

# The Vexilloid Tabloid

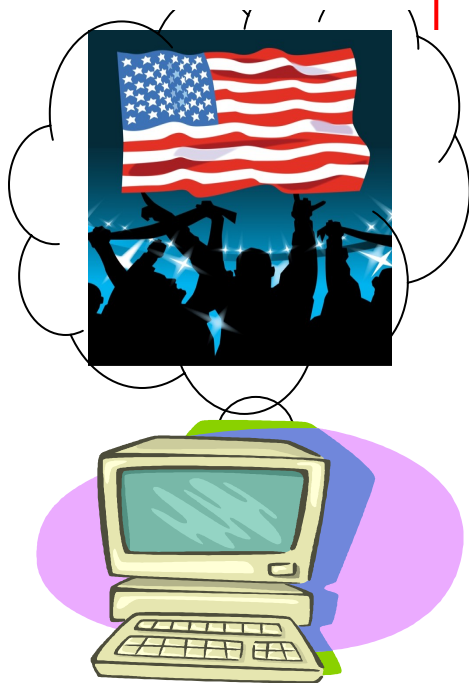
Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 24 January 2010

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**“We have two American flags always: one for the rich and one for the poor. When the rich fly it, it means that things are under control; when the poor fly it, it means danger, revolution, anarchy.—Henry Miller in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare***

## A Ramble on Design Rules

By David Rudolf Koski

We like to complain about the guidelines we must follow sometimes, but it bears thinking about: would we be better off without them?

A field populated with a motley crew does not make a game. At the very least there has to be a goal (“have fun”) and a rule (“frolic”) before the semblance of a game emerges. If more rules are added, the game is likely to be better — until the point where additional rules start to stifle. Likewise, nothing happens for an artist or designer until some constraint is placed on the project at hand. It is easier to write about chickens than it is to just “write,” and it doesn’t matter so much if the rules are self-imposed or if they come from without.

Each area of visual arts has a traditional set of rules that are followed, however loosely. Fine art has the least, sometimes consisting only in “framing” what is within and without the artist’s work or expression, but the con-

straints can be very strong, such as when the artist is commissioned to paint a portrait. The portrait may have to look like Cuthbert, suggest Cuthbert’s profession, show some of Cuthbert’s possessions and place in the world, plus match the color of the couch in the living room. Graphic design has almost unlimited freedom with the visual elements, but usually is two-dimensional and must identify, communicate or promote a company or product. Heraldry is rife with rules that serve the original purposes very well, although they prevent us from using all the colors and effects we might want. In the “Wild West” of flag design we have wider latitude, but hopefully rein it in for the sake of beauty and clarity.

*Editor’s note: David, a disciple of the late Doug Lynch, is a graphic designer/artist who found us by way of submitting a design for the proposed Oregon State Flag. It is fortuitous he should write this article for the same issue that carries a piece on the actual designing of a village flag (see page two).*

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.

## A Flag from the Low-Lands

This is a story of how a flag, a good flag I might add, can be designed by a committee. Any of you of Dutch extraction might be interested to know that almost every city, town and village in Holland has a flag, and most of them are "Good Flags".

Leermens is a village in the municipality of Loppersum, Groningen Province. It used to be in the former municipality of 't Zand. Every year, all six villages of 't Zand meet for a village contest. In 1985, it was the turn of Leermens to organize the competition. For that event, it wanted to have its own village flag. The society for village interests, the *Dorpsbelangen*, organized a contest and asked Mr. J. A. de Boo to pick a winner. However, it appeared that some minor matters had been overlooked, such as the question: "What is a flag?" It was decided to start a new competition, aided by this definition:

*"A flag is colorful, waving piece of cloth, which can be hoisted on a mast, or can be carried around on a stick, which is a recognizable sign and a coherent element for a group of people."*

The flag has to be simple in design, so anyone with a sewing machine can make it, and it should be different from other flags in order to be recognizable. No words.

Before the deciding meeting, the

*Dorpsbelangen* received the following questions:

- Which are the colors which characterize the village?
- Which are the specific characteristics of the village?

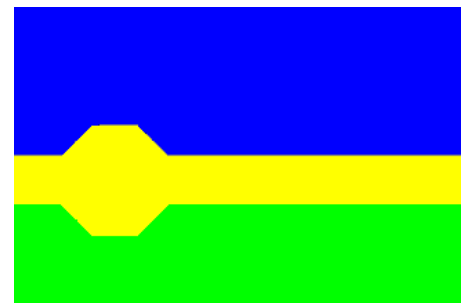
Leermens is a typical Gronings *terp*-village with a Romano-Gothic church, devoted to St. Donatius or Doonaart. There is no *borg* (old fortified stately house) to which it owed allegiance. In ancient times law was administered here. Around the village is the old *osseweg* (ox-road), and the small canal, named *Maar*, which is untouched. In the Gronings vernacular "*om Leerse koomm*" means "To know what there is to know."

