Opinion: Where is the food safety?

By Mark Bittman, New York Times

I'm eager to cover some curious and less depressing topics here – did you know Asian multi-millionaires are cornering the market on first-growth Bordeaux? – and equally eager to stop throwing mind-numbing numbers around. But as long as those pesky Republicans keep attacking the food supply for low-income people and food safety for all of us, and as long as most Democrats put up toothless defenses instead of actually trying to make things better, I gotta pay attention. If we needed further evidence that the party of "family values" only values wealthy families, we have it now; when these guys say "women and children first," they mean "first to throw overboard."

The House's reactionary majority wants to dismantle two aspects of the Federal system that serve the majority of us not perfectly but decently: the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), one of the most effective of all social welfare programs, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), among whose jobs is the increasingly difficult one of protecting us from the kind of outbreak of E. coli that just killed at least 39 people in Germany, gravely – perhaps mortally – sickened another 800 and gave another couple thousand a few of those days none of us ever wants.

As I wrote two weeks ago, we've had our share of foodborne illnesses in the past, but have not kept up with the increasing threat of E. coli. One in six Americans gets sick from the food we eat every year – that's about 48 million people, or enough to fill your average baseball stadium a thousand times with people having extremely unpleasant symptoms – and there are 3,000 food-related deaths annually.

This is a food system that Georgia Congressman Jack Kingston calls “99.99 percent safe.” I guess he wasn’t one of the 16 percent last year who fell ill, but maybe he should talk to a million or two of them; they should be easy enough to find.

As we near the 10th anniversary of 9/11, we’re going to be reminded more and more of how much 3,000 deaths from hostile attackers can hurt. Yet put aside the questionable decisions we made in anger and sorrow that have cost us $1.2 trillion – and another 6,000 or so American lives – in wars whose benefits are far from clear. Think, instead, that the annual costs of food-borne illness are estimated to be around $152 billion a year, and consider that the entire proposed FDA budget is around $4 billion (three percent of that $150 billion), and that a measly $280 million or so of that (about one-fifth of one percent of that $150 billion) was destined for the Food Safety Modernization Act, which would expand activity geared toward protecting us from E. coli and other foodborne threats.

Read the whole story

What should the rules for signs in the Lake Tahoe Basin be?

Homegrown herbs add flavor to dishes

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

When it comes to herbs, we've gone from parsley and chives to a new world of flavors.



"People are asking for shiso and ginger root," said Meg Gray, buyer for Green Acres nursery in Sacramento. "Stevia is at the top of everyone's list."

Herbs spice up our meals and our gardens. And as interest in global cuisines grow, so does our appetite for ethnically diverse herbs.

With increased interest in cooking at home, gardeners also are growing more of their own herbs, saving money while adding fresh flavor.

"You can get a whole plant for what it costs for a few sprigs of basil in the supermarket," Gray said. "And you'll have fresh herbs all summer – or longer."

And this spring, herbs also have spiked sales for nurserymen as novice and experienced gardeners dive into herbs as an easy entry to edible landscaping.

"It goes hand in hand with interest in vegetable gardening and growing your own food," said Janet Simkins of Sierra Nursery in Roseville. "Independent nurseries, such as ours, sell herbs side by side with vegetables. Even if you don't have room for a vegetable garden, you can put a few herbs in a pot and get some satisfaction, too."

It’s not just about food.

Read the whole story

Lakefront golf course lodging in works for Edgewood Tahoe

Publisher’s note: ***This is the last of three stories about Edgewood Companies.***

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Brooks Park, the mastermind behind so much of what Edgewood Companies developed at Lake Tahoe under the business’ former name of Park Cattle, envisioned lodging on the golf course.

Eleven years after his death, the environmental document for Edgewood Lodge is expected to be released this fall in draft form. It’s possible construction on the $150 million-plus project that is slated to have 126 standard rooms, 24 regular suites, four deluxe suites and 40 interval ownership units could break ground in 2013.

