

# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 21 April 2009

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## The Sun in Flags

By Robert Stephens

The independence revealed in flags has a universal representation that shows us that a group has the right of sovereignty. The general symbolisms of the 192 flags of United Nation member states are linked through astrological representation. Of the astrological symbols shown in flags there are three classifications: planets, moons and stars. The star is the most common symbol in flags, a characteristic that is confusing in its representation. I have classified the image of stars on flags into the four categories of constellations, asterisms, clusters and specific stars. A specific star, such as the Sun, is a mystery on flags due to its indirect representation leading to a discussion of what its true meaning is. The Sun on flags is a symbol that has different shapes, colors and significances.

The shape of the Sun can be full circles, half circles or hidden imagery. The common representation is the circle, but this shape is an illusion in itself. The Sun as a hidden image is exemplified in

Portugal's flag where one can see a shield sitting on top of a circle. The circle behind Portugal's coat of arms is actually a shape representing an astronomical device called an armillary sphere. The armillary



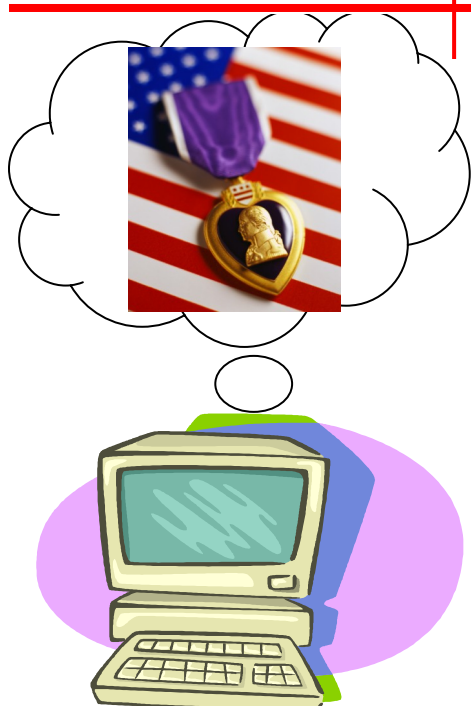
Portugal

sphere has the earth at its center in order to track the Sun in relation to the earth. The entire armillary sphere is actually a symbol of the Sun, a sign of wisdom and knowledge.

Another example of a hidden image of the Sun would be Iran's flag. A



Iran 1964-1979 Variant  
(Continued on page 2)



**A patriot wraps himself around the flag to protect it; a scoundrel wraps it around himself to defend himself. — Unknown**

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.

## The Sun in Flags

(Continued from page 1)

variation of the state flag of Iran from 1964-1979, with its coat of arms at the center, shows the Lion and the Sun being encompassed by an olive wreath with a royal crown at its peak. The modern flag of Iran contains the Islamic Republic coat of arms made up of four crescents that are a stylization of the word for "Allah" and a sword in the center with a "shadda" on top, doubling the strength of the sword.

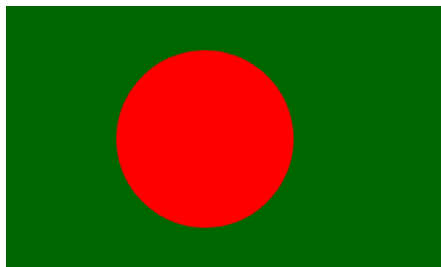


**Iran (current)**

While the entire symbol represents a tulip, the current and previous coats of arms both contain a similar circular design representing the Sun as a general representation of God. Pre-Islamic Arab pagans considered solar eclipses and other celestial incidences as signs indicating the passing of an important figure or other earthly events.

The specific color of the Sun on flags has a significant meaning and relationship to its identity. The most common color of the Sun on flags is either yellow or gold and, in descending order, white, red, orange and blue. Yellow is part of the divine essence on Earth. It became the attributing power of princes, kings and emperors and proclaims that the divine source of their

power comes from God. White is associated with cardinal points, especially East and West where the Sun is born and dies each day. Red in the Bangladesh flag stands for the blood spilled for their independence and the rising sun.



