



The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

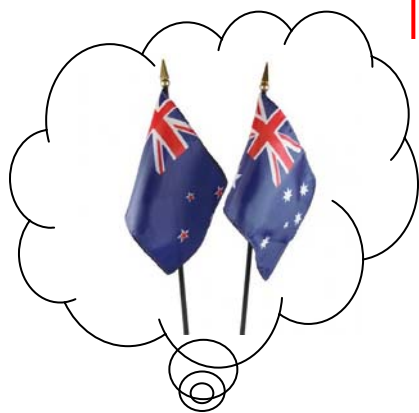
“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 57 April 2016

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... surely something is desirable regarding the flags of foreign nations beyond a hazy acquaintance with a few of them and the limited knowledge of flag etiquette that leads to so many unintentional breaches of courtesy.

— W. J. Gordon, *Flags of the World*

Psephology and NZ; Mississippi

By Ted Kaye

As this issue, while dated April, comes out in mid-March, the outcome of the second New Zealand Flag Referendum is still undetermined. Although the polling shows a strong preference for keeping the current flag, we'll only know for certain after 24 March.

Meanwhile, we are very pleased to present an insightful exploration of the first referendum from an expert in *psephology*—the scientific study of elections (and you thought “vexillology” was a challenging word!). While the competing designs and the debate over whether to change the flag at all have received most of the attention, the actual decision-making process used by New Zealand to divine the “people’s will” is an under-appreciated but significant aspect of the exercise.

We’re grateful to Dr. Herron for sharing his expertise with us on the eve of the outcome of the Kiwis’ decision—the first time we know of that a national flag choice has been put to popular vote.

FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



“That’s the Danish flag ... or no, that’s Swiss ... then the Australian flag, or is that New Zealand? Next I think is ...”

On another subject—is anyone as amazed as I that Oregon legislative leaders just removed Mississippi’s state flag from the capitol’s 50-state flag display? It’s one thing when citizens of Mississippi decline to fly their state flag because of its inclusion of the Confederate Battle Flag, but it seems quite another thing when one state says to another state: “we disapprove of the symbolism you choose to represent yourself”—usually when a flag is taken down the message is “we disapprove of YOU as an entity”. In this case, Oregon seems to be telling Mississippi what to do. I believe it is the first state to do this.

If you wish to compliment the editor, or to contribute in the future, contact Ted Kaye at 503-223-4660 or editor@portlandflag.org. If you wish to complain, call your mother.

March 2016 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our March meeting, hosted by John Schilke, 16 PFA members enjoyed a lively evening of flags. As the host, John led the introductions and moderated the discussion. We began by welcoming Michael Orelove back from his heart attack and surgery.

Michael started by commenting on the similarity between his latest flag acquisition—Madison, Wisconsin—and New Mexico.

John Schilke recounted his recent experience seeing an actual St. David's cross flag on the Welsh patron saint's day, 1 March.

Wondering about his fellow flag-lovers' experiences explaining their passion, Jessie Spiller related often how Sheldon Cooper's name comes up (see *VT*#56).

John Niggley, with his flag-retail experience, provided expert opinions on flag identification.



Becky Olson challenges the group with “name that flag”.

Becky Olson brought a “name that flag” item—initially appearing to be the flag of Costa Rica, it turned out to be regular U.S. bunting.

Ted Kaye shared several small items. In response to David Ferri-day asking for an explanation of a *New Yorker* cartoon describing a “Freak Flag”, he actually produced



Award-winning Portland animator Joanna Priestley created this Freak Flag for Ted Kaye at Burning Man 2015.

one, created for him by an artist friend at Burning Man 2015. He also gave away tribal flag posters.

Using his fine Minecraft talents, Nathaniel Mainwaring made a PFA flag image in the colors of quartz, gold, diamond, and slime.

Scott Mainwaring celebrated the PFA's reaching 300 Facebook followers with a special flag design. He shared a college student's proposal for a new flag for Imperial County, California, which was accompanied by a 15-page report for explanation (!). And he announced the results of the South Bend, Indiana flag effort (see p. 9).



