

The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

"Free, and Worth Every Penny!"

Issue 12 January 2007

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DESIGNING FLAGS FOR FUN AND EXERCISE

By Doug Lynch & John Hood

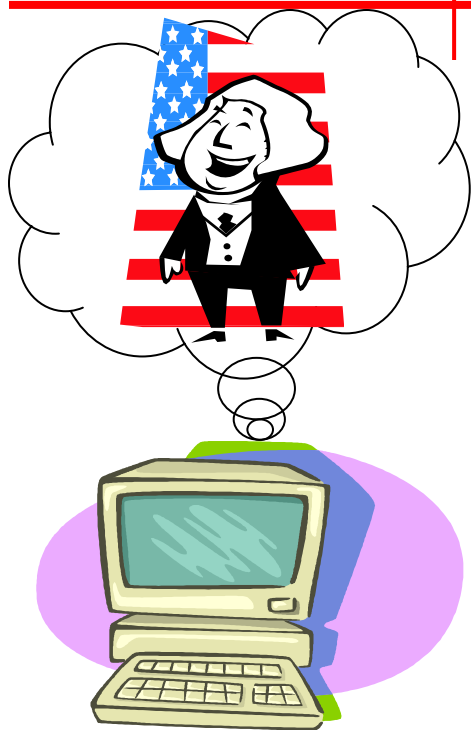
Most of you know Doug Lynch, the designer of the Portland City Flag. But did you know that just to keep his fingers limber and, "To keep you amused," he designs flags for any occasion. Having taken up the pen and brush in high school, Doug has spent eighty years as a commercial artist, graphic designer, teacher, art director and preservationist. Is it any wonder then that he should provide Portland with, what was considered in the NAVA survey, as the seventh best city flag in the United States? This, in turn, earned him the Vexillonnaire Award in Montreal in 2003.

Doug has said that before designing the Portland flag, he researched the ancient and long years of flag customs and traditions. That was before Ted Kaye's *Good Flag, Bad Flag*, of course, but the research served him well until the City Council got into the mix! Now he says that discussions in our flag group meetings, "...inspire me to explore other possibilities." When asked how he came up with some of the colors for his "exercise" flags, Doug said that while he has his PMS color reference guide, he likes to use newsprint, col-

ored paper, or whatever catches his eye. "Making a flag design with cut paper is consistent with the many years of making flags of cut and sewn cloth. We literate word people tend to gather and register our thinking on flat, white paper; however, a limp, draped, furled piece of colored cloth is our actual perception and experience of a real flag," he says.

As for what will become of Doug's "finger exercises", he says that if some small town in Kansas wants one, he'll be delighted! Following are a few of his creations. Most are exactly as he drew them, but some have been computer enhanced. I think that one of them (#10) is ideal for Stanley, Idaho. It often shows up on the weather page of the newspaper as the coldest place in the U.S. and the design depicts the mountains, snow, pines and cold stars overhead. Another (#7) is the perfect replacement for the Oregon State Flag. It is composed of two different photos, that of a coastal forest and that of a wheat field with the over-reaching blue sky, separated by a serration that represents the dividing Cascade

(Continued on page 5)



We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity, representing our liberty.
—George Washington, attributed

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.

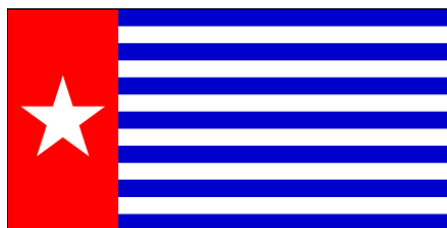
CONFUSABLE FLAGS

By Scott Mainwaring

As a member of Wikipedia's Heraldry and Vexillology Project ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ WP:HV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WP:HV)), I decided to convert a section of the online encyclopedia's Flag article ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Flag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag)) on "similar flags" into a more useful depiction of similarities. The section was growing into an unorganized and awkward list of items like "The flag of Cuba is similar to the Irian Jaya flag. The difference is that Irian Jaya's flag contains a red box, while Cuba's flag contains a red triangle instead." One could click on links to see what was being talked about, but sometimes there is no substitute for seeing these flags side by side (or over/under):



Flag of Cuba



Flag of West Papua (Irian Jaya)

