As I reported in this column a few weeks ago, the town board was considering a pilot program in DPW to contract out one of 17 plow routes as part of our ongoing efforts to manage increasing medical costs (“affordable health care”), pensions, insurances, and more, as we balance the town workforce with regular full- and part-time employees, seasonal labor, and contractors. After reviewing the projected savings of a contracted plow route, the town board does not believe the savings warrant contracting a plow route at this time. Therefore, for the 2013-14 snow season, plow routes and resources will remain the same as in past years. With the majority of our residents not wishing to see taxes increase, the town board will continue to explore ways to manage and control costs and spending in all areas of town operations.

Last week the Penfield Business Association (PBA) held its annual holiday party and recognized Wickham Farms as its “2013 Business of the Year” and Ron Baroody as its “2013 Daniel Penfield Award” recipient. On behalf of the community, congratulations to Wickham Farms and Ron Baroody on these honors, and thank you for all you do to make Penfield great for us all. Please remember to shop locally – healthy businesses make a healthy community.

If you have been to the Penfield Community Center recently to visit the library, register for a recreation program, or attend a class, you may have noticed new signage on the doors. The Penfield Public Library has been designated an official “safe place” by the Center for Youth. What does that mean? Youth in crisis may come to the library seeking help. When they do, library staff will contact the Center for Youth who will dispatch a counselor to assist and connect the youth in distress to services they may need. This is another example of your library and recreation department working to make a difference in the community by supporting our young residents.

Thank you Mitchell Krenzer, Penfield High School sophomore and member of Boy Scout Troop 312, for presenting a holiday wreath to the town board for display at the town hall. For greatest visibility, we have placed the wreath at the main entrance on the east side of the building where most residents enter. Thank you Troop 312 for helping to make the town hall more festive during this holiday season.

Members of the Creative Gardeners Club (Barbara Bouchard, Maureen Parker, Janet Lockhart, and Marilyn Vandenberg) made their annual visit to the town hall to decorate for the holidays. Each year we are honored to have this group brighten up the rotunda with greens, bows, and wreaths for all residents to enjoy. I extend a very special thank you to the Creative Gardeners for their ongoing commitment to make the town offices special for all who visit during this season.

The Penfield Trails Committee will sponsor its next free guided hike and tour at the paths and boardwalks of The Nature Conservancy’s Thousand Acre Swamp on Saturday, December 14 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. A variety of habitats including woods, meadows and ponds will be covered. The guide will emphasize winter nature lore such as identifying trees in winter dress, looking for tracks (if there is snow) and other signs of animals in the area. Meet behind the Penfield Ambulance base, 1585 Jackson Road. The hike is free, however participants are asked to register by calling the Recreation Department at 340-8655, option 6.

I was recently honored to present a certificate of recognition to Rosemarie Kyle in celebration of 50 years of music education and inspiration at St. Joseph’s School. Mrs. Kyle has helped develop excellent students and given countless children a lifelong appreciation of music. Congratulations and best wishes from the entire Penfield Community.

Enjoy your week, be well, and be safe!

Tony

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