Michal Orelove and his “driver”, Kathleen Forrest, share tribal-themed flags.



Scott Mainwaring's image says “300 PFA followers on Facebook”.



Max Liberman shares Tony Burton's new book, *Vexillogistics*.

Max Liberman described the new book on flag design by Australia's Tony Burton and a Portland Flag-themed notebook sold by Powell's.

Alexander Baretich has created more Cascadia-themed designs, including one used at the Cascade Locks protests against the Nestlé bottled-water proposal—it symbolizes water resistance in the region. Robert Izatt provided details.



Alexander Baretich shows his latest: a salmon-themed flag in Cascadia colors.



Leo Gardella shares a replica 1903–1918 war ensign of Germany, acquired at Goodwill for his extensive collection, as host John Schilke (left) looks on.

New PFA member Leo Gardella described his 400+ flag collection and how he displays them on the proper days—with an explanation on a public whiteboard.

David Ferriday brought flags to identify—the Coast Guard, the Christian flag—and his latest “hidden text” artwork.

Sharing his great Goodwill finds, Patrick Genna gave away flags of Indiana, Israel, piracy, and the U.S.

Carl Larson brought another item he'd obtained from a local ship-breaker's inventory: a nicely-embroidered Ecuador flag.

Our next meeting will be at the residence of Patrick Genna on 12 May. He took the Portland Flag Association flag with him—the customary task of the next host.



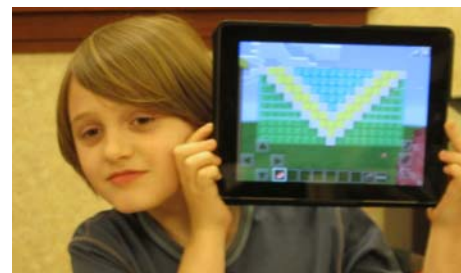
“Roger” is very “Jolly” in the hands of Patrick Genna.



David Ferriday with his latest poser—a three word epigram with “v” words.



Carl Larson retrieved this stained flag of Ecuador from a ship-breaker.



The PFA flag rendered in Minecraft, by Nathaniel Mainwaring.

Roundup 1

A Design Challenge

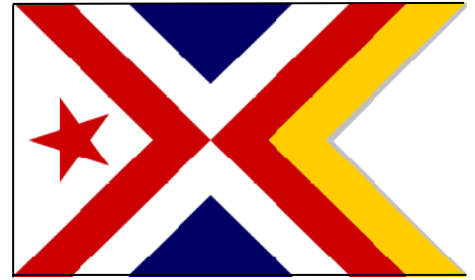
At our March meeting, we posed a challenge: **bring to the May PFA meeting your best single version of a re-designed U.S. flag.**

Ignoring the political near-impossibility of change...simply from a *DESIGN* perspective, how could the U.S. flag be improved?

Readers of the *Vexilloid Tabloid* are encouraged to send proposals to editor@portlandflag.org.



A PFA member received this empty box as a Christmas present—recalling the time when toddlers got as excited by the box as by the gift inside...



NAVA 50

Make your plans now to attend the 50th annual meeting of the North American Vexillological Association., October 14–16 in San Jose, California.

See www.nava.org for more info.

State of Jefferson's Symbols Evolve

By Ted Kaye

The short-lived 1941 secession movement which attempted to create a new state from 12 counties around the Oregon-California border lives on as the rebellious “State of Jefferson”. It had a seal then, but no flag.

In an article on how its flag was later created based on that seal, which appeared in the *Flag Bulletin* XXXII:1 (150) Jan.-Feb. 1993, I described how the flag places the 1941 seal on a green field.



The usual version of the flag of the State of Jefferson.

So a sweatshirt worn by young visitor from Siskiyou County recently caught my eye in downtown Portland. It bore a new Jefferson seal.

It combines the 1941 rebel imagery (the “double cross” and gold-mining pan) with today’s evocation of the Gadsden Flag (rattlesnake and “Don’t Tread on Me” motto), newly-popular with Tea Party-ers.



