Penfield resident and coordinator of Senior Consumer Network for Lifespan, Jim Lynd, has asked me to make our community aware of recent concerns targeting homeowners and the elderly. A “well dressed man” has been in neighborhoods knocking on doors telling homeowners he believes you are over-paying for your energy supply. He asks to see your monthly bill so he can confirm his claim. He also suggests you sign a form to switch your account over to the plan he is offering so you can save money. Jim Lynd wants to remind us all, especially our senior population, to never open your door to strangers, keep your storm door locked at all times—and no matter how cold it is outside, never invite a person into your home! Also, never give or show anyone documents with your personal information. Better yet, don’t even open your door unless you are expecting a known visitor.

If you have any safety concerns call 911, a Sherriff’s Deputy will respond to take a report. For more information on tips to protect yourself and your family from door-to-door or telephone scams, log-on at www.lifespan-roch.org. Also, I have recently become aware that there are a number of telephone scams taking place. Individuals are calling our residents soliciting funds for the state police and other law enforcement agencies. The New York State Police and other law enforcement DO NOT solicit funds via the telephone. If you receive any suspicious calls just hang up—do not discuss or explain— just hang up.

Maggie Hession, a former town board member and a very active volunteer in the community, asked me to remind all residents of the importance of getting a flu shot. The flu can be deadly, especially among our youngest and oldest residents. Even with record numbers of flu cases already being reported, it is not too late to receive your vaccination. If you have received your shot we hope you have had a healthy season thus far; if you have not received your shot because you have been busy with work, family and the holidays, please consider making time to do so. Maggie, I thank you for this important health reminder and for your continued service to the Penfield community.

I am encouraged by several of the Governor’s initiatives that were spelled out in his recent 2013 State of the State address, specifically his remarks concerning continued focus on growing the economy in Upstate New York; reforming workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance to reduce business costs; achieving equality for women through a 10-point plan to break down barriers that perpetuate discrimination and inequality based on gender; the launching of OPEN NY to increase government transparency and allow on-line access to government data, reports, statistics and other information; and making New York a national leader in building a clean tech economy program. All governments across this state must work to have New York appear at the top of lists of positive qualities rather than at the bottom, where we seem to be today. I am cautiously optimistic that we may be moving in a good direction, the proof will be in the overall results.

The Penfield Heritage Association will hold its regular meeting on Sunday, January 27, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. in the Braman Room of the Penfield Library at the Community Center. This month’s topic is “Penfield’s Planning Board.” Mark Valentine, Director of the Planning Department, will be discussing the history of the board, how members are chosen, current projects, and more. This board has been in operation for more than 80 years. Town Historian Kathy Kanauer will also be on hand to help answer questions from the audience. Looking for something different to do on a Sunday? Come join in on this discussion you will be amazed on the number of visuals Mark and Kathy have to share. There is no cost to attend and refreshments will be served!

Until next week, enjoy the mini January thaw, there is still a lot of winter ahead!

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