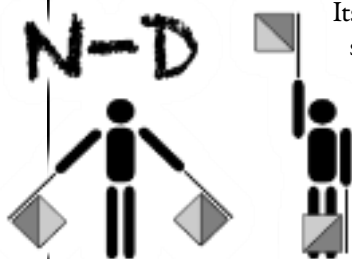


DANBY NEWS

PEACE OF HISTORY

BACK IN THE SIXTIES—the 1960s—there was hardly a street corner without a few loiterers flashing a peace sign at pedestrians. It seemed that every flat piece of concrete was decorated with what became one of the most widely known symbols in the world. But where did the the peace symbol, a circle with a downward pointing fork in it, come from?



Its origins are well documented and, surprisingly, strongly based on traditional military symbology. In 1958, Gerald Holton was asked to create banners and signs for a nuclear disarmament rally in London. As a graphic designer, he understood the need for something simple and easily recognizable. He turned to the British Navy's library of semaphore flag signals.

Holton used the flag positions for the letters "N" and "D". He overlaid them to form a downward-facing-fork. To soften its jagged, dangerous appearance and to define a visually enclosed symbol, he surrounded the fork with a circle. It's no coincidence that the symbol fits well on a button!



By the 1960s, Holton's symbol had migrated across the pond. It was introduced to the U.S. public by another anti-nuclear group, the Committee for Nonviolent Action. Within a few years, it was adopted by any number of organizations and became synonymous with the word, "peace." 🐼(tc)

CHRISTMAS SING!

Traditional hymns & carols
Everyone is invited to the Danby Fire Department on December 17, 7pm. Come on out for singing, coffee, hot chocolate and cookies. 🐼(ss)

SINGING SEASONAL SONGS

WHAT COULD BE BETTER, this time of year, than getting together for simple seasonal cheer? Gathering with friends and neighbors. Sharing hot cocoa or cider, and maybe some cookies or cake. And singing songs of Wonder and Light.

Danby folks will have a weekend loaded with opportunities to sing seasonal songs: Saturday, December 17, 7pm in the Danby Fire Station, and Sunday, December 18, 3:15pm in the Community Church. Both are right on Route 96B...with plenty of parking. Both are free, open to everyone, and family friendly.

For many years the Danby Community Council and the West Danby Community Association have teamed up to host a holiday-time gathering featuring carols and other seasonal songs. Folks from all across Danby gathered at various locations (since 2015, in the Great Room at Slow Lane) to sing, play instruments, listen, and enjoy treats. COVID concerns prevented events in 2020 and 2021, and a smaller group gathered in 2021.

This year, the Community Council is partnering with the Danby Community Church for an afternoon of songs for the winter holidays. Songs and carols from Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, and Christmas will make the hall ring. People will come from all across Danby to join together in song and cheer.

Song sheets will be on hand, and anyone is welcome to take a turn leading or requesting a tune. There's always a core of strong singers to keep us going and all voices are welcome. Some people bring an instrument to accompany the songs, and we may have musical support from the Church as well.

We'll hear such favorites as *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, *Hanukah Oh Hanukah*, *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, *Jingle Bells*, *Oak Ash and Thorn*, *Joy to the World*, and *Twelve Days of Christmas*. We'll hear about Santa Claus, Red-nosed Reindeer, and Winter Wonderlands filled with snow, roasted chestnuts, and wassail. We will certainly Deck the Halls! Sunday afternoon, 3:15pm in Danby's Community Church.

Being vaccinated and wearing a mask is strongly encouraged. Consider COVID testing ahead of time, for the safety and protection of everyone. 🐼(pg)

This Month Inside the Danby News:

Know Your Neighbors: Gary Bercow	③
Fire District Election	④
Reminiscing	④
Battery Safety	④
Pancakes in December	⑤
Stars Over Dotson Park	⑤
Holiday Safety	⑤
What The Town Didn't Tell You	⑥
Community Library	⑦
Seniors!	⑦
'Tis The Season...	⑦
Calendar	⑧

December 2022

Layout: Ted Crane
Count-n-Label Crew:
 Ted and Pamela; others.
Post Office Crew:
 Ted

To contribute items:

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 Ithaca, NY 14851-6886
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 Email: [danbynews@danbycc.org]

Text submissions:

Send text in the body of an unencoded, plain-text Email message (**not** as an attachment); or mail typewritten copy, double-spaced on white paper. Short handwritten submissions accepted; please write legibly.

