

# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 18 July 2008

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## The Final Finial Finale

By John Hood

*No matter how it is spelled there will be a Google site to explain that these things are a bed post, a church spire or the top of a flag pole, but they will not say what fun it is to rummage for information on them.*

Some time ago Marshall Goldberg wrote a doggerel about finials for the Maryland Flag. At the time he thought there should be an article about finials in general, but in travelling the yellow brick road, he never got back to it. Since the idea did have merit, I did some research and now present this far from scholarly monograph—after all, this is a hobby, not a vocation.

FOTW describes the finials for many countries, but there are no pictures—I would like to see the gopher from Minnesota—and most of the countries' websites have no pictures either.

The United States seems to have the biggest variety, particularly the military. The Army, Air Force and Marines use the spearhead while the Navy and the Coast Guard use several different finials,

depending on rank and location.

This comes from having to identify officers in boats of different rank for reasons of protocol. For example, the battle-ax is used for the national col-

ors while the spread eagle is atop staffs of officials and officers entitled to a



Spearhead

Battle-Ax



Spread Eagle



Halberd

salute of 19 or more guns. The halberd is used for lesser flag ranks entitled to 11 to 17 guns. Going down the scale, the ball is used for captains and those officers of

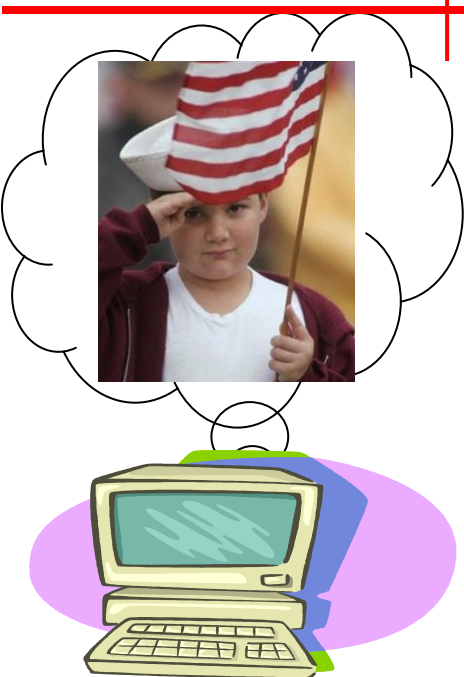
equivalent rank, and the star is for commanders.



Ball

Star

(Continued on page 2)



**Patriotic societies seem to think that the way to educate school children in a democracy is to stage bigger and better flag-saluting.**  
—S.I. Hayakawa

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

## Finials

(Continued from page 1)

While the Navy uses the spread eagle for the boat ensign when the President is aboard ship, a different eagle is used for the President's personal flag in the White House. It is more Roman style and looking to the right.



**Presidential Eagle**

The fancy finials are usually only used on indoor or parade flags since spear points, eagles wings and tridents can snag and tear an outdoor flag.

Maryland is steadfast about using



**Cross Botonny**



**Cardinal**

the cross botonny but Kentucky is not so adamant about the cardinal and nowhere could I find Minnesota's gopher. Perhaps it only comes out on Groundhog Day! There are the various church crosses but I don't know if anyone bothers to tell them apart other

than the manufacturers.



**Church Cross**



**Classic Cross**



**Catholic Cross**



**Star of David**

I found that the Israeli Flag should be shown with the Star of David finial, but nowhere have I seen this actually done.



**Maple Leaf**



**Royal Crest**

Canada uses the maple leaf and Great Britain uses the Royal Crest but, I believe, only for parades and formal functions (I'm sure I'll hear from Michael Faul about this!). Kazakhstan and Belarus have interesting finials, but all I could find for Russia was from the Soviet military. Sweden uses



**Kazakhstan**



**Belarus**



**Soviet**

the onion; France, the 1st Empire



**Swedish Onion**



**Sikh**



**Napoleonic Eagle**

Eagle and Sikhs, the double-edged sword of the Khanda symbol on the flag.



Would this be appropriate for a pirate flag?

The Eritrean camel, the Cambodian Hanuman Monkey, the Indian Ashoka Lions and the Hungarian Turul were not found. Nor were the Ukrainian trident, the Bhutan Norbu (jewel) and the Munich monk. If anyone knows of examples of these, I would like to see them.

Finale

## October Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, October 16, 2008, at Scott Mainwaring's house, 7144 SW 29th Ave., telephone (503) 977-3222. See the map below. The meeting is week later than usual because of the NAVA conference in Austin, TX.

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

Since we have not spent much time discussing the flag for our group, perhaps people can come prepared to do that. The other question is, how will the flag be used once it is decided upon? 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 some-

## 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 <http://www.flagresearchcenter.com>

Southern African Vexillological Assoc. <http://www.sa-va.org.za>

thing to share with our readers.