It’s all about providing the complete Edgewood experience, is how company officials tout the high-end hotel.



Patrick Rhamey of Edgewood Companies talks water quality. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Besides adding lodging to the Stateline golf course that sits on the edge of Lake Tahoe and is home to the annual celebrity golf tournament each July, the company expects to put a rough estimate of about $2.5 million into water quality projects that go beyond what is necessary to complete the lodge.

Patrick Rhamey, vice president of real estate for Edgewood Companies, said in part the extra effort is to prevent the League to Save Lake Tahoe from filing a lawsuit. While the League has been invited to take the same tour of the site *Lake Tahoe News* went on this month, Rhamey said no one at the League has taken him up on his offer.

Calling the various improvements “threshold projects” is good verbiage to show the League it’s paying attention to what’s in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Regional Plan.

What the public will notice

Holes 7, 8 and 9 will be altered to accommodate the lodge, with No. 9 having the most substantial changes.

With the last three holes of the 18-hole course being known for their scenic qualities, 9 will share that distinction in the future.



Edgewood Creek will be restored.

Brandon Hill, project manager, said, “They’ll finish 9 on the beach. It will be a dramatic, compelling improvement.”

It has to change because the lodge is expected to go where the current fairway for No. 9 is.

Hole 13 will be raised a bit so it’s not so swampy like it has been this year with all the moisuture the basin has received.

Construction schedules will not interfere with the celebrity golf tournament, officials said.

Non-golfers will have access to a stretch of beach that is currently private.

The road leading into the area will be rerouted a bit so it heads more to the left, ending at the lodge. Parking will be in a structure at the lodge.

The current lot will be removed. The beach will be brought up farther from the lake.

The current restaurant/clubhouse will be extended toward what is now the parking lot so larger banquets and weddings may be accommodated.

A path along the entry road will be designed for cyclists, pedestrians and golf carts. It will tie into the Stateline-to-Stateline bike path, which passed its last hurdle last week with the U.S. Forest Service signing off on the South Shore

demonstration project.

Protecting Lake Tahoe

While Edgewood Companies owns about 500 acres on the South Shore, the 4,000-acre Edgewood Creek watershed almost entirely ends at the golf course. This is water that is not being treated at today's standards before reaching the lake.

Highway 50 and Kingsbury Grade carry the nastiest pollutants through the golf course's network of pond filtration systems. Ultimately it comes out in a culvert off the 18th hole.

How all of that works will change – including reconfiguring Edgewood Creek through the course so it looks and acts like a stream instead of resembling a man-made concoction.

The company has expanded its original water quality improvement vision to include Friday's Station on the other side of Highway 50. This is where the big white house sits.

On the east side of that property is a large pond, with the water being held back by an earthen dam that is at least 60 years old. An ancient wheel controls water flow, with the outflow being at the bottom – thus sending more sediment downstream.



The pond at Friday's Station will be drained and revamped.

This land was once pasture for the cattle that were here June to October. The pond was used for irrigation and fishing.

Making sure the dam is stable is another component.

The sediment from the pond will be excavated to allow for more storage, to reconstruct the dam, change the outflow and reroute the overflow area.

Water from the Stateline Stormwater Association, which encompasses the casinos, first hits pond No. 6 on the golf course. (Pond numbers correspond to the hole its on.) Dredging this and other ponds is part of the plan.

Pond 14 will be removed to make for a more natural flow of Edgewood Creek. Fish will be reintroduced to the creek.

Other ponds will be improved as well. Vegetation will be planted to better stabilize the soil and provide habitat for animals. The idea is the wetlands will be restored, too, as well as doubled in size.

“We are going to increase the amount of time water is in contact with vegetation,” explained Jason Drew with Nichols Consulting Engineers.

Revamping the courses fertilizer management plan is part of the bigger project. Rhamey said the course does not use much fertilizer now.

