Update…Making Sense of Leaf Management”! As the current Town Board has reviewed past leaf collection studies, there are three components of the cost structure to pick up leaves. First is the start up costs, second are labor costs, and third is disposal. Past studies have identified these costs to be $300K–$1M depending on the alternative selected, not including the ongoing yearly costs of maintenance and labor. Here are some numbers of interest: Every nickel of tax rate increase would result in a $125,000.00 addition to the town budget, or $7.50 additional town taxes per average house assessed at $150,000. A one million dollar investment would result in that same value home paying an additional $60.00 of town taxes. As I have reported before, informal surveys show our community with a 50/50 split on Town leaf collection service and willingness to pay the additional taxes to support the service.

Alternatively, there are local landscapers willing to pick up leaves curbside for a cost of about $40. What the Town board learned last year is the private sector is able to react more quickly for a lower cost than government could deliver in this area. While this may seem a small item in the grand scheme of the overall budget, it is one more opportunity to involve small business in supporting our community versus growing government and government spending! Please visit www.renewpenfield.org to learn more about leaf management, landscapers, and other tips on mulching and composting.

I would like to recognize Zaretsky and Associates Landscapers of Penfield for receiving a state ethics award. Bruce Zaretsky, his wife and partner Sharon Coates, and their staff are able to add the Upstate New York Better Business Bureau’s 2010 Torch Award to their many accolades they have received over the years. Bruce started his landscaping company 20 years ago by trading work to get his first business vehicle, a used pick-up. Their business philosophy is about doing the right thing, providing quality work at a fair price, and by not taking advantage of customers. The company employs ten staff members. On behalf of the entire community, congratulations Zaretsky and Associates for the award and for being part of this great community.

Last week I had the pleasure of personally congratulating Louis Pereira, owner of Gentlemen’s Choice barber shop in the Browncroft Corners plaza, as he celebrated the 50th anniversary of his business with family and friends. What an accomplishment! YNN was there to capture Louie’s story and share it with the greater Rochester community. Louie, thank you for choosing to do business in Penfield, you’ve kept so many in our town looking great all these years!

The roadway that runs parallel with Atlantic Ave. on the east side of the Town Hall will play host to a Rochester Soap Box Derby Association event on Saturday, October 9 and Sunday, October 10 from 9AM–4PM. Racers from NY, OH, PA, and MA will be on hand to show off their cars, driving skills and abilities. If you are looking for something different to do this weekend, please consider stopping in and watching a few races, it should be fun for all ages.

The Recreation Department hosted the 8th annual Penfield Challenge 5K race last week; I had the pleasure of starting more than 180 participants and supporting our staff with the awards ceremony. This has come to be a wonderful event in Penfield with the proceeds this year being donated to the Golisano Children’s Hospital at Strong. The overall male winner was Dan Moore (16:43) and the overall woman’s winner was Christina Finke (20:30). Congratulations to Dan and Christina. The overall race results can be found on the PCR Timing web site www.PCRTiming.com.

The Town Board held a public hearing on the 2011 Preliminary Budget. The budget for 2011 holds the tax rate at $2.64 per thousand of assessed valuation. This was not an easy budget to prepare; however, the board was very sensitive to the comments received from many of our residents about the need to cut costs, reduce spending, and not increase taxes. The Town Board will take all the comments received to date and any others up until October 15. We will then look to adopt the Final Budget on Wednesday, October 20.

Some key dates to circle on the calendar: Saturday, October 9 is the Historic Ghost Walk at 7PM starting at the Community Center; Fall Drop-Off is October 14-16 at the Penfield Highway Garage, hours are Thursday and Friday 8AM–6PM and Saturday 8AM–4PM; Family Halloween Fun Friday is October, 15 6-8PM at Rothfuss Park; and Penfield’s Bicentennial Heritage Festival is Saturday, October 16 11AM-3PM. To learn more about all of these and many more wonderful programs going on in Penfield, please log on to www.penfield.org and click on Parks and Recreation.

I can hardly wait until next week to tell more good things going on in Penfield! Tony, 340-8631