**Bangladesh**

The red rising sun is the rebirth of life. The blue sun in a flag represents the heavens where the Sun lives; it also expresses a detachment from the things of this world and the flight of the liberated soul towards God, who lives in the Sun. On the flag of Ethiopia, the central emblem is a blue circle representing the peace of heaven; the star, a pentagram with Sun's rays, represents the House of King Solomon to show their relationship to God.



**Ethiopia**

The significance of the Sun on a flag has a religious connotation that speaks to all nationalities. Mankind has long recognized the Sun's role in supporting life on Earth and, as such, many societies throughout history have paid homage to the Sun by giving it an important role in their religion and mythology, and by extension

in their flags.

Overall, the significance of the Sun in flags throughout history has given a direction for people to show their right to rule through religious notation. The form, color and meaning of the Sun in flags have been quite controversial due to their direct relationship to God or gods in the past. The Sun is above you and hidden symbolically in the flags of the world.



### 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>

## Goodbye, Doug



Douglas Lynch 1913-2009

With the flag he designed.

Doug Lynch, the long-time dean of the graphic design community in Portland, died April 17 at age 96. He practiced and taught art from boyhood. His career evolved from creating store window displays for Meier & Frank, to creating murals for Timberline Lodge in 1937, editing the artwork in the Oregon Shipyards' magazine during the War, managing the Art Department at Jantzen Woolen Mills, chairing the Portland Arts Commission, teaching generations of students at the Museum Art School, and working as an independent graphic designer. Born in La Grande, he moved with his family to Portland, always considering himself an artist. Among his many accomplishments, he designed the flag of the City of Portland in 1969.



## Remembering Doug Lynch

By Ted Kaye

I first met Doug Lynch in 1997, when I was signing copies of *Flags of the Native Peoples of the U.S.* at the Oregon Historical Society's annual holiday author's party. He struck up a conversation, saying that he'd studied flags and had designed the flag of the City of Portland. When I stood up, shook his hand, and exclaimed "You must be Doug Lynch!", he was flabbergasted that anyone knew or remembered.

In 2002, after I got to know him, I invited him to speak to the Portland Flag Association about the lengthy process he'd gone through in 1969 to design the flag. A fascinating case study of balancing the concerns and attitudes of politicians and artists, he finished it with "...if I had to do it over, I'd take off the seal, turn the canton from blue to green, widen the blue stripes, make the star larger, and move it closer to the hoist...but it's too late now." However, when I pointed out that among us were the historian of the city's flags, the author of a flag-design guidebook, the manufacturer of the flag, and the original designer, he agreed that we had the requisite talent to pursue updating the flag.

Doug's neighbor, Sam Adams, then chief of staff to Mayor Vera Katz (Sam is now, of course, mayor himself), and I helped Doug propose the language of an

ordinance to adopt his new design. After he and PFA members testified before the council, the new flag became official (city code section 1.06.010) and Doug again made local vexillographic history. He felt a personal connection to his designs. When I called to tell him how Portland's flag rated among American city flags in the 2004 NAVA survey, Doug's immediate question about it to me was, "How did I do?"—it was seventh out of 150.

He often remarked that he was amazed to find others who shared his interest in flag design, and he began attending PFA meetings regularly. Over the years, Doug frequently contributed ideas and concepts, often hand-rendered and displayed during meetings when we explored new designs—especially for the State of Oregon. He had helpful and insightful pointers for others who shared their ideas, and discussed his own theories of design. I well remember he would test how flag designs would look flying, draped, and hanging limp—his thinking informed mine. Six months ago, when *The Oregonian* launched a contest to update the state's flag, John Hood made sure that several of Doug's designs were submitted. Sure enough, out of over 2,400 entries, one of Doug's was selected for the final ten.

We will all miss Doug's twinkle, his intense dedication to sound design, and his enthusiasm for vexillology, a term he had first encountered 40 years ago. My Portland flag flies at half staff this week.



## July Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, July 23, 2009, at Ted Kaye's house, 2235 NW Aspen Ave., telephone (503) 223-4660. See the map to the right. The date is two weeks later than normal because of ICV 23 in Japan.

