

The Vexilloid Tabloid

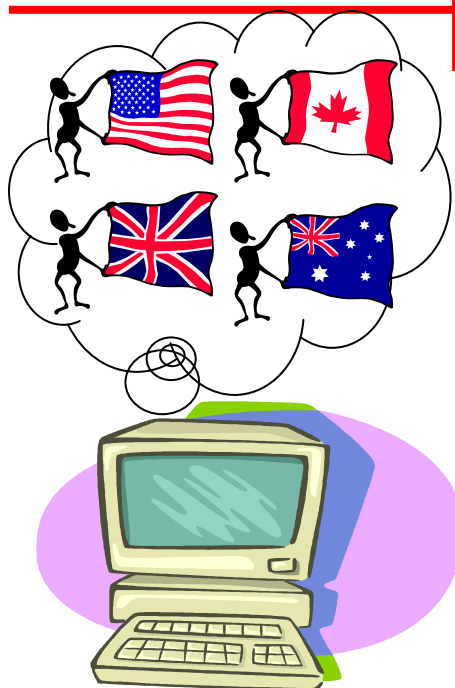
Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 6 July 2005

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Thoughts on a New Flag for Oregon

By Scott Mainwaring

Through discussions at the Portland Flag Association, and learning from Ted Kaye's thoughtful vexillographic guidelines and tireless efforts in survey-evaluation of various categories of current flags, I've come to see Oregon's current flag as at best mediocre. In my opinion its most interesting and quirky feature – one that fits Oregon well as an interesting and quirky state – is its two-sided, beaver-backed design; but, alas, this is also its principle failing, sharply driving up complexity and costs. Prompted by these discussions at PFA meetings, and inspired by Mason Kaye's interests in maps on flags and Doug Lynch's proposals for an Oregon flag reflecting the state's geographic features, I set out to try my hand at flag design.



(a)

Of the variations I've experimented with, (a) is the simplest and perhaps

my favorite. It can be seen as a highly stylized map of the essentially rectangular state (green), bordered by water (blue) on the west (Pacific) and north (Columbia), and the high deserts (gold) of Idaho on the east and of Nevada and NW California on the south. The central square is green, by which I intend a number of symbolic resonances: to the forests which dominated the landscape and economy of western Oregon, to the lushness of the Willamette Valley and its surrounding forests which lured early European settlers, to the ecological and smart-growth mindset of many of its municipalities which lure many of the current settlers, and to the flag of its sibling Northwestern state of Washington. The blue, green, and gold divisions can together represent the three principle regions and distinctive landscapes of the state: coast and gorge, valley and forest, and basin and range. The blue and gold of flag's edges also echo the state's official colors, and the gold suggests as well Oregon's neighbor to the south, the Golden State.

(Continued on page 2)

“A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation's flag, sees not the flag only, but the nation itself...” — Henry Ward Beecher

If you wish to compliment the editor, or to contribute in the future, contact John Hood at 503-238-7666 or vivijohn@comcast.net. If you wish to complain, call your mother.

A New Flag for Oregon?

(Continued from page 1)

The overall design is intentionally quirky, though hopefully in a less costly way than the current flag's quirkiness. I'm not familiar with any other flags adopting this kind of non-heraldic configuration (does it have a name?), of a central field bracketed by L-shaped borders. I believe it gives it some inherent visual interest and distinctiveness.

The basic design also affords additional ornamentation, though with added complexity (and violating *Good Flag, Bad Flag's* recommendation of a maximum of three colors). Many variations I've considered include (b)



(b)



(c)



(d)

a white circle to symbolize Oregon, the wheels of the pioneer wagons, and the concept of wholeness, (c) a more literal reference to the pioneer wagons of the Oregon Trail, and (d) wheel-like patterns of 33 stars to symbolize it's status as the 33rd state of the union, as well as suggesting through the use of stars on a solid field its identity as a US state. The openness of the original flag (a) to elaboration may be a useful feature in itself, allowing symbolic extension through the addition of an appropriate symbol to state agencies, counties, or other subsidiary entities.

I hope these designs and thoughts may play some role in future conversations about the Oregon flag, and I would welcome any feedback, especially regarding any historical precedents for the overall L-shaped bracketed design. Please contact me at scottmainwaring@yahoo.com.

Did You Know?

The five smallest independent countries in the world really don't comprise much area, but how small are they relative to known places? Here are approximant equivalents (for those of us in the Portland area): Vatican City – 0.17 sq. miles, Washington Park – 0.2 sq. miles; Monaco – 0.75 sq. miles, Laurelhurst – 0.72 sq. miles; Nauru – 8.2 sq. miles and Tuvalu – 9.4 sq. miles, Forest Park – 8 sq. miles; San Marino – 24 sq. miles, Southeast Police Precinct (I84 to Clackamas Co. and the Willamette River to I205) – 21 sq. miles.