This effort has grown into a new article, Gallery of confusable flags ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Gallery_of_confusable_flags](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallery_of_confusable_flags)), which is taking on a life (and unwieldiness!) of its own. One issue has been terminology: some editors have objected to "confusable" as somehow non-neutral and point-of-view spe-

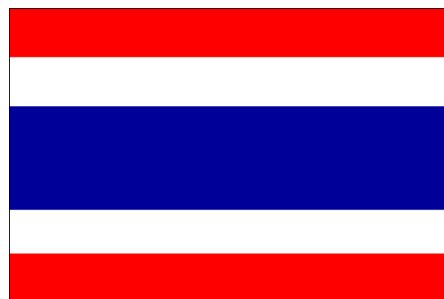
cific (a big no-no on Wikipedia), suggesting "similar" instead. My view is that "similar" is actually a vaguer term (flags can be similar in use, symbology, history, etc., not just visual similarity), and doesn't address cases like Cuba/Puerto Rico or Thailand/Costa Rica in which could be seen not as similar but as visual opposites of one another (though still hard to keep track of which is which).



Flag of Puerto Rico



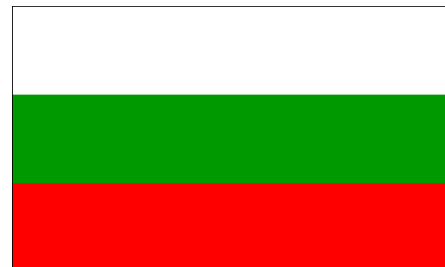
Civil Flag of Costa Rica



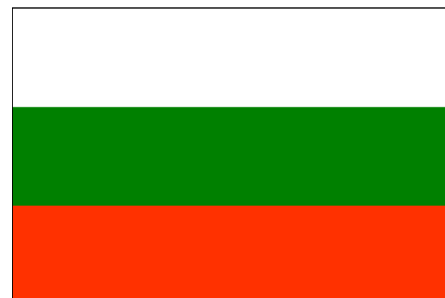
Flag of Thailand

There's also an issue that Ted Kaye brought up at the last PFA meeting of confusability in theory vs. confusability in practice. National flags that share designs are asking for trouble, but sets of flags of widely different

usage types seem less problematic. For example, here are two almost identical flags that would almost never be seen flying together (unless perhaps at a Bulgarian consulate in Manizales):



Flag of Bulgaria



Municipal Flag of Manizales, Colombia

Beyond these theoretical issues around types of similarity or confusability is a more practical issue of how to visually group flags in these terms. Somewhat arbitrarily, I decided to organize the Gallery page by "the number of main colors (disregarding, for example, colors in emblems) in the simplest design" of each grouping of flags. Thus, the page divides into one-color flags, two-color flags, etc., with subsections in each for the different color combinations (red vs. green flags, red+white vs. blue+yellow, etc.). There are then sub-sub-sections for, say, blue+yellow flags with crosses vs. blue+yellow horizontal bicolors. Finally, within each labeled grouping,

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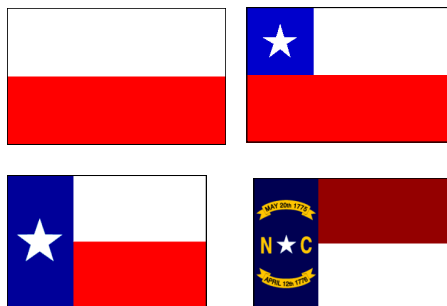
CONFUSABLE FLAGS

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flags are listed alphabetically by the name of what they represent.

Such a system seems to work alright, though alternative ways of organizing flags by similarity remain to be explored. Another editor, David Kernow, suggested creating sequences of flags, such that each “next flag” in line shares all but one aspect of the flag before it (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Gallery_of_confusable_flags).

These “spectra” could thus connect very dissimilar flags through a range of pairwise-similar intermediaries; a fascinating idea! Any given flag could be part of many such spectra, connecting it to different far-flung portions of the flag universe.



An example of “spectrum”: Poland / Chile / Texas / North Carolina

Bottom line: flag similarity/confusability is a topic calling out for some concerted vexillological investigation—how to depict the rich sets of interrelationships, even at just the visual level, between all the flags in the world.

