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West Street, Danbury, with holiday lights.

Hello Friends!

The holiday season is in full swing!

As we wind down the year, we have a full schedule of Saturday activities--all of them FREE! On Saturday, December 2, Barry Rickert will be selling historic stamps and ephemera from 1-4 and at 2pm author Carolyn Ivanoff will be reading from her book, "We Fought at Gettysburg." Books will be for sale and available for

signing. We're the perfect place to find a special gift for the history lover on your list. As always, check out our [Upcoming Events](#) page for more details.

We also have a "Sell Your Old Gold" fundraiser from December 7-9 (the perfect opportunity to take home a little extra holiday money and get rid of old, broken, or unworn jewelry!) and a wonderful pop-up shop from the Danbury Community Knitters on Saturday, December 9, from 1-4. They've been knitting up a storm and making beautiful items for sale.

And in very special news, the Berkshire Jazz Orchestra is putting on a FREE holiday concert in Huntington Hall on Tuesday, December 19, at 7:30. This will be a fun-filled concert with all your favorite songs!

As you've probably heard, the Danbury Museum Gala is BACK! Back in Black (Tie) and in person for the first time since 2020. Join us for an epic night of live music, dining, and dancing on Friday, February 2, 2024, that benefits the Danbury Museum. All the info is on our [Danbury Museum Gala](#) page, and there's a link to purchase tickets or sponsorships. Gala tickets make EXCELLENT holiday presents, so if you need a special gift, we're happy to help out.

And finally, we're so pleased to have John O'Donnell and Dr. Thomas MacGregor writing essays for us this month. John writes about a recent and very special gift to the museum from the Tomlinson family, and Tom reminds us that Danbury "Rocks." We're so grateful for the many essays that John and Tom have shared with us this year, thank you to them both.

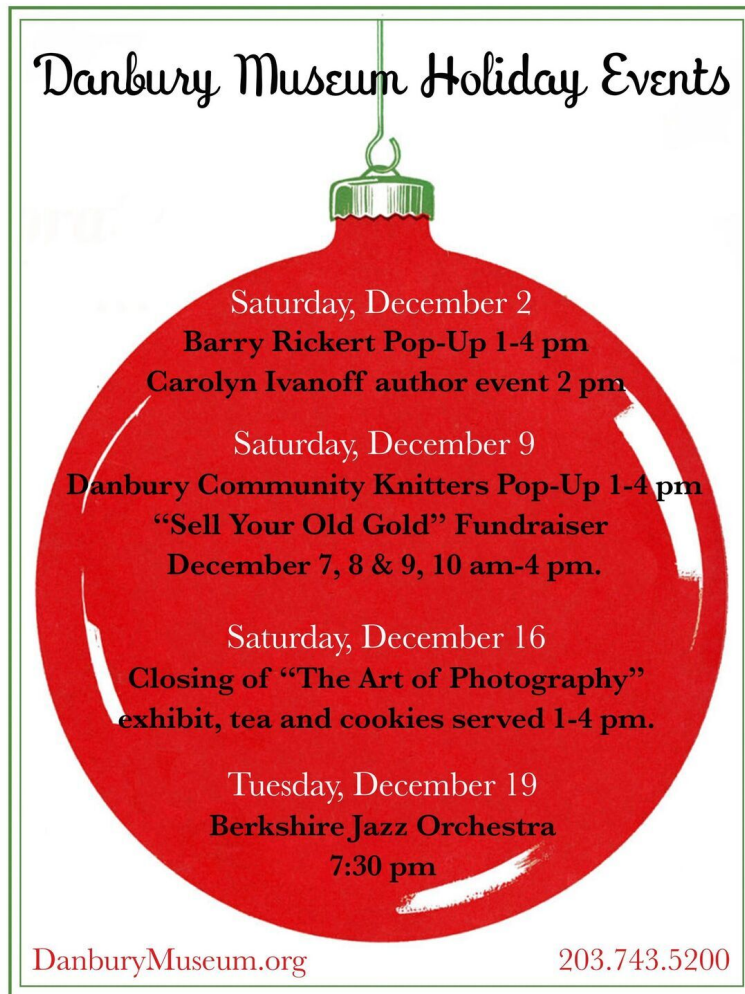
From the staff and trustees of the Danbury Museum, we thank you for your interest and support and we wish you and yours all the best of the holiday season.

We'll see right before 2024!

