Now that school is back in session and the fall routine is settling back into a familiar norm, I cannot refrain from thinking about the holidays. I know—you are all thinking ‘don’t rush the year any more than it has already been flying by!’ I think about the holidays because of the Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf (PEFS) and the work this dedicated group of volunteers does to serve more than 80 families on a weekly basis. PEFS exists entirely on donated food and monetary donations, and volunteers are grateful for weekly donations from Wegmans and Tops Friendly Markets. The PEFS is located at 1618 Jackson Road across from the Penfield DPW complex. You too may drop off donated items every Wednesday morning from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. or they can arrange for a volunteer pick-up. For more information you may call 234-0799 or log on to penfieldfoodshelf@gmail.com. The current wish list of needed items includes boxes of cereal, condiments (ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise), pasta and sauce, canned fruit, coffee and tea, and laundry and dishwashing soap. Thank you in advance for helping PEFS to help the residents of our community.

September is National Preparedness Month, a time for all families to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies and update or make a family disaster plan. If you have to leave your home due to a gas odor, fire, or other emergency, do you have a location for everyone to meet? Do you have a plan to contact family members that are not at home? If you lose power for a period of time do you have extra food and water for family members? These are just some of the things you should be thinking about to prepare yourself for an emergency. For more information regarding emergency preparedness, consider visiting www.redcross.org.

Speaking of the American Red Cross, I learned over the weekend that there were 15,382 open blood donation slots in August throughout New York. Many well intended people signed up to make a donation; however, because of busy schedules, summer activities, travel or simple forgetfulness, appointments were not kept. Each open slot represents a pint of blood that hospitals are counting on to be available for patients in need. If you have recently donated, thank you. If it has been a while since you have donated, or if you have never donated, please consider giving the gift of life to another person. The next blood drive in Penfield will be held on Saturday, September 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Faith Lutheran Church, 2576 Browncroft Blvd. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to schedule your appointment.

Events and activities to add to your September calendar:

- Saturday, September 14, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., guided hike at Smith Pioneer Cemetery. Meet just south of Sweets Corners Road and north of Atlantic Ave, look for the hike signs and parking attendants.

- Saturday, September 14, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m., Tastin’ the Blues at the amphitheater behind the town hall in Veterans’ Park. Chili cooking contest, samples of locally brewed beer, music and more.

- Sunday, September 15, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. or 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., a canoe ride through history with Rene Robert LaSalle located at Bay Creek Paddle on Empire Blvd.

- Sunday, September 29, 8:00 a.m. registration, 9:00 a.m. race for the 11th annual Family First Penfield 5K Challenge starting at the Community Center on Baird Road.

- Sunday, September 29, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for the first RECreate Wellness Day at the Community Center. The event will showcase some of the many wellness programs being offered by the Recreation Department throughout the year. This is a free event focused on family wellness!

Until next week, watch out for all those “little people” at the bus stops and crossing roadways to catch the school bus. Remember, it is against the law to pass a stopped school bus that has its flashing lights on and its STOP sign displayed. Please do not be distracted by talking on your cell phone or texting!

Tony
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