The colors blue for the sky, and green for the fields were chosen. As a dividing line a red stripe was preferred for the brick houses. Several geometrical forms could represent the *terp* (mound); other geometric patterns were offered for the letter "L". The attributes of St. Donatius (an axe, a lightning flash, or a wheel with a sword) invited other alternatives, etc.

First some simple tricolors were tested. It was found out, that stripes with unequal width were preferred. At the end, stripes proportioned 3:1:2 were chosen.

The village silhouette dropped out of the options, because that was too complicated. Next experiments were carried out with the letter "L", with a flash of lightning, and with a combination of both. Finally, two trapeziums were found, connected in such a way that they formed a regular octagon, which represented the village plan, and other elements, mentioned above. The red stripe was found too somber, and this color was replaced by bright yellow, the color of flowering cole seed fields and ripe corn.

The final product became: three horizontal stripes of blue, yellow, and green, proportioned 3:1:2; the middle stripe widened to a regular octagon, with sides equal to the width of the stripe, the octagon placed at a distance of the width of the yellow stripe from the hoist.



Leermans, Netherlands

Source: article in *Vexilla Nostra* 138-139, 1985, by Mr. J. A. de Boo.

*Editor's note: This article was taken from the FOTW web site and minimally edited.*



## Veteran's Day

Michael Orelove is a veteran and a member of the Columbia River Gorge Kiwanis Club which hosts a Veteran's Day breakfast each year. Michael helped decorate the hall with American flags of all sizes and number

of stars. World War II veterans fought under the 48 star flag so 48 star flags were hung to honor them. Michael also set up a table and wall display with various flags and flag books, including a 49 star flag representing Alaska becoming a state in 1959. Michael moved here from

Juneau Alaska in 2006. Also included was a 15 star and 15 stripe flag, the flag that Francis Scott Key saw and wrote the Star Spangled Banner about.



## Did You Know?

In heraldry, there are at least nine postures for the lion? Most apply to other beasts, also, but some have unique references.

*Rampant*: erect with one hind paw on the ground.

*Salient*: springing with both hind paws on the ground.

*Passant*: walking with three paws on the ground.

*Statant*: standing with all four paws on the ground.

*Sejant*: seated with fore paws on the ground.

*Sejant rampant*: as sejant but with fore paws raised.

*Affronty*: showing the full front.

*Couchant*: crouching with legs and belly on the ground.

*Dormant*: as couchant but with head lowered and tail on the ground.

These are just some positions for the body. The head and tail, claws and tongues all have very highly developed rules (see David Kiosk's article on page one).

Good flag design relies on many of these rules for good reason—they have provided a commonality over the years that works.

To get a taste for heraldry, I suggest dipping into *Discovering Heraldry*, by Jacqueline Fearn, Shire publications, Ltd., or *Flags and Heraldry*, by Alfred Znamierowski and Stephen Slater, Fall River Press.



## January 2010 Flutterings You Need to Know

Mike Hale showed off a replica of the 1935 Cycling World Champion shirt that was given to him as an incentive to get back to riding his bike. He wasn't sure why only those flags were shown, perhaps they were the only countries participating in those days.



Mike also had the flag his company made for the winner of the contest *The Oregonian* put on last year in



an attempt to change the state flag. He said there will be a ceremony to present this flag to the designer, Randall Gray.

David Ferriday has been shopping at Goodwill again and came up with a 4"x6" Canadian table flag of pre-1965 vintage which was still in pretty good condition. He also found a U.S. car flag with embroidered stars—a very rare item. For those who may not have seen it, David passed around the article on Doug Lynch's memorial from *The Oregonian* that showed his linoleum mural panels at Timberline Lodge.

A few months ago, David Koski showed us some flag apps on his cell phone and bemoaned the fact that there were not more and their inaccuracy. By way of improvement, he showed us an app that allows the user to interact with the flag by causing it to wave, drape, etc. Things have improved considerably in just a

few months.

Werner Bittner is still designing burgees for his Gull Island friends. One for a chef has a garlic plant *dormant*; another depicts the Gull Island (remember, it is clothing optional) beaver. Some thought it would be an improvement over the beaver on the state flag.

Max Liberman is ready for the PFA flag to become official. He has tentatively come up with ensigns for the various departments. Probably the only usable one would be the Merchant Ensign for Werner's sailboat and Mike's drift boat. Max will pursue this further when the final PFA flag is chosen.

