

Old Long Skiis – ‘He touched so many lives’

By Kathryn Reed

If life is about creating cherished memories, then **Bob Rockwell** had a full life – even though many would say 61 is way too young to die.

He was a character. His friends proved that on Saturday with their stories about this longtime South Lake Tahoe resident who died in November.

As a lover of history, the afternoon doubled as a fundraiser for the Osgood Toll House, which is believed to be the oldest building in the Tahoe basin. It was appropriate that the nearly 70 people in attendance faced that old building as others talked about the man they called friend.



Bob Rockwell

Rockwell in the last few years became involved with the Lake Tahoe Historical Society, even speaking at events. The nonprofit is trying to raise \$30,000 to restore the toll house; which people were asked to donate to in Rockwell's name.

For those who didn't know Rockwell growing up or working with him at South Tahoe Refuse, they were introduced to him as Old Long Skiis (his spelling) as a regular commenter on *Lake Tahoe*

News.

“One thing that amazed me after he passed is how many people only knew him as Old Long Skiis. They had never met him,” Jeff Tillman said. “We’ll miss Old Long Skiis because he set us straight, told the truth and kept us in line.”

Tillman was not only Rockwell’s boss at the garbage company, but his friend. A token of honor was Tillman wearing a T-shirt from one of the many car races they went to.

Rockwell’s genuine good nature, storytelling and love of music were constant themes during his memorial June 11.

It was a different world when he grew up here. Mike Silvera recalled when they were 11 they wanted to ride around the lake with a couple other friends. Their parents said fine. They spent the night on the North Shore camping and then came home the next day.

John Allasia recalled the five-day canoe trip around the lake. No life jackets. The canoe was so loaded down that the water, especially as the waves got stronger, nearly came in.

The sentiment was Rockwell was always up for an adventure even it wasn’t well thought out.

“We went to the same church – the great outdoors,” Kevin Cruess said. He talked about how Rockwell liked to backcountry ski in an area just north of the Carson Pass. It had been years since either had been there. Cruess took his old skinny skis back there last December to scatter some of his buddy’s ashes.

Christy Prouty recalled being set up on a blind date. She was told this guy was cute and funny. She said that was true, and spent the next 25 years with Rockwell.

“He touched so many lives and always in a positive way,” she said.

Rockwell was also an avid gardener. It was appropriate that wildflower seeds were handed out Saturday – symbolizing the circle of life.