

# SHELTON-MASON COUNTY Journal

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## City gears up for holidays

*Parade, tree lighting scheduled for next week*

By Gordon Weeks  
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The annual Christmas parade, a tree lighting in Post Office Park and trips through a Christmas tree maze are among the highlights of holiday events staged Dec. 6 and 7 in downtown Shelton.

During the Holiday Magic First Friday on Dec. 6, downtown businesses will be open until 8 p.m. A snow globe will be hidden at one of the businesses, and everyone who spots it will receive a raffle ticket to enter a drawing to win a variety of gift baskets. The raffle tickets need to be dropped off at Cooper Studios, 409 W. Railroad Ave., before 8:15 p.m. to be entered into the drawing.

The 2018 film "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch" will be screened at 4 p.m. Dec. 6. at Shelton Cinemas. Admission is free with the donation of non-perishable food.

West Railroad Avenue in the downtown corridor will be closed to vehicle traffic starting at 3 p.m. for the First

see **HOLIDAY MAGIC**, page A-15



## A 'Santa Paws' sighting

Hank, a 6-year-old pitbull mix with three legs, sits on Santa Claus' lap with handler Jeannette Quimby on Saturday at Scott McLendon's Hardware in Belfair. For \$20, residents could get their pet's photo with Santa, also known as Jeff Berger. Proceeds went to the Humane Society of Mason County. For more photos of the event, see page A-23. *Journal photo by Shawna Whelan*



Moments after a jury found 62-year-old Bruce Frank Fanning guilty of second-degree murder in the April 2017 shooting death of 31-year-old Nathaniel J. Rosa, the victim's mother, Linda Ann Rosa, right, embraces Charity Dorcy on Nov. 21 in Mason County Superior Court in Shelton. *Journal photos by Michael Heinbach*

## Fanning found guilty of murder

*Jury convicts 62-year-old Belfair man on lesser second-degree charge*

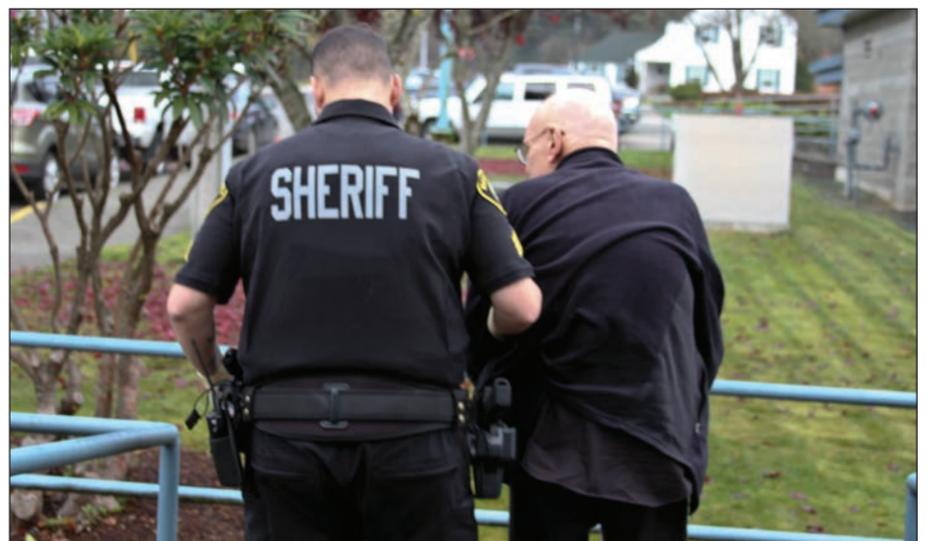
By Michael Heinbach  
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"Well, I guess I'll see you in about 20 years."

That's what Bruce Frank Fanning told courthouse security the morning of Nov. 21 as Mason County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Bill Philpott led the 62-year-old Belfair man to Mason County Jail in Shelton. Moments earlier, a 12-member jury found Fanning guilty of second-degree murder in the April 2017 shooting death of Nathaniel J. Rosa, a lesser charged offense than the first-degree premeditated murder charge argued for by Mason County Prosecutor Michael Dorcy.

Dorcy and Richard Woodrow, Fanning's defense attorney, wrapped up closing arguments late in the day Nov. 19 before the eight-male, four-female jury began deliberating the following morning. About 24 hours later, the jury reached its verdict.

Multiple sources within the Mason County Prosecutor's, Sheriff's and Superior Court Clerk's offices confirmed to the *Shelton-Mason County Journal* that the jury initially voted 11-1 to convict Fanning of the premeditated murder charge before agreeing unanimously on a second-degree murder conviction. That relieved Fanning of



Mason County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Bill Philpott escorts Bruce Frank Fanning to Mason County Jail.

the burden of premeditation.

"The truth is, there's frustration to the extent that it is a premeditated murder. I truly believe that, and the jurors that I did have a chance to speak with, they saw that and felt that same way pretty quickly," Dorcy said. "That's a form of vindication for the way I've always seen the case."