Brigid Guertin

Patrick Wells

Michele Lee Amundsen



Danbury Museum Holiday Events

Saturday, December 2
Barry Rickert Pop-Up 1-4 pm
Carolyn Ivanoff author event 2 pm

Saturday, December 9
Danbury Community Knitters Pop-Up 1-4 pm
"Sell Your Old Gold" Fundraiser
December 7, 8 & 9, 10 am-4 pm.

Saturday, December 16
Closing of "The Art of Photography"
exhibit, tea and cookies served 1-4 pm.

Tuesday, December 19
Berkshire Jazz Orchestra
7:30 pm

DanburyMuseum.org 203.743.5200

Check out our fun and free December pop-ups and events!

"Sell Your Old Gold" Fundraiser



FOR THIS FUNDRAISER,
YOUR CHECKBOOK STAYS HOME...
AND THIS TIME, YOU GO HOME
WITH A CHECK IN YOUR POCKET !!!

Please take a moment to look through your jewelry boxes at home for:

- BROKEN GOLD CHAINS AND BRACELETS
- SINGLE EARRINGS (HALF PAIRS)
- OLD SCHOOL RINGS
- RINGS WITH MISSING STONES
- OLD BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND GIFTS
- JEWELRY YOU NEVER WEAR
- GOLD NON-WORKING WATCHES
- YES, EVEN DENTAL GOLD
- STERLING SILVER JEWELRY, FLATWARE, HOLLOWWARE
- PLATINUM AND PALLADIUM

THEN BRING IT WITH YOU TO:

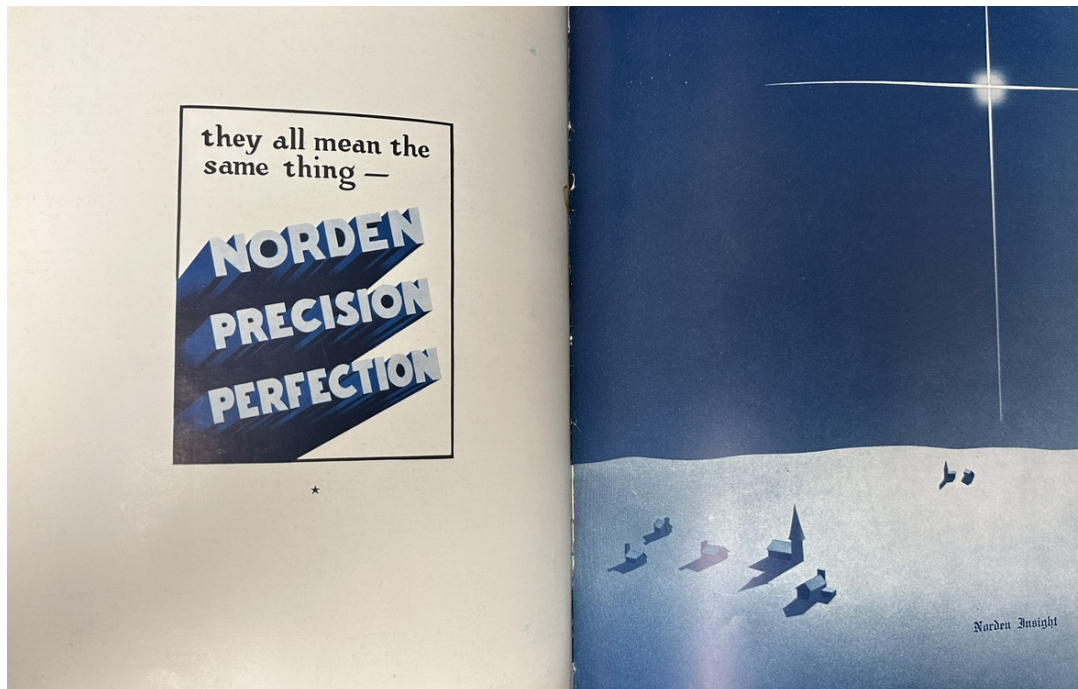
THE DANBURY MUSEUM
43 MAIN STREET
DANBURY, CT

203.743.5200

Thursday	December 7 th	10 AM to 7 PM
Friday	December 8 th	10 AM to 4 PM
Saturday	December 9 th	10 AM to 4 PM

There, our good friend, Bob the gold man, will buy your "old gold" and hand you a check. Then, after the refining process, over 70% of the profits will be donated, in your name, to the **FRIENDS OF THE DANBURY MUSEUM !!!**