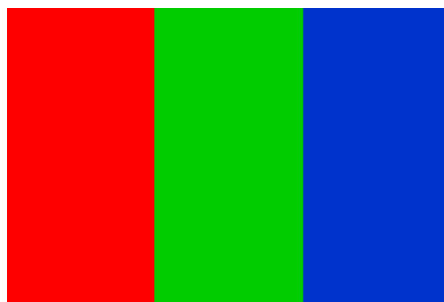


January 2007 Flutterings You Need to Know

Michael Orelove just moved here from Juneau, Alaska and brought with him a fresh viewpoint and the flags of Mars. As is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, Michael wrote an article for NAVA News a few years ago, but the picture was in black and white. This one is from a website he contributed to (<http://www.astrosociety.org/education/publications/tnl/66/flag.html>).



He also showed us the Mars Society proposal designed by Pascal Lee.



The colors are from *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, *Blue Mars*, a trilogy by Kim Stanley Robinson. Unfortunately the colors are in the wrong order to provide good contrast.

Scott gave us a preview of his paper on *Confusing Flags*, found elsewhere in this newsletter. He also told a wild tale of going to Morocco recently to meet with Bedouins. Try as he might, couldn't acquire a flag, but he did show us a picture of it and had a copy of the Bedouin alphabet

that showed the symbol that was on the flag.

Mike showed us a new book, *The Constitution of the United States of America*, by Sam Fink.



It is available for \$29.95 and has some wonderful plates in it. He also led a rather spirited debate on “half-staffing” a flag. He gets many queries at his store and tries to respond practically since the regulations are somewhat vague.

Ted had a flag from Carlton College in Minnesota where his younger son, Rob, is attending this fall. He also had a unique, rather elaborate flag with a large “K” in the design. First attributing it to his family arms, he eventually admitted that it was from The Knickerbocker Hotel! Ted has now had *Good Flag, Bad Flag* translated into Spanish and French.

John gave a tour of his basement and his collection of 324 flags (3' x 5') and Vivian's 120 banners. He also gave copies of his database of 2509 Occasions to Fly Flags (MS Access 2002 format).

And it was good to see Mason Kaye before he had to go back to college.

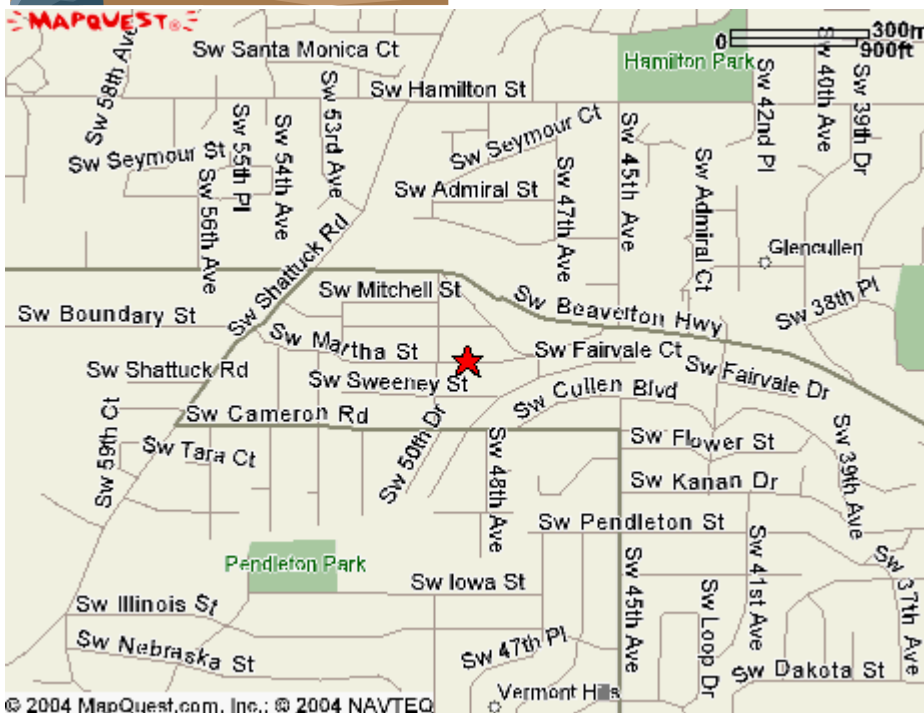
April Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 12, 2007, at Mike Hale's house, 4904 SW Martha St., telephone (503) 245-5283. 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.