The US flag has had more changes made to it than any other flag in the world.

Walk of the Flags

(Continued from page 5)



Flag ready to be hoisted

The educational value of the display, and the feeling of separateness, yet one that typifies our nation of States is unique to this spot. The Capitol Dome rises in the background, with the statue of the pioneer, to remind us all of the sacrifices and of the time and work needed to assemble such a Union of separate States.



The Pioneer on top of the dome

Elmer's Flag and Banner was honored to be a part of this historic and now monumental flag display.

July 2005 Flutterings You Need to Know

Host Ted Kaye had a bunch of flags hanging from hooks in his dining room, ready to show later in the meeting and commented that his younger son, Rob, wondered what the collective noun for flags was. It happened that several people had copies of the book, *An Exaltation of Larks*, by James Lipton, so terms of ventry were discussed. The consensus, on the spur of the moment, was “a flutter of flags”, suggested by John Hood. We would like to hear from people out there if there is an accepted collective noun, or if there is a better one to offer.

The flags Ted had to tease us with were from his box of “institutional” (non-government)

flags — all of which he has had some association or contact with : U.S. Naval Academy - Brigade of Midshipmen, Australian Bicentenary, United Way, University of Virginia, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Telesis Group, Double Standard (Yes/No), XIX International Congress of Vexillology. In honor of the next ICV meeting in August, he also displayed Argentina and Buenos Aires Province.

Scott Mainwaring has come up with several designs for a new flag for Oregon (see related article in this newsletter). In the state and provincial flag survey of 2001, Oregon was eleventh from last, but it takes more than that to change a state flag. We

had quite a discussion on what can actually drive a change. Dan Patterson is a member of the Oregon Geography Alliance and felt that they could be instrumental in helping with a contest when the time is right.

Mike Hale put on a PowerPoint presentation of the “Walk of Flags” (see related article). The pictures don’t do the display justice. The circle of 50 flags is really impressive on a nice day with a little breeze. It’s worth an outing to Salem and then lunch at *Konditorei* or *Alessandros*.



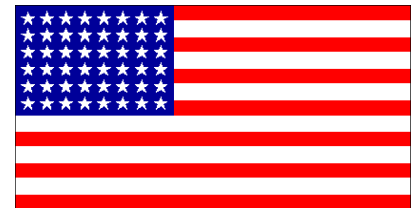
Flags in the News

Ken Ray, a member in Salem, sent us a letter apologizing for not being able to attend meetings more often and enclosed a newspaper clipping as a contribution. The clipping is from *The Observer*, of La Grande, Oregon, and following is an abridged edition:

In Cove, Oregon, a town of about 600 people, 17 miles east of La Grande, Harold Blank and Robert Moxley, both veterans, meet at 7 a.m., sunrise, on July 4th to raise the flag. It isn’t just an ordinary flag, but a 10- by 20-foot, woolen, 48-star American flag. The original flag, dated 1917, was once raised on what was considered Oregon’s tallest flag pole in the very middle of Cove’s main street. That flag was lost in a

fire a few years later, but area women came up with red, white and blue wool to sew a replacement flag – the one Blank and Moxley were getting ready to raise. Blank took over the flag raising duties in 1975 from relatives of LeRay Wilson, the first World War II casualty from Cove. He is worried about who will do it when he no longer can since the

young people don’t seem to share his sense of tradition. But this day it is not a problem and at sunset, he and Moxley will return to lower the flag and store it away for another year.



Some Flag Related Websites

North American Vexillological Association <http://www.nava.org>

Flag Institute (United Kingdom) <http://www.flaginstitute.org>

Flags of the World <http://www.fotw.net>

Elmer’s Flag & Banner <http://www.elmersflag.com>

Darwin, Northern Territory (Australia) <http://www.nationalflags.com.au>

Flag Society of Australia <http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au>

October Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association was scheduled for Marshall Goldberg's, but a conflict of dates precluded that. Scott Mainwaring graciously offered his house (with a minimum of arm-twisting). It will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, October 13, 2005, at 7144 SW 29th Ave., telephone (503) 977-3222. See the map below.

We look forward to seeing those of you that have been otherwise committed, and hear some new war stories, see some different flags, and hear some provocative discussion.

Ted Kaye will tell us about ICV XXI he attended in Buenos Aires. Mike Hale will probably have some more terror tales of the flag business. Perhaps the article Scott wrote on new Oregon flags will inspire others to try their hand. In addition, as is shown

letter, we also seem to be trivia buffs. So any little tidbits you may come up with will be welcome. Ken Dale, do you hear me? And I'll try to gather some neighborhood association banners to show what really BAD flags look like!