Graphics: JPEG preferred for photos, GIF for line graphics. PNG also works. Check with editor before sending hardcopy graphics.

Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication date. Materials may be accepted later if time allows. Submissions should generally not exceed 250-350 words (one column). We cannot print political material or letters of opinion.

The Danby News (DN) is a publication of the Danby Community Council (DCC). All statements are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, sponsors, the DCC and its officers, or officials and employees of the Town of Danby. All works remain © of the contributors. Please provide a SASE if you wish to have materials returned. The DN and DCC are not responsible for typographic or other errors.

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**DANBY NEWS NOTES**

Submitted by Ted Crane

Submission Guidelines: Before submitting an item for the Danby News, please have a look at the *Submission Guidelines*. You can request them by Email from the editor at [danbynews@tedcrane.com] or find them at [danbynyn.org/DanbyNews]. If you're thinking of sending something for publication in the Danby News, there's two documents to read: the

Guidelines and the *Submission Guidelines* at the same web location.

You'll learn what is, and isn't acceptable material for publication. If it's acceptable, we'll make an effort to include it; generally, we print everything we receive! You'll find hints about how to prepare a submission. Following these guidelines makes the editing and layout easier. A terse version of these guidelines is in the left-hand column of this page. γ

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS: GARY BERCOW

"I feel very privileged in my life, just living on this hill."

GARY BERCOW HAS MOLDED an active yet grounded life, centered on his home in the quiet, dirt road section of Comfort Road. Together with his wife Leslie Namaste, they had a "yours, mine, and ours" family. "Leslie had one, I had two. Then we had twins and we fostered two kids."

Gary taught art for 33 years; 20 years with ACS and 13 years in the Spencer/VanEtten schools. Through those years he brought art in many forms to middle and high school students. Ceramics, painting and drawing, but also meditation and yoga. "It's not just a class, but a space where they could collect themselves. I got to really know what's going on with kids. Everyone talks in art class, about everything that's happening. It was good to help guide students through that time."

Working with clay is something that Gary has done for about 40 years. In his 20s, he was working as a handyman carpenter and started spending time in Cornell's *pot shop*. He learned ceramics there, eventually leading to a master's degree and teaching certification for art.

Bercow felt it was important to more than a teacher, so he kept up with his own painting and ceramics through all those years. He retired (good timing) at the end of 2019, right before the COVID pandemic shut things down. This gave him lots of time and space to follow his art. Bercow might have done more painting, but felt an internal calling to do more ceramics as a functional art form. He installed a full studio in their basement and enjoys being able to fine tune his pieces through the day. "I'm very happy, being just here."

"My involvement with Ceramics has been an act that could be compared to spending time in a garden or the woods," Bercow says. "That incredible sense of satisfaction of the earth enters your soul—reminds oneself of their place in the world. All of these acts, pottery, hiking and gardening, are time-honored traditions which bring us closer to our humanity."

Bercow sells his pottery through the Arts Trail and seasonal shows, such as the summer Artist's Market at Steam-



boat Landing. He opened an *Etsy* site during the pandemic shutdown. It's been more successful than he ever dreamed. He says he was shocked when the international market found him. Bercow has sold his ceramics to customers in Singapore, Australia, and across Europe. The burgeoning community of indoor plant lovers—driven by the pandemic—has created a strong market for his textured, tree-like planters. Planters with names like *snow path*, *nightfall*, *ocean run*, and *flowering dessert* feature earth and sky tone glazes on textured red or gray clay bodies. "Repeat enthusiasts have given me great support," Bercow says. "It feels really great."

Giving back to his community and to the world has always been important to Gary Bercow. "My shop and all my pottery is made and fired using solar energy. Most packaging is recycled as I try to have a very low carbon footprint impact." He adds social justice to what he does, donating 25 percent of his *Etsy* purchase sales to organizations like:

- Color of Change (campaigns to end practices of racism)
- International Justice Mission (combats illegal and unethical practices worldwide)
- People's Pottery Project (employ and empower formerly incarcerated women and others through job training and more)
- Miles4Migrants (uses donated frequent flyer miles, credit card points, and cash to help people impacted by war)
- Center for Reproductive Rights (protect and advance women's reproductive health, etc.)