Any and all flags, books or articles are welcome for "show and tell."

If you can't get to the meeting, perhaps you can give the editor something to share with our readers. As you can see, we have many interests.



The other day the Portland Tribune newspaper offered the trivia question: "What are the four colors of Portland's official flag?" The answer, of course, is blue, green, yellow and white. It went on to briefly tell how Doug Lynch designed the flag and ultimately corrected the design. It then said that a rose was wanted for the reverse, but proved to be too expensive. Unfortunately, the picture shown was that of the original 1969 design.



— submitted by Ted Kaye.

A few blocks from my house is a Cuban restaurant, *Pambiche*, that gets very good reviews. In addition to good food, it sports a large Cuban

flag in neon lights over the door that can be seen for blocks!



—submitted by John Hood.

Betsy is a friend in San Francisco who was interested in and collected flags from various places that she and her husband, Win, visited. They were travel agents and traveled a lot! Unfortunately during a recent move the flags disappeared! She receives this newsletter and keeps up on flag news. The other day she sent me this honor ribbon from Latvia with a lapel pin on it. Betsy doesn't remember when she and Win were there, but it must have been in the early 1990's. Does anyone know of these things?

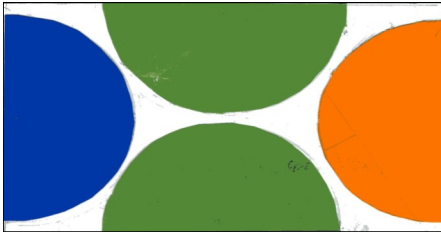
—submitted by Betsy Winship



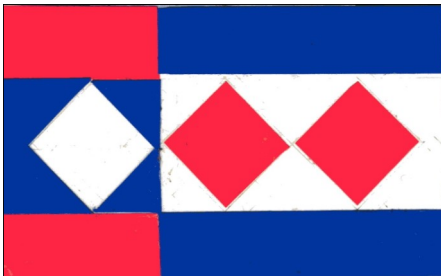
DESIGNING FLAGS

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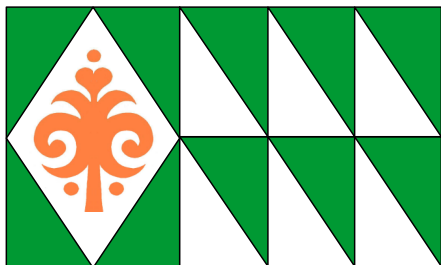
Range. While it may depart from simplicity, with the dye sublimation process, it can easily be replicated at a more reasonable cost than the current two-sided flag we have today, and it epitomizes the state's qualities without siding with either college's colors! Numbers 8 and 9 are examples of how Doug elaborates on the same structure, much as a composer creates variations on a theme.



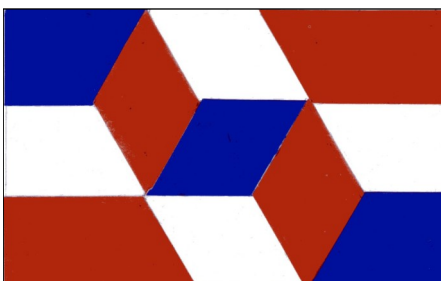
1—Doesn't look like much here, but wait until you see it on nylon!



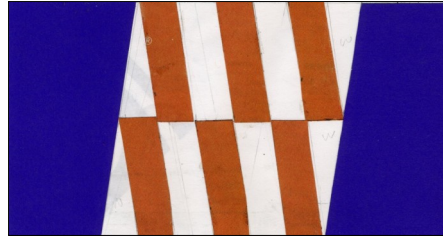
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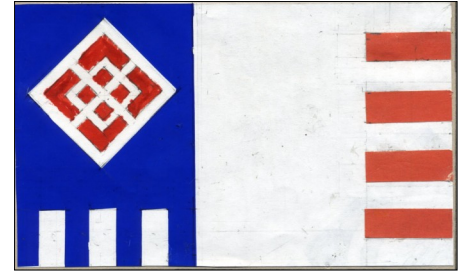
3—Have to keep you amused.



