



The Bike Rack: A Pedal-Up Eatery

by Sheryll Hirschberger Reichwein



When we purchased The Beach Rose Inn in 2006 and moved to Falmouth, there were rumors about the [Shining Sea Bikeway](#). The popular paved path stretches from the outskirts of Downtown Falmouth to Woods Hole, and the rumors had it expanding north along the railroad tracks, through West Falmouth. The railroad track crossed our road, Chase Road, 200 feet from our front door.

We were delighted by the idea. But many of our new neighbors were skeptical.

Over and over again, we heard, "They've been talking about expanding that bikeway for years." And, "I'll believe it when I see it." And, "Don't hold your breath." And a variety of other such clichés born of past cycles of raised expectations followed by seemingly inevitable disappointment.

When the recession hit in the fall of 2008, the railroad-track-would-be-bikeway was still a mass of overgrown weeds and vines. Though the permitting process was moving forward, no progress could be seen. With the financial system in crisis and government funds in high demand, would expanding the Shining Sea Bikeway still be a priority? Would the predictions of our jaded neighbors come true?

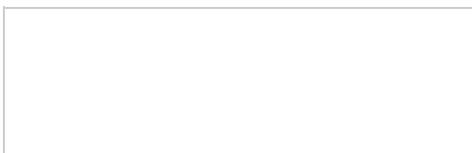
And then, as if by magic, in the spring of 2009 the railroad tracks were cleared and removed. The rail bed was quickly leveled and prepared with drainage stone. Even before the paving crews arrived, walkers claimed the path. And, on the very day the pavement was laid, bikers appeared.

Within days, it was as if the bikeway had always been. As if an artery had been blocked and was now flowing.

The main building of The Beach Rose Inn was originally built in 1863 by James Gifford as a wedding present for his bride, Charlotte Lumbert.

Nine years later the railroad began its first run as a lifeline of commercial transport for Woods Hole's Pacific Guano Works, a company that produced fertilizer made of phosphate rock from the Pacific Islands marinated with fish remains from Cape Cod waters, creating a particularly odiferous stew. One can only wonder how the young Gifford couple felt about the arrival of this noisy, smelly train.

In 1889, Pacific Guano Works went bankrupt which was a sad loss for the local economy but a welcome reprieve from the oppressive odor. Happily, city dwellers found the railroad a convenient way to get to the seashore and the Cape Cod tourism industry was born.





When the railroad stopped running, about 70 years later, the flow of tourism and summer residents to Falmouth was well established. For most visitors, cars had long since replaced rail as the preferred means of travel. As was true in towns across the country, weeds and vines grew over the tracks.

Enter the "rails-to-trails" movement. As much of U.S. railroad travel died, a few visionary souls saw an opportunity. Instead of miles of discarded old wood and metal, they saw a vital web of networked trails.

Today, tens of thousands of miles of rails have been successfully converted to trails, including the popular Cape Cod Rail Trail which connect Dennis to Provincetown and the newest arrival, the expanded Shining Sea Bikeway.

The Shining Sea Bikeway now runs from North Falmouth to Woods Hole and is 10.7 miles long. Our Inn is located near the 7.9 mile marker. Much to our surprise, the Bikeway has radically changed our world for the better.

In simple obvious ways, such as being able to walk the one mile to Chapoquoit Beach without using a car-filled main road. And in subtle, not so obvious ways, such as creating a means of connection to residents from other parts of town and to guests from around the world.



In a little over a year, the Bikeway has become a new kind of Main Street where people, outside of their busy routines, slow down enough to see other people. And, I do mean "see." Really see. They make eye contact. They smile. Send a warm greeting. Everyday kind of connecting that used to be part of everyday life, until it wasn't.

This July, in response to these wonderful changes, we decided to try something totally new.

The Beach Rose Inn is located on 1.5 acres and since we've owned the property we've done a lot of work on the grounds, including adding a dining patio surrounded by a waterfall stream, a koi pond, fire pit, and several peaceful outdoor areas.



Patio Dining at The Bike Rack

Our guests enjoy lingering over breakfast on the patio and often spend leisurely afternoons hanging out in their favorite lounging spot. We thought it would be fun to share what we've created with our friends and soon-to-be-friends who enjoy using the Bikeway.

The Town of Falmouth gave us permission to go ahead with a take-away food establishment, so we opened a "pedal up eatery." Located off of our patio, we call it "The Bike Rack."



The Breakfast Bar

We serve snack bar-type treats with an upscale flair – organic hot dogs, Panini grilled cheese, Pizza imported from Italy, fresh salads, a selection of breakfast items served all day, and (my new favorite) Blue Bunny Ice Cream treats. We also offer cold drinks, wine, and beer.

Wendy Koder, of [Wendy Talks Wine](#), prepares our wine list and many guests are surprised by its variety and depth.

For Douglas and me, a full wine cellar and cooler of Blue Bunny treats have become celebratory symbols of abundance!

So far, we're having a lot of fun. Many people are stopping by to check us out. They're intrigued by the idea of a destination they can walk or bike to.

It's a new idea and they're curious. Some do stay for a snack or a meal. And, they seem to be very happy, loving the food and raving about the beautiful environment.

Our plan is to stay open through Columbus Day. But, who knows? If the weather is good, maybe we'll light up the fire pit and serve Thanksgiving dinner. Walk up for turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce – the works – on paper plates.

Well, the world as we have known it is once again changing.

Anything is possible.



Sheryll Hirschberger Reichwein, along with her husband Douglas Reichwein, are the owners and innkeepers of The Beach Rose Inn, located at 17 Chase Road in West Falmouth, home of their newest creation -The Bike Rack.

Prior to flipping pancakes and grilling hot dogs, Sheryll was an Adjunct Professor of Communication at Cape Cod Community College and freelance writer.

The Bike Rack is located at the Beach Rose Inn
17 Chase Street
West Falmouth, off Shining Sea Bike Path.

They are open 7 days a week through Labor Day, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends through Columbus Day.

For more information about The Bike Rack, visit www.thebeachroseinn.com or call 508-540-5706.