"Thank you to all who have shopped at my site," Gary says. "As of the beginning of January 2022, \$1650 has been donated. That's a beautiful thing!"

Locally, Gary has joined the Board of the Learning Web, which is dedicated to enabling local youth—whether homeless or more fortunate—to build capacity and thrive as self-assured, self-directed, productive adults. This is yet another way that Gary is bringing his life into a circle of creative action. He was personally helped by the Learning Web in the 1970s. "The Learning Web builds a bridge that helps each youth successfully travel the path into positive adulthood." Now, he's giving back by making sure those resources are available to the next generation of middle and high school youth.

🐼 (pg)

REMINISCING #4

I WENT ALL THE WAY BACK to my very first Christmas column in 2004 for these memories!

The Danby Volunteer Fire Department was sponsoring a sale of address number signs for community members. The signs, designed to be placed along the road in front of our houses, are meant to assist police, medical or fire personnel in easily finding us in case of an emergency. I think lots of the signs were sold because I see them all around the neighborhood to this day! *[Signs are still available from the Fire Department!—editor]*

I wrote about how we always get an annual holiday family picture from George and Connie Lust, our former long-time neighbors on Gunderman Road. We watched over the two oldest Lust kids while their parents went to the hospital to have a new baby. When they got to the hospital, they received a big surprise! Twin daughters! Connie and Betsy Lust were one of two sets of twins who attended the Danby Elementary School together, the other set being Barbie and Billy Howe from Jersey Hill Road.

I shared the news that Janet and Tom Gray enlarged and improved their Highland Farms Dog Boarding facility, located

at 158 West Miller Road, and that they would be open for business during the holidays. Their grand opening was scheduled for spring, 2005.

The column concluded with some thoughts of my own about the Christmas holiday. *Time has flown by and here we are just two days away from Christmas, 2004. Weeks of planning will come down to one day. When we lay our weary heads on our pillows on the evening of December 25, will we have accomplished all that we set out to do? Was that one day perfect in every way? I think it's a safe bet to say that something did not get bought, or someone came down with the stomach bug, that at least a few cookies were burnt or the dog knocked over a full glass of wine onto the new rug with a quick swish of his or her tail. The good news is that we get another chance. A new year, a better recipe, a fatter tree, fresh ideas and a great spot remover! It's good to remember the simple pleasures of that one short day, so kick back, relax, have fun and remember the reason for the season. As my friend Ernie Payton always said, "Blessings."*

And now, in 2022, I feel the same way. I wish everyone a holiday full of simple pleasures and good times! 🐾 (gh)

HOLIDAY BATTERY SAFETY

Provided by Tompkins County Recycling

Lithium-ion batteries are not accepted in recycling or trash because they can cause safety hazards like fires and explosions if handled incorrectly.

Lithium-ion batteries are used in many products such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops, E-Bikes, electric toothbrushes, cordless tools, hoverboards, scooters, and for solar power backup storage.

- Undamaged lithium-ion batteries are accepted at the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (RSWC) when prepared correctly.
- Tape terminal ends of all lithium-ion and rechargeable batteries with either duct tape or black electrical tape.
- Deliver properly prepared lithium-ion batteries to the attendant at the designated battery area of the Electronics Drop-Off Station.
- Damaged batteries are only accepted by appointment at Household Hazardous Waste Events.

When in doubt, contact the Recycling and Materials Management Office, 607.273.6632. 🐾

FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION

AFTER TWO PRIMARIES AND THE GENERAL ELECTION on November 8, you could be forgiven for feeling overloaded with voting during 2022.

But wait, there's more!

Danby's Fire District—by law—holds its Commissioner Elections in December. This year, on Tuesday, December 13, 6-9pm in the Danby Fire Station, 1780 Danby Road. There are five Commissioners, each serving a five-year term.

This year, your vote counts more than usual...the seat is contested! There are two candidates: Kevin Faehndrich and Derek Dougherty, plus the opportunity for write-in candidates. 🐾 (tc)

Be curious, not judgmental.

