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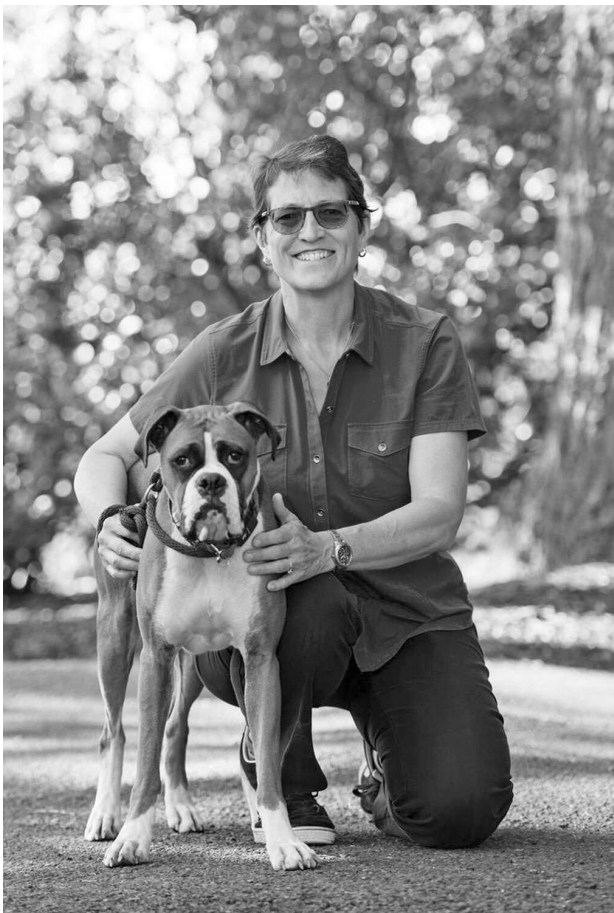
# The Leader

Saturday, January 27, 2024

MAIN MENU



## Quilcener running for Senate



(/uploads/original/20240109-191339-Kelbon.jpg)

**Marcia Kelbon with Chaco**

Posted Wednesday, January 10, 2024 3:00 am

Marcia Kelbon admits that she really hadn't been politically active until two years ago.

‘I was commuting back and forth to Seattle and I saw that city fall apart and I saw the same thing happening over here,’ the Quilcene resident said in an interview with The Leader after announcing her candidacy for the Washington State Senate.

Citing problems of drug abuse, a lack of adequate policing and the unhoused, she got involved as she saw other glaring problems.

‘I started realizing how hard it is for younger people to make a go of it here and I don’t want to see us become a ghost town peninsula. It’s not just the young but the retirees too, and I have the background to address those things. Rather than throw in the towel I thought, let’s do something so that all of the generations can make a good go of it here.’

Kelbon considers herself a moderate.

‘We’re in a pretty polarized country and a pretty polarized state and as was the case during my county commissioner race, I’m hoping people avoid political labels and look at what the candidates stand for. I’m for our government letting people do things instead of not letting them do things. I hope people are open-minded because I am certainly open-minded,’ she said.

Kelbon is a chemical engineer, attorney, former US Navy civilian engineer, former biopharmaceutical executive, and current Quilcene fire commissioner.

‘Washington state was a wonderful place to build a rich and rewarding life when I moved here over forty years ago,’ she said, ‘I was readily able to seek higher education, raise a family, educate my children, start and grow a business, and purchase and build a home.’

‘But our children and grandchildren, particularly on the Olympic Peninsula, do not have the same opportunities in this resource-rich state today,’ she added. ‘Fuel and long-term care taxes reduce the reach of our dollars; too many of our children receive a sub-standard education; and drugs are rampant and our police are not empowered to keep us safe. Housing is also in short supply and costly, and businesses face an uphill battle.’

Kelbon stated that she handled child abuse and neglect cases for the State Attorney General’s office while completing her law degree, then practiced as a patent attorney. She most recently served for 19 years as a senior executive and the general counsel of a biopharmaceutical company. She has served as a Quilcene fire commissioner since 2022 and volunteers with East Jefferson Habitat for Humanity and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group in addition to assisting with other community affairs.

She lives with her husband of 43 years and a boxer dog on a tree farm in Quilcene. Two of Marcia’s three adult children and a granddaughter live on the Olympic Peninsula.

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## OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

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**THE WAY WE WERE: NEWS OF THE PAST FROM THE LEADER (/stories/the-way-we-were-news-of-the-past-from-the-leader,154809)**

**City seeks caretaker for Kah Tai Park (/stories/city-seeks-caretaker-for-kah-tai-park,154805)**

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**Salish Coast students are ready to rock (/stories/salish-coast-students-are-ready-to-rock,154803)**

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# The Leader

January 24, 2024  
Issue 4 of 100

IN DEPTH • IN TOUCH • INDEPENDENT

\$2.00



**MUSIC**  
Local teacher starts  
School of Rock • 6



**CALENDAR**  
See what's happening  
around town • 3



**INSIDER**  
The JCFMCO Chamber  
Business Insider • 9



**LOVE NOTES**  
Send them through  
The Leader • 21

## Marchers stand up for reproductive rights

BY KIRK BOKLEITNER

Protest marchers took their calls for reproductive rights to the streets at noon on Saturday, Jan. 20, lining the sides of Sims Way with picket signs. From Highway down to Reaney Street, members of the local chapters of League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women joined a demonstration organized by Port Townsend Indivisible.