It's not too early to be making plans for NAVA 39 in Nashville, TN, October 7-9. See the NAVA website for details.



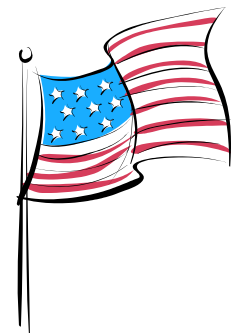
Meet the World: Brazilian/Portuguese Artists Reinterpret National Flags as Political Charts

By Scott Mainwaring

A flag-based art project called *Meet the World* has been making the rounds on the Internet, pointing readers to the website <http://www.brazilianartists.net/home/flags>. Artists Icaro Doria, Luis Silva Dias, Andrea Vallenti, and João Roque, working for the Lisbon magazine *Revista Grande Reportagem*, have assigned their own meanings to several national flags such that the flags not only represent their subjects, but provide social commentary on them as well. For example, the color areas of the US flag are re-defined as "red - In favor of the war in Iraq, white - Against the war in Iraq, blue - Don't know where Iraq is". Despite taking



some liberties with mapping statistics onto the color (e.g., it's likely that many more Americans are ignorant of Iraq's location than there is blue in that flag), the artists appear to have invented a provocative way of playing with vexillological meaning.



Walk of the Flags

By Mike Hale

The following is an excerpt of an article by Peter Wong from the June 15, 2005, *Statesman Journal*:



Title plaque

To the strains of "America the Beautiful" by the Keizer Community Jazz Band, donors on Tuesday (Flag Day) raised the banners of the 50 states along the new Walk of the Flags outside the Capitol.



With a little breeze

The display was paid for by private donations to the Oregon State Capitol Foundation. The flags fly atop 20-foot poles in an oval next to Willson Park, on the west side of the Capitol, and are placed according to



Looking West from the top of the dome

the date of admission of each state to the Union. Delaware is first, and Hawaii is 50th. Oregon, as the 33rd state, is on the north side of the oval.



Oregon's plaque (typical)

Each flag site cost \$1,300, which was paid by an individual, a family, a group or an organization.



Gov. Kulongoski (on the right)

Gov. Ted Kulongoski talked about the value of the display to children. "One of the joys of working in Salem, sometimes the only joy during the legislative session, is the joy of welcoming children to the Capitol," he said. "They remind us of why we come here every day as we watch their eyes widen and answer their curiosity about this state's rich history."

Senate President Peter Courtney said Oregon is the only state in the West with such an outdoor display. "This is a history lesson outside our Capitol," he said during the Flag Day ceremony.

"A flag represents the ideals and hopes, the history and dreams of a place and its peo-

ple," House Speaker Karen Minnis said. "That is what is sewn into each flag, which is why we treasure and defend them. This display honors our states and serves as a visual reminder we are among 50 states that are proud to call themselves the United States of America."

So much for the politics of the dedication. The mechanics are a different story.

The project began in earnest about 2 years ago. Many steps had to be taken including the removal of several trees that were within the circle. None were in good health. Notices had to be sent and various State Government Departments were involved. The Governor's concern was whether or not the flags would require lowering each time the US Flag was lowered. With the recent, and non-historically based practice of lowering the flag for each soldier dying in Iraq, the practice of lowering the US Flag is now much more frequent. However, since the US Flag is on a much higher pole on the other side of the Capitol Building, and at half staff it is still higher than these flags, it was determined that the two were quite separate displays. No US Flags hang within the State Flag display.

The footings are four feet deep instead of two feet. The poles are 20 feet tall, satin finished, one piece, with a V-Cleat internal rope. The concealed halyard provides a clean appearance, security and quietness. Each is locked and will be left up 24/7 for the public to enjoy.

(Continued on page 2)

Flag Flowers

By John Hood

Our friend in Australia, Ron Strachan, sent us an article describing three flowers with the word “flag” in their names and wanted to know if we had any “flag flowers” in the U.S.A. I immediately thought of my mother referring to Irises as “Flags”, but had not heard the term in years. Then I remembered the “Spanish Flag” in the back yard and the “White Flag” in the dining room. With a minimum of research, I found sixteen flag flowers, including the three that Ron sent. Following are their Latin names and descriptions .



Belgian Flag, Drapeau Belge, Chinese Lantern, Flowering Maple
Abutilon megapotamicum

The French recognized the colors of the Belgium flag, but they seem to be the only ones who call this flower by that name. A container plant for warm climates — native to Brazil.



Spanish Flag
Mina lobata, Ipomoea lobata

An annual vine with flowers that was thought to resemble the flag of Spain. Makes a good cut flower — native to Mexico.



