Over the holidays we saw our first large snow storm in a very long time. I, for one, have enjoyed our long stretch of mild weather and modest snowfall. I have often said that I would rather cut grass than shovel or plow snow.

Following the storm and throughout the week I spoke to a number of our DPW employees who are called upon to remove snow in the worst conditions. They told me of a number of accidents and near misses they witnessed in the course of their plowing duties. I was disturbed by what I learned and I am motivated to offer these winter safety reminders to all drivers, parents and children:

You cannot expect to drive at the same speed in snow and ice conditions as you do with dry pavement. Please allow extra drive time for work, school or other travel activities.

Piles of plowed snow in cul-de-sacs attract our youngest residents to build snow forts and dig tunnels. While these huge snow piles are tempting, playing in them is risky business. Last week while cleaning up cul-de-sac snow with a front loader, we had multiple situations in which children “popped up” from the snow pile. Parents and children, we do not want any of our youngest residents injured or buried in snow. Please resist the lure of that snow and play only in yards away from roadways.

Plow operators have seen children and adults lying atop snow banks along roadways so that snow spray from the plow blade could bury them with snow. This is a dangerous idea; a moving 10-ton truck with a massive plow blade throwing snow is not an opportunity for play. You cannot judge the edge of a blade or the weight of snow, and mixed in with the flying snow are ice chunks and all kinds of debris.

Drivers, never pass a plow on the right. We have had drivers run into the right side wing plow or end up in a ditch once they realized the wing was operating. It is very difficult for drivers to see a plow wing with the snow spray.

If you cannot see a plow’s left or right side mirrors you are following the plow too closely, please maintain a safe driving distance.

Plow trucks weigh between 10 and 15 tons. With plow blades and loads of salt they cannot stop on a dime, take wide turns or easily vary their speed. Please respect the work these DPW employees do to keep roadways, drivers and families in our community safe.

I would like to offer anyone a ride with one of our drivers during a storm to see what they face each time they are out on the roadways; I believe you would gain a better appreciation of the difficult conditions in which they work. To take me up on this offer, please contact Ronnie Williams, Director of Public Works at 340-8632. Thank you in advance for sharing the road with our drivers!

If you would like to recycle your Christmas tree you may bring it to the Public Works Department at 1607 Jackson Road. There is a marked pile between the Highway and Sewer Buildings. Trees will be mulched up in the spring with the rest of the brush residents drop off during the year. Mulch will be made available for residents in the spring and early summer.

Animal Control and the Sheriff’s Department are reporting an unusually high number of dogs off leash and owners not picking up after their pets. Several tickets have been issued to pet owners. Penfield has a leash law and requires dogs to be on leash outside of their property. Also, in fairness to all that use our parks, please do your duty to pick up your pet’s duty. Thank you!

By the time you reading this column you should have received your 2013 Town/County Tax Bill in the mail. If not, please contact the Tax Receiver at 340-8626. I also encourage you to take a look at my letter to the ‘Penfield Property Taxpayer’ dated January 3, 2013 that addresses the various components of the bill. Copies are available at the Town Clerk’s office or by logging on to www.penfield.org and choosing ‘Departments’ then ‘Taxes.’

Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 21 in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

I will be presenting the “State of the Town” address on Wednesday, January 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Town Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend or you can tune in to Penfield TV or log on at www.penfield.org to watch the streaming video.

Until next week, be well and drive safely!

Tony
supervisor@penfield.org
340-8631