A visitor to Portland from the State of Jefferson.



An updated variant seal of the modern State of Jefferson. See <http://portlandflag.org/2015/12/10/gadsdenoids/>

Another version of that new seal adds the concept of the “51st state” to the text (ironically, in 1941 Jefferson aspired to become the 49th state).

A quick web search yields much more information about Jefferson’s symbols—reminding me how much easier the research process has become since 1990–92!

New Zealand's Flag Referendum and Theories of Voting

By Erik Herron

Introduction

The disciplines of vexillology and psephology (the scientific study of elections) have many commonalities: both focus on how design and representation intersect. New Zealand's 2015–16 Flag Referendums caused these two worlds to collide. This article assesses the process and the results of the first round of voting and links the flag referendums to fundamental theories from the scholarly literature on voting. While the first referendum produced a winning design that is facing off against the current national flag during the second round, the outcome of the vote may not reflect the “people’s will”.

Choosing Among Five

In the first Flag Referendum, held 20 November–11 December 2015, New Zealanders voted on five designs to determine which would challenge the current national flag in March 2016.

The ballot included images of all five options arrayed horizontally in random order, an empty box below each design for voters to enter their rank-order, and the question “If the New Zealand Flag changes, which flag would you prefer?”



The ballot from the first referendum.

To cast a valid ballot, the voter had to indicate a first preference for at least one design, and was permitted to rank-order the five alternatives.¹

The first design (Option A), features a white fern frond extending diagonally from the bottom left and dividing the flag into black (left) and blue (right) sections. The black section occupies the canton area, but is roughly triangular in shape. The blue section covers approximately three quarters of the flag area and includes four red stars, outlined in white, in the shape of the Southern Cross (I call it Silver Fern A).



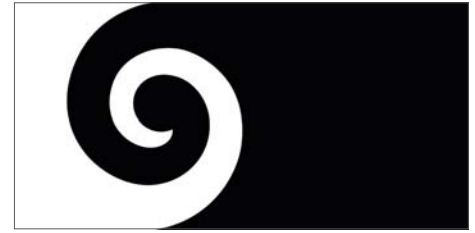
Option A: Silver Fern A.

The second design, Option B, is called “Red Peak”. The flag features a large, white chevron, with the upper left colored black, upper right colored blue, and the center triangle colored red.



Option B: Red Peak.

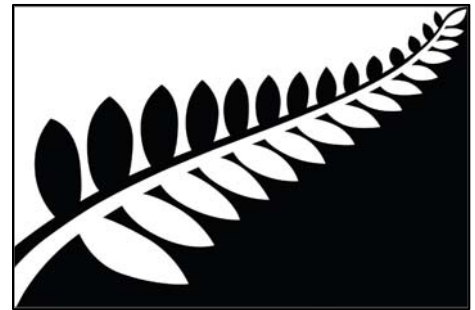
Option C, called “Koru”, features a black and white design. The right half of the flag is black, with a black spiral extending into the



Option C: Koru.

white (left) half. The Koru is a traditional Maori fern symbol, representing “...new life, growth, strength, and peace...” and is featured on the national Maori flag as well.

Option D (Silver Fern D) is also black and white, with a fern frond extending from lower left to upper right. The right side of the flag is black with a white frond; the left side features the opposite colors.



Option D: Silver Fern D.

The final design, Option E (Silver Fern E), is virtually identical to Silver Fern A stylistically, but features a different color palette. Notably, the areas of Silver Fern A that were black are instead red.



Option E: Silver Fern E.

To win the first round of voting, a flag design needed to garner 50% +1 of the first-preference votes. If no design received a majority in the first round, the lowest-performing design would be eliminated and its second-place votes would be distributed to the remaining designs. Any ballots from the losing design that did not have second-preferences selected would be eliminated from the count, and the majority needed to win would be recalculated based on the new valid vote total. If no design were to receive a majority in the second round, the next lowest-performing design would be eliminated and its lower-level preferences would be distributed among the remaining designs. In the third round of preference vote distribution, third preference votes might be included as supporters of the design eliminated in the first round may have chosen the design eliminated in round two as their second preference. Ballots without valid second- or third-preferences would be eliminated and the victory threshold once again recalculated. The process would continue until an option received the requisite majority of valid votes.

