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# Haverstraw Brick Museum celebrates Flag Day

By ANNIE SHREFFLER  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL NEWS

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Families, senior citizens and officials joined Boy Scout Troop 29 for a ceremony yesterday at The Haverstraw Brick Museum in anticipation of Flag Day.

Museum President Pat Gordon stressed the ideals the museum is trying to promote in honor of the national holiday on June 14.

"It's an important thing, our flag, and we need to do more to honor it," Gordon said, pledging that the Brick Museum will continue its mission each year to recognize the American flag and to honor the veterans who gave so much to defend it.

Before the ceremony, museum volunteer Howard Gordon Jr. operated an electronic diorama that depicts the worst tragedy in Haverstraw's history, the great landslide of 1906 that killed 19 people.

Helene O'Dowd's great-grandfather, firefighter Joe Albert, lost his life in that landslide, and her family comes to the museum each year to honor his memory.

Her granddaughter, Maureen O'Dowd, donned a blue mobcap and posed as Betsy Ross to dramatize the making of the flag.

Helene's son, Boy Scout Troop leader Charles O'Dowd, brought Troop 29 from Congers to participate in the flag celebration. They read instructions taken from the resolution adopted by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, on how a flag is to be constructed, displayed and used in procession; next they demonstrated how to properly salute and fold an American flag.

"They come because they always know the snacks will be good," joked Thomas Leonard, another Troop 29 leader. On a more serious note, Leonard said the boys in Troop 29 take their required participation in civic life to heart and that they care about sharing the importance of the flag.

"It deserves respect," said troop member Patrick O'Dowd.

Boy Scout Matt O'Dowd said as he learned more about the flag, he was impressed with all that it symbolizes, including America's troops.

"You realize that there's a lot behind it," he said.

"When I do this, I feel honored to be part of our country. The flag reminds me of what soldiers have done for us," said troop member Michael Hoblin.

Gordon also shared a sobering recording by comedian Red Skelton on the Pledge of Allegiance, as he had learned it from his seventh-grade teacher, who patiently outlined the definition of each word to underscore the patriotic meaning behind praises so routinely recited.

Among the many officials who attended the ceremony were Howard T. Phillips Jr., town supervisor, and Michael Grant, county legislator.



Kathy Gardner/The Journal News

Patrick O'Dowd, left, of Congers Boy Scout Troop 29 shows the proper way to fold the flag yesterday at the Haverstraw Brick Museum during a Flag Day ceremony.

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participate in Flag Day and feels gratified that they honor veterans.

"I had four brothers and a husband serve in World War II. All of them came home," she said.

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