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— Olga “Honey” Canney, about a dozen students from Canney’s water aerobics class at Bend Golf & Country Club plan to celebrate her birthday Saturday by gathering outside her room at Whispering Winds to sing her song



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Olga “Honey” Canney of Bend will be celebrating her 105th birthday on Saturday.

105th

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Over the past year, Canney has missed the social interactions with her students, who are in their 70s and 80s, just as much as the exercise.

“It’s the thing that changed my life dramatically when I could no longer go to the pool,” Canney said.

“I am such a different person without the water exercises. Now, I’m a lot slower. But I’ll keep going as long as I can.”

About a dozen students from Canney’s class plan to

celebrate her birthday Saturday by gathering outside her room at Whispering Winds to sing her songs.

“I will be perfectly delighted to see each and every one of them,” Canney said.

Colette Blum-Meister, who has taken Canney’s class since 2016, helped organize the gathering Saturday outside Canney’s home.

“We just want to be able to express love to her and appreciate who she is,” Blum-Meister said.

Blum-Meister describes Canney as a motivator. Canney’s dedication to water aer-

obics is likely why she is so vibrant at 105, she said.

“How many people like that are there in the United States or in the world,” Blum-Meister said.

“We are very fortunate to have her here in Bend.”

Canney is in rare company as someone who reached triple digits in age. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data from 2010, the United States had 53,364 people over 100.

Canney has outlived her five siblings, her husband and two of her children. She still has a son, daughter, 13 grand-

children, 28 great-grandchildren and 12 great-great grandchildren.

Canney is grateful for the people in her life. She can’t wait to see them all again in person after the pandemic passes.

She also hopes to return to the pool at the Bend club. Maybe not as a teacher, but as a supportive friend to her students.

“I will be happy if and when the pool gets open,” Canney said. “If I still have my marbles.”

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State-by-state numbers of the U.K. variant

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is tracking emerging variant cases of COVID-19 per U.S. state. The number of cases are updated three times each week. Here is the most recent data available.

State name	Number of U.K. variant per state	State name	Number of U.K. variant per state
Alaska	1	Nevada	1
California	92	New Jersey	2
Colorado	9	New Mexico	2
Connecticut	8	New York	22
Florida	92	North Carolina	1
Georgia	14	Oregon	3
Illinois	9	Pennsylvania	5
Indiana	4	Tennessee	2
Kentucky	2	Texas	7
Louisiana	1	Utah	1
Maryland	4	Virginia	1
Maine	3	Washington	3
Michigan	17	Wisconsin	1
Minnesota	8	Wyoming	2

Note: States not listed above have no known cases of the variant as of Wednesday.

Variant

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“We anticipated that we would eventually detect it in Deschutes County,” Conway said in an email. “Multiple lines of evidence suggest that the U.K. variant (B.1.1.7) is more efficiently transmitted than other variants of the virus that cause COVID-19. That means that it is more important than ever to take precautions to slow the spread.”

According to modeling by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this variant will continue to grow in early 2021, likely becoming the predominant strain by March, Conway said.

The current vaccines appear to be quite effective in immunizing people to this strain, as it is with the strains currently more common in North America.

The detection in the wastewater sample is an effective way to see how prevalent the virus is in a community, he said.

Teams of students and researchers from Oregon State University are heading to Redmond this weekend to conduct a randomized Team-based Rapid Assessment of Community-level Coronavirus Epidemics in 30 neighborhoods. Wastewater samples from Redmond and Bend will also be taken at that time, Tyler said.

“Even though the vaccines are starting to roll out, the appearance of these new variants means that people need to stay vigilant in wearing masks, limiting contact with others, social distancing and hand washing,” Tyler said. “And they need to get vaccinated.”

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Beauty

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The natural desert association, a Bend-based nonprofit that protects habitats on the Oregon High Desert, launched the online tool this month. It can be found at: <http://bit.ly/sagebrush-story-map> or by visiting ONDA.org. The tool is best viewed on a computer screen or tablet — a mobile phone screen is just too small to do it justice.

The story-map features the Greater Hart-Sheldon region, several million acres of untouched sagebrush habitat

that straddles the Oregon-Nevada border, close to the town of Lakeview.

“The Greater Hart-Sheldon has some of the darkest night skies, richest human histories, and densest concentration of wilderness-quality lands in the lower 48 states,” said Jeremy Austin, the desert association’s policy manager.

