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85th year at BD, catheter maker still thriving on Bay Road



By Cathy DeDe
Chronicle Managing Editor

The Glens Falls catheter manufacturer that launched the region's medical device industry will mark its 85th anniversary on November 19.

In 1939 Norman Jeckel co-founded USCI — the United States Catheter and Instrument Corporation. It began operating in 1941 with 35 employees in the brick building on Warren Street in Glens Falls where Native Textiles later operated.

CR Bard bought USCI in 1966. Bard in turn was purchased in 2017 by Becton-Dickinson — BD.

Through it all, the Glens Falls operation, which employs approximately 550 people, has made catheters — some going back to the company's beginning, others increasingly complex and cutting edge.

The Bay Road campus south of Quaker Road is deceptively vast — 13 buildings on 15 acres on the Glens Falls-Queensbury border. The Warren County Bike Trail cuts right through it.

Employs 550 making medical devices, the more complicated, the better

"**A lot of people go by this building every day, and they're not really sure what we do** in here. **We save lives. That's what we do," says Pam Welch,** Senior Quality Engineer Specialist.

In her 23rd year at the plant, Mrs. Welch is also keeper of the local company history.

"The oral history that was passed down to me from our folks who have retired is that **Norm Jeckel started the company in his garage**.

"He had traveled extensively and saw that there was a need for catheters and especially woven catheters, and he brought that technology here. And now here we are 85 years later."

Many BD/Bard employees spend whole careers at the plant, and it's helped give rise to other local medical device makers. Dave Sheridan, a USCI co-founder, went on to create three separate companies that thrived in Argyle. Phil Morse

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Chronicle photos/Mark Frost

Qby. native Bob Kelly joined BD in 2019, is interim plant manager

Bob Kelly graduated from Queensbury High School in 2006 and earned an engineering degree at Fairfield University. At Bard/BD since 2019, he's a member of the site leadership team and currently interim plant manager.

"The vast majority of what we make here, we are the sole manufacturer of it. **We're constantly looking to see what new things we can bring in, what we can make better than other people."**



Jackson Donlon, 20, of Queensbury, in photo posted by the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office in Colorado.

Hiking death in Colorado

By Cathy DeDe
Chronicle Managing Editor

Jackson Donlon, 20, a 2024 graduate of Queensbury High School, perished while hiking with a college classmate in the Rocky Mountains.

2024 Qby grad Jackson Donlon was all about outdoor recreation

He was a student at Colorado Mountain College's Leadville residential campus studying outdoor recreation leadership.

"Those who knew him remember his adventurous spirit and the deep friendships he formed along the way," the College wrote.

It said his classmate Kaden Matsuda, 19, of Ridgway, Co., who perished alongside Jackson, was studying wildland fire and had experience working in the fire service after high school.

The two were reported missing

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