oz. tomato paste

3 T dried oregano, crumbled

3 tsp dried basil, crumbled

3 bay leaves

2 T sugar

4 tsp salt

Black pepper, freshly ground

In a 3-4 quart saucepan, heat the olive oil and cook onions over moderate heat, stirring frequently for 7-8 minutes.

When onions are soft and transparent, but not brown, add the garlic and cook for another 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Stir in the tomatoes, and the strained liquid, tomato paste, oregano, basil, bay leaves, sugar, salt, and few grindings of black pepper.

Bring to a boil, turn the heat low and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour

When finished, the sauce should be thick and fairly smooth.

Remove the bay leaves, taste and season with salt and black pepper.

Eggplant Parmesan ingredients:

3 or 4 medium eggplants (quarter each eggplant with lengthwise cuts just through the skin, cut crosswise into 3/8-inch thick slices)

Mozzarella and cheddar cheese, grated

Parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Lay eggplant slices on parchment lined baking sheets. Lightly brush olive oil, salt and pepper on both sides of slices. Bake without turning until dark brown, 45 minutes to an hour.

In a 9 x 13 Pyrex casserole dish, put a think layer of tomato sauce on the bottom. Layer the roasted eggplant in overlapping

row. Spread a generous layer of mozzarella cheese and about half that amount of cheddar cheese on top of the eggplant, and over with a liberal coating of tomato sauce.

Repeat for another layer.

Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese on top. Bake at 375 degrees for 35-60 minutes.

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Middle school students starting young Soroptimist club

By Kathryn Reed

Toss out whatever impression you have of a Soroptimist because a group in South Lake Tahoe is redefining what a member looks like.



She's a whole lot younger than the average member. She doesn't have a college degree. She isn't a manager of any firm or some executive in a business suit and heals.

This group is in eighth grade at South Tahoe Middle School. They have good grades. And by the looks of things, are the future leaders of whatever town they live in as adults.

For now, though, under the guidance of advisor Karin Holmes the girls are partnering with Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra to form what is loosely being called a Junior S Club.

At a meeting this week, Jamie Kennedy, Trinity LaTella, Emily Aminian, Brandy Kent, Alexandria Bocholz, Teresa Tenocelott and Zaira Monette heard a bit about what their sponsor group is all about. One day this school year they'll go to one the adult's 7:30am Thursday meetings.

For now, they are concentrating on things more relevant and of interest to them. They helped with last week's Pumpkin Run at the school, are partnering with sixth-graders to have a tree at the Barton Foundation's Festival of Tree and Lights in December, and plan to have tutoring be a yearlong project.

A couple students voiced concern of drugs being used at lower grades and wanting to do something to show the dangers of that and ways to avoid it.

At the high school level is the S Club and colleges have Soroptimist Sigma Society. Though the STMS club is not officially chartered by the international organization, it is the youngest group in the country. This is being called an experiment.

South Tahoe, El Dorado salary stats finally on state website

South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County salary information were a little late in getting posted to the state website, but the figures are there now.

The California controller's office in an attempt to be transparent and in the wake of the Bell scandal in Southern

California asked all cities and counties to provide salary information.

Go to the website to access the salary by position for most California cities and counties.

– Kathryn Reed

Douglas County, New Zealand district become sister communities

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners formally approved a sister community partnership with the Waitaki District, New Zealand, this month.

The partnership was spurred by long-time relationships that already exist between gliding enthusiasts in Douglas County and the Waitaki District, as both communities are widely recognized as world destinations for soaring. Soaring NV, a glider operator at the Minden-Tahoe Airport has established a strong relationship with Glide Omarama, a glider operator at the Omarama Airfield in the Waitaki District. During initial discussions to create the partnership at a cross-country glider camp in Minden last summer, many other natural commonalities were discovered between Douglas County and the Waitaki District, including rural lifestyles, outdoor recreation, agriculture, soaring, fishing, climate, tourism and friendly people.

Sister community programs are recognized as a catalyst for economic vitality, fostering communication across borders,

creating a mutual exchange of ideas, education, culture and sport, and promoting tourism and trade. Formalizing the relationship between Douglas County and the Waitaki District through a sister community partnership sends a message to both communities that we value the mutual exchange of ideas, people and materials, and we wish to promote the common links between our communities.

The partnership does not require any financial commitment from Douglas County.

Opinion: Ideas how to vote on Nov. 2

Publisher's note: ***The following editorial is from the Oct. 10, 2010, Sacramento Bee.***

The *Sacramento Bee* believes that an informed electorate is the bedrock of a sturdy democracy. Endorsements are one of many sources of information voters can use in making their decisions. That's why The Bee's editorial board offers recommendations in competitive races. Below are our endorsements to date for the Nov. 2 election.