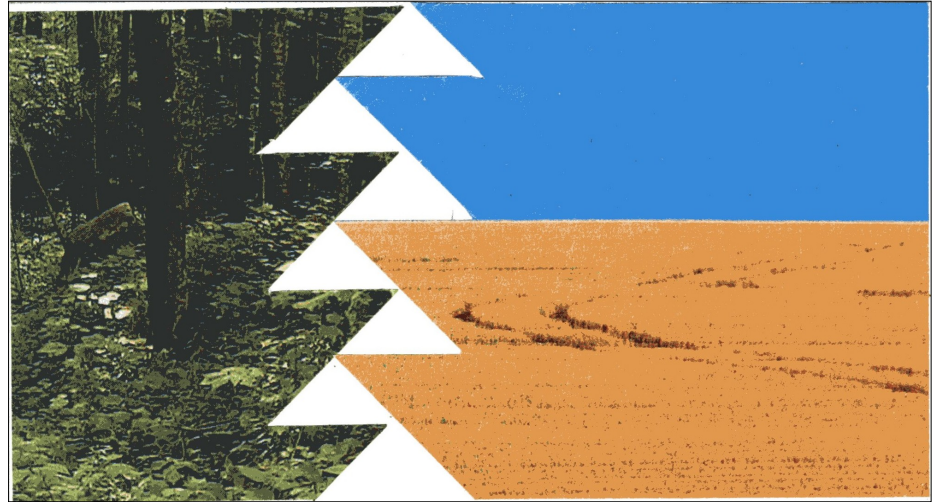
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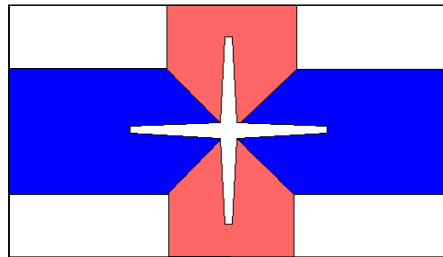
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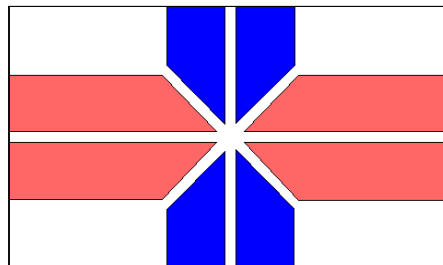
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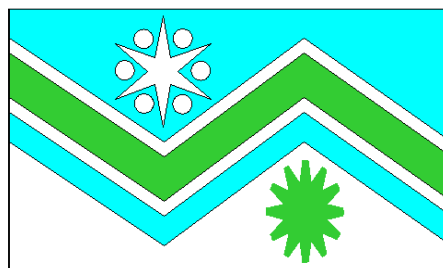
7—A possible new state flag for Oregon?



8

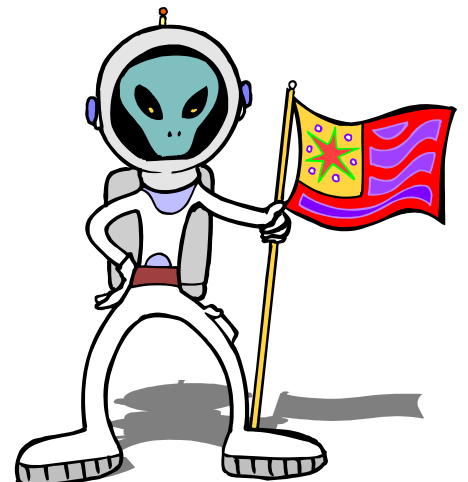


9



10—Stanley, Idaho could use this.

Perhaps next we'll get Doug to design a flag for our group. After all, we are a reasonably large group with some very active members. We deserve a banner to rally around! Plus, we have a manufacturer in our midst! Watch this space for further developments.



The Most Dangerous Flag in the World

By Michael Orellove

I own the most dangerous flag in the world. I have never flown it. If I were to fly it, someone might shoot me.

Flags are sacred. Think of all the stories and images of life and death and flags. The Red Badge of Courage—the marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima—flags on caskets—flags being burned, spit on, stepped on, peed on.

Flags have been used for political purposes and to make political statements. I made such a flag.

The **Good Flag, Bad Flag** guidelines of flag design might want to consider adding a warning such as, "Don't mess with someone else's flag."

I am 64 years old, my heritage is Jewish, and I grew up following political events in Israel and surrounding areas, including Palestine. I had not yet been to the Middle East. Too dangerous!