As you can see, snippets from anywhere can be used and it gives you an opportunity to add to your *curriculum vitae*.

## Flag Society of Australia turns 25!

Our friend Ron Strachen in Darwin reminded us that on August 20th, The Flag Society of Australia (a.k.a. Flags Australia) will celebrate 25 years of promoting vexillology Down Under. We commend Ralph Bartlett, President; Ralph Kelly, Treasurer; Tony Burton, Secretary and editor of *Crux Australis* and all those whom we have not met but have read their articles. They have done a wonderful job of educating all of us on the history, grievances and future of the flags of Australia. During the "Great Australian Flag Controversy," the FSA has remained remarkably neutral and has continued to publish a scholarly journal in the midst of Bondi Beach, et al.

In addition to *Crux Australis*, the FSA has published several great flag charts: *Flags of Non-Independent Peoples* - 1990, *Flags of Aspirant Peoples* - 1994, *Flags of Paradise* - 1996, and *Flags of Empire - Flags of Commonwealth* - 2001. Perhaps the first two will be updated soon, since many of those countries have now achieved independence!

Congratulations again, and keep the flags of Australia flying!





## July 2008 Flutterings You Need to Know

A couple of our regulars couldn't make the meeting, but we have a new member, John Niggley, who has moved to Beaverton from back East. He brought some flags that no one had seen before. His daughter's Brownie flag was, of course, in shades of brown—an unusual color for flags. He also had a hand-made flag from Furman University in South Carolina, The Smithsonian Institute Flag, a true Olympic Flag (without the USA on it), a new flag for Kansas that is much improved over the current one, and a couple of Swiss canton flags (having lived there for awhile).



Proposed Kansas Flag



Former Smithsonian Flag

Ted had an old U.S. flag to replace and asked Mike Hale how he does it. Mike said that he gets a lot of requests to destroy old flags and there are two ways of doing it: first, there is a crematorium in Gresham that will burn a flag with the deceased, if the family wishes. These are usually veterans. Second, the Boy Scouts need to properly dispose of a flag for one of their merit

badges, so they are a continuing repository for old flags. All other flags (state or national) are simply recycled as cloth. Mike also had two flags left over from a buy he once made from the Tudor Flag Company in England, "Flag Maker to the Queen." He had no idea what they were, but with a little help from Michael Faul of The Flag Institute in England and his contacting The Heraldry Gazette, we determined they were the coats of arms of Sir Thomas Felton and Sir John Cornwall.



Sir Thomas Felton



Sir John Cornwall

These are the challenges any vexillologist loves!

Michael Orelove found a website that has each state flag converted

to a Gay Pride flag: [www.geocities.com/my\\_flags/contro.html](http://www.geocities.com/my_flags/contro.html). Here are some of the better ones:



Gay Alaska



Gay Arizona



Gay Maryland



Gay New Glory

There is a neighboring site with suggestions for state "flags in desperate need of change." They are covered on page 7 of this newsletter.

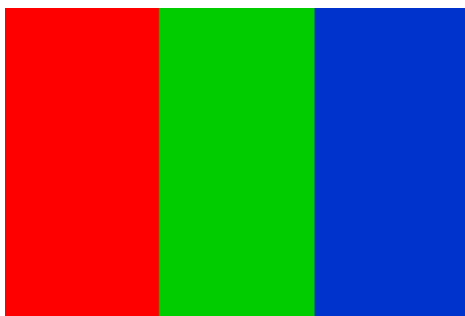
Michael said that each year in his

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## Flutterings

(Continued from page 4)

hometown of Juneau, AK, the main street is lined with flags from all the states. He has been able to acquire a complete set, including all of those states that have changed in the past twelve years. Hence he was able to show us the three incarnations of Georgia's flag: 1956-2001, 2001-2003, 2003-present. Nevada and South Dakota are a couple of other flags that have changed in recent memory—are there any more? He also showed Pascal Lee's, Mars Society Flag and his own flag for Mars that was featured in NAVA News of April-June 2004 and here in January 2007.



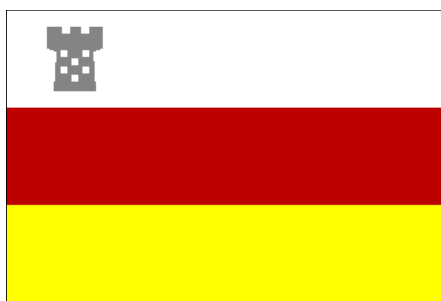
Mars Society



Orelove's Mars Flag

As he is prone to do, Michael has been modifying existing flags. See the sidebar for the story of his astronomically correct Alaska State Flag.

Marshall Goldberg was off on a road trip recently (not "The Yellow Brick Road" this time) and attempted to acquire city flags from the places he visited. Marshall found that although the flag might be flying out front, no one knew what it meant nor where it came from—sometimes they didn't even know there was a city flag. He did manage to see Santa Barbara's flag, but the castle may not have been correct.