Gina McMath, who is part of the group's leadership team, described Port Townsend Indivisible as "a loose organization of local groups, that was formed to counter the MAGA agenda." They meet on the second Tuesday of every month at the Unity Center on Sea Dune Avenue, presenting civic-minded activities that range from researching political candidates to writing postcards and letters to government officials.

Saturday's event was focused on promoting reproductive health care rights for all, along with urging support for an election year, McMath said. "We want to give people encouragement, and keep up their spirits, even though this is still an issue that we still have to care about," she said. "It's better to do something, and take action, rather than just sitting around and worrying. We try to stay involved whenever we are, and the responses we've received have been heartening."

By about noon that Saturday, they counted at least 80 participants in the protest, with the largest cluster in front of the Port Townsend Visitor Information Center on Jefferson Street. A few minutes later, as passing cars honked their horns, McMath estimated at least 20 more marchers joined the cluster across the street.

"This is probably the best attendance we've seen in years," she said. "We've had a steady increase in interest as this election year has approached. I think a lot of people felt exhausted before, and had settled back down a bit, but our turnout now has



Marchers protest along an icy road against recent legal moves by states and the Supreme Court. Leader photo by Kirk Bokleitner

got all sorts of people who aren't even part of our streets." Mike Cordova, a retired Navy officer who said his activism didn't really begin in earnest until "the first, and hopefully only, Trump administration," joined his wife, Linda Martin, whose activism dates back to her 20s, due to a painfully personal experience with this issue.

"That was when I had an almost deadly illegal abortion in Missouri, in the late 1960s," Martin said. She admitted that it feels "insupportable and shameful" to have to raise her voice and a picket

sign on the streets all over again, to protect this issue so many decades later.

"We did have a long gap, after Roe v. Wade in 1973, during which a lot of us thought this fight was done, and we devoted our attention to other issues, but it came back," Martin said. "At this point, we know who the likely Republican nominee is, and we know what his agenda is. It's not good for women, it's not good for minorities, and really, it's not good for anyone except the ultra-wealthy. That's why we have to keep at this."

## Fund gives a boost to diverse small businesses

BY MITZI JO GORDON

A program of Jefferson County Farmers Markets aims to make it easier for people of the global majority to start and grow their market businesses.

Entering its third year, the BIPOC Start-Up Business Fund works to address and remove financial barriers that have an impact on the inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in those markets.

Executive Director Amanda Meléndez grew up in Port Townsend. She began her eighth season with the nonprofit Jefferson County Farmers Markets (JCFM) in October.

"The farmers market is a place where small businesses get started and grow and thrive," Meléndez said. "It's a huge part of what has made agriculture a viable piece of our local economy. And the culture of small farms and small businesses here are a huge part of what people love about this space."

Last year, more than 100 small



Mitzi Jo Gordon, executive director of Jefferson County Farmers Markets, stands behind a market stall.

businesses participating in JCFM's a lot of people who are beginning farmers, beginning small business owners, artists, and food makers," Meléndez said. "These vendors as a whole are younger and more diverse in

terms of racial and gender identity, and sexual orientation, than the population of Jefferson County."

She said the nonprofit wants to invest in these business owners through the Start-Up Fund, creating space for a diversity of people to participate in farmers markets.

"I'm really excited for its potential," she said. "For us it's been a way we can intentionally welcome people who have been systematically excluded from access to financing and inherited wealth, while recognizing the impact of white supremacy in our country."

Participation in the BIPOC Start-Up Business Fund has grown steadily, from one vendor during the first year, up to seven individual or team recipients in 2022. So far every applicant has received some form of support from JCFM.

Meléndez and her colleague Michelle Gomez was a fund recipient in 2022 as part of a group application joining several vendors in collaboration.

## Infant dead in wake of kidnapping case

BY LEADER STAFF

After an extensive search that began last Friday afternoon, police Saturday morning recovered the body of an infant child near Koh Tai Park, where the infant was found deceased. The child was less than one month old, according to authorities.

Sorenson was originally wanted for questioning relating to the kidnapping, as well as criminal mistreatment and reckless conduct, according to law enforcement. Sorenson was unable to provide the "basic necessities of life" for the child.

As of Jan. 22, officers and deputies were seeking to process the scene. The cause of death remains under investigation, and law enforcement said there is no active threat to the public.

Sorenson made his first appearance in court on Monday morning, where a judge set bail at \$200,000. According to state records, Sorenson has prior felony and misdemeanor convictions for burglary, forgery, theft, and possession of stolen property.

