Town of Penfield Supervisor’s Column
January 2, 2018

Happy New Year to you and yours, I hope 2018 is filled with good health and happiness for everyone!

I would like to recognize and thank Penfield’s own Sheriff Patrick M. O’Flynn for his 16 years of dedicated service protecting the residents of Penfield and Monroe County, and also for his 41 years as a member of the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office. Thank you Sheriff, it has been an honor to know and work with you over the years.

This extended stretch of cold weather has raised concerns by members of our Fire Marshal’s Office and they would like to offer up some thoughts on the use of space heaters and fireplaces. Although these heating devices may help you feel cozy and warm, they can become extremely dangerous if not used properly. On average, research shows that heating equipment is involved in an estimated 60,500 reported home fires in the United States each year. These fires resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths, thousands of civilian injuries, and more than $900 million in direct property damage per year. Home heating fires are largely preventable when you know the rules.

The Town of Penfield’s goal is to reduce the number of home-heating fires in our community; however, we need your help. We are urging Penfield families to use extra caution this winter when heating homes. Four out of five heating fire deaths (81%), more than two-thirds of the injuries (70%), and half of property damage (51%) involves stationary or portable space heaters, including wood stoves. To help keep our community safe and warm this season, The Fire Marshal’s Office recommends that you follow these guidelines:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home. For the best protection interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home—when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Be sure your home has both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms, also known as dual sensor smoke alarms.
- Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Inspect for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.
- Have your chimney inspected each year by a qualified professional and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.

With these simple and reasonable precautions, help us meet our goal of decreasing home-heating fires this winter.

PenRec program registration begins today, January 2. Many programs fill up very quickly due to popularity so do not delay in signing up! Go to [www.penfield.org](http://www.penfield.org) to ensure you get into the programs that you and your family want to participate in.
It looks like there will be snow for the “Scenic Trek” in Ellison Park on Saturday, January 13. Dust off your cross country skis or snowshoes and join in on this exhilarating trip through this especially scenic park. The program runs from 10:00 AM to noon. Meet at the north side of the parking lot off Blossom Road and look for the hike signs.

Until next week, stay warm!

Tony

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