



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Supporters of Pendleton High School Spanish teacher Kathryn Youngman during a rally to get her on The Ellen DeGeneres Show on Thursday at the Happy Canyon Arena in Pendleton.

YOUNGMAN: More than 300 attended

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Falcon defensive end Vic Beasley, Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley, the operating room team at St. Anthony Hospital, the BMCC mascot and even rival Hermiston High School, among others.

Ellen has noticed. At about 2 p.m., Thursday, Executive Producer Ed Glavin tweeted, "So everyone who's tweeting knows, we are aware of #YoungmanOnEllen and we are in touch. Thanks. @TheEllenShow"

Until Youngman gets a formal invite, however, the campaign will cruise on.

The idea to photograph a sea of supporters at the Happy Canyon arena germinated from a request by 2014 Happy Canyon Princesses Jory Spencer and Marissa Baumgartner for the Happy Canyon Board to retweet the hashtag. But Happy Canyon Grounds Director Johnny Pimentel wanted to do more than just shoot the hashtag further into the Twittersphere.

"Johnny said, 'Let's put on our pink shirts and pose for a picture with the hashtag,'" said Communications Director Cory Neistadt. "It grew from there."

Eventually, they decided to invite the whole town.

Some of those at Happy Canyon had fueled up on

"We learn so much more than Spanish. We learned about kindness and persistence ... and life in general."

— Charla Simons, PHS student

pizza earlier in the evening, stopping off at Big John's Pizza where \$10 from each family-style pizza went to Youngman. Every employee was working. Taryn Soloski, one of Youngman's students who was preparing pizzas, said the response was overwhelming.

"It was crazy," she said. "At one point, we had to stop doing takeout. The customers were so patient."

As the crowd gathered at the Happy Canyon arena, energy built. A drone flew overhead to capture footage of the gathering. The drone pilots, Jeff Ware and Joey Burns of Hermiston, said they just wanted to support "a cool cause." Their footage will appear in future Twitter and Facebook #YoungmanOnEllen posts.

After the 300-or-so supporters assembled in the dirt arena, Happy Canyon Vice-President J.J. Spriet whipped them into a frenzy.

"This is trending worldwide," he said of the hashtag. "From New York to Hermiston, from Germany to Irrigon, from South

Bend, Indiana, to Spokane, Washington, from Spain to Arizona to West Virginia."

Several of the teenagers who drove the Twitter campaign spoke to the crowd about doing something for their beloved teacher.

"It was our privilege," said senior Roman Martinez. "She means a lot to us."

He grinned and said, "It's the power of teenagers — we know how to get on our phones and tweet."

"We learn so much more than Spanish," said student Charla Simons. "We learned about kindness and persistence ... and life in general."

The group erupted when Youngman herself took the microphone. She thanked the community. She talked about the importance of being kind and then praised her students.

"Teenagers are amazing," Youngman said. "They took an idea. They took their compassion and their energy and started a movement."

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

MURDER: Nelson moved to Pendleton in 1995

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Local and state police responded at about 3:30 a.m. Wednesday to a 9-1-1 call about a shooting near milepost 233 on the Old Oregon Trail Highway in the Meacham area on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Marnie Elder is Nelson's sister. She said in an email she learned her brother returned home Wednesday morning and found someone attempting to steal one of his vehicles.

It was unclear what happened after that, she said, "except that he was shot and killed by" McIver.

Nelson's daughter, Ashlyn Nelson, said she heard about her father's death through social media and called her grandparents, Susan and Steve Nelson, who live in California.

"I had to be the one to say he got shot and didn't make it," Ashlyn said.

Elder said her brother was outgoing and charismatic and never met a stranger.

"He had the ability to engage an entire room telling a tall tale of fishing or hunting," she said, "and was funny enough to be a professional comedian."

Thadd Nelson became a general contractor after moving to Pendleton in 1995 and developed a large clientele in Umatilla County and Washington, according to Elder. He also worked for wineries in Sonoma and Mendocino counties in California. Elder said her brother was a skilled stone mason, and the TV show "This Old House" featured one of her brother's jobs.

Ashlyn Nelson said her father's construction company folded during the Great Recession, so he traveled for work, including to California and more recently in Hermiston.