Statewide Offices:

Governor: Jerry Brown (D)

Lieutenant Governor: Abel Maldonado (R)

Attorney General: Steve Cooley (R)

Treasurer: Bill Lockyer (D)

Secretary of State: Debra Bowen (D)

Controller: John Chiang (D)

Insurance Commissioner: Dave Jones (D)

Superintendent of Public Instruction (nonpartisan): Tom Torlakson

Read the whole story

Emergency childcare for youth in Placer County

First 5 Placer Children and Families Commission has approved up to $300,000 in emergency childcare funding for families in crisis for children ages 0-5 until Jan. 31. Additionally, the Placer County Office of Education has approved funding for children between the ages of 6-12.

The reason for this emergency funding arose when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the 2010-11 state budget and eliminated childcare services for low income working families in the CalWorks Stage 3 program. The low-income working families in this program now face the dilemma of having to leave their jobs or place their children in uncertain childcare situations.

In Placer County, this act will leave approximately 250 children without access to safe quality childcare as of Oct. 31, 40 percent of whom are under age 6. Funding from First 5 and PCOE will help ease the transition from the program.

For more information on First 5 Placer, go online.

TRPA gets earful on river project at golf course, state park

By Maggie Thach

STATELINE – It was hard to know the meeting was about a river project designed to reduce fine sediment reaching Lake Tahoe.

Most of the 38 people who spoke this week before the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Governing Board were concerned about Lake Tahoe Golf Course and Washoe Meadow State Park.

This area of the South Shore on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe is under the microscope as the next reach of the Upper Truckee River is being studied. The problem is banks are eroding and in turn clouding Lake Tahoe, according to officials.



It was standing-room-only at the Oct. 28 TRPA meeting. Photo/Laurie Brazil

The river runs through the golf course that is on state land and is contiguous with the state park. To make substantive changes to the river may require changes to the course and park.

The river at this section is owned by the California State Parks. This body as well as TRPA will decide which alternative in the environmental impact study and environmental impact report will be chosen.

No action was taken at the Oct. 28 meeting, but much input was given. People have until Nov. 8 to comment on the five proposals for the project.

The meeting room quickly filled to near the maximum capacity of 100. Concerned patrons ranged in age from middle school students to residents who have lived in the Lake Tahoe Basin for more than 30 years.

Before the meeting was open to the public, staff gave an overview of the project and of the five alternatives. The alternatives are:

1. No action.

2. Restore the river ecosystem and reconfigure the 18-hole golf course, removing several holes from the east side of the river to higher capability lands.

3. Restore the river ecosystem and reduce the area of the golf course by making it a nine-hole golf course, keeping all nine holes on the east side of the river.

4. Stabilize the river ecosystem and make no changes to the golf course.

5. Restore the river and meadow ecosystem and remove the golf course.

There was strong support for Alternative 2. The people who

back Alternative 2 said the golf course plays an important role in the community's tourism industry, bringing in $6 million into the local economy. There are 33,000 rounds of golf played annually on the course, which employs a 76-member staff and generates 92 jobs related to tourism. It pays the state park system an average of $880,000 a year and is among the top five revenue makers of all California State Park units.

"Alternative 2 is a win-win situation. It's a win for wildlife, it's a win for water clarity. It's a win for the community of South Lake Tahoe," said Kathy Strain, laboratory specialist in the Science Department at Lake Tahoe Community College. "It will increase outdoor recreation with new hiking and biking trails. This can become a model for how golf courses can be integrated with environmental restoration."

Interestingly, Strain has been giving presentations about the Upper Truckee River project throughout the South Shore. At those meetings she always says there is no preferred alternative, but would still slant her talks to tout Alternative 2.

State Parks employees have taken the same approach.

Local business owners and avid golfers at the meeting argued Alternative 2 is a fair compromise, making restoration a priority, while keeping the local economy in mind.

Although it got most of the support, there was opposition to Alternative 2. Patricia Handal, whose house borders Washoe Meadow State Park, believes restoring the environment should be the top priority.

"We want to focus on wildlife. If Alternative 2 is implemented, wildlife will be fragmented," Handal said. "We are a close-knit community and we support restoration of the river. We don't want something with unintended consequences. We want something that does not increase the footprint of the

golf course.”

The League to Save Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Area Sierra Club favor Alternative 3.

After public comment is closed, the TRPA will review and respond to those comments through November and December. A decision on a preferred alternative is set for January and February and action on the project is set to start in September.