Any questions, please email: bob@libertygoldct.com



Cover of the December, 1942, "Norden Insight"

A Beautiful Gift

By John O'Donnell

Recently the Danbury Museum and Historical Society was the fortunate recipient of a beautiful and bounteous gift. A generous and thoughtful donor gave us a bound set of the "Norden Insight" and Barden Corporation "The Groove" magazines beginning with the first issue in August of 1942 and running into the 1970s. When I was told about this gift, I was drawn to read the first issue in August of 1942 immediately. The importance of contemporaneous materials to historical events cannot be overemphasized. These documents are so vital in giving us insight into what was on people's minds at the time. I decided to compare the August 1942 issue with the December 1942 issue to get a picture of how the home front was doing at this stage of World War Two.

The first issue has the masthead "Norden Insight, Monthly, The Norden Family of Precision Instrument Plants: Norden, Lukas-Harold, Cardanio, Barden." The issue contained thirteen pages. It defined its purpose as: "Insight" serves as a means through which we can all become better acquainted with each other during these trying times when every minute is so precious." The publication is of course very concerned with the morale of workers on the home front. It is trying to motivate the workers and stress the importance of what their efforts mean to the war effort. There are typical items you would expect in a publication of this kind: Letters to the Editor, movie reviews, cartoons, social events (bowling, softball) and departmental columns. There are also exhortations to buy war bonds. But overriding everything else was the stress on the major product that Norden was producing for World War Two: the Norden Bombsight.

The Norden Bombsight was designed by Carl Norden. It was an early tachometric design that directly measured the aircraft's

ground speed and direction. The Norden further improved on older designs by using an analog computer that continuously recalculated the bomb's impact point based on changing flight conditions. There was also an autopilot that reacted quickly and accurately to changes in the wind. To protect those advantages the Norden Bombsight was produced under a veil of secrecy and was part of a production effort on a scale comparable to the Manhattan Project design of the atomic bomb. The overall cost was 1.1 billion dollars (nearly 19 billion in 2023 dollars). Norden Corporation and its subsidiaries were a vital cog in the war effort. Barden Corporation was founded in 1942 to make precision ball bearings for the Norden Bombsight. Danbury, according to the first edition of *Insight* was chosen for its location because "it possesses everything which is required in the way of a suitable community and Barden will be a permanent addition to Danbury."

There is a notice in the first issue about Wing Commander Paddy Finucane who was nicknamed "Spitfire Paddy" for his exploits in the Battle of Britain. He became an ace during the battle flying a Spitfire and ultimately shot down twenty-six German planes. His father had fought alongside future Irish President Eamon DeValera in the 1916 Easter Uprising. He had a shamrock painted under his cockpit. He was just twenty-one years old when he was made a wing commander. He is the youngest man ever to hold that rank. He was such a skilled pilot that he shot down the best-known German fighter pilot of the war, Adolf Galland. It was noted in the item that Finucane wanted more than anything else (in a letter to a friend) that a Norden Bombsight would be the finest Christmas present he could receive. Unfortunately, he was shot down on July 15, 1942, and ditched in the English Channel and subsequently vanished.

The December, 1942, issue has a cover showing the Star of Bethlehem shining over the Christ child's birthplace. It is a longer issue with thirty pages as opposed to the August issue with

