

Recent Economic Development Funding Awards to Benefit Region Locally

ALBANY — State Senator James L. Seward (R) today applauded the recent Dec. 10 announcement of grant awards for economic development projects throughout his senate district, the 51st.

Seward was quoted as saying, “A record amount of funding is being dedicated to economic development for every single region of the state, and I am extremely pleased that portions of my senate district are among the top award winners. This is a real commitment from N.Y. State and will lead to continued revitalization and new opportunities for working men

and women.”

Seward went on to say, “As a member of the Strategic Implementation Assessment Team (SIAT) that reviewed the proposals, I was extremely impressed with all of the entries — everyone really stepped up their game this year. The innovative ideas generated through this process have given us a real blueprint that, going forward, will lead to exciting results. I look forward to working with our local business leaders, government officials, and entrepreneurs to implement their vision and maintain the momentum.”

The funding was awarded through the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI). The Southern Tier, Central N.Y. and Finger Lakes regions captured the URI awards and each receive \$500 million over a five year period.

Senator Seward represents portions of the Southern Tier and Central N.Y. regions, along with the Mohawk Valley region, which was an REDC “top performer” and will receive \$100.3 million, and the Mid-Hudson region which will receive \$90.4 million.

Christmas Eve Services

Many tri-town area churches will be holding special Christmas Eve services on Thursday, Dec. 24. Several services are listed here. Other special Christmas services appear on the church page.

SIDNEY — Join us at the First Baptist Church, 28 River St., Sidney at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of our Savior. The evening will include a children’s program presented by our TeamKID Club, a message from God’s Word and a candlelight closing of Christmas songs.

BAINBRIDGE — The First Baptist Church of Bainbridge, 12 South Main St., will hold a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6 p.m.

SIDNEY — Two candlelight

Christmas Eve services will be held at the Sidney United Methodist Church, 12 Liberty St. All are welcome. The services will be held at 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.

HARPURSVILLE — A Christmas Eve Service will be held at 7 p.m. at the Harpursville United Methodist Church. Join us for the Christmas story and music of the season.

COVENTRYVILLE — The First Congregational Church, Coventryville invites all to their annual Christmas Eve worship service of traditional lessons and carols at 7 p.m. The story of Christmas will be re-told in readings and song. Share this holy evening with friends and neighbors. There is ample parking and the church is handicap accessible.

GILBERTSVILLE — Three

Gilbertsville churches will hold a combined Christmas Eve service at the Gilbertsville Baptist Church, Commercial and Elm Sts. at 5 p.m. Participating will be the First Presbyterian Church with Rev. Mark Piedmonte; Christ Church, with Rev. Donna Steckline; and the Baptist Church with Rev. Kurt Funke. There will be combined choirs with special music.

Two Eves Before Christmas Service

MOUNT UPTON — The First Baptist Church of Mount Upton, 1749 State Route 8 will hold their annual “Two Eves Before Christmas” service on Wednesday, Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. There will be fun, games, food and fellowship.

Leonard Bus Sales Inc. & B-Sens Team Up

HARPURSVILLE — Leonard Bus Sales and the American Hockey League’s Binghamton Senators have teamed up to recognize one outstanding area middle school student at every home game during the 2015-2016 season.

The Young Scholar of the Game for Nov. 25 was Camaron Smith from Harpursville Junior High School.

Each Young Scholar receives four tickets to the game, recognition over the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena’s public address system and video board, and a visit and prize from the Binghamton Senators mascot,

Max.

Participating schools determine which student is awarded. School staff, family and friends are also eligible for discounted game tickets on the night that student is recognized.

Leonard Bus Sales CEO Mike Leonard said, “It’s a huge thrill to be able to recognize some of the best and brightest students in the area and it wouldn’t be possible without the partnerships we have with the Binghamton Senators and our local school districts.”



Photo — Max, Camaron, and in-stands host Tejay Schwartz from Magic 101.7

Bainbridge mtg. notice

BAINBRIDGE — The Village of Bainbridge Zoning Board of Appeals will hold their regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Monday, Dec. 28, at 7:00 p.m. in the Village Clerk’s Office, 33 West Main St. Immediately following the public hearing, the Board will hold their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

COMMUNITY MEALS



UNADILLA — The monthly dinner held the last Monday of each month at the First United Methodist Church will not be held in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

BAINBRIDGE — The Soup Kitchen at the Bainbridge United Methodist Church is open Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SIDNEY — A full meal is served at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 25 River St. every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Food selections vary weekly and all are welcome.

UNADILLA — A weekly luncheon is served every Thursday at 12:30 p.m. at St. Matthews Episcopal Church. A free will offering is appreciated.