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



## Inauguration Flags

Peter Emerson of the Bipartisan Café asked, "What were the flags behind the swearing-in ceremony at the inauguration." I hadn't noticed the flags, but many did and Peter Ansoff addressed this question on the American Flags Forum web site, <http://www.usa-flag-site.org/forum/inauguration-day-flags-4416.html>. Ansoff is the past president of NAVA and knows his flags. The central one is the current 50-star flag, the next two are 23-star flags representing Illinois, President Obama's state, and on the ends are two 13-star "Betsy Ross" flags. The flag for the state the President Elect comes from is not firm since a particular star pattern might represent several states; e.g., Arizona

and New Mexico, or if it was one of the first thirteen; however,

President Clinton did have the 25 star flag for Arkansas.



21 Star Flag of Illinois for President Obama



25 Star Flag of Arkansas for President Clinton

## April 2009 Flutterings You Need to Know

We had a good turnout at the meeting with several new people letting their voices be heard.

Mike Hale, as host, started off the proceedings with war stories of designing flags for customers. The way the customer envisions the flag and the final product are not necessarily the same. He would like to make “good” flags, but those are not always wanted. For sale at the store, he has an updated pirate flag with a Star War’s Storm Trooper’s



Fred Paltridge with the Storm Trooper head and a Dark Side Banner. He also showed off his Franklin Mint



Dark Side Banner

striking of 64 sterling silver ingots of the flags of the American Revolution. Elmer, Mike’s step-father, got them in 1975. In addition, Mike had a collection of 48 4” x 6” historical flags that had to be at least 50 years old and a sheet of 20 Revolutionary War Commemorative stamps that were issued on Flag Day of 2000.

Werner Bittner is a sailing enthusiast and has collected a few burgees. He showed a string of them, most fairly well worn and faded and too difficult to photograph. He also had a *Palio* flag from a *contrada* in Siena, Italy that he gave to John Schilke. It must



Werner with his Siena *contrada* flag

have been an older flag since it does not match any of the current 17 *contrade* in the Siena website. In 1970, Werner was in Prague, Czechoslovakia and was handed a paper Soviet Union Flag, 8” x 12”, a bit faded, but remarkable for its age.

Ted Kaye had some “Create Your Own Flag” kits that were discussed at a previous meeting. They allow you to design your own flag on your computer and print it on ink jet printer compatible cloth. It even has the stick/pole for mounting. He also told us of an article that will be in the forthcoming *Raven*. It is the presentation that Anne M. Platoff made at the 2008 NAVA meeting in Austin, Texas.

**Lions and Babrs and Bears:** *Analyzing the Flags of Russia’s Federal Subjects* is Ms. Platoff’s second Driver Award for best presentation at a NAVA meeting. On his trip to Berlin for ICV 22, Ted met a flag manufacturer that has been sending him flags ever since. We know that Ted is a purist and only collects flags from places he has been, consequently his generosity allows us non-purists to add to our collections. He showed Baden, Prussia, Serbia and Kosovo. The Kosovo flag, he gave to John Hood



Baden



Kosovo

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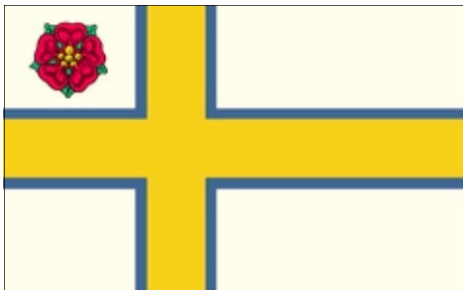


## April 2009 Flutterings

(Continued from page 5)

for future indentureship and to add to his over 330, 3' x 5' flags. Ted also had a Japanese book of Samurai flags. It was unique in that it was accordion pleated and stretched out about eight to ten feet.

David Koski is new to the group and is a graphic artist who was well acquainted with Doug Lynch. Being of Finnish-Swedish heritage, David has designed an appropriate flag with those colors and has added a rose for artistic effect.



Koski's Swedish/Finnish Flag

David Ferriday, another new comer and graphic artist and architect, brought a sampling of his graphic arts. Many of the designs have real possibilities for flags, just as Doug Lynch's did in a previous newsletter.

