Opinion: Ex-SLT city manager on the outs in Wash.

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Nov. 6, 2015, Yakima Herald-Republic. Tony O'Rourke was city manager of South Lake Tahoe before leaving in 2012 for the Yakima job.***

Tony O'Rourke wants out of Yakima. The city manager has put in for at least two out-of-state positions. His house is on the market. He even said so – at a City Council executive session that violated state law, the legal point having been acknowledged by the city attorney.



Tony O'Rourke

But then, in a huff of hubris that careened into denial, O'Rourke rescinded his resignation, a move that sparked unprecedented exasperation and anger at Tuesday night's City Council meeting. The emotion-fraught verbal fracas fittingly corresponded with the flow of Election Night ballots for a new City Council that, apparently, will have to sort through a mess of the current council's and city manager's making.

We do know that the next City Council will have four new members among its crew of seven; what we don't know is whether O'Rourke will be the city manager who reports to them.

He shouldn't be. When Jan. 1 comes, Tony O'Rourke should be gone. If he isn't – and the current council shows few signs of being up to the task – the new council should perform this

dirty yet dutiful task.

Read the whole story

Mysterious light in sky was test missile

By CBS-San Francisco

Social media lit up Saturday evening as people reported seeing strange lights in the skies over California and Nevada.

It began shortly before 6 p.m. Newsrooms in California report being flooded with calls.

Some speculated it was a meteor, others thought it was a UFO sighting.

Navy officials told the San Diego Union-Tribune it was an unarmed Trident II (D5) missile fired from a missile submarine. The test flight was visible across California, in Nevada and Arizona.

Read the whole story

Then and now: Memories of

1952 Stateline



Gateway Club in 1952. Photo/Del Laine Collection/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

In 1952, George’s Gateway Club stood on the corner of Stateline Avenue and Highway 50. In 1955, Bill Harrah purchased it and opened his first Tahoe casino, Harrah’s Club.



Harvey Gross’s Wagon Wheel Saloon and Gambling Hall stood next door.



1952 brought lots of snow to Stateline. Photo/Del Lane Collection/Lake Tahoe News

Across the street were Sahati's Stateline Country Club and the Nevada Club. In 1958, Bill Harrah purchased both and opened Tahoe Harrah's. Harrah's historic triangular marquee and parking lot were built about where the pictured coffee shop stood on the California side.



A plowed Highway 50 in 1952 allowed barely one lane of traffic. Photo/Del Laine Collection/Lake Tahoe Historical Society



The same Highway 50 at Stateline Avenue today. Photo/Bill Kingman

High rises dominate Stateline today.

— Bill Kingman

South Lake Tahoe glitters as it turns 50



More than 200 people mingle before the festivities to celebrate South Lake Tahoe's 50th birthday begin Nov. 7. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

"History is what binds us."

That was just one of the sentiments expressed by South Lake Tahoe Mayor Hal Cole on Saturday night as more than 200 people came together to celebrate the city's 50th birthday.

It was on Nov. 30, 1965, that South Lake Tahoe became an incorporated city.

The milestones – some positive, some sad, all critical to the city being what it is today – were captured through video, personal stories, and the written word.

While the city is bound to have more parties at other significant markers, it is at 50 when many of those who helped establish the city are still here to tell their story. Yesteryear's visionaries aren't likely to be around for the 75th celebration. That is what made Nov. 7 special – the past, present and future were all in one room for a few hours.



A golden anniversary.

It was a night to remember those who had the foresight to strive for incorporation, the recognition that the area would be better off governing itself than being saddled with decisions made 60 miles away in Placerville, and to illustrate what has occurred in these five decades and what is possible going forward.

Thirteen former or current councilmembers attended the festivities at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel. Members of the Brad

Murphy (the first mayor) and Norm Woods (councilman) families were in attendance.

The sold-out event included former and current city staff, as well as a who's who list of community members.

It was a night to better understand some of the struggles that have taken place – such as development and redevelopment, finances, the loss of local soldiers, and the Angora Fire.

It was a night to embrace accomplishments – Lakeview Commons, recreation center, environmental stewardship.

It was a night to look at the future – Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care moving into the city limits, Tahoe Mountain Lab building a hub for the untraditional work force, expanded recreation opportunities and a city that will be vibrant when the 100th celebration takes place.



City Manager Nancy Kerry, second from left, is flanked by the four councilmembers who attended the Nov. 7 party.

Cole touched on four entities that to him have made a profound difference to this area:

· Heavenly – especially singling out how the ski resort was built by locals and had world-class events, and is still integral to the fabric of the city.

· Barton Memorial Hospital – recalling the days before there was a hospital and how it is rare for a community hospital to still be locally owned-operated.

· South Tahoe Public Utility District – for being a pioneer in treating sewage to keep Tahoe blue.

· Edgewood – to the Park family that has been key to Tahoe since the 1800s and is continuing to evolve.

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Notes:

· The commemorative book is available for purchase by emailing Tracy Franklin – tfranklin@cityofslt.us.

· The three-part video shown Saturday night is available on **YouTube**.

Opinion: Demand better tests, not fewer schools

By Michael R. Bloomberg

President Obama is in danger of squandering one of his most important legacies – better public education policies – and doing real harm to our poorest students and America's future.

Last month, the president and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called for limiting the amount of time that students spend taking tests. It's an unfortunate and tragically oversimplified response to the challenges facing our schools – challenges made plain by U.S. test results released recently, which show that students have lost ground in math for the first time since 1990.