In the July 2007 issue of this newsletter, Michael Orelove wrote an article presenting the Portland Flag Association Teaching Flag. On the obverse, it had all the parts labeled and the reverse showed what a "good" flag would look like. It generated a good deal of stimulat-



Michael Orelove surrounded by most of the PFA holding their teaching flags.

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## January 2010 Flutterings

(Continued from page 4)

ing discussion. Now he has gone a step further and has had table flags made for all the PFA members.



Patrick Geena is a new member who showed up at Mike's store with a healthy interest in flags. The flag he stumped us with was this:



Even though it had the colors and designs of the Buddhist religion, no one realized that the Thai Buddhists have a different flag from the regular, five striped flag. Patrick had picked up the flag at a Buddhist monastery for a modest contribution.

John Hood was in Canada over the holidays and picked up some local flags from The Flag Shop in Victoria. Since the Olympic torch route is strictly in Canada this year, a flag has been created for each community along the route to fly. The dye process for this flag is unique, having been developed by Cirque du Soleil for their costumes. The other flags were

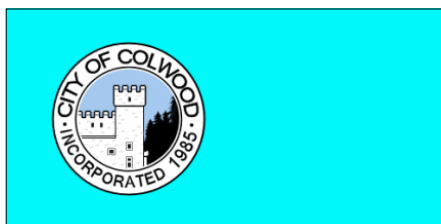


Olympic Torch Relay Flag

from towns surrounding Victoria on lower Vancouver Island.



Sidney-by-the-Sea, BC

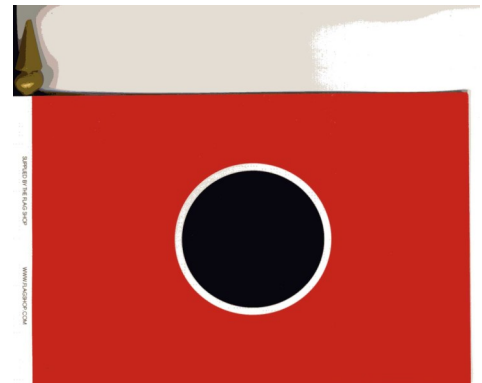


Colwood, BC



Central Saanich, BC

The ferry trip back to Port Angeles was unusual in that it was the M.V. Coho's fiftieth birthday. It began service between Port Angeles, Washington and Victoria, British Columbia on December 29, 1959, so they threw a birthday party with cake, beverages and flags for the kids.



Black Ball Transport, Inc.

After the show and tell we discussed the proposed designs for the PFA flag. The survey from the last meeting narrowed the field to five designs, two of which were nearly identical. It was unanimous which of those would be included in the final cut. Ballots were passed out and most voted on the spot. When the absentee ballots came in, two designs finished one vote apart, so at the risk of driving this into the ground, we need one more vote.

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## March Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday March 11, 2010, at John Hood's house, 208 SE 39th Ave., telephone (503) 238-7666. See the map below.

Lets see how this two month interval works out. It certainly will effect my procrastination of getting this newsletter out.

By this time we will have the final decision on our flag design. The next decision is what to do with it. Of course Max can then create the proper ensigns for our unit.

Bring any interesting flags or books you may have acquired lately, topical pictures or articles you have come across, or stories you wish to regale us with.

If you can't make the meeting, please send something for publication in the next newsletter. As you can see, snippets, pictures and arti-