The lodge

To build the lodge, Edgewood Companies had to procure tourist accommodation units from South Lake Tahoe. That was achieved earlier this month.

The original plan was to take ones from the Horizon hotel, which it owns. But the thinking now is for that site to be viable after Columbia Sussex’s lease expires July 31, 2014, the TAUs need to be in place.



Edgewood Companies wants to build high-end lodging on the golf course.

Rhamey does not foresee extending the lease again, but instead having Edgewood Companies take control of the property.

“We are looking at a full range of options,” he said without being specific about the Horizon. “It’s future we think a lot about, but we don’t know yet.”

In its various iterations, the project now calls for 194 TAUs – down from 230; 274,000 square feet, a reduction of 172,000 square feet from the original plan; and three stories instead of four.

“The changes in the design program come from being responsive as we’ve been listening to public sentiment over the past two years,” Hill said. “We’ve been specifically monitoring other projects in the region and have seen that time and time again, the public has requested that projects reduce in size, scale and massing in order to better fit in with the Lake Tahoe environment.”

The lodging will be built in stages, with the main hotel in the first. The casitas, which will be detached and sold in yet to be determined intervals, will have four to six units in each structure.

Edgewood is weighing options when it comes to bringing in a

flagship hotelier to run the operation or doing it in house.

LEED certification will be sought, but the level has not been decided. A living roof is part of the design.

A bistro-style restaurant will offer meals three times a day. A high-end spa will be open to guests and the public.

Turning the golf course into a destination for cross country skiers and snowshoers is being discussed.

More information about the project is online.

This is an Edgewood Lodge rendering, the lodge site plan and the full site plan.

BofA puts off sale of Ritz-Carlton at Northstar

By Mark Anderson, Sacramento Business Journal

Bank of America delayed until July 11 its sale of the Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe.

The bank early in June had filed a notice of sale of the nearly new resort, listing a sale date of June 27 for an auction at the courthouse steps at the Santucci Justice Center near Roseville.

The bank this week delayed the sale. It is not unusual for notices of sale to be delayed.

The bank did not set a minimum bid.

The luxury hotel opened Dec. 9, 2009, to what was a good ski

season but also the depths of recession.

Bank of America, a primary lender on the development, first filed a notice of default on the property in March 2010. In that notice last year, the bank claimed Highlands Hotel Co. LLC was $18.6 million in default on the hotel and a neighboring parcel. The default involved two loans totaling $157 million.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist to host talk about internal medicine

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra is hosting Paula Crenshaw on July 14 at 7:30a.m

Crenshaw is a board certified internal medicine physician.

The free talk is at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

Call (530) 409.2791 if you have questions.

Remains of another victim of I-5 Strangler found

By Roman Gokhman, Contra Costa Times

Police have discovered the body of a Walnut Creek woman who was kidnapped and murdered in 1977 by the serial killer known as the I-5 Strangler.

The remains of 21-year-old Lou Ellen Burleigh were recently found in a dry riverbed near Lake Berryessa by a Napa County sheriff’s deputy who had taken an interest in the case, Walnut Creek police announced Monday.

Roger Reece Kibbe was convicted of the murder, as well as five others, in 2009. As part of a plea deal, he agreed to cooperate with authorities and locate Burleigh’s body.

At the time Kibbe claimed Burleigh was his first victim, and led police detectives around the lake on an unsuccessful search for her body. Burleigh was the only one of his victims who had not been found.

Burleigh was working for Heald Business College at the time of her killing and agreed to meet Kibbe to talk about a secretary job opening at a cosmetics studio on Contra Costa Boulevard.

When she met him on Sept. 10, 1977, in the 500 block of Contra Costa Boulevard, he told her his office was under construction and asked her to get in his van so they could talk about the job.

After they talked, he asked her to meet him again the morning after. She was seen for the last time around 9am Sept. 11.