Port Townsend police officers and Jefferson County Sheriff's deputies gather on the side of Reaney and Clay streets, searching for a missing infant who was found deceased on Saturday morning. Leader photo by Lloyd Miller



Port Townsend police officers and Jefferson County Sheriff's deputies gather on the side of Reaney and Clay streets, searching for a missing infant who was found deceased on Saturday morning. Leader photo by Lloyd Miller

inside this issue

FRONT	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CLASSIFIEDS	INSIDER'S GAVINNY UNCLASSIFIED
Letters	Arts & Entertainment	Arts & Entertainment
Business Insider	Community Calendar	Arts & Entertainment
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## LATEST NEWS

### Development director seeks faster permitting process (/stories/development-director-seeks-faster-permitting-process,154904)

Jefferson County's lengthy permit process is about to get an upgrade that will consider requests in a more timely manner, according to the county's Director of Community Development. ...

### Humor is hard to find, but worth it (/stories/humor-is-hard-to-find-but-worth-it,154812)

A reader told our new editor there should be more humor in this beloved weekly. To which I can only reply: What am I, chopped liver? Granted, humor is always in short supply. Go into ...

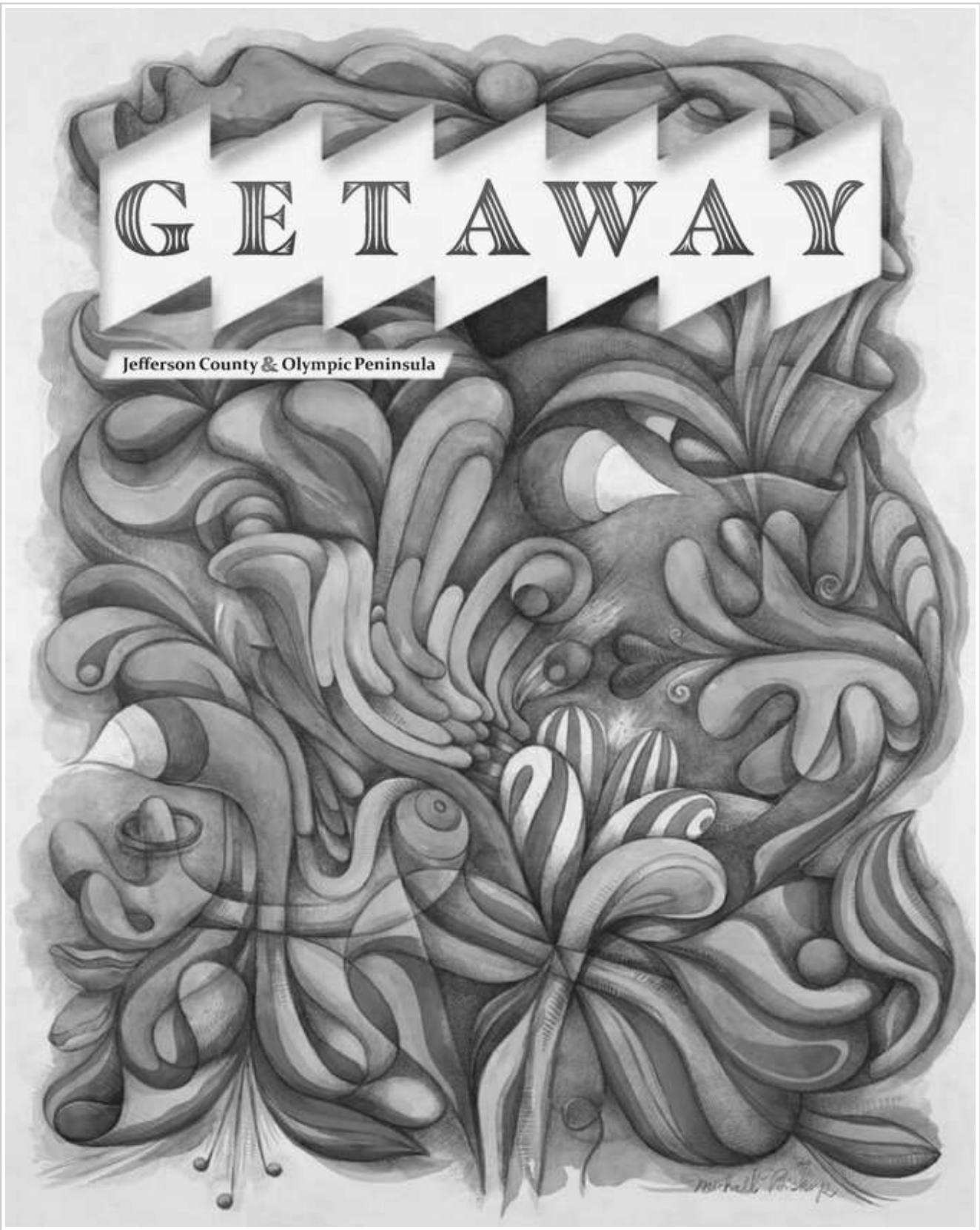
### Relax into the ordinary (/stories/relax-into-the-ordinary,154811)

There is an art to gracious aging. The mastery involves deciding to make the most of life no matter the glitches, choosing to be pleasant no matter the terrain, and fostering the highest possible ...

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## **PT Leader Getaway 2023 (/stories/pt-leader\_getaway\_2023\_web,120332)**

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