Another new comer, Robert Stephens, has accumulated a graphic collection of 60 flags with suns on them. See page one for his article, *The Sun in Flags*.

John Schilke, who wrote an article for the last newsletter on this subject, brought his brand new Pax Cultura Flag and reminded the group of the history behind it. Subsequent to the meeting, John

alerted me to the possibility of designing a flag for the Sisters of the Holy Names in honor of their 150th anniversary of coming to Oregon. More to follow.

Michael Orelove was travelling in California and could not make the meeting but, as is his wont, he contributed from afar. He took his California state flag and sends these pictures:



Michael and his girlfriend, Kathleen Forrest, in front of the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco.



Michael in front of Governor Schwarzenegger's office.

The bear was purchased by the Governor with his own money and is remarkably similar to the one on the flag. Michael's California state flag is from his collection of the 50 state flags that flew in Juneau, Alaska in the past years. He also sent an article from *Portland Spaces* about

neighborhood banners. This is a great subject for a future story.

Scott Mainwaring was also travelling this time but sent a message that he has set up a Group on Facebook for NAVA, titled "North American Vexillological Association (NAVA)." If you are interested, please join. The URL is <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=63216802760>.

John Hood had no new flags to show this time, but brought the group up to date on what was happening elsewhere in the world from his various English speaking periodicals. There were some bad flags designed throughout the country—even by a NAVA member. Not many City Councils have taken *Good Flag, Bad Flag* to heart. Then there were a few wooden flags in England (flags flown upside down), but then aren't there always? In *Flagscan*, Kevin Harrington had quite a bibliography of Japanese flags in honor of the forthcoming ICV in Japan. We had our own example of a wooden flag in the *Oregonian*, when it wanted to poke fun at a couple of Brits who took exception to the reference of the size of the UK as "slightly smaller than Oregon."



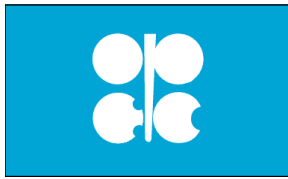
The Union Jack is shown upside down!

## What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

There were many more blue and white flags than I thought, and these are by no means all of them.



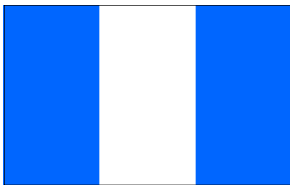
Micronesia



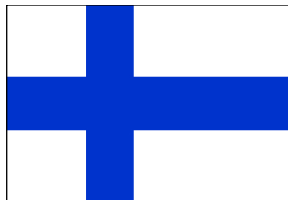
OPEC



Greece



Guatemala (civil)



Finland (civil)



Altay, Russia



Balkars



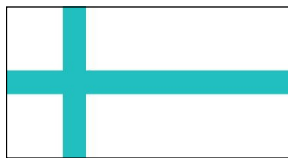
Quebec



Ka Lahui, Hawaii



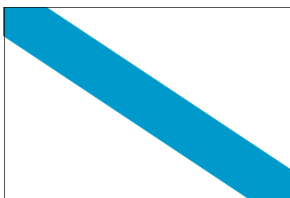
Honduras



Andalusia, Columbia



Nicaragua (civil)



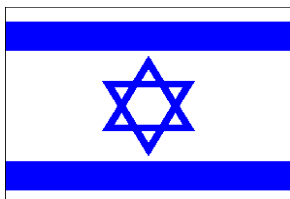
Galicia, Spain



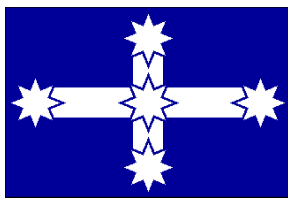
Bavaria (alternate)



NATO



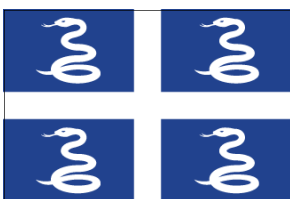
Israel



Eureka Stockade



Israel Naval Ensign



Martinique



Argentina (civil)

## What's that Flag?

All of these flags have something in common. What is it and where are they from?