—Walt Whitman

Sometimes it seems we all live somewhere on a sliding scale between idealism and cynicism.

SAFE AND PEACEFUL

Provided by Tompkins County Emergency Response

HOLIDAY SAFETY IS AN ISSUE that burns brightest at this time of the year when families gather and parties are scheduled. By taking some basic precautions, you can help ensure your family and guests remain safe and injury-free throughout the season:

- Only use holiday decorations that are flame-retardant or not flammable. * Check holiday lights each year for frayed wires or excessive wear.
- Use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors.
- Don't link together more than three strands of holiday lights.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Better yet, consider using battery-operated flameless candles.
- Keep your live Christmas tree away from heat sources and room exits.
- Water your live Christmas tree daily to keep it from becoming dry.
- Always use a fireplace screen while a fire is burning.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. Know where to meet outside your home.
- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside all sleeping areas.

Cooking Safely

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. When preparing holiday meals, stay in the kitchen when cooking at high temperature, like frying, broiling, or boiling. If you see any smoke or grease starts to boil, turn the burner off. See [[ready.gov/home-fires](https://www.ready.gov/home-fires)].

Winter Safety

Winter storms can bring snow, sleet, and freezing rain. Take steps to stay safe before, during, and after a winter storm. See: [[weather.gov/safety/winter](https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter)]. 🐾

As they say, stay tuned.

Actually, that is completely obsolete because modern televisions and radios do not have a tunable analog filter to select one frequency. Web sites never had anything tunable. But people still talk about, *an interview taped earlier, miles of footage, you sound like a broken record, it's a carbon copy, and hang up the phone.*

This Issue's Writers

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ○ cp.... Cindy Parlett | ○ gh ... Gay Huddle |
| ○ dcc.. Comm. Council | ○ mv ... Margie VanDeMark |
| ○ dd... Derek Dougherty | ○ pg ... Pamela Goddard |
| | ○ tc Ted Crane |



Dotson Park in wintertime. Sirius, a star, seems to glow atop the Spruce tree. —photo by Jim Long [longing4nature.com]

PANCAKES IN DECEMBER

DANBY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY will be having a drive-thru pancake breakfast on December 11, 8-11am.

We are raising funds for the purchase of new portable extrication tools. Help us get the jaws of life! 🐾 (dd)



Life is like licking honey off a thorn.

— Hungarian proverb

WHAT THE TOWN DIDN'T TELL YOU

AN ITEM APPEARED IN MY EMAIL a few weeks ago, alerting me to the existence of a report from the NYS Comptroller's Office titled, *Town of Danby - Town Clerk (2022M-08)*. The report was issued in May 2022.

You can read it for yourself; the URL is long, so here's a handy shortcut: [\[danbyny.org/2022M-08\]](https://danbyny.org/2022M-08).

Incidentally, please be aware that [\[danbyny.org\]](https://danbyny.org) is not associated with the Town of Danby. Some of it is out-of-date, but some content is easier to find than at [\[danby.ny.gov\]](https://danby.ny.gov).

Long-time readers of the Danby News are well aware that, in early 2022, the Town of Danby chose to end its decades-long support for the Danby News and, instead, publish its own newsletter containing information about the Town that had previously appeared in the Danby News. Ignoring all the politics, the rumors, and the newsletter's \$20,000 budget for 2023, one might expect the Town Board News to provide a complete picture of developments in Danby's town government.

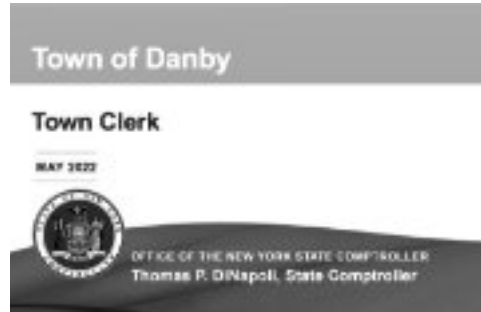
Instead—this is difficult to report and will be hard to read—you'll have to learn about the goings-on from other residents or from a community-oriented publication like the Danby News.

