The Penfield Sport and Fitness club recently celebrated its 35th anniversary, which included a ribbon cutting on a new sport and fitness area as well as significant remodeling of the facility. I first met founder and owner Alan Hanford in 1977 when he came to the town planning department to develop a racquetball club and workout facility. What has happened over the 35 years since Alan opened the doors in 1978 is a wonderful story. The club grew not only in membership, the facility and business model expanded to support total fitness with Nautilus, an aerobic studio, free weights, cardio equipment, a swimming pool, gymnasium, cycling studio and much, much more! Congratulations to Alan and his team on their 35th anniversary and for making such a significant “wellness” difference in so many lives in and around our community!

I recently received a safety alert from the Office of Fire Prevention and Control regarding “sky lanterns.” These airborne paper lanterns, also known as Kongming Lanterns, wish lanterns, or fire balloons, are constructed from oiled rice paper on a bamboo frame and contain a small candle or fuel cell composed of a waxy flammable material. When lit, the flame heats the air inside the lantern causing it to rise into the air. Lanterns are known to travel significant distances from the point of release and have created a serious safety hazard by starting unintended fires on or off the property from which they are released. As we move into the holiday season and the New Year, please be aware of this safety concern. For more information on these lanterns and other safety tips, please log on at www.dhsses.ny.gov/ofpc.

As the town board continues to struggle with the increasing costs of medical (“affordable health care”), pensions and insurances, we continue to review our workforce balance across the town with regular full time employees, part time employees, seasonal labor, and some added contractors to help manage mounting expenses. During the 2013-14 snow season we are looking to a pilot program in DPW to contract out one of our 17 plow routes and the plowing of municipal parking lots. We have built in checks and balances in the specs to ensure we receive the highest level of quality for this very important service and will critique service levels after every storm event to ensure compliance. This endeavor is new to many communities; however, as costs continue to rise, and with the majority of our residents not wanting to see taxes increase, we will continue to explore ways to manage and control costs and spending.

As we approach the holiday season I encourage all of our residents to consider shopping locally in one of our six business districts: Lloyd’s Corners (Routes 250/441); Panorama Valley; Browncroft Corners, the Four Corners; LaSalle’s Landing and North Penfield Cross Roads (yes the Empire Blvd area is in Penfield!). Also, let’s not forget our many farmers markets which may stay open through Christmas Eve. Please remember that “healthy businesses make a healthy community…shop locally.”

From time to time, the school district has a need to conduct half-day staff workshops. This can create some hardships to working parents as they look for alternative day care or after school program support. To that end, a partnership between the Penfield School District, Penfield Recreation, and the Eastside YMCA has been formed to offer an after school program for Penfield students in grades K-6 at Bay Trail Middle School. The first offering will be on the next scheduled half-day of school on Friday, December 6. Busing will be provided from your child’s school to Bay Trail and activities will run until 5:00 p.m. The cost is just $15 per child. You may register through the Penfield Recreation Department at www.penfieldrec.org.

Once again I close this column on a sober note. I would like to honor Bob Gentle, of Gentle’s Farm Market on Penfield Road, who passed earlier this month. Bob was a long-time Penfield Rotarian and Paul Harris Fellow. I recently had the opportunity to have breakfast with Bob’s grandson Cody Robert Cappon at the Swan Market and he shared a number of wonderful stories about his grandfather with me. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Gentle and Cappon families during this difficult time.

Until next week, batten down the hatches, it looks like the cold weather is coming!

Tony
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