SIDNEY — Soup night at the First congregational UCC is the second Thursday of each month from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Soups, sandwiches, desserts and beverages are served.

Area Production of *The Nutcracker* Brings Local and World Class Talent Together

By Allison Collins

ONEONTA — This past weekend saw the 28th incarnation of the Oneonta-based Fokine Ballet Company’s holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. The ballet’s reappearance each December marks a decades-old tradition in Oneonta of ushering in the holiday season with a festive dose of high caliber performing arts culture.

The Fokine Ballet Company defines itself as “a not-for-profit organization created in 1988 by an interested group of dance enthusiasts who wished to enhance the cultural climate of Central N.Y. with quality ballet performances and to further appreciation within the community.” Donna I. Decker, of the Decker School of Ballet, directs the company, and its production of *The Nutcracker* “is based upon notes handed down from Decker’s grandmother, Alexandra Fedorova Fokine...one of the first ballerinas to dance the [role of] Sugar Plum Fairy.”

The first of five shows began with one of two special student performances wherein, in keeping with the FBC’s aim of enhancing the culture of the area and enabling a better understanding of ballet amongst children, local schools were given the opportunity to watch the ballet amidst an audience of their peers. The student performances represent an incredible chance for kids to see a real, top-notch and full-length ballet without any of the stuffiness sometimes associated with the art form. The student audience can squirm and

clap and ooh and ahh all they want. Indeed, audible gasps could be heard rippling across the crowd of kids with each moment of Nutcracker magic: from the swell of music and suspense as Clara watches her Christmas tree grow impossibly big, to every delicately balanced *pas de deux* lift, to the swiftly falling snow that closes Act I, the kids sat spellbound.

Reciprocally, the student performances give the cast a chance to perform fully, twice, but without pressure. Given that the majority of the production is cast with Decker’s own students, also local kids, aged four through seventeen, the arrangement is mutually beneficial.

For those roles not filled with area talent, Decker imports professionals either at the height of their craft, or just cresting into renown within the ballet world. As in the staging of the two students-only performances, the chance to dance with highly skilled professionals offers those students of Decker’s a uniquely beneficial opportunity. “FBC believes that a mix of national and international stars working with local ballet students will create more informed dancers, better trained dancers, and more determined dancers. The young people who have benefitted from professional instruction, advice and encouragement will be tomorrow’s supporters of the arts and quite possibly tomorrow’s artists.” One need only note the widening of eyes or the awestruck O-shaped mouths as little ones watching preeminent ballerinas like Juliet Doherty (this year’s Sugar

Plum Fairy) to know that FBC is succeeding in its mission.

Asked what advice she had for area dancers, given that FBC’s staging of *The Nutcracker* is such a blend of small town and big city talent, Doherty said, “I don’t think it matters whatever level you’re at, you can still give the audience a gift.” Doherty went on to say that the average audience doesn’t view a ballet performance with an eye for perfect precision or flawless technique, but rather to be taken on a journey. With regard to technique, Doherty admitted that, “You want to achieve that excellence, but what the general audience wants is to be told a story, to go on a ride with you and experience something emotionally.” The eighteen-year-old phenom who, at age fourteen delivered a powerful TED Talk about embracing innate greatness and shunning out from under the burden of imposed expectations and judgments, said, “You have so much to give. Whatever you have, just bring it. Know that you are enough.”

Regarding how she reconciles the type-A, perfectionist, hypercritical ballet dancer archetype with the individual ready and willing to slough off self-judgment and acknowledge inner greatness, Doherty said, “I just think that idealist ballerina ‘type’ is a myth. Every single human is so different; you could all dance the same role and have each one be and look different.” She elaborated, “It’s all about showing a piece of you, taking a risk, putting yourself out there and being open and honest about it. You’re saying

‘hey, this is me.’” Obviously one who practices what she preaches, Doherty dances with light and breath, and an inviting, gracious smile to accompany the meticulous execution of her steps. Doherty’s comfort with vulnerability shines through and her performance is better for it. And, though “Juliet” in *Romeo and Juliet* stands out as Doherty’s “dream role,” it didn’t hurt that she cited the part of Sugar Plum Fairy as her favorite role to date. Doherty gushed, saying, “It’s a role where you just get to be this sweet, loving, queen-type, ruling over all these sweet and magical beings.”

“Magical” was the theme of the show, as it always is, year after year. Audience member Courtenay O’hara said, “At times it gave me goose bumps and brought tears to my eyes, as I’m so envious of the dedication and talent that I saw on stage from everyone! It was the perfect way to start my holiday mood this year.”



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