Results

Turnout

1,546,734 citizens submitted votes, constituting 48.8% of registered voters. Overall, turnout was lower than in national parliamentary elections, and toward the low end of public referendums. Of the thirteen past referendums held in New Zealand, the Flag Referendum has the third lowest turnout, surpassing

only the Fire Service Referendum of 1995 (27.0%) and the Energy Referendum of 2013 (45.1%).

The turnout data suggest that participation by Maori citizens was lower than non-Maoris. New Zealand has two types of districts: general and Maori. The Maori districts overlap general electorates, but are designed to accommodate and better represent the Maori people in parliamentary elections. Turnout in Maori constituencies, and in Manukau City (South Auckland), was substantially lower than in most other districts. While participation ranged from 37.9% to 60.1% outside of these areas, turnout in the Maori regions and Manukau City ranged from 23.7% to 30.5%.

Voter Preferences

Unfortunately, New Zealand did not publish constituency-level data on voting preferences in the first round. If those data were available, we would be able to investigate how preferences in flag design varied by region, and we could develop some sense of the rank-ordered preferences of different regions.

The first round results produced clear preferences for fern-based designs. Options A, D, and E garnered 87% of the valid first-preference votes. Red Peak took 9%, and Koru 4%.

The first flag to be eliminated was Option C (Koru); its second-preference votes were distributed to the remaining competitors. If no second-preference was listed, the votes were rendered non-transferable. Koru's 52,710 votes

were distributed to Silver Fern D (37%), Red Peak (24%), Non-Transferable (22%), Silver Fern A (10%), and Silver Fern E (8%).

The second preferences for Koru voters demonstrated greater support for the designs that did not feature the Southern Cross. The second-preference votes of the two Southern Cross designs did not exceed the non-transferable sum; in short, more supporters of Koru preferred no other option than the sum of those who preferred to retain the Southern Cross. The top second-preference for Koru supporters was the other black and white design, Silver Fern D; and Red Peak. With caution interpreting individual preferences from aggregate vote tallies, it seems that Koru supporters generally desired a replacement flag with limited references to the status quo design.

Because the first round of vote redistribution did not yield a majority winner, a second design was eliminated and the votes were redistributed. Interpreting the second round of vote redistribution becomes more complicated as the second preferences of the eliminated flag are redistributed along with the *third* preferences of Koru supporters who identified the eliminated flag as their second preference. Silver Fern D was eliminated second, with 12,708 of its 98,595 votes (13%) deemed non-transferable. The remaining votes were allocated to Silver Fern A (49%), Silver Fern E (23%), and Red Peak (15%). This redistribution favors both design and color scheme. The black-oriented Silver

Fern A design garnered far more preference votes in this distribution than the alternatives. These votes likely include second-preference Silver Fern D votes, and third-preference Koru votes. In other words, voters who supported black/white designs seem to exhibit a preference for the version of the Silver Fern that refers least to the current national flag.

Red Peak was eliminated in the third and final distribution round. This round of voting produced the winner: Silver Fern A. Red Peak's 149,321 votes were distributed to Silver Fern A (39%) and Silver Fern E (32%), with 29% non-transferable. Red Peak's votes—emanating from first-preference votes for it as well as lower-level preferences for Silver Fern D and Koru—were divided almost in thirds, with somewhat more support for the winning design and somewhat less support for no alternative. If 35% of the voters whose ballots contained no additional preferences in the third distribution round had selected Silver Fern E, it would have been victorious.

Overall, New Zealand's voters expressed substantially stronger preferences for designs featuring the Southern Cross than the alternatives. Combined, Silver Fern A and E received 82% of first preference votes. Silver Fern E, which received the most first-preference votes, ultimately lost the balloting because transfers from losing options—especially Koru and Silver Fern D—favored the less tradi-

tionally-colored alternative.