This is a quote from the audit report's summary of findings, *Tax collections were missing and not deposited timely or intact and were not remitted to appropriate parties in a timely manner. Although the Clerks reported the Clerk fees that were recorded, they did not properly deposit and remit all collections to the appropriate parties in a timely and accurate manner. The Clerks did not identify tax collection account errors totaling \$64,959 and could not account for approximately \$1,000 in cash from tax collections.*



The summary also says, *The [Town] Board did not perform an annual audit of the Clerk's records...Town officials generally agreed with our findings and indicated they plan to initiate corrective action.*

We're all human and errors happen, so it's unfair to single out any one elected official. This article will simply refer to "The Town" and will consider this as one example of the possibly haphazard way the Town government operates.



According to the Comptroller's staff, the Town was required to inform the public about the audit and its conclusions within a few days of the release of the report...and the Town was informed of this requirement. Legally, that means the placement of a Legal Notice in the Town's newspaper of record (the Ithaca Journal), immediately followed by a presentation of the report during a public meeting of the Town Board. All of this is described in NY General Municipal Law, Section 35. You can read it for yourself using this

shortcut: [\[danbyny.org/GMU35\]](https://danbyny.org/GMU35).

Very few people read legal notices and about the same number attend Board meetings, so the whole matter might have flown under the radar. The Town could have been transparent and, given its new Town Board News, it could have included information about the audit in any issue from June through today. The Town could have put the report on its web site and featured it in the web site News.

The Town did not inform the public as required. No legal notice, no report presentation, no item in its monthly publication.

Six months later, on November 16, after a Danby resident demanded action, a legal notice was published; the notice contains a URL of an obscure page (itself dated November 14) on the Town's web site, where small window displays the report. As of this writing, the agenda for the next Town Board meeting has not been published; perhaps the report will be presented at that time. The Town Board News for December contains no mention of the report.

Again, we're all human, but the failure—after being called out in the first place for procedure resulting in financial loss—to follow a simple notification procedure again suggests a haphazard operation. The cumulative lack of transparency suggests a certain disregard for the Danby public.

Danby's Fire District has also been audited recently. That report cites what appear to be minor procedural problems. You can find that report using this shortcut: [\[danbyny.org/2020M-149\]](https://danbyny.org/2020M-149).

🐼 (tc)

If the Danby News received its funding from the government, imagine the number of strings it would come with.
— borrowed from an NPR fundraising slogan

'TIS THE SEASON TO SUPPORT THE *DANBY NEWS*

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL knows that you've enjoyed its projects over the years: concerts, information programs, community events (including the recent Knife and Hatchet demo and the Harvest Festival), and, of course, the Danby News.

The *Danby News* contains community-oriented information: events, people, news, and articles of general interest. Its contents come from the Danby public; those and the editing, layout, and legwork are all offered by volunteers.

The cost of printing and mailing, however, are supported by contributions and subscriptions. Your subscriptions (\$10-15 or more) are appreciated. Because some cannot afford a subscription, we're asking those who can, to offer larger contributions—enough for themselves and their neighbors—to support our community-building efforts.

Please make checks payable to *Danby Community Council*, note *Danby News* in the memo, and mail to P.O.Box 6886, Ithaca, NY 14851-6886.

Have a happy holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous New Year! 🐾 (dcc)

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How many of you like graphic novels? We have Juvenile, Young Adult and Adult books in our collection.

For all who like the TV show *Bosch*, Detective Hieronymus (Harry) Bosch is based on novels by Michael Connelly. We have more than ten books of the series. 🐾 (cp)



FREE COFFEE AND DONUTS

DANBY'S COMMUNITY CHURCH is offering Free Coffee And Donuts Fridays, once a month, 7:30-9:30am, for the rest of the year. The next event is on 12/16. Open to the public! 1859 Danby Road, 607.272.1687, [danbychurch.org].

They're in need of volunteers to help, 7-10am, with prep and cleanup. 🐾 (cmc)

SENIORS UPDATE

THE DECEMBER LUNCHEON of the Danby Seniors will be on Thursday, December 15, at Noon. It's a combination road trip, catered lunch, and entertainment.

It'll be at the Lakewatch Inn this year, about 5 minutes north of Stewart Park on NYS RT.34. It sounds like a very festive venue. The cost is \$20 per person and must be paid in advance. Menu is choice of either beef tips or chicken marsala and includes potato, pasta, vegetable, salad or soup with breads, light desserts with coffee and a mimosa bar. A cash bar will also be available.

