

'Paint the town' to proclaim our community pride

Let's show the world how proud we are.

The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership is again asking all area residents to Paint the Town Red, White and Blue for Independence Day. That means fly the U.S. flag, plant a tree, or maybe red, white and blue flowers. I understand those blue flowers are hard to find. If you find any, let me know.

The whole point the partnership is trying to get across with this is that we have pride in our community, whether it is Hazleton, Freeland, Drums, McAdoo,



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Tresckow or Kelayres.

It certainly brightens things up, doesn't it?

The effort began with the Memorial Day holiday in May.

Although there was some confusion over the celebration being a one-day event, it is still going on. If you missed out on the chance to at least fly the flag, you're getting a second shot.

The partnership wants to keep this going right through the summer to Funfest.

I think it is working.

Some parts of the outside world believe Hazleton is a significant place. The people at OfficeMax, for instance, were willing to invest \$47.5 million in the area.

And there are at least four more recent examples.

Humboldt Industries, a pet supply and craft kit distributor, was sold recently for \$9.2 million. And the company that bought it – instead of moving this one out – is moving in here.

And soon, there will be a shopping mall right in front of it. Local developer Donald Laputka, is building a shopping center at the entrance to the Humboldt Industrial Park, specifically to serve the park's employees. That project was spurred by a Shenandoah-based bank that wanted to build a branch there.

A Philadelphia developer has

purchased the Hazleton Shopping Center, because he sees its potential, as well as Hazleton's. A new dollar store will take the space occupied for almost four decades by McCrory's, while the developer markets the space where a supermarket did business for about as long as McCrory's did.

And – despite known opposition from potential neighbors – a Nanticoke developer has revived plans to build a motel along Route 93, across from the entrance to the Penn State Hazleton Campus.

So, I ask once again, if you

missed putting your flag out Memorial Day, do it this weekend.

Better yet, if you have more time, plant some flowers or a tree – or make yourself one of those red, white and blue ribbons, and tie it to a tree near your home.

The ribbon could act like the yellow ribbon in "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," the '70s song by Tony Orlando and Dawn. Remember?

"Tie a yellow ribbon, 'round the old oak tree, it's been three long years, do you still want me? . . . I can't believe I see, a hundred yellow ribbons 'round the old oak tree."