Dorcy told the *Journal* that with a five-year enhancement for using a firearm, Fanning's sentence will range

between 183 months (15 years, three months) and 280 months (23 years four months). His sentencing hearing is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Dec. 17 in Mason County Superior Court.

"We were hoping for a not-guilty decision, but I understand the jury's verdict," Woodrow said. "That was our fear to tell the truth, because when Mr. Fanning gave his statement to

see **GUILTY**, page A-15

### INSIDE TODAY

Students learn to budget at Financial Reality Fair

Page A-2

Home sales rising, but local economy still lags

Page A-8

North Mason remembers long-time baseball coach

Page A-20



8 53263 00111 2

# Guilty: Rosa's family members attend verdict hearing

*continued from page A-1*

law enforcement he said some things that could lead somebody to believe that the use of deadly force was avoidable."

On the morning of April 1, 2017, Fanning went from his East Trails Road residence to his next-door, home-style office space to find it broken into, and a stranger in the shower. Following a brief verbal confrontation with the intruder, Fanning went back to his residence.

There, he took a loaded .40-caliber pistol from its holster, placed it in his jacket pocket and returned to the office space, where he fired three times through a shower curtain into the shower stall, striking Rosa with all three bullets before calling 911 to report the incident.

During a trial that began

with jury selection Oct. 31, Fanning's best ally next to Woodrow was forensic psychologist Dr. David M. Dixon. On two separate occasions, Dixon took the witness stand to back his evaluation of Fanning. After a six-hour examination conducted 13 months after Rosa's killing, Dixon concluded a combination of Fanning's low-average IQ, his self-sufficient, solitary lifestyle and having been previously robbed on multiple occasions contributed to an anxiety disorder, making it impossible for Fanning to form intent to commit Rosa's murder.

As Woodrow conceded, the strongest case against acquittal may have been Fanning's own words. Throughout the trial, Dorcy made sure to make the point that Fanning's retelling of the shooting differed as days went by. What Fanning told a MACECOM

dispatch operator when he placed the 911 call and during an interview with detectives hours after the incident at the Mason County Sheriff's Office differed slightly from what he told a friend three days later on a phone call made from jail.

By the time Dixon examined Fanning in May 2018 and while on the witness stand, Fanning said Rosa threatened to kill Fanning, and that Fanning feared for his life when he returned to the office because he saw something poking from the shower curtain. During his interview at the Sheriff's Office, Fanning never mentioned seeing any object poking from the shower, and told detectives he couldn't understand any of Rosa's replies when asked what Rosa was doing there.

When asked on the stand why he never told detectives that Rosa threatened to kill

him, Fanning explained his actions during interrogation by simply stating, "I was in hysterics."

During closing arguments, Dorcy reminded the jury the law states that the use of deadly force is justifiable only if deemed necessary by a reasonably prudent person. In the end, the jury ultimately couldn't justify Fanning's actions.

At about 10:15 a.m. Nov. 21, members of Rosa's family, a handful of Sheriff's Office personnel, the prosecution and the defense filled the auxiliary courtroom to hear the verdict. When it was read, Fanning's head sank and he stared at the floor for about 15 seconds.

As it was throughout the trial, no one in attendance was there in support of Fanning.

"Any sentence is essentially a death sentence for Bruce because he's so frail and he has all these medical issues

in addition to his psychological issues," Woodrow said. "So yeah, we're disappointed."

After the jury was excused by Judge Amber Finlay and court was adjourned, a teary-eyed Linda Ann Rosa, Nathaniel Rosa's mother, embraced everyone within her reach. Then she turned and addressed the Sheriff's Office personnel in the courtroom.

"He was a good boy. He just made a mistake, a horrible mistake" she told them. "Thank you all for all the work you've done on this."

Shortly after court adjourned, Sheriff's Office Det. Sgt. Jeff Rhoades, who testified during the trial, then sat alongside Dorcy and Deputy Prosecutor Tyler Bickerton throughout its remainder, summed up his reaction to the verdict in just three words.

"The system worked," he said.

# Holiday Magic: Holiday revelers can enjoy parade, maze

*continued from page A-1*

Friday Activities presented by the Kristmas Town Kiwanis Club. Fire pits will be lit. The Christmas tree at Post Office Park will be illuminated at 6 p.m., choirs from local schools will sing, and Santa and Mrs. Claus will make an appearance. Patrons can enjoy wagon rides and kiddie trains travelling along West Railroad Avenue.

The Holiday Magic Christmas Parade is staged from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 7 on West Railroad Avenue in downtown Shelton. The Kristmas Town Kiwanis Club, Little Creek Casino Resort and Peninsula Credit Union sponsor the annual event.

After the parade, patrons can walk to 414 W. Franklin St. to see an attempt to beat the Guinness Book of World Records by displaying the most lighted Christmas trees at one site. The trees will also provide a maze to meander through, and will remain open until Dec. 15, when the trees will be donated to local families.



Local school choirs will perform in downtown Shelton during the Holiday Magic First Friday from 3 to 8 p.m. Dec. 6 on West Railroad Avenue. Journal file photo by Shawna Whelan

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