

The Leader

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IN DEPTH • IN TOUCH • INDEPENDENT • SINCE 1889

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TJ Johnson and "Comet," a 17-year-old registered spotted draft horse who weighs 1,700 pounds. *Leader photo by Laura Jean Schneider*

Big horses, big love

The peaceful presence of equine giants works wonders for the soul

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Ida Joy weighs somewhere around 1,300 pounds and loves to have her face scratched.

In the draft horse world, tradition dictates that each animal be named after a human, and 6-year-old Ida Joy's real-life inspiration was a woman from Brinnon who has since passed on.

Then there's Comet, Jewel, Duchess, Lacey — all drafts as well — and American Paint Horse "Cash," the patriarch of the herd.

The gentle spotted draft mare has five other equine pals who have found refuge at Linger Longer Farm in Quilcene.

Elisa Cole-Johnson and her husband TJ Johnson have opened their pastures to a herd of horses with unique stories of their own.

Cash and Ida Joy have been with Cole-Johnson since birth. Rescues Comet, a registered Spotted Draft gelding, and Jewel, a Brabant Belgian draft mare, were the foals of so-called "Premarin mares," pregnant female horses whose urine is harvested to make hormone replacement therapy drugs. Often the foals are of little value, and are brutally trained or slaughtered.

But these two lucked out, like most of the pasture mates at Linger Longer farm, a draft horse rescue and rehabilitation



"Duchess," a 5-year-old is a registered Premium Drum Horse, bred specifically for their athleticism. *Leader photo by Laura Jean Schneider*

Meet the Parents

Meet Elise Cole-Johnson and TJ Johnson from Linger Longer Farms at the Quilcene Holiday Craft Fair and Bazaar.

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 27

Where: Quilcene Masonic Hall, 170 Herbert St., Quilcene

What: Photos with Santa are \$5.

home where Cole-Johnson says, "dreams linger, longer."

A recent visit involved a lot of mud, something the horses actually seem to enjoy. Cole-Johnson kept apologizing for

patches of dirt and puddle splashes, but the horses didn't seem to care.

At the sound of her voice, they came over, placing their massive heads gently against her chest.

"We both love the horses," Cole-Johnson said, of her and her husband.

It wouldn't be odd then, that they met at the Mason County Fair.

As a child in California, Cole-Johnson gravitated toward horses.

"I begged my parents for riding lessons," she said, admitting that her father wasn't fond of them. But he saw she was serious, and she ended up taking riding lessons from a family friend for \$5 an hour, which was a stretch for the family of five.

Cole-Johnson's feelings for her father, who died after a battle with locked-in syndrome, were palpable.

He was a career firefighter. She used to ask, "Daddy, please bring the engine," she said, and he would swing by the house, delighting her.

"My father was my hero," Cole-Johnson said. She stayed at home until she was in her mid-20s, helping her mother care for him after a stress-related stroke left him unable to move anything but the muscles around his eyes.

As Cole-Johnson spoke, she engaged in a slow dance with each horse, backing

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Despite 'high burden' status, water rates to increase as city and mill negotiate new contract

Residents skeptical of motives, benefits of new agreement

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After spending the better part of two years renegotiating a new water agreement, the city of Port Townsend and Port Townsend Paper Corporation are making progress on a final agreement.

A revised final draft is expected on Dec. 6.

Staring down a literal pipeline of around \$64 million of capital improvements to the single artery of the city — and the mill's — water supply in the next 20 years, the city hopes that increasing water rates will help cover the cost of significant improvements to a system that city white papers state have "suffered a lack of investment."

That's expected to change with the finalization of a new long-term contract with the mill.

"We do expect a significant rate increase for the city customers," City Public Work's Director Steve King City said during the council's consideration of the agreement at its meeting Monday.

King said that since the Department of Health has mandated water conservation for the city, higher costs could incentivize using less water, while also admitting that water conservation mandates do not apply to the mill.

"It's a perplexing issue, I think, Steve," said

see **CONTRACT**, Page A8

Another COVID death reported in Jefferson County

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Jefferson County health officials reported the death of another resident from COVID-19 Monday.

The person is the 18th to die from coronavirus in Jefferson County since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

Dr. Allison Berry, health officer for Jefferson and Clallam counties, said the deceased was "a man in his 70s with an underlying health condition."

"He had received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine but not a booster," Berry said in an email to The Leader Monday.

The man was not a resident of a long-term care facility, she added.

"Unfortunately, deaths like this really bring home the critical need for boosters for our elder population. The most important safety step is to get vaccinated in the first place, but if you are over 65 or have an underlying health condition, we strongly recommend getting a booster as soon as possible."

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United Good Neighbors supports the nonprofits, staff, and volunteers who are dedicated to providing critical programs and safety-net services to those most in need in Jefferson County.

Donors can choose to contribute to the Give Jefferson fund or can pick a specific partner to support.

Donations to Give Jefferson ensure that food, shelter, healthcare, and education continues to be available to those weathering uncertainty and recovering from crisis.

Go to www.givejefferson.org to learn more, view a complete list of eligible recipients, and donate.

You can help United Good Neighbors!



THIS YEAR'S GOAL: \$300,000

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