Many Jewish families, and others, refer to the flag of the State of Israel as the "Jewish" flag. I own a Jewish Flag. I also own a flag for the State of Palestine. A number of years ago, I sewed them together to make one flag, with the Palestine flag on the obverse and the Israeli flag on the reverse. At that time, the relations between Israel and Palestine were improving and I made my "peace" flag to fly on the border between Israel and Palestine. I still have not been to the Middle East and have

not yet flown the flag. Still too dangerous!



Michael Orellove holding "The Most Dangerous Flag in the World."

If you can "see" through the politics and "see" through the flags, you will see that the two flags look good together. You can see the star from the Israeli flag through the white center stripe of the Palestinian flag. You can see the triangle from the Palestinian flag through the white center of the Israeli flag.



Star of Israeli flag shows through.

I keep the flag folded so that both sides are visible. When peace comes, I have the flag ready.



Triangle of Palestinian flag shows.

Editor's note: Michael has recently moved to the Portland area from Alaska and we are pleased to have his spirited contributions to the group! Some will remember his article on a flag for Mars in NAVA News, April-June 2004, a picture of which is shown elsewhere in this newsletter.



Some Flag Related Websites

NAVA <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>

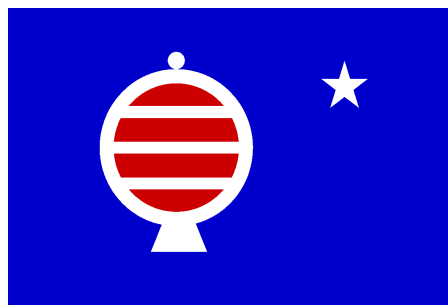
Darwin, Northern Territory (Australia)
<http://www.nationalflags.com.au>

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

Flag Research Center (Massachusetts)
<http://www.flagresearchcenter.com>

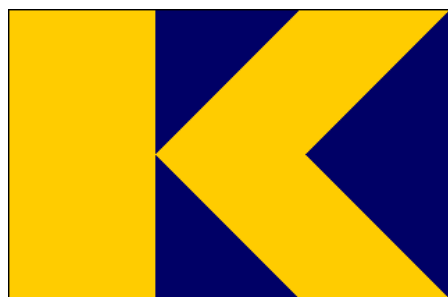
What Was that Flag? Answers to last quiz

At the NAVA 40 conference in Reno, members were encouraged to display their personal flags. Here are some. The descriptions, as taken from the NAVA web site, have sometimes been abridged.



Peter Ansoff, Annandale, VA

The armillary sphere is a symbol of knowledge and learning. It represents Peter's humanistic philosophy that he is responsible for charting his own destiny. The star represents his goal of a better life. The colors are those of his country, the USA, and also of his ancestral homeland, Russia.



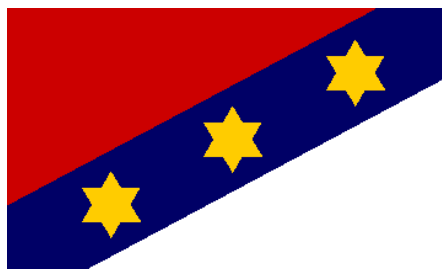
Ted Kaye, Portland, OR

A 'K' signal flag, with a wedge moved out from the blue section, such that the whole forms the letter 'K.' The colors echo the colors of Oregon and California, Ted's native and adoptive states.



Dave Martucci, Washington, ME

The star is Betelgeuse in "The Flaming Star-Sword" of the constellation Orion. The arrow-head shapes are pointing out from the star signifying expanding interests. Green is for the growing earth; yellow is for prosperity; red is for the trials of life. The flag is swallow-tailed with a tongue, indicating that Dave is his parents third child.



David Ott, Beaumont, TX

Red, white and blue are the colors of freedom in the US and Texas flags. The stars of David are for his first name, and the three stars and three stripes are for the three letters of his last name.



Dr. John Purcell, Middleburg Heights, OH

The black and yellow colors come from the original Irish Purcell coat-of-arms which has been significantly changed to seven counterchanged vertical stripes of purple and yellow for the seven letters in Purcell. The black isosceles triangles are suggestive of the original boars' heads

What's that Flag?

Scott wrote about stars on flags last time, but what about the Moon on flags, and not just the crescent that appears on many Islamic nations' flags, but the full disk?

