



Stars and Stripes

A crowd watches as American Legion Post 477 of St. Nazianz dedicates a new flag pole at the site of the Meeme Liberty Pole

on July 4. The pole ceremony was part of the post's Celebration of Freedom to honor the 250th anniversary of the United States of America.
—Journal Photo by Jacob Puestow

Liberty Pole site gets second flag display

By Jacob Puestow

A new 60-foot flag pole was dedicated on the morning of the United States' birthday.

American Legion Post 477 of St. Nazianz hosted the Celebration of Freedom on Saturday—July 4—at the Meeme Liberty Pole at the intersection of County Roads XX and M in the Town of Meeme.

The newly erected flag pole joins the Meeme Liberty Pole and features a 12-by-18-foot American flag.

After the ceremony, the community was invited to Shadows in School Hill for a light brunch.

Nancy Schnell Rivera narrated the procession of the 13 folds of the American flag, which detailed the meaning of each step in a ceremonial folding.

With the 13th fold, the stars are upheld and shown to symbolize the motto, "In God We Trust."

"Let us always honor the American flag, not merely as

a piece of cloth but as a living emblem of a freedom to be valued, unity we uphold and sacrifices made on our behalf," she said.

"May we treat our nation's symbol with respect, dignity and reverence..."

Up next, Dean Koenig gave a brief history of the Meeme Liberty Pole.

He talked about a 6-year-old boy named Norbert who attended the 1922 dedication of the Meeme Liberty Pole.

"When they arrived... (he and his family) saw a large crowd," he said. "Almost 1,000 people gathered (for) the dedication."

Years later, Norbert would graduate from Kiel High School and go on to fight in World War II.

"He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for valor for his service during the Normandy invasion," Koenig said.

Norbert, who died in 2010, long after serving his country, requested in his will that his

burial flag be flown on the Meeme Liberty Pole during national holidays.

"Today, Norbert's flag flies on the Liberty Pole just above the America 250 flag," Koenig said. "Just as the old Liberty pole has stood for the last 104 years for freedom and liberty, so too does the new pole."

"Its service starts today, ensuring those principles are on...full display for all to see

and never forget."

Fay Billman, a former Kiel High School English teacher, then offered some America 250 reflections, but not before exuberantly shouting, "Happy birthday, America!"

She spoke of the Declaration of Independence and its iconic line that starts with, "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." and the Preamble to the Constitution.

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She also brought up other various quotes, poems and lyrics.

Later on, she would recall how this area has seen many losses to armed conflict, including a few of her own former students.

"We as Americans have experienced many losses and

setbacks in the past 250 years," she said. "But, through the service and dedication of many, we still have our freedom and the unalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

She ended her short speech

with the sentiment that the American spirit is unstoppable.

During the ceremony, Wendy Jacobs sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America, the Beautiful" as the audience joined in.

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