As you read this column, you have roughly NINE days left to complete your holiday shopping. Please consider Penfield businesses when you are looking for that special gift. From automobiles to clothing, jewelry to restaurants, computers to photography, most everything you might need for that family member or friend can be found in one of Penfield’s six business districts. If you are having trouble making a choice, a gift certificate works equally well. Also, please support our local farm markets, many are open till Christmas or beyond. Healthy businesses make for a healthy community—please shop locally whenever you can!

This week’s tips from EAP of Rochester on how to beat holiday stress: “Pass down wisdom and tradition” instead of mourning the passing of better times, keep those memories alive by sharing them with the next generation; “take some time off work” don’t cram all errands and shopping trips into the precious little time you have outside work hours, avoiding weekend crowds will allow you to get more done; “make a gratitude list” review it whenever you’re feeling depressed, anxious or stressed out.

I would like to make one last plug for the needs of the Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf for this holiday season. The Food Shelf will accept all non-perishable food items; however, they are in great need of canned fruits this time of year. If you can help, please bring your donation to the Food Shelf located at the Penfield Baptist Church, 1862 Penfield Road on Wednesday mornings or call Joe at 234-0799. You may also bring your donations to the Penfield Town Hall any weekday from 9 AM to 5 PM, look for the donation barrel in the rotunda. Thank you for helping your Penfield neighbors.

The Genesee Valley Recreation and Park Society held its annual awards ceremony a few weeks ago, and Penfield was notified we received two more awards for the Heritage Festival held as part of the town’s bicentennial in 2010. The festival, organized by local farm families and the Recreation Department, showcased the significant role that agriculture has played in the rich history of Penfield. One of the awards was for publication and the other for special events. Please join me in another round of applause for everyone who made this event so successful during our bicentennial—great job team!

You have an opportunity to give blood in Penfield on Friday, December 23 at the Penfield Community Center. Donating blood makes a difference in our community. Typically, blood supplies are low at this time of year. I plan to donate and ask that you consider joining me. If you would like to schedule a donation appointment on December 23, please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit www.redcrossblood.org. I hope to see you there.

Town and county tax bills will be mailed on December 30, 2011, with the first day of tax collection on that same day. Town offices will be closed on January 2 due to the New Year’s holiday; full and installment tax payment collection will resume on January 3. All Penfield M&T Banks will be taking full payments on January 3. Payments can also be dropped off in our locked drop box located on the east side of the Town Hall building.

The Shepherd Home presents its Wings of Light Luminaria event on Monday, December 19 from 5 to 9 PM. Come join an evening of light, laughter and love. Luminaries are small bags weighted with sand and a lighted candle. Candles will all be lit at once to create a glowing nighttime holiday display on the grounds of the Shepherd Home at 1959 Five Mile Line Road. You can personalize every luminary you purchase to honor or memorialize a friend or loved one. To learn more, visit www.shepherdhome.org or stop in at the Shepherd Home.

We have been very fortunate thus far with dodging the winter weather; however we all know it is just around the corner. Winter parking rules are in effect from November 15 to April 1. No parking is allowed on any roads or highways in the town between 2 and 7 AM. Thank you in advance for observing these rules; it will make it easier and more efficient for our Highway Department to keep all roadways plowed.

Important dates and events in history: December 15, 1791 the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, are ratified.

Until next week—be well and be safe!

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