To improve education, parents and teachers need to know how

well our students – of all ethnic and racial backgrounds – are learning. That's especially true in communities where schools are the best hope for escaping poverty. Parents deserve to know how schools compare with one another so that they can demand improvements where they are needed and hold schools accountable for delivering results. The same is true for principals and elected officials, to say nothing of taxpayers. That's why accurate information on student learning is so crucial – and like it or not, high-quality testing is an essential element of that.

Read the whole story

Bob Rockwell (Old Long Skiis) – 1953-2015



Bob Rockwell and his dog Lucky. Photos/Provided

"Old Long Skiis" is now making first tracks with his dog Clarity in a secret powder bowl high above Meiss Meadow.

Robert Porter Rockwell Jr. died Nov. 3, 2015. He was 61.



Bob Rockwell loved to tell stories.

Bob was born in San Jose to Mona and Robert P. Rockwell Sr. on Dec. 29, 1953. The family moved to South Lake Tahoe in the early 1960s and began a long history of running motels, shops, and other businesses.

Brought up with a great work ethic, his first job was cleaning up the beach at Ski Run Marina and taking out tourists in an aluminum boat over to Emerald Bay, acting as tour guide. He was only in grade school at the time. Folks loved his enthusiasm and hearing his knowledge of the lake.

He graduated from South Tahoe High School in 1972, where he earned his “block T” letter on the ski team. Working at the drive-in theater on Glenwood was a blast for Bob. Next he managed the A&W Drive-In for his folks, then later he became the tram operator at Heavenly Valley Ski Area. As an avid skier, this was one of his favorite occupations.

He worked for South Tahoe Refuse next, and was there for over 30 years, starting at the bottom and working his way up to supervisor of the collections crew. One person’s trash is another one’s treasure, and boy, the treasures he would bring home. He had so many hilarious stories of his days with STR.

His contagious laugh and great sense of humor made him an unforgettable person to know. Bob was a kind, caring, generous person who went out of his way to help others, be it snowblowing the neighbors’ driveways, kitty sitting, or

sharing the veggies from his garden.

He loved skiing, boating, fishing, duck hunting, camping, and every aspect of living at Tahoe. Bob especially loved boat camping in his Bayliner cabin cruiser; rising early he would troll the tranquil waters of Emerald Bay listening to the ospreys call.

Bob leaves behind his loving father, Robert P. Rockwell Sr. of San Jose; brother Eric Rockwell of New York City; sisters Linda (Del) Sessions of San Jose, Michele (Larry) Mowrey of Sacramento; and loving partner of 25 years Christy A. Prouty of South Lake Tahoe.

Buddy the dog and Ashleigh the cat will miss him as well as everyone else who had the pleasure to know him. He was well known in our community will be dearly missed by many.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Lake Tahoe Historical Society (P.O. Box 18501, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151) or American Heart Association would have pleased Bob.

A celebration of life for Bob will be announced at a later date.

Fast, free in-flight Wi-Fi is uncharted territory for airlines

By Mike Tierney, New York Times

As broadband Internet service becomes increasingly widespread and free in public places, it has remained, to travelers'

frustration, stuck in the slow lane on airplanes.

But with recent developments in technology, sluggish in-flight Internet speed is starting, however fitfully, to change. Still, it might not catch up to passengers' expectations, as many are accustomed to a superior Internet experience on the ground.

"The thing that they must realize is that in-flight Wi-Fi is still a very new product, and the expectation that you'll get a good, strong signal like you do at home or office needs to be reined in," said Chris McGinnis, founder of TravelSkills, a blog that focuses on the business passenger, and an inveterate user of Wi-Fi while airborne. "Airlines are partially to blame for inflating expectations."

Read the whole story

Snow, below-freezing temps in forecast

Saturday's blue skies are going to give way to storm clouds on Sunday.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for a low pressure system to move into the area the morning of Nov. 8. By Sunday night it should be snowing in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Snow is expected in Reno and Carson City on Monday.

One to 3 inches of snow is expected at lake level on both days.

On Monday the high in South Lake Tahoe is expected to be 35 degrees. On Tuesday night the low could be 10 degrees.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ed board takes no action regarding superintendent

No action was taken Saturday by the El Dorado County board of education during a special meeting.



Jeremy Meyers

The meeting was called to discuss Superintendent Jeremy Meyers who on Nov. 5 was arrested on four misdemeanor charges related to driving under the influence. His blood alcohol level was 0.19, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Shortly before Meyers crashed his truck in Placerville he had been at the county office of education working.

This is the second DUI arrest in about a five-month period for the elected official. He pleaded no contest in the first case. That incident was also in the middle of a workday.

The board of education expects to discuss the situation further at a December closed session meeting. As elected official Meyers does not fall under traditional employee

rules.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Barton Foundation has money to give away

The Barton Foundation $14,500 to give away for community projects focused on building capacity through training, informational products, or events that increase mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and connect patients and their families to programs and services.

Priority will be given to “one time” investments, such as special projects or events. Grants will not be awarded for overhead or on-going services.

Grant proposals will be accepted until Nov. 30, with recipients notified no later than Jan. 30.

This funding is available for nonprofit organizations and social service agencies. Additional grant criteria and the application are available **online** or contact Kindle Craig at 530.543.5612.