Update…budget 2011! After several months of hard work the Tentative Budget is completed and in the hands of the Town Board. The tax rate will remain the same as 2010, at $2.64/thousand of assessed valuation. I wish to thank all of our department heads, the comptroller, and the Town Board for their attention to detail and creative alternatives to raising taxes by looking for ways to cut spending, sharing of resources, and reducing government. Great job team, it was my honor working with such a group of professionals! What are the next steps in the budget process? After presentation, the Tentative Budget will then become the Preliminary Budget, and there will be a public hearing on October 6 to hear all interested residents. It should be noted, once the Tentative Budget is submitted, the budget amount cannot go up, it can only go down as required by law, one of the few things the State has gotten right. From October 7-13 the Town Board will prepare the Final Budget and that will be submitted for adoption on October 20. On October 21, the adopted budget is forwarded to the County of Monroe.

As you are reading this week’s column, the 34th annual Penfield Library used book sale is well underway. So don’t delay, Friday, September 17 is “half price day” with many great specials to be had from 10AM – 6PM. Saturday, September 18 features the $3.00/bag sale and special books half price, the sale is open from 9AM – 2PM. I would like to recognize The Friends of the Penfield Public Library for their efforts on this annual event. This year’s sale features more than 85,000 books, videos, DVDs, CDs records, games, and computer software; thank you for all you do for the library and this community!

If you have been by the Town Hall over the last few weeks you may have noted a new addition to the main entrance on the east side of the building just before you enter. A secure night drop box has been added for your convenience to drop off your current tax bill after hours. This box will be checked twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The bill will be processed and the receipt will be mailed back to you for your records. Additionally, you may make your tax bill payments at any of the three M&T bank locations in Penfield, which are located at Routes 250/441 in the Penn Fair Plaza, Empire Blvd near Tim Hortons, and in the Panorama Valley near the corner of Panorama trail and Penfield Road. Please note: bills received after the due date without interest will be returned with a letter of explanation.

The 2010 National Assisted Living Week (NALW) began on Grandparents Day, Sunday, September 12 and ends Saturday, September 18. This year’s theme is “Living Life.” “Living Life” reflects the commitment of assisted living professionals to provide person-centered care to their residents. “Living Life” also means residents sharing their experiences, history, and teaching others what they have learned. Established by the National Center for Assisted Living in 1995, NALW acknowledges the unique relationships that staff, family members, and volunteers have in caring for the residents in assisted living communities. On behalf of the entire Town of Penfield, I want to recognize all of the assisted living facilities within this great community and thank them for everything they do to enhance residents’ lives.

“Making Sense of Leaf Management”…update! This week I want to discuss leaf mulching. As I cut my grass this past week I am starting to notice more leaves that have fallen from the recent winds and the start of the fall season. For the last 33-plus years I have elected to mulch my leaves to minimize raking, elimination of materials to the landfill, and being generally environmentally responsible. I find leaf mulch from autumn leaves provides effective garden insulation and helps restore nutrients to the soil. “Mulcher mowers” seem to be the most efficient tool, although any kind of rotary action mower will work. With several passes of your mower, you can mulch up to 18-inches of leaf clutter. Once the leaf bits settle in, microbes and worms get to work recycling them. For more details on leaf mulching alternatives and tips, please log on to www.penfield.org and click on Renew Penfield.

Save the date…Penfield’s Bicentennial Heritage Festival is October 16 from 11AM – 3 PM at Rothfuss Park. This promises to be fun for the entire family with horse drawn hayrides, games from the past, old-fashioned toys, make your own cornhusk doll, plowing demonstrations, available lunch, pumpkins, cider, and more. Experience farm and family life from 100 years ago! If you are at the Town Hall, please stop in and say hello.

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