Santa Barbara, CA

Other than that, he was only able to get postcards or logos from Ojai, CA; Los Gatos, CA and Berlin, MD. Better luck next trip! He also had a pre-sort stamp with an odd configuration of stars and strips and wondered if it had any special history—no one knew.



Patriotic Banner

Ted Kaye saw that his Stanford University Alumni Magazine had a page of précis of books written by alumni. He decided to submit *Good Flag, Bad Flag* to the editor and, to his amazement, they

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## Astronomically Correct

The official song of the State of Alaska, known as the Alaska Flag song, begins with the following description of the Alaska Flag: "Eight stars of gold on a field of blue..."

The Alaska flag is not astronomically correct. The Alaska flag displays the Big Dipper and the North Star. Most depictions of the Big Dipper show 7 stars. However, the second star in the handle of the Big Dipper is a multiple star system. To the keen unaided eye, two stars can be seen, the brighter 2<sup>nd</sup> magnitude Mizar, and a fainter 4<sup>th</sup> magnitude nearby star, Alcor. Being able to detect the two as separate is considered a test of good eyesight.

Michael Orelove, an amateur astronomer, has added an additional star to his Alaska flag so his flag will be astronomically correct.



Astronomically Correct Flag



Detail

## Flutterings

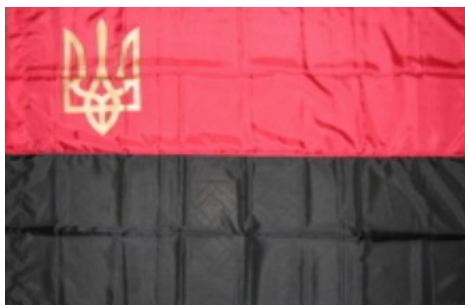
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devoted half a page to it! That got Scott to thinking he may submit something, also. Ted also had his paper that was delivered in Berlin at 22 ICV published in *Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage*. The article was about the flags of the tribes encountered by the Corps of Discovery two hundred years ago. Of course he also had some flags to show: Los Angeles, Bhutan, Ukraine, Western Ukraine and one seen often during the political protests of a year ago in Ukraine.



Yes! Yushchenko

The flag from Western Ukraine was given to him by work colleagues a few years ago as being a more commonly flown flag in their area of Liviv. That may be the case, but this is the only place I have found the flag to appear. The image has not made it to FOTW yet, nor does it seem to be on any Ukrainian web site. FOTW mentions it as the Ukrainian patriotic flag, apparently

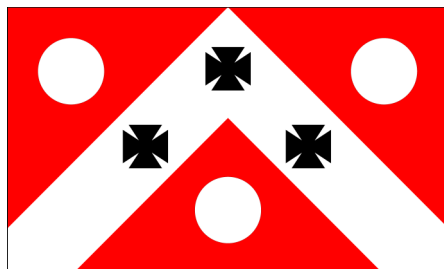


Western Ukraine (Liviv)

because the west is more ethnically Ukrainian than the center or east. But even unofficial flags deserve their place in the sun!

Ted's son Rob, who is going to college in Minnesota, sent an article he found on the BBC website a while back. It was the story about 'Free Tibet' flags being made in China! "Workers said they thought they were just making colourful flags and did not realise their meaning." Some workers saw protesters with the flags on TV and told authorities. So much for free trade.

Scott Mainwaring had a flag made for his wife with the Ledbetter coat of arms, Nancy's maiden name.



Ledbetter Flag

Scott is working on a website that would allow people to design their own personal flags using images of International Maritime Signal Flags. There was discussion of where to put the last name initial: in the place of honor, the upper hoist; the largest area, the fly; reverse the normal arrangement, the hoist. He plans an article on the subject for the next Tabloid. His flag would look like these in the different configurations:



Last initial in canton



Last initial in fly



Last initial in hoist

During the discussion, Ted mentioned that there was a website that sold a package of special cloth and pole so a flag with any design or picture could be printed on a home computer. The site is: [www.create-a-flag.com](http://www.create-a-flag.com). Scott also had a kanji flag of "love", the concept rather



Kanji-Love

than "being in". He showed us a new book he got. It's actually not new, but rather two older books

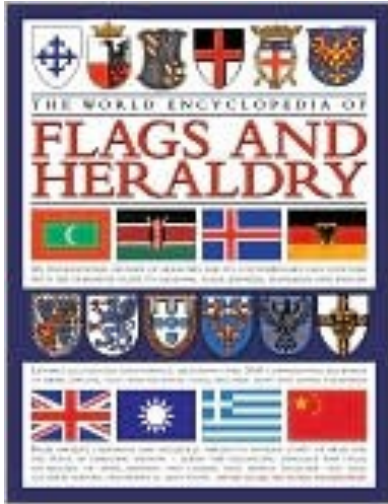
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## Flutterings

(Continued from page 6)

combined into one. It is *The*



*World Encyclopedia of Flags & Heraldry* by Alfred Znamierowski

and Stephan Slater, May 2008 Anness Publishing Ltd. \$29.99. The Stephan Slater book was previously published as *The Complete Book of Heraldry*. Lastly, as he does most meetings, Scott posed the imponderable: “How can we engage young people in the flag work?” And as usual, we all shook our heads.