Ashlyn was born in Boise and moved back there in 2010, but for a time attended Pendleton High

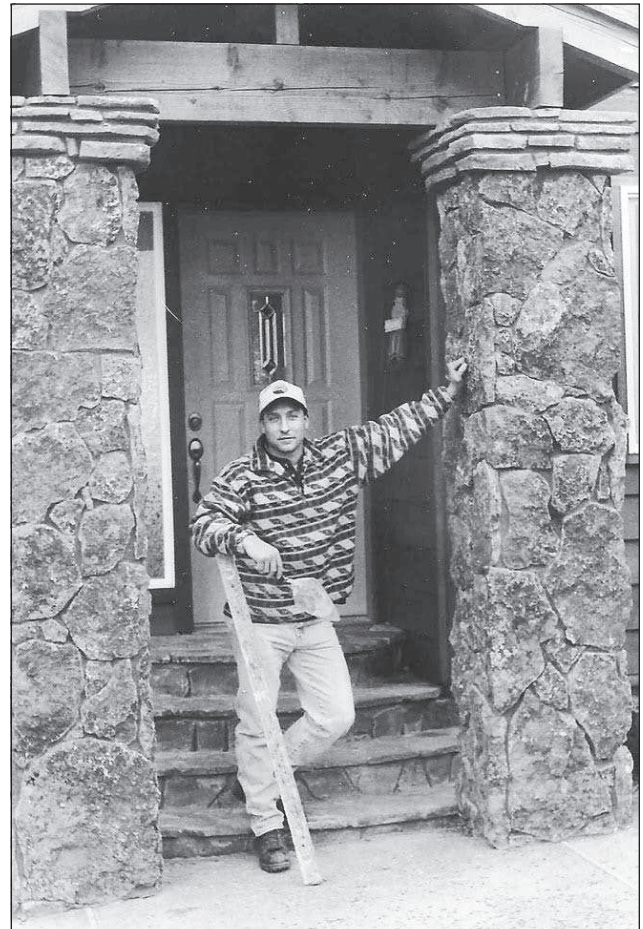


Photo contributed by Marnie Elder

Thadd Nelson stands next to his masonry work in the late 1990s. He was a skilled stone mason, according to his sister, Marnie Elder.



Ayala



Vargas

School and lived with her father. He said she cherished those years.

"It was just the two of us," she said. "He was a hard-working man, a good man."

Elder said he helped her start her own business, Vintage Photos, in Pendleton, and volunteered to bring the Pendleton Farmers Market to fruition. Her brother also was an avid hunter and angler, she said, and taught children to fish.

"He loved kids and

animals," she said. "(He) was a very loving father, son, brother and uncle. He had an extremely big heart for anyone in need and would give what he had to help out others."

He is survived by his parents, his daughters Ashlyn and Alexa Nelson, his sister Marnie Elder, and his niece Savannah Elder.

Anyone with details about the crime can contact the Umatilla Tribal Police Department at 541-278-0550 or the Umatilla County dispatch center at 541-966-3651, -3652 or -3653.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

COAL: Wind, solar have become increasingly cost-competitive

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to Initiative 63.

On Wednesday, Pacific Power released its analysis of the plan, showing HB 4036 would save \$600 million through 2030 versus the ballot measure. Customer rates would increase by less than 1 percent per year over that time, the analysis continues.

Pacific Power has roughly 17,847 customers in Umatilla County.

PGE conducted a similar analysis, with similar results: the company projects an overall savings of \$220-\$360 million, and a rate impact of 1.5 percent per year compared to business as usual.

Rick Link, director of origination for Pacific Power and lead analyst on HB 4036, said the primary difference between the bill and proposed ballot measure is how the utilities will be allowed to phase out their coal generation. A number of the company's coal plants are expected to depreciate between 2024-2030, but Link said the bill gives them flexibility to adjust their depreciation schedule.

"It allows us to essentially take advantage of fully paying for coal resources after they've depreciated," Link said.

Wind and solar energy have also become increasingly cost-competitive, even with historic lows in natural gas prices, Link said. Pacific Power forecasts show new wind and solar projects are about 20 percent less expensive than new natural gas plants.

Another key development, Link said, was the extension of federal tax credits for wind and solar energy. Both the Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credit received multi-year extensions with gradual phase-out periods that Link said should give greater certainty to investing in renewables.

"Irrespective of Oregon

policy, this now provides opportunity for near-term renewable resources as the most cost-competitive alternative," Link said.

HB 4036 also maintains a 4 percent incremental cost cap, meaning that Pacific Power and PGE won't have to add renewables if the cost is more than 4 percent higher than developing non-renewable power.

Under the plan, Pacific Power says it will close or convert 2,800 megawatts of coal-fueled generation by 2034, and could build up to 600 megawatts of renewable energy projects in the near future. Its analysis shows the bill will reduce Oregon's carbon emissions through 2040 by 35 million tons.

A number of environmental groups including the Oregon Environmental Council, League of Conservation Voters, Natural

Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Climate Solutions collaborated on the bill. The Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon, the state's primary advocate for residential ratepayers, has also signed off on the plan.

"Oregonians from all walks of life and across the state that it is time to move to a cleaner energy future," said Stefan Bird, president and CEO of Pacific Power. "Pacific Power has an obligation to achieve that shared objective in an affordable way. HB 4036 does that."

The Public Utility Commission will meet at 9:30 a.m. to hear from Pacific Power and PGE on their analyses. A public hearing on the bill is scheduled for Feb. 2 in the legislature.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

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