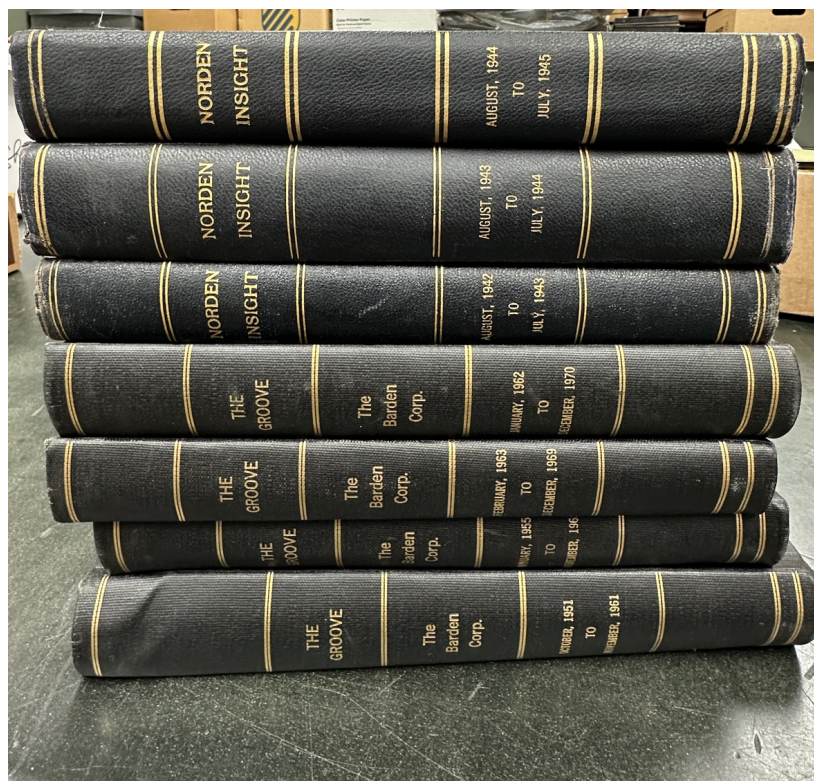
thirteen pages. Because of the success of the Allied efforts during this period the December issue clearly indicates that morale was higher. In the Pacific, the Doolittle Raid had bombed Tokyo, there were also engagements at the Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal which had blunted the Japanese offensives. The Germans had been halted and surrounded at Stalingrad, El Alamein, and in the Caucasus as well. The tide of war was clearly changing in favor of the Allies. Operation Torch took place in November, 1942, and the American army engaged the German army on a large scale for the first time. It was also noted that demand for the Norden Bombsight had doubled since July, with the stepping up of our offensive against the Axis powers. One of the few problems noted in this issue was a shortage of tools. Workers were asked to make tools from their personal collection of tools available to their colleagues. Tools are one of the big weapons of the Home Front.

The issue also included a column titled Norden Family Profiles. It is a profile of Commander (later Rear-Admiral) Austen Magly (1901-1977) who was appointed Naval Inspector of Ordnance at Norden. His predecessor in the position, Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, was killed in action at Midway while in command of Torpedo Squadron 8. Magly was very familiar with the Norden Bombsight. While in training he was asked by the Squadron Commander, "How many of you know how to operate this thing (the Norden Bombsight)?" Lieutenant Magly put up his hand and cautiously looked around. There were no other hands up. "Well, Magly that makes you the Gunnery officer. And that is how our Magly got the job of testing and instructing in the operation of the first Norden Bombsight to arrive at Pearl Harbor. Since then his keen interest in it has only increased."

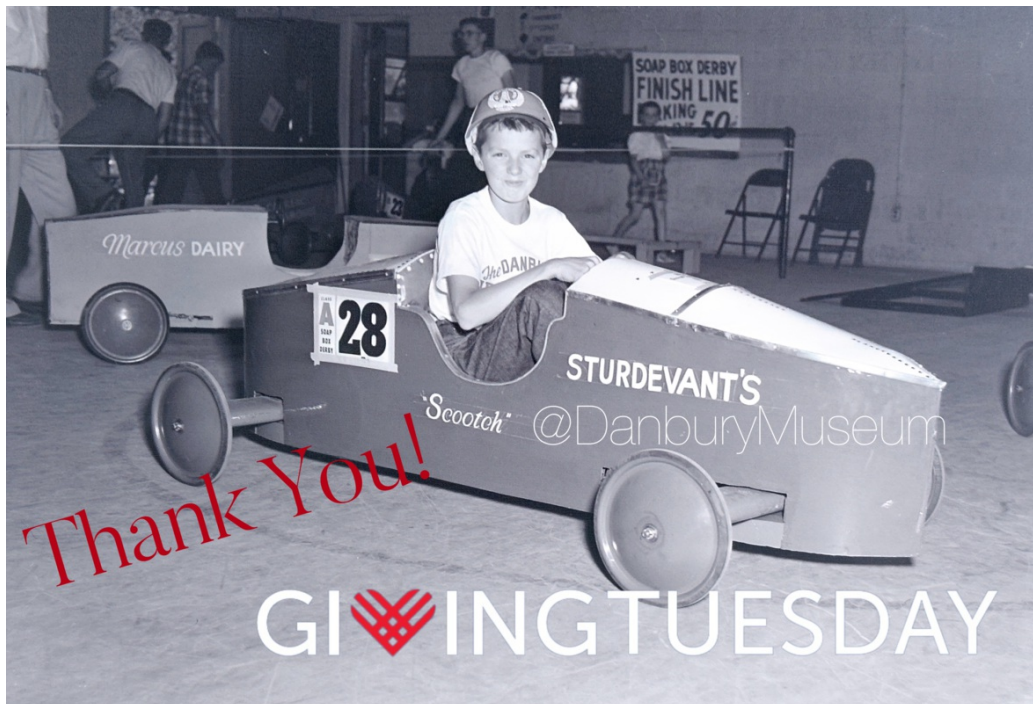
Magly served a four-year assignment with Torpedo Squadron 3 on the carrier USS Saratoga. He rose from flight officer to executive officer to commanding officer. "From my first contact with the