Pedaling back in time through the hills of Vermont

By Susan Wood

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS, Vt. – I made the summit of the scenic crescendo on the road bike and instantly saw why we took the optional route on the Bike Vermont October tour.

After leaving 40 years ago, the pilgrimage to my hometown of Woodstock, technically the nearby small bedroom community of Pomfret, involved more than Vermont’s celebrated history. It involved my own.



Ready to ride through the

Green Mountain
State.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

We passed the road leading to my childhood home a few miles back, then crested the top of the hill on the first day of the two-day 60-mile bike ride, bringing me face-to-face with Pomfret's old town hall in the foreground of a drop-dead killer view of red, orange and yellow maple trees in central Vermont's famous rolling green hills. Across the road, the one-room schoolhouse where I learned to read and write in first and second grades still stands and now functions as town offices. I peeked in the windows and recognized the open front room as my small classroom that resembled something out of "Little House on the Prairie."

And to think this highlight fell on only the first day of the weekend bike tour out of the Bridgewater Corners-based October Country Inn. The tour is aptly named after the bed and breakfast we stayed in for two nights. Owners Chuck and Edie Janisse, who have run the place off Route 4 for nine years, came on board as the third inn operators after she went on a Bike Vermont tour.

The weekend was nothing less than superb on every front. The inn's food was delicious, the conversation stimulating, the service genuinely stellar. The setting makes me want to return on vacation to hang out in the immaculately groomed grounds or inside the cute, antique-furnished room.

With a roaring fire, cozy furniture and homey environment, the living room is established as a common space for the 18 people on the tour. We are from all walks of life and regions. It's so relaxed I take off my shoes as if I'm at home. That's a sign I belong there.

More than a bike ride

With 34 years under their belt, Bike Vermont owners Larry and Dawn Niles, with their staff and tour leaders, have these trips down to an absolute science. Signups were easy, and the tour unfolded exactly how I expected. In 20 years of serious cycling, I've never had such detail on a route map.

Tour leaders Meg Davis and Jim Ortuno provided full explanations of what to expect for the day, including a session called "map wrap." The duo made it refreshingly obvious how much they enjoy their jobs, each other and sharing experiences with fellow cyclists.

Ortuno, who lives in Shoreham, Vt., where one tour is based, thoroughly embraced the meal Edie and her staff were serving from the kitchen's apron-donned cook Chuck. The October Country Inn meals follow an international theme, with Friday night's menu of sole, carrots, salad, pilaf and cheesecake representing a French theme.

"This is why I bike. My wife is a good cook (too). I'd weigh 500 pounds if I didn't," Ortuno said, while taking a second helping of the perfectly seasoned carrots.

The next morning's breakfast will long be remembered for its mini maple scones, which many in our group fought over or bid on because they were so appetizing. But even upon request, the recipe remains closely guarded by Edie.

It soon became apparent that I would actually gain a few pounds on a cycling vacation.

Our charismatic leaders quipped there are "no hills, just gear changes," on the two routes. Ortuno also assured the group to forget about the recent rains because there are "no bad bike days, just bad clothing choices."

I was OK with that because after a quick fitting of my Bike Vermont-rented Giant bicycle, Saturday's first day of touring Woodstock, Pomfret and Quechee was brisk, but sunny. The blue

sky after the evening rainfall offered quite a scenic backdrop to the bright foliage, old-time architecture, historic covered bridges and cows grazing on the green rolling hills. A few sightings of wooly bear caterpillars crossing the road are an indication winter is coming to the Northeast.

On the road

The start of the ride took us east, over the iron bridge at the Ottauquechee River, which runs through the quaint, historic town of Woodstock. Three covered bridges, including the Middle Bridge in town and the Taft near Quechee, cross the water about 10 miles apart from each other. A word of caution from our bike tour leaders – go slow or walk your bike on the covered bridges.

The 16-mile Pomfret loop provides some of the best "leaf peeping" one can get in New England. The loop empties into Quechee, known for its so-named gorge with views that dramatically drop hundreds of feet into the river. Rafting and fishing enthusiasts can be seen on any given day in three seasons on the river.

Quechee's lunch stop included hot soup at a busy café and a visit to the gallery of Vermont glassworks artist Simon Pearce.

This is the epitome of how I like a bike tour – beautiful without belaboring the exertion at the expense of the sheer enjoyment of being free from work or without a care in the world. (Plus, I knew Kae would go on another bike tour if it were like this.)

The first day's 42-mile jaunt had us ending in Woodstock, where the Billings Farm and Museum was celebrating harvest days. The working farm is operated by a nonprofit founded by Laurance Rockefeller, who married Mary Billings, in cooperation with the national historical park where Route 12 and River Road meet. Cows still graze there.