Danebrog, Oriental Poppy
Papaver somniferum

The white cross on the red background certainly looks like the Danish Flag. This opium poppy is native to Armenia.



White Flag, White Sails, Peace Lily
Spathiphyllum wallisii

A durable house plant that seems to be waving a white flag of peace — native to Colombia.



Spiral Flag
Costus sanguineus, speciosus, spiralis

A member of the Ginger family, used as an essential oil and more recently, as an anti-inflammatory steroid, grows to 10 feet tall — native to Thailand.



Copper-Colored Corn Flag
Gladiolus securiger, dalenii, linnaeus

A parent of the more common garden Gladiolus and only resembles it slightly — native to South Africa.

(Continued on page 7)

Flag Flowers

(Continued from page 6)



Alligator Flag, Fire Flag
Thalia geniculata

A large aquatic plant to 10 feet tall, named this because its native habitat is in the cypress swamps where alligators are likely to be found — native to Florida.



Sweet Flag
Acorus calamus

A semi-aquatic plant used in herbal medicine as a stomach tonic — native to India.



Purple Flag
Patersonia occidentalis

Yellow Flag
Patersonia xanthina

Since Iris are rare in Australia, *Patersonia* is called native iris or flag. Purple Flag and Yellow Flag look similar, attractive to native birds and butterflies — native to Australia.



Butterfly Flower
Diplarrena Moraea

Long lived, honey scented, good container plant — native to Australia. Called White Iris in Tasmania.



Morning Flag
Orthrosanthus multiflorus

Long flowering, upright, iris-like leaves, attracts butterflies — native to Australia.



Yellow Flag, Water Flag
Iris pseudacorus

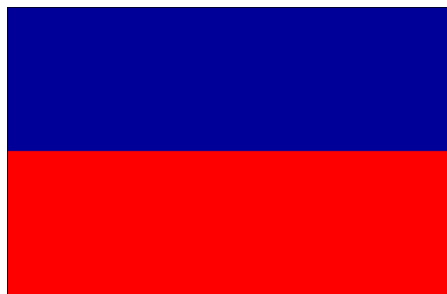
The name probably came about when Clovis, the 5th century King of the Franks, used it as a heraldic symbol on his battle flag. The origin of the fleur-de-lis that was stylized and adopted by King Philip I of France in the 11th century. It is invasive in streams — native to Europe.



Blue Flag, Flag Lily, Water Flag
Iris versicolor
Western Blue Flag
Iris missouriensis
Southern Blue Flag
Iris Virginica

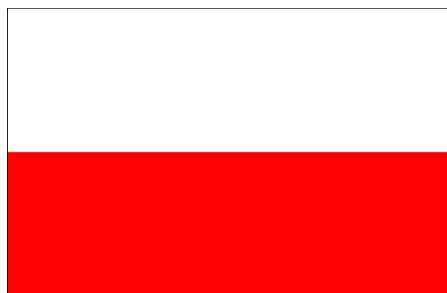
Waterside and shallow water plants, similar to one another, but differ slightly by region — native to the US and Canada.

What was that flag? Answers to April's quiz



Haiti (Civil)

Originally patterned after the French tricolor, but without the white stripe which was associated with white slave owners. It went through several changes of both orientation and color until the present flag of 1986.



Poland

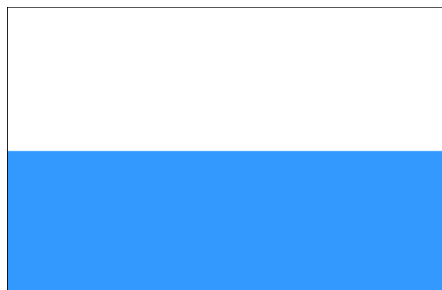
Livery colors from coats of arms were often used for flags in Europe. In this case it was a white eagle on a red shield. Officially approved in 1831, but didn't become popular until WWI.



Indonesia

Revived in 1922, probably from a centuries earlier adaptation by the Majapahit Empire. Made official in 1945. All of this well before the leg-

end that said when the Dutch left in 1949 the flag was torn down, but only the blue came away leaving the red and white.



San Marino (Civil)

Another example of livery colors. The coat of arms is three white towers on a blue field. Now the white is for peace and the blue is for liberty. The flag was adopted in 1797 as an emblem of sovereignty.



Ukraine

Yet more livery colors. This time a golden lion on a blue field. Originally the colors were reversed, but were changed in 1918. The blue stands for the sky and the yellow for the wheat.



For this information, acknowledgment is given to various works of Whitney Smith, William Crampton and Alfred Znamierowski.

What's That Flag?

One of our members, Mason Kaye, was going to do a paper on counter changed flags, but something called college got in his way. Here are some that I'm sure would have been on his list — can you identify them?

