Town of Penfield Supervisor’s Column
August 22, 2016

Rothfuss Park is always active this time of year with children playing soccer and other sports, families walking the paved trails, and our youngest residents enjoying the playground. However, this past Saturday, Rothfuss Park was even more active as hundreds of families and friends participated in AutismUp’s fourth annual Kiteflite Festival and Expo. Many vendors were on hand to provide valuable information and resources in support of those with autism and their families. Participants enjoyed inflatable climbing walls, slides and a bounce house, hay rides, raffles, face painting, demos by the Monroe County Sheriff’s Department, Penfield Ambulance, Penfield DPW, and plenty of food.

This ultimate family fundraising festival helps to support the expansion of AutismUp’s unique education programs for those in our community living with autism. On behalf of the Penfield Town Board and our Recreation Department, we are delighted to partner with Executive Director Sara Milko and her entire team at AutismUp to host this wonderful event in Penfield at Rothfuss Park. I have seen this program grow each year and it is our hope our important partnership continues. To learn more about AutismUp and all the great things this organization does for the community go to www.autismup.org.

Penfield Recreation and the Penfield Public Library are working with Lifespan to determine if there is interest in establishing a volunteer program to provide transportation for senior citizens in the Brighton and Penfield areas, similar to programs in other Monroe County communities. A survey to identify needs and gauge interest is available in hard copy at the Penfield Public Library and is digitally accessible at www.penfieldlibrary.org or www.penfieldrec.org.

I recently attended the 55+ Fun Fair at the Eastside Y sponsored by Senator Rich Funke. There were many activities for participants including Silver Sneaker Cardio, proper stretching techniques, cooking demonstrations, a presentation on chronic disease prevention, and more. Many vendors were on hand to support this great event. A special thank you to the Eastside Y for hosting and Wickham Farms for offering hayrides. I look forward to this event growing each year to support our seniors in Penfield.

The next hike sponsored by the Penfield Trails Committee will take place at Channing Philbrick Park on Saturday, September 10. Join Town Historian Kathy Kanauer for this Penfield history hike to learn about the life and accomplishments of town founder Daniel Penfield. The hike runs from 9:00 to 11:00 AM; please meet at pavilion in the park and look for the hike signs.

Mark your calendars for the 40th Annual Used Book Sale at the Penfield Community Center, 1985 Baird Road, sponsored by the Friends of Penfield Public Library. This popular event will run from Wednesday, September 14 through Saturday, September 17. Come and join the fun, four rooms filled with 85,000+ books, CDs, DVDs VHS tapes, records, games, and more! This year, the FPPL will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the sale with cake on September 14 at 4:00 PM.

The subject of my 2017 town budget update this week is how we manage debt. A decision to incur debt is not made lightly. It must be done with an eye on the long-term needs of our community and an understanding of the impact borrowing will make on future budgets. As the town’s infrastructure ages, the town board must look out over the next five to ten years to determine when multi-million dollar projects will be undertaken to minimize the impact to taxpayers. Each budget cycle, the town board works to keep the overall percentage of the town budget appropriated for debt payments to approximately 11 percent, taking care to add new debt as older debt service is retired. The philosophy of long-term planning, staggering the incurrence of debt, and debt stabilization are major reasons the Town of Penfield was recently upgraded to an Aa1 credit rating by Moody’s Investor Services – Penfield is notably one of the few towns in the region to attain this excellent rating.

In addition to prudent borrowing, the Town of Penfield has an aggressive debt schedule, retiring more than 87 percent of principal in ten years. As with any borrowing, the shorter the term of a loan the more favorable the interest rate, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.

Until next week, I hope to see you out in our great community!