Added treats

In town, Kae and I hit the Mountain Creamery for homemade ice cream and a walk around my historic, pedestrian-friendly hometown. The sidewalks are packed with tourists. Imagine a place where there are no traffic lights or fast food eateries, but an independent bookstore that has thrived for 75 years.

Karen Greenberg and Steve Pittendrigh of Phoenix end their tour at the Woodstock Inn & Resort with a drink at the bar and massages at the landmark hotel's new full service spa.

At Saturday night's Italian-themed dinner in our home-base inn, Greenberg gave a sign she was melting into the dining room chair to reflect her state of mind. The rest of the group got shoulder massages at the table from the two tour leaders. Beyond being a guide and a nurse, Davis is known for her rubdowns.

My red wine and an eggplant Parmesan good enough to write home about added to my restful evening, which included a rousing game of Scrabble in front of the fire. Unbeknownst to Kae and I, cyclist Ann Chilton of New Hampshire – who was on her sixth Bike Vermont tour – has a penchant for the game. She won with a 50-point Scrabble bonus for using all seven tiles.

For those who may partake in a night out for a cold glass of Vermont beer, the Long Trail Brewery – named after the trail that runs through the spine of the state – is located directly across the inn from Route 4.

Day 2 began with silver dollar pancakes and pure Vermont maple syrup, then a ride, as Ortuno put it, "with rested bikes" that took us on an interesting journey through the childhood home of Calvin Coolidge. It was here his father swore him in as the 30th U.S. president. The Plymouth Notch Historic District is nothing short of gorgeous and a reminder of one of Vermont's primary food groups – cheese.

The Plymouth Cheese Factory is the second oldest continuously operating cheese factory in the United States. I sampled some and liked it a lot. I'm in good company. According to the St. Petersburg Times, chef Julia Child considered Plymouth cheese "her favorite."

Plymouth is bursting with history. An old Gulf gas pump in front of the general store declared fuel costing 11 cents a gallon.

Relying on my own body fuel, I hopped back on my bike and finished the 18-mile journey along scenic Route 100, where it seemed we stopped every few feet to snap a photo. I didn't mind. I was taking it all in.

We passed the northeast station of Killington Ski Area, Vermont's largest resort recognized for often being the first area in the United States to open in October. But no snow was in the forecast. It was just a cruise back to the October Country Inn, where lemonade and dessert bars await.

If you go:

Bike Vermont offers a multitude of tours, many more ambitious than our 60-mile, three-day October Country Inn weekender. The company tours Maine, Maryland, Scotland, Ireland, Italy and the outer regions of Vermont, such as Lake Champlain.

The October Country Inn weekend tour costs $545 per person in the fall, a highly recommended time to see the foliage. The Scotland tour runs $2,995.

Road or mountain bike rentals with 21 gears may range from $40 to $100 depending on the length of the tour.

Bike Vermont may be reached by calling 800.257.2226 or via email at bikevt@bikevt.com or online.

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SLT council candidates keep collecting cash

Campaign contributions continue to roll in for people seeking one of three seats on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Click on the person’s last name to see the latest filing.

Joy Curry

Tom Davis

Claire Fortier

Steve Kubby

Angela Swanson.

Robert Frohlich – 1955-2010

Robert “Fro” Frohlich, a prolific skier and writer, died Oct. 26 after a long battle with cancer. He was 55.

Frohlich was born July 9, 1955, in Princeton, N.J.

He graduated from the of University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with a degree in Film Communications.

He wrote for *Ski, Skiing, Powder, San Francisco Chronicle, Tahoe Quarterly, Reno Gazette-Journal* and other publications. He covered the Salt Lake City Olympics in 2002 for the

Sacramento Bee. For 10 years he covered professional boxing for *Boxing Illustrated*.

He moved to Squaw Valley in 1977 as an assistant to the producer for ABC Sports.

In 1994, Frohlich co-founded SnowTribe Productions, a charitable organization that produces multi-audio visual shows and other events benefitting Tahoe area charities.

Frohlich is the author of the books “Mountain Dreamers: Visionaries of Sierra Nevada Skiing,” “Skiing With Style” and “Mountain Journal.”

Survivors include his mother, Billie Burke Rogers, and sister, Margaret Frohlich Pearcy, both of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and a ton of friends in Lake Tahoe.

A memorial service will be Nov. 11 at 4pm at the Olympic Valley Lodge in Squaw Valley. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Robert Frohlich Scholarship Fund, c/o Truckee-Tahoe Community Foundation, P.O. Box 366, Truckee, CA 96161.