New Zealand's Referendum and Theories of Voting

Does the victory of Silver Fern A in the first Flag Referendum accurately reflect the preferences of the New Zealand electorate? Two issues raise questions about the outcome: the distribution of non-voter preferences and the problems inherent in selecting a winner among more than two alternatives.

From a normative perspective, the turnout for New Zealand's Flag Referendum could raise questions about the representativeness of the outcome. Fewer than half of eligible voters participated, and the final design was ultimately preferred by just over 50% of the voters. This means that only around 25% of eligible voters cast a vote for the winning option. If we assume that the distribution of preferences among non-voters is similar to the distribution of preferences among voters, then no concerns arise about the appropriateness of the choice. Under these assumptions, full participation would yield the same outcome.

But, if the distribution of preferences among non-voters differs from participants, and non-voting is related to an important feature of voters, then the outcome may not reflect the "people's will". As noted above, turnout in Maori regions seems to lag behind general districts, suggesting that non-participation may be linked systematically to meaningful population features. Whether or not these

features are related to voting preferences for one or more of the designs is unknown. However, if non-voters systematically favored an alternative design, their non-participation could have altered the outcome.

While some might dismiss this potential concern as citizens in democratic societies exercising the right to abstain from voting, election research raises another issue. The scholarly literature on voting, especially in the area of Social Choice Theory, raises doubts that any method of voting for more than two alternatives can unambiguously reveal the "people's will". Contemporary Social Choice Theory,² developed from Kenneth Arrow's Nobel Prize-winning work in the 1950s, demonstrates that no method of choosing a winner among multiple options satisfies all conditions of logic and fairness commonly associated with elections.³

The New Zealand Flag Referendum illustrates the voting problems noted in the Social Choice literature. A voting outcome that reflects the "people's will" should not be contingent upon the rules used to select it. In the case of the New Zealand Flag Referendum, different methods of selection, given citizen preferences, could produce different outcomes. If we assume that citizen behavior is fixed, a plurality vote would have selected Silver Fern E as the victorious design.⁴ But the ranked-choice method used for the referendum yielded Silver Fern A as the winner. The rules selected to

adjudicate among the choices affected the outcome. Since different rules could produce different winners, even if the voters' preferences do not change,⁵ the "people's will" may be unknowable. Thus, the policy outcomes produced by voting procedures should not be interpreted as equivalent to the "people's will."

The only method of choice that satisfies the conditions of logic and fairness outlined by Arrow is a majority vote with a binary choice.⁶ But true binary choices are rare. Often they are manufactured by a mechanism designed to reduce choices to two, but this mechanism does not meet the criteria for logical and fair choice.

The second Flag Referendum is an example of ersatz binary choice. Thousands of original designs were constrained to four by a committee, and this choice was subsequently expanded to five through a petition and legislative action. The final step to a binary choice was the first round of the referendum.

However, if New Zealand voters had been asked a question about retaining or replacing the current design (status quo) with a majority vote, the outcome could have been interpreted as reflecting the "people's will". While it would not have yielded a new design, the results of this vote would have answered a binary choice: to keep or discard the current flag. But, even if the people of New Zealand supported the replacement of the current flag, the method of choosing

the replacement cannot unambiguously yield an outcome that can be labeled the "people's will".

Conclusion

The first round of New Zealand's Flag Referendum gave citizens unprecedented influence over the design of the national flag. An open process permitted thousands of designs to be solicited and considered; a petition process allowed a fifth design to be added to the ballot; and preference voting provided citizens the opportunity to cast sincere preferences rather than voting strategically. The 3–24 March 2016 vote will determine if Silver Fern A will replace the current flag; a majority vote of participants will determine the fate of the flag.

If Silver Fern A is victorious, it is important to remember that it may not be the *most* preferred alternative to the status quo, but simply the design that successfully passed through the process. Similarly, if Silver Fern A fails to defeat the current flag, it does not mean that New Zealanders are rejecting a new flag. It will only mean that they prefer the status quo to the alternative presented; a different alternative potentially could have emerged victorious in a head-to-head battle with the current flag.