Kibbe, who confessed to raping and murdering her, previously was convicted of killing 17-year-old Darcine Frackenpoh, whose body was found near the Old Meyers Grade on the South Shore in 1987, and has been in prison since 1991.

Read the whole story

Kite festival at Squaw

Every July, Squaw Valley celebrates the art and sport of kite flying as host to the nation’s highest altitude organized kiting festival at High Camp, elevation 8,200 feet.

Gigantic flying creatures, professional kite flyers, kite-making and face painting for the kids, and the live music are all part of the high-flying enjoyment of the 10th Annual Soaring Kites & Music Festival on July 9.

The festival brings members of regional and national kite organizations to Squaw Valley’s mountaintop to launch dozens of elaborate and colorful kites. The Soaring Kites & Music Festival also includes live music, kite-making workshop for kids and professional kite flying demonstrations.

Kite flying, which originated in 5th century BC in China, is a popular pastime and a competitive sport.

The Soaring Kites & Music Festival is from noon to 5pm and the kite-making workshop will run from 1-3pm.

Guests are invited to bring their own kites or purchase kites at the festival.

For more information about the Soaring Kites & Music Festival, call (530) 452.4000.

Randy Schachtili – 1926-2011

Randy Schachtili passed away June 19, 2011, doing what he loved, spending time with Jane, his wife of more than 63 years.

At 84, he lived a long and interesting life and touched the lives of all who knew and loved him.

Born in Asheville, N.C., on Nov. 7, 1926, and raised in Sacramento, he graduated from McClatchy High School, then enlisted in the Army Air Corps to train as a fighter pilot just as World War II ended. He attended UC Davis for a short time, but was drawn by a love of the outdoors to Lake Tahoe with his wife and young daughter, Jenni, in 1955.

He taught himself to ski as a teenager in the Sierra and parlayed that love into a long, enduring career in the ski industry as the first ski school director at Heavenly Valley in the 1950s; then operating a small ski area, The Edelweiss, which produced several Olympic ski racers and hopefuls during the early 1960s; and later going to Vail in the early 1970s, where he taught skiing for several years. He has been a member of a National Ski Instructors Association for nearly 60 years.

Winter sports were not his only passion. He mastered tennis in his 40s. Fly fishing and backpacking consumed every summer for decades. He was “The Vail Backpacker,” and family, friends and clients learned the skills of living in the outdoors and gained special appreciation of the Colorado Rockies and the Sierra Nevadas.

At the age of 55, he and Jane moved out of the Colorado snow to the Scottsdale sunshine, where they have lived for nearly 30 years. It was at that time that he developed a love of running and up until he was 75, he ran more than 19 marathons, including three in Boston.

Sports took their toll and his greatest disappointments of his long life were the decisions to hang up his skis, pack away his rods, put away his Nikes, and settle for games of skill like pinochle and Sudoku. An avid reader, he always had a book at his side, and he never lost his love of a good read.

His family gave him his greatest joys.

He is survived by his wife, Jane; his daughter Jenni Marquez (Walt) of Eagle; his grandchildren, born and raised in Vail, Jeff Marquez (Debbie), of Boise; and Molly Marquez, of Durango. Randy was excitedly waiting to meet his first great-grandson this fall.

He had an entrepreneurial spirit and his business careers ran from retail to insurance, recreation, real estate sales and property management. In retirement, when asked what he did, he replied with a smile, “Whatever I want,” a comment on how he lived. He will be missed.

EnEarl barred from being a judge again

The Nevada Commission on Judicial Ethics has barred former Douglas County Justice of the Peace Jim EnEarl from ever being a judge again.

The agreement signed last week by EnEarl says he violated judicial canons by repeatedly engaging in “extremely inappropriate and offensive” comments and actions with his court staff. Details of complaints filed last year by court employees have been sealed.

EnEarl served 15 years on the bench, having spent most of his career in law enforcement. He resigned from in August 2010.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report