Sign up with Margie, [margievan@live.com] or 607.273.8046.

There will be no meeting in January, so the next Seniors meeting will be on Thursday, February 2. 🐾 (mv)

Dec 2022

DANBY NEWS: EVENT CALENDAR

Dec 1 • Thu

Noon 📍 Community Church • **NO Seniors Meeting**

Dec 3 • Sat

9am 📍 Town Hall • **Library Volunteers Meeting**

Dec 6 • Tue

6pm 📍 Town Hall+Zoom • **Town Board Meeting**
Public Hearing: Authority to enforce Building Code

Dec 7 • Wed

5pm 📍 WD Fire Station • **West Danby Water District**

Dec 8 • Thu

7pm 📍 Zoom • **Danby Community Council Mtg**

Dec 12 • Mon

7pm 📍 DVFC Station • **Fire Dep't Meeting**
 7pm 📍 West Danby Fire Station • **WD Fire Dep't Mtg**

Dec 13 • Tue

6-9pm 📍 DVFC Station
Fire District Election
 7pm 📍 DVFC Station/YouTube • **Fire District Meeting**
 7pm 📍 Zoom • **Conservation Advisory Council**

Dec 15 • Thu

Noon 📍 Lakewatch Inn • **Seniors Holiday Luncheon**
 4pm 📍 Community Church • **Danby Food Pantry**

Dec 17 • Sat

7pm 📍 DVFC Station • **Christmas Sing**

Dec 18 • Sun

3:30pm 📍 Community Church
Community Sing: Holiday & Seasonal Songs and Carols
 Sundown 📍 Everywhere • **First Night of Hanukah**

Dec 20 • Tue

7pm 📍 Town Hall+Zoom • **Planning Board Meeting**

Dec 21 • Wed

6pm 📍 Town Hall+Zoom • **Town Board Meeting**

Dec 25 • Sun

All Day 📍 Everywhere • **Christmas**

Dec 27 • Tue

7pm 📍 DVFC Station/YouTube • **Fire District Meeting**

Dec 31 • Sat

Midnite 📍 Everywhere • **New Year's Eve**

Jan 3 • Tue

6pm 📍 Town Hall+Zoom • **Town Board Meeting**

Jan 4 • Wed

5pm 📍 WD Fire Station • **West Danby Water District**

Jan 5 • Thu

Noon 📍 Community Church • **NO Seniors Meeting**
 7pm 📍 Zoom • **Danby Community Council Mtg**

Jan 7 • Sat

9am 📍 Town Hall • **Library Volunteers Meeting**

Jan 9 • Mon

7pm 📍 DVFC Station • **Fire Dep't Meeting**
 7pm 📍 West Danby Fire Station • **WD Fire Dep't Mtg**

Ongoing Events

Seniors Strength Class 📍 via Zoom

Mondays and Thursdays, 9–10am

Contact [jmchurch@twcny.rr.com] for Zoom link

Danby Community Library 📍 Town Hall

Tuesday, 1–3pm; Thursday & Saturday, 10am–Noon

Curbside pickup available; can return in drop box.

Food Scrap Recycling 📍 Town Hall 🔄🔄🔄🔄

Saturdays, 9am–Noon

AA Meeting 📍 via Zoom: [zoom.us/j/8209358263]

Wednesdays, 7pm

Where Things Happen

📍 **Danby Town Hall** • 1830 Danby Road

📍 **DVFC Station** • 1780 Danby Road

📍 **WDFD Station** • 47 Sylvan Drive, off Rt.34/96

📍 **Danby Community Church** • 1859 Danby Road

📍 **American Legion Post 221** • 1231 Danby Road

Meeting	Date	Zoom MtgID	Passcode
Town Board	Dec 6	962 1625 1190	071939
CAC	Dec 13	972 1566 0090	423584
Planning Board	Dec 20	958 0817 5336	245871
Town Board	Dec 21	990 7294 9108	569826
Zoning Appeals	None, yet	953 8273 3938	None?
To join a meeting by telephone, call 646.876.9923			

Warning: Zoom meeting info and agendas change frequently!