John Hood shared the most recent *Flag Inform*s from the Flag Research Center and an article his son sent him from *The New Yorker*. Jack Handey, the author, describes his flag. It started with the word “NO” on a blank background and evolved—“The bra and panties for women’s rights... the angel holding the sword

represents how guns are nice but swords are more of a ‘heavenly’ thing...the parrot represents the need to communicate, even if it’s only squawks...” and so on for two columns. His ultimate thought was that he would rather have a cluttered flag than one that has no meaning whatsoever.

John also passed a greeting card for signing, congratulating the Flag Society of Australia on their 25th anniversary of doing good flag work.

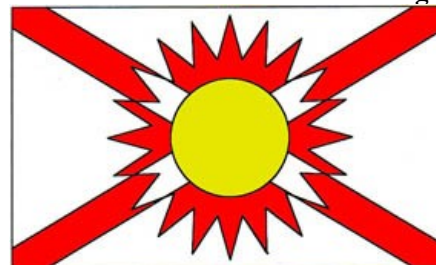
Fred Paltridge recorded an episode of *The History Detectives* that featured a strange flag from the mid-nineteenth century, but we ran out of time at this meeting so we will see it in October.

## State Flag Changes

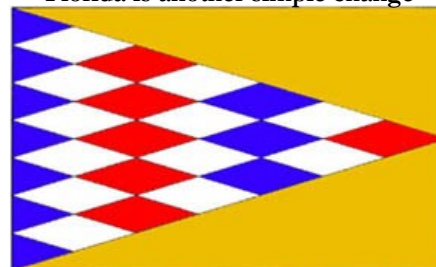
The web site that Michael Orelove found with the controversial flags mentioned in *Flutterings* is that of John Gamez, a.k.a. “The Flagman”. He appears to be a rabid hockey fan, but he also has several pages dealing with vexillology and is a great place to browse—it even has a link to the NAVA web site. At [www.geocities.com/my\\_flags/states](http://www.geocities.com/my_flags/states) he shows “Flags in desperate need of change.” He doesn’t mention NAVA’s state flag survey, but The Flagman does know how to recognize a poor flag. Here are just a few of his designs that may whet someone’s appetite to create some new flags. The captions are the editor’s, but The Flagman describes the symbolism of his new flags in excellent detail.



Delaware—from bad flag to good flag with minimum angst



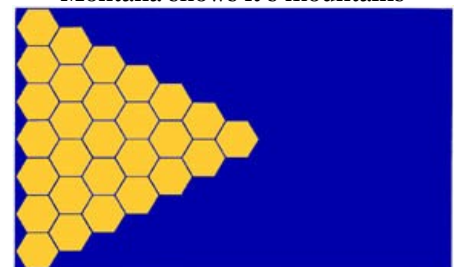
Florida is another simple change



Iowa retains the *Tricolore* theme



Montana shows it’s mountains



Utah is still the Beehive State

## What Was that Flag? Answers to last quiz

These are some of the lesser known international organizations:



**League of Arab States**

There are 22 member-states in the Arab League which is meant to promote unity between the Arab-speaking nations. The green and the crescent symbolize Islam, the chain is for unity and the wreath stands for peace and unity.



**Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

ASEAN was formed in 1967 to promote regional stability and co-operation. There are currently ten member nations, signified by the ten rice stalks. The flag has all the colors of the ten nations' flags.



**Commonwealth of Independent States**

When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, twelve of the former 15 republics joined together to form this

commonwealth to deal with matters relating to the break-up. The blue field represents peace and the graphic emblem suggests the will to form a common house with the sun in the center providing light and warmth.



**African Union**

Originally formed as the Organization of African Unity in 1963 and included all the independent African nations. The AU changed its name in 2002 but retained the original flag. The green is for the vegetation, the gold for the deserts and the white for hope.



**Pacific Community**

Formerly the South Pacific Commission, the name was changed (and the flag) in 1999 when many of the members were now in the North Pacific and "Commission" seemed too colonial. The 27 stars represent the members connected with an arch that suggests a satellite dish for bringing isolated islands together into a community.

## What's that Flag?

These flags do not represent countries, but rather cultures. Here are people whose homelands transcend geographical boundaries.

