Congratulations are in order! Hong Wah Chinese restaurant at 1802 Penfield Road has received the prestigious award of “Top 100 Overall Excellence – U.S.A. Chinese Restaurant” for 2013. Hong Wah has also been inducted into the Chinese Restaurant Foundation’s roster of awarded restaurants in an announcement made at the 10th Annual Top 100 Chinese Restaurants Awards Ceremony held on January 6, 2014 in Newark, California.

Hong Wah was established in 2007 by owners Vicky Shi and Kevin Zheng. The Chinese menu includes Hunan, Szechuan, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Thai dishes, and also caters to dietary needs on request, such as low sodium, gluten-free, and low sugar items. Participating restaurants are judged by public voting, a “Mystery Diner” who is sent to the nominated restaurants, past culinary awards, online commendations and testimonials, and an advisory panel of food critics. Continuing its high standards of excellence, Hong Wah has been the recipient of five additional “Top 100 Chinese Restaurants-U.S.A.” awards: Healthy Menu 2008, Local Favorite 2009, Local Favorite 2010, Overall Excellence 2011, Outstanding Contribution 2012, and Overall Excellence 2013.

Hong Wah was also awarded a silver medal in the Democrat and Chronicle’s “Rochester’s Choice Awards” in 2012 and 2013. According to the Chinese Restaurant News, the Chinese Restaurant Foundation (CRF) organizes the national “Top 100 Chinese Restaurants Award” event and continues the tradition of the annual gathering for operators of the American-Chinese restaurants since 2004. The CRF is the first non-profit organization for the development of the Chinese Cuisine in the U.S.A. and their mission is “to unify the Chinese restaurant industry, promote its development and bolster communication among its members.” On behalf of the entire community of Penfield, we applaud Vicky and Kevin for receiving the 2013 Overall Excellence Award!

The Penfield Trails Committee will sponsor its third annual “Hiker’s Jamboree” on Saturday, February 15 from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the town hall auditorium. This year’s featured speaker is Richard Perrin, Executive Director of the Genesee Transportation Council. Mr. Perrin will discuss the expansion and linkage of current trail systems. Come meet the staff behind the many hiking programs in the greater Monroe County area and learn about their specific offerings. This event is free and open to the public. The Penfield Trails Committee is always seeking volunteers to serve on its planning committee, as well as to do manual labor for trails maintenance. For more information, please call Penfield Recreation at 340-8655 or log on to www.penfieldrec.org.

The Penfield Heritage Association will hold its monthly program on Sunday, February 16 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. in the Braman Room at the Penfield Library. This month’s program is entitled “Rochester Movie Mania” by author Donovan Shilling. Who were the entrepreneurs that opened the first movie house? Where were they located and what were the subjects of those first one-reelers? Who were the early movie actors and actresses and how did some of the performers rise to become movie stars? Ever wonder how the films were projected? What part did Rochester play in giving birth to this novel form of entertainment? All this nostalgia and more is part of Mr. Shilling’s presentation, “Rochester’s Movie Mania!” If you have lived in this area for several years you will be transported back to the early days of Rochester’s movie houses. Or enjoy tales of yesteryear as told by Mr. Shilling if you are a newcomer to this area. Either way, be prepared to be entertained.

I want to give a special shout out to the residents of Legacy at Willow Pond in recognition of an impressive accomplishment — creating 12,000 comfort bears. These caring residents recently crossed this milestone of making the comfort bears that have found their way to the hearts of 12,000 people in need of kindness. What a wonderful act of thoughtfulness by all those involved in creating the bears; you have touched so many lives in ways you may never know...thank you for your compassion and caring!

Does the weather have you down? You do not enjoy winter sports? Then why not join us most every Friday night through March at the Penfield High School Pool? Come and play, swim and exercise while enjoying this spacious pool divided to suit all your needs. There is a shallow end with a 4x4 tot dock for the little ones, a deep end for water walking, and two lanes for lap swimmers. Also swimmers who pass the deep end test can also enjoy the one-meter boards in the diving well. The fee is $2.00 at the door and you can log on to www.penfieldrec.org for more information about this aquatic wellness program and more!

Until next week stay warm, and please be sensitive to your pets out in the elements. I hope to see you out in our great community.

Tony LaFountain
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