Regardless of the outcome, New Zealand has set a valuable precedent for engaging the public in flag design questions. Flags serve a critical symbolic role, providing a focal point for national pride and illustrating how a society views its past, present, and future. New de-

signs imposed without public votes can be embraced, as in Canada in 1965, and they can be rejected, as was the proposed flag for Iraq in 2004. By engaging the public in the process, the final decision may have a better chance of being embraced quickly, whether or not it can be portrayed as a manifestation of the "people's will".

Erik Herron, PhD, is Eberly Family Professor of Political Science, West Virginia University.

1. Ballots without clearly defined first preferences were deemed to be "informal votes". The total number of informal votes was 148,022.

2. Riker, William. 1982. *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press.

3. The specific voting rules used for the Flag Referendum, a variant of Single Transferable Vote (STV), can fail the condition of *monotonicity*. This condition requires that if a society makes a decision to select social choice x over the alternative choice y , and the preferences expressed for x are not lowered in any individual rank-ordering, then x should remain the social choice.

4. It is important to note that counterfactuals—or examples that assume a different historical path was chosen—can be problematic. It is possible that voters would have behaved differently if a plurality rule were used, voting strategically instead of sincerely. That is, if supporters of Koru, Silver Fern D, and Red Peak understood that their preferred designs were likely to lose, they may have voted for a more likely winner if the formula was plurality. STV systems encourage sincere voting whereas plurality systems encourage strategic voting.

5. Saari, Donald. 2001. *Decisions and Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. Black, Duncan. 1948. "On the Rationale of Group Decision Making." *Journal of Political Economy*. 56(1):22-34.

Flag Design Questions

Dear Vexillologists and Flag Enthusiasts of Portland, Oregon:

I am from Pembroke School in Adelaide, Australia. For my final year of school, I must complete a research project on a topic of my choice. For this, I have chosen to investigate the design of flags. This is a topic of personal interest due to the importance that flags have in societal identity. To explore this social importance and the reasons for this, I have proposed a research question of:

To what extent does the design of a flag influence its importance?

I was wondering if you could answer some questions for my research to get an insight into your opinions on the topic?

Regards,
Max Pickering
max.pickering@pembroke.sa.edu.au

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways do 'good' flags evoke a personal response?
2. What are the most important design principles in order to create a 'good' flag?
3. What are some of the most significant flags throughout history? Do you consider these flags to be 'good' flags?
4. Are there any examples of what you would consider to be poorly designed flags that have retained significance amongst the people they represent?



5. Do you consider the aspect ratio, and/or shape, of a flag to play a role in its ability to evoke a sense of identity within the people it represents?
 6. What role does the colour of a flag play in its ability to evoke identity or pride?
 7. Is a flag necessary in order to create unity within a group of people?
 8. What kinds of symbols are most commonly used on flags and what principles should flag designers consider when using symbols on flags?
 9. Other symbols, such as seals and coats of arms, can be used to represent groups of people. Are flags more significant in building unity and identity than other kinds of symbols?
 10. To what extent does the design of a flag influence its ability to evoke a sense of identity and pride?
- [Readers of the *Vexilloid Tabloid* are encouraged to respond directly to Max with their answers; please copy editor@portlandflag.org]



South Bend, Indiana



South Bend's new flag.

In honor of South Bend, Indiana's sesquicentennial, the SB150 Committee hosted a carefully designed process to design a new city flag. After selecting three finalists, gathering public feedback, and creating a composite design, the city's elected officials revealed the final result, officially adopted 14 March.

For more details, see <http://portlandflag.org/2016/03/09/south-bend-great-new-flag/>



Finalist design by Jeffrey Koenig.



Finalist design by Jesse Villagrana.



Finalist design by Garrett Gingerich.

Roundup 2



The 39th Portland International Film Festival, the Northwest Film Center's annual showcase of new world cinema, took place 11–27 February at the Portland Art Museum. It used doughnuts—many flag-themed—to transmit the message of internationalism in posters, on its website, and in its trailer (from which these images were clipped).