Norden Bombsight back at Pearl Harbor up to the present day I never lost faith in Norden and its equipment.” When Torpedo Squadron 3 walked off with the gunnery trophies for excellence in horizontal bombing, Magly attributed their success to using the sight in the competition. The Commander was very happy to be assigned to the Norden Plant. “As for the Norden Bombsight,” Commander Magly concludes, “I believe it is one of the most amazing pieces of equipment we have for winning this war.”

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



Part of the very generous gift of the Tomlinson family.



Thank You!

Thanks to more than 25 donors--online and in person!--we reached our \$2500 goal and will be able to purchase the equipment to begin to digitize and preserve these negatives. If you still wished to donate (and allow us to level up on the camera we purchase), the [#GivingTuesday page](#) will be up through Tuesday, December 5. Thank you to everyone who so generously supported our efforts.



Danburite

Danbury Rocks

By Dr. Thomas MacGregor

This month I attended a fascinating talk, entitled “Danbury Spaces and Places,” given by our City Historian, Brigid Guertin, at the Danbury Senior Center. The talk was attended by over forty long-time Danburians (I’ve only lived here for 44 years), who told stories describing various sections of the city that have descriptive, but unusual, names to an outsider. I encourage you to visit the [Danbury Museum website](#) to find a digitized pamphlet on this interesting topic.

While I was planting flower bulbs in my yard for next spring’s bloom, I thought about this talk. Since bulbs should be planted in

the soil at a depth that is three times deeper than the size of the bulb, I didn't have difficulty planting small grape hyacinth or crocus bulbs, but I encountered problems with rocks when planting larger tulip bulbs. My yard is in the South Street area of Danbury and is surrounded by road names like Shelter Rock and Coal Pit Hill, so this should give one a hint why my yard contains so many rocks. One block over from my front yard there used to be a working quarry when I moved here, but it is now occupied by multiple two-story condominium units. The geology of this section of Danbury is conducive to rock collecting rather than bulb planting.

As I pulled out each rock, I looked to see if maybe I had unearthed the gemstone, danburite, which was discovered here in Danbury in 1839 by Chemistry professor, Charles Upham Shepard, M.D. In its purest crystalline form, danburite is colorless and orthorhombic in shape, i.e., having a three-dimensional crystal system with three axes of unequal length that intersect at right angles. Fusion with various elements can give it various hues, e.g., an amber color if a trace amount of iron is present. According to Professor Shepard, danburite is often found in rock fissures near feldspar and dolomite and is often confused with quartz (www.mindat.org/loc-243666.html). Unfortunately, Professor Shepard did not give the exact location in Danbury where he found the danburite. Other rock enthusiasts also have found locally-sourced danburite, but again they did not provide the locations of their finds. Recent investigators have suggested that Professor Shepard's discovery was near the North Street, Hayestown, and Padanaram Roads intersection. Recent road construction has been providing new evidentiary clues consistent with the type of metamorphic rock formations observed in the 1839 find. Because the exact locations were not revealed, the possibility exists that there are multiple locations throughout the city for danburite specimens. Every rock or boulder you pull out of your garden may be a prospector's dream!

Desired by jewelers for its clarity and resilience, a cut gemstone can be quite valuable. Being a hard (Mohs hardness of greater than 7), orthorhombic gem stone, danburite is rumored to have unique powers by channeling vibrations. Reportedly, these vibrations process emotions with a clear and conscious mind, thereby elevating one's decision-making ability (www.healing-crystals-for-you.com/danburite.html). Therefore, rather than cashing it in, I have felt that if I could find a large specimen or mother lode of danburite in my yard, I would send it to Congress.

After 33 years at Boehringer Ingelheim, Dr. Tom (UConn '85) retired to his garden and piano.



Danbury Museum Gala is BACK and in person! February 2, 2024, @ the Amber Room Colonnade.

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