This week I would like to celebrate an auspicious anniversary in Penfield that you may not know of, even though all Penfield residents have all benefited from the existence of this important office. Here’s the news...November 2019 marks a 100-year-old tradition of having an official town historian in the Town of Penfield!

The Town of Penfield, Monroe County, had its first historian appointed on November 8, 1919, seven months after an April 11 law that created the office of government-appointed historians. The man named to this position was Aristides Francis Church, known as “Tide,” (1849-1937). Tide had been recording local history events in his daily diary since 1864. In 1896, he created a log book of the town’s Civil War soldiers, contacting veterans and their families to collect stories of their service and get current updates on their lives. He later compiled a similar record for the soldiers of WWI. Tide also wrote about various events that occurred during his childhood, which help to provide insight into the Town of Penfield in the late 19th century.

Historians to follow were Claude Lewis, Kay Thompson, and then Maude Frank. Our current Town Historian, who many of you may know, is the eminent Kathy Kanauer who took this position in 2005 after several years of working alongside Town Historian Maude Frank. If you have been to the local history room, attended a local history lecture, or joined a ghost walk in Oakwood Cemetery, you will have crossed paths with Kathy. Also, if you are a history buff you may have read “Calvin Wooster Owen: Diary of a Nineteenth Century American” that was edited by Ann H. Stevens and Kathy Kanauer (copies are still available, call 340-8740 to learn more). In recent years, Kathy has been working diligently with volunteers to digitize the many documents and photographs in our archives. We are fortunate to have Kathy serving our community, preserving our past and keeping it fresh for contemporary audiences.

I received the following important article regarding Thanksgiving safety from Syed Ahmed Mustafa, MBA, President, Board of Directors NYS-EMT Paramedic, Northeast Quadrant Advanced Life Support and Webster Emergency Medical Service. He has asked me to share this with the entire Penfield community. Please read and take note:

As we get ready for my favorite holiday of the year, Thanksgiving, here are some tips to make this holiday as safe as it can be.

Turkey is one of the most popular main courses for this holiday, and while many of us bake the turkey, some of us also smoke or deep fry it. No matter how you prepare the turkey it is important to be sure it is cooked properly. Read the instructions on the turkey’s wrapper or grab your favorite cookbook, but ensure the turkey is cooked to at least 165 degrees F. If a meat thermometer isn’t handy, a good way to confirm a bird is cooked fully is by poking it to the bone and ensuring the juices are clear, not pinkish.

For those who prefer frying a turkey, it is absolutely critical that you dry the turkey before placing the bird in the hot oil. Wet turkeys can cause the oil to boil over and potentially ignite. Never, ever, fry a frozen turkey. And never fry a turkey in your garage. It is best to deep fry your fully thawed and dry turkey a safe distance from the house on a flat, stable surface.
Remember, after you touch raw poultry, wash your hands with soap and water before touching other utensils or ingredients to avoid the spread of bacteria which can cause stomach upset later.

One other thing to pay attention to is food allergies. During holidays we fry turkeys in peanut oil, put pistachios in baklava, and we cook with a variety of ingredients that could spur food allergies. Check with your guests to ensure they don’t have any allergies you should be aware of, or if you or someone in your party has a food allergy, let your hosts know before cooking begins. If you think someone is having an allergic reaction, call 911 immediately. Don’t waste time seeing if the reaction resolves itself or giving over the counter medicines to treat at home. Food born allergies can quickly become life threatening and it’s better to get help on the way, let the patient be assessed by EMS professionals and transported if necessary.

With guests coming over and many leaves still on the trees, be sure your sidewalks and driveways are well lit and cleared of leaves and snow. You don’t want your guests slipping on the way to dinner or on the way home after a lovely meal. Slips and falls are one of the most avoidable accidents.

Those with diabetes should monitor what you eat and your glucose levels carefully during the holidays as we all tend to eat more and different foods than normal. Also, changes in routine because you are getting up early to cook or staying up late with guests can also change blood glucose levels outside normal ranges.

Lastly, while having a glass of wine or a few beers with dinner may be fine, please don’t ever drink and drive. If you feel you’ve had anything to drink, please consider getting a ride from a friend, designate a non-drinker in your party, or just hang with your family and friends after dinner while you have some non-alcoholic beverages to ensure that whoever is driving home can do so safely.

From my family of firefighters, police officers and EMTs to all of you, have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving.

Syed Ahmed Mustafa  
President and Paramedic  
Northeast Quadrant Advanced Life Support

Thanksgiving Day is about celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year. Americans generally believe that their Thanksgiving is modeled on a 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists (Pilgrims) of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people. This holiday is particularly rich in legend and symbolism, and the traditional fare of the Thanksgiving meal typically includes turkey, bread stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, and pumpkin pie. Sadly, many have forgotten why the day was established. Its meaning has slowly deteriorated, and is now almost completely lost under a cloud of media hype, sales pitches, marketing tactics, and blitz commercialism. During this coming Thanksgiving Day holiday please take some time to gather with family and friends to give thanks for the many blessings enjoyed...from our family to yours...Happy Thanksgiving!

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