The Town hosted a tree dedication in memory of former Town Historian Maude Lancaster Frank. Maude served as the Town’s Historian from 1978 until her death in 2004. The contributions she made to this community will be remembered for generations. Maude is credited with establishing Dayton’s Corners Schoolhouse on the National Register of Historic Places, and for making the one-room school a teaching and learning museum for thousands of fourth-graders each year.

Additionally, Maude collected and preserved countless documents and artifacts for our Local History Room; published numerous articles and books; helped to preserve the small pioneer cemetery on Whalen Road; and conducted interpretive tours of local historic sites.

A group of 40 family members, friends, and interested residents gathered to hear comments by former Town Supervisor Anna Bundschuh and current Town Historian Kathy Kanauer celebrate her life and contributions to Penfield. I had the honor and great privilege of knowing and working with Maude for more than twenty-five years as an employee of the Town and as a Town Board member. As a community we are fortunate to have been able to share Maude. She and her husband Howard have made lasting contributions to the entire Penfield community…thank you Frank family!

Work continues on the Health Care Consortium. Penfield is one of 13 towns and villages that have come together to leverage our total number of insured employees and retirees as a group versus individually negotiating with the two major health care providers in the area. As you all are too well aware, health care costs have increased by double digits year-on-year for the last three to four years. Penfield has been very aggressive in looking for creative ways to hold costs down; however, as one lone entity, we have very little leverage with our 130 employees and retirees to make a major difference. Together, as an insured group of more than 4,500, we have more clout to make a difference. We are cautiously optimistic that our consortium will help reduce costs to all the communities involved which ultimately become savings to our residents. I will keep you posted as we continue with this process.

Several months ago I reported on a manhole sealing process that our Sewer Department was experimenting with as a way to reduce or eliminate water infiltration into the water treatment system. At that time I said I would update you as to how that process was progressing. I am delighted to report that through the efforts of our Sewer Department working with Monroe Community Pure Waters, we have calculated that we will be able to reduce approximately 12.5 million gallons of storm water/groundwater from entering the water treatment system.

What does this mean from a dollar and cents standpoint? At a treatment cost of $1.29/per thousand gallons, this yields an annual savings of $16,128. The cost to the Town to complete the sealing work was $1,344 in labor and $1,346 in materials for a total cost of $2,690. The return on investment is $13,438 for the first year and $16,128 savings for each year after…great job by Superintendent Mark DiFrancesco and his entire team (Tom Gomes and Paul Fuller).

I have met with most every department head on their individual budgets and the remaining few I will complete next week. I must say that I have been very impressed with their creative ways to manage or reduce spending. With the cost of materials rising, many more unfunded mandates being pushed down from the State and Federal governments (that will be a future column all to itself), and lower than expected revenue from mortgage tax and sales tax, our team has pulled together a very realistic snapshot of 2011. Over the next six to eight weeks I will be working with our Comptroller to package everything together and present a realistic and financially responsible budget to our Town Board by mid-September. Because this is such an important process that impacts every resident, I will have a short update in my column every week until the budget is passed!

As always, I seem to have more than enough items to report on; however, I am interested in hearing from you, our residents, as to what you might like me to discuss in this column. Please feel free to drop me a short note at lafountain@penfield.org with any suggestions or call my direct line at 340-8631.

Have a great week…Tony.