You may have noticed that our Public Works Department has been cutting a number of Austrian Pine trees on the west side of the Town Hall and along Atlantic Ave. Sadly, the trees have been hit by a disease that has killed or is killing many Austrian Pines around our community. Many Austrian Pines also surround the Community Center; we will begin selectively removing them throughout 2013 and 2014. Our Parks & Facilities crews will be replanting with a combination of trees, bushes and shrubs to replace the loss of the diseased trees over the next several seasons.

The Assessor’s Office asked that I remind residents that the deadline for filing exemption applications (new or renewals) is March 1, 2013. For more information, please log on to www.penfield.org, click on ‘Departments’ on the left side of the home page, then choose ‘Assessor.’ A description of exemptions and forms are available as well as the numbers to reach the Assessor’s Office.

One of the recommendations that came out of the town’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan was the creation of mixed use zoning districts and supporting documentation. Since then, the town has applied for and received a grant from the Genesee Transportation Council to help support this goal. Last week a steering committee of 30 residents, town staff and planning consultants came together to kick off the approximately nine-month process to define the characteristics of two proposed mixed use districts: Route 250 south of Penfield Center Road and north of the Eastside Y, and the area in and around Manitou Lake, the former Dolomite sand quarry on Old Penfield Road. Throughout this period there will be communications regarding the project including public information meetings and a dedicated webpage for residents to learn about the project and submit feedback. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to contact our Planning Department for details, they can be reached at planning@penfield.org or by calling 340-8640. In the coming months I will provide updates in my column.

On February 6 the town board recognized Penfield resident Ted O’Brien with a proclamation in recognition of his retirement from his 15-year role as an active and core member of the Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf, which he helped found in 1997. Working at the food shelf was a full time job for Ted; he fully dedicated himself to its mission and took great pride in supporting the Penfield Community. Ted also had a long and distinguished career with the Penfield Central School District, retiring as the principal of Scribner Road School. Ted’s commitment to the Penfield community is a benchmark for all. Ted, we thank you for your service. To the O’Brien family, we thank you for sharing Ted with this great community of Penfield.

Please note that the town offices will be closed on Monday, February 18 in observance of Presidents’ Day.

The Penfield Heritage Association’s (PHA) next program is scheduled for Sunday, February 24 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the Penfield Library in the local history room. The topic is “Penfield Mills and their Millers” with historical researcher and guest speaker Donovan A. Shilling. Displays and handouts will supplement his presentation. Come spend a wintery Sunday with the PHA and learn a little more about the history of Penfield mills. There is no charge for this program, light refreshments will be served.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, March 7 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for the next Passport Night in Penfield. The Monroe County Clerk’s Office will be on hand to assist residents in completing their applications and answering questions about the process.

Until next week, I hope you all weathered winter storm Nemo without any major problems!

Tony
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