The region is rich in wildlife, and the story-map contains delightful images of burrowing owls, bighorn sheep, trout and sage grouse. Hart-Sheldon is one of about six areas identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the most important habitat

The story-map also covers the history, flora, and geography of the area, as well as the human-caused threats to this sensitive habitat. The Greater Hart-Sheldon region is threatened by the fossil fuel industry — 44% of the area is at risk for high energy development.

for the long-term survival of the greater sage grouse, said Austin.

One of the largest and longest pronghorn antelope migrations in the country can also be found in the Greater Hart-Sheldon. One particularly unique feature of the desert association’s tool is a map that shows the an-

nual migration of a single female pronghorn, which was tracked with a radio device.

“As someone who has spent a lot of time there, this piece tells of the story of the Greater Hart-Sheldon far better than anything else I’ve seen in print or online,” said Tim Greyhavens, a photographer who contributed to the project.

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Austin calls the area a rare opportunity to protect and conserve habitat cores, particularly when compared to other high-value migration corridors and sagebrush habitats in North America, where oil and gas drilling, interstate highways, commodity production and develop-

ment pressures have created near-impenetrable barriers for wildlife movement.

On top of being an ideal place to spot wildlife, Austin says the Hart-Sheldon offers unparalleled High Desert solitude.

“It’s difficult to explain the feeling of the desert,” said Austin. “The soft coarseness. The cool, clean, saturated color after a rain. The expansive, uninterrupted viewsheds that extend for miles. Our hope is the story-map can help convey some of these feelings to viewers.”

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Councilor

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“Fellow council members — not naming names — are comfortable making posts where they mock the COVID-19 mandate, making fun of victims by disrespecting the guidelines and smiling while doing it,” he said.

Another charged moment involving a Madras councilor was also discussed Friday, this one concerning Councilor Royce Embanks, who snapped at a member of the public at a recent meeting. In the end, the council chose to take no action in Embanks’ case and gather public input in Throop’s case and determine at the next council meeting, Feb. 9, whether to sanction him.

Around midday Wednesday, Throop responded to a photo on Facebook showing three women and one man taking part in workouts at 3 Peaks CrossFit. One of the people is Holcomb. None was wearing a mask.

“Nothing but pathetic terrorists,” Throop wrote.

Screen grabs of the comment were sent to Madras Mayor Richard Ladeby and City Administrator Gus Burril, who began looking into whether Throop had violated conduct rules for interacting with fellow councilors.

Ladeby and Burril both tried contacting Throop to discuss his post, but when he didn’t respond, a special meeting was scheduled.



Dean Guernsey/Bulletin file photo

The “South Y” or the South Madras Gateway in Madras.

On Friday, it was held in an open public session, rather than in an executive session, at Throop’s request. Nearly 100 people watched the livestream.

Throop said there was a double standard at play, with members of the council choosing which laws they want to follow. “When I see my fellow council members boasting about violating the mandate, I feel insulted, mainly for the 400,000-plus Americans who have died from this deadly and real pandemic,” he said.

Elected in November, Throop, 30, is a rare progressive elected official in conservative Jefferson County, which went for Donald Trump over Joe Biden 60.5%

to 37% in the 2020 presidential race. Throop’s Facebook bio reads: “Passionate Progressive, Anti-Racist, Agnostic & Lifelong Central Oregon Citizen. BLACK LIVES MATTER!”

He read an 800-word statement to the council in which he claimed a small group of Madras business owners was “terrorizing” the community by flouting COVID-19 guidelines.

Mayor Ladeby cut him off several times, telling him, “We’re not here for a lecture.” “From here on out, I will follow the code of conduct strictly and professionally and I will not repeat this mistake,” Throop said.

Holcomb did not accept Throop’s apology.

“I am many things. I am a mom. A licensed Realtor. A CrossFit coach. A business owner. A member of Jefferson County Rotary and a Madras City councilor. I’ve spent hundreds of hours volunteering in this community,” she said, sounding as if she was fighting back tears. “A terrorist, I most certainly am not.”

Holcomb was appointed to the council in 2018 to fill a vacancy and elected in November 2020. She said she represents Throop calling Trump supporters “uneducated” or “Nazis” online, and read from the council handbook’s rules for professionalism.

“It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other council members, their opinions and their actions,” she said.

The tenor of public discourse in Madras has been heating up lately, with some business owners expressing anger over the governor’s COVID-19 protocols, several councilors said.

After Redmond’s City Council wrote to Gov. Kate Brown earlier this month asking for greater local control in reopening schools and businesses, Madras residents called on their council to do the same though no letter has yet been sent.

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