Portland's very own world-famous Voodoo Doughnuts provided the actual flag-pastries.

Iwo Jima Honored



The VFW in Canby, Oregon, honored Iwo Jima's 71st anniversary (Ken Dale).

"Get Well" Flags

By Michael Orelove

While convalescing from my heart attack I have received "get well" emails, letters, and cards. But my niece and her family made and sent me "get well" FLAGS. Each flag has a "get well" message on the back and information about the symbolism of the colors, such as red for heart health.

Thank you Holly, Steve, Lia, and Helena.



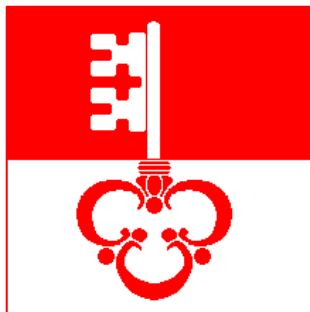
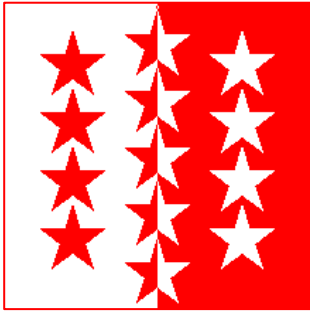
"Get well" flags for Michael.

What's that Flag?

By Tony Burton

Can you name these seven flags, and identify the linking theme?

Answers in the next issue...



What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Carlos Alberto Morales Ramirez

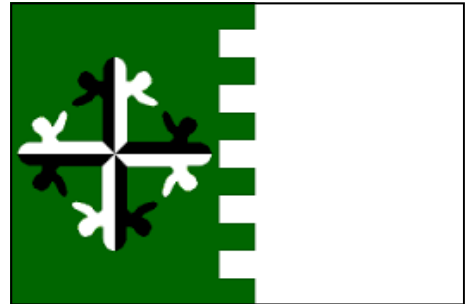
These seven flags, of course, bear crosses; but all are also municipal flags from Puerto Rico. The clue was my article elsewhere in the last *VT* on two Puerto Rican city flags. Congrats to Tony Burton, first to solve this. Prize? His own quiz.



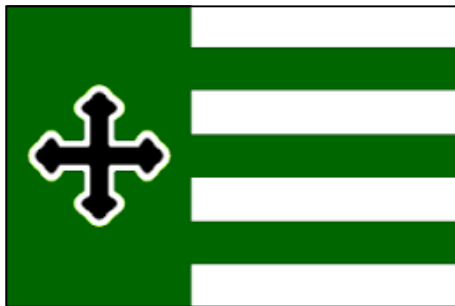
Comerio, Puerto Rico



Adjuntas, Puerto Rico



Guaynabo, Puerto Rico



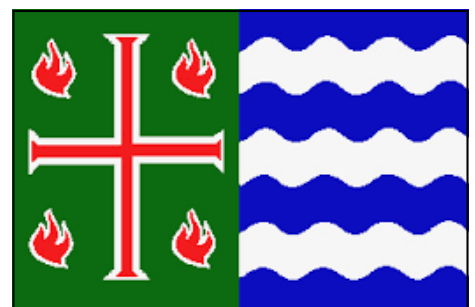
Anasco, Puerto Rico



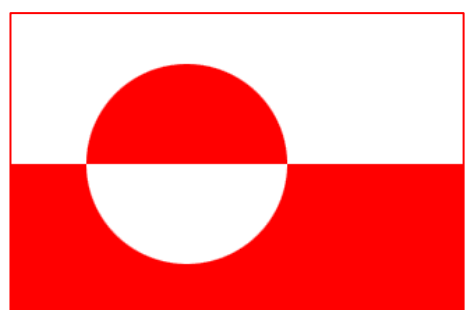
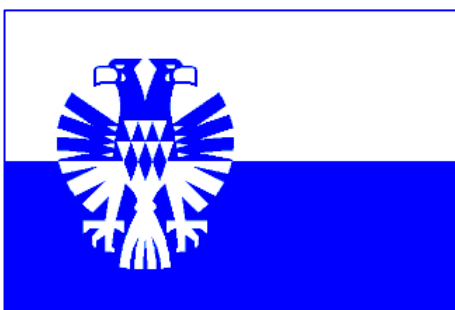
Hormigueros, Puerto Rico



Ceiba, Puerto Rico



Mayagüez, Puerto Rico



Portland Flag Miscellany



Etsy.com, the “creative marketplace” platform for small independent craftspeople, sells this shirt “inspired by the flag of the city of Portland, Oregon”.