## Some Flag Related Web-

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>

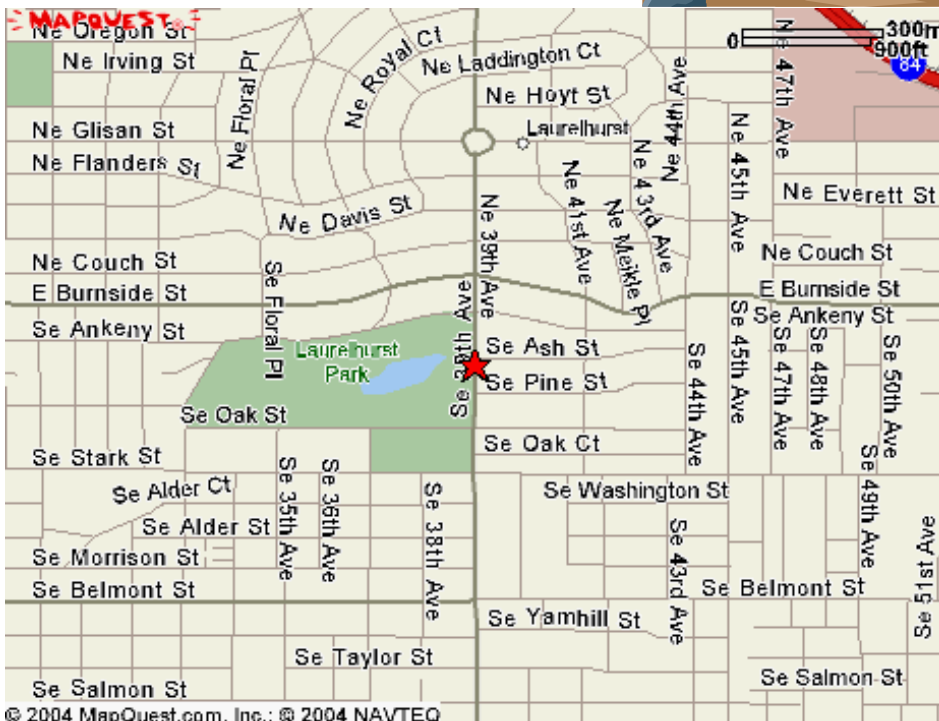
Darwin, Northern Territory (Australia) <http://www.nationalflags.com.au>

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

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

Southern African Vexillological Assoc. <http://www.savaflags.org.za>

cles from anywhere can be used—don't make me twist your arm.



## January Flutterings

(Continued from page 5)

That ballot is included with this mailing for the local members.

As the last meeting was breaking up, it was suggested that since our group has expanded and not everyone can share as freely, perhaps we should meet more often. At this meeting it was decided to try two month intervals for a while and see how we like it. There were pros and cons, but generally we agreed to give it a try, so the next meeting will be in March.

## Joke Time

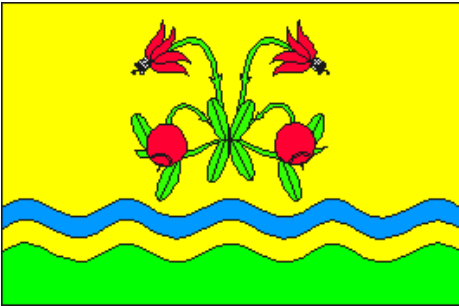
Michael Orelove contributed this:

A visitor from Holland was chatting with his American friend and was jokingly explaining about the red, white and blue of the Netherlands flag. "Our flag symbolizes our taxes," the man said. "We get red when we talk about them, white when we get the bill, and blue after we pay them." "That's the same with us," the American said, "only we see stars, too."



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

In honor of Thanksgiving we found some flags with depictions of the holiday. In some cases the names were erased to make it more of a challenge.



**Laeva, Estonia**

Here are the cranberries for the dinner, but why this town has them on their flag is beyond me since I do not read Estonian or Finnish (the web site is not translated).



**Gansingen, Switzerland**

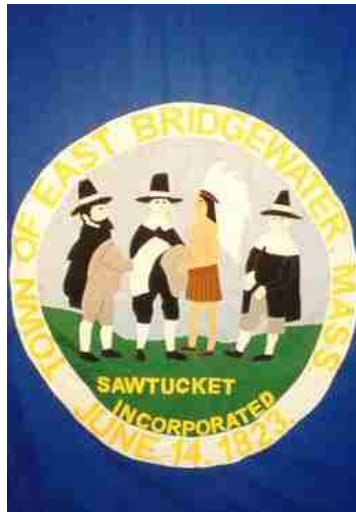
The goose is canting (a pun) for "Gans"; German for goose. I could not find a recognizable turkey on a flag.



**Smoky Lake, Alberta, Canada**

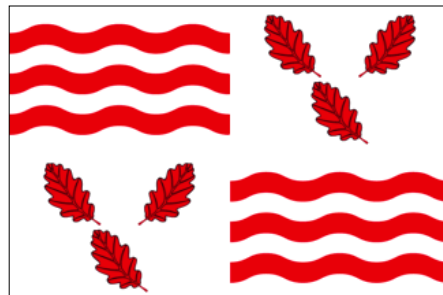
This is a special flag for the "Great White North Pumpkin Fair and Weigh-

off", held on the first Saturday of October. The town's official flag is less commercial.



**East Bridgewater, Massachusetts**

This is more a banner than a flag. It is the town seal showing the Europeans (perhaps Miles Standish among them) and the natives.



**Froidchapelle, Belgium**

The autumn Oak leaves refer to the forest environment and the wavy stripes probably refer to the five lakes of Eau d'Heure in the area.



## What's that Flag?

Here are some couterchanged flags and, to make it easier, they all come from the same country.