It is unusual in placing it on a background in the color of the flag’s field, which blurs the recognition of the image as a flag and emphasizes the “offset cross” design.



FRONT



BACK

MapOnShirt.com markets custom-made t-shirts printed with maps. Based in Riga, Latvia, the firm features among its “ready-to-go” designs the maps of dozens of cities from around the world—including Portland!

This version depicts the city in two scales and in the colors of its flag.

“PDX” is the IATA airport code for Portland, which stemmed from the 1930s-era two-letter National Weather Service code for Portland (PD) plus an “X”—like Los Angeles [LAX], Phoenix [PHX], and Chicago—Meigs Field [CGX].

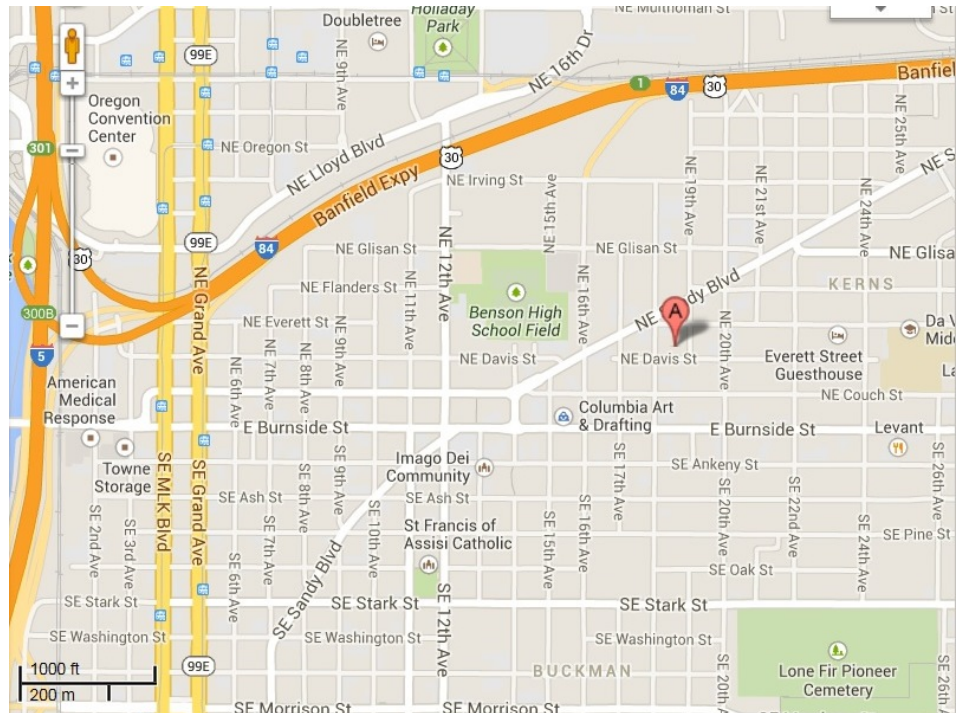
May Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 PM, Thursday, 12 May 2016, in the community space at the home of **Patrick Genna: 1865 N.E. Davis St., Portland, OR 97232.**

See the map at right.

We look forward to seeing those of you who have missed recent meetings and engaging in provocative flag-related discussion. Newcomers are welcome!

If you can’t get to the meeting, perhaps you can give the editor something to share with readers.



The *Vexilloid Tabloid*, founded in 1999 by the late John Hood, is published bi-monthly by and for the Portland Flag Association—Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Find back issues at www.portlandflag.org.