



# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 111 April 2025

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## A Misstep in Illinois

By Ted Kaye

This month the state of Illinois missed the opportunity to upgrade its flag. I attribute the failure to a poorly-designed process.

I like to say that flag adoption is 10% design and 90% politics and public relations. A part of that 90% is how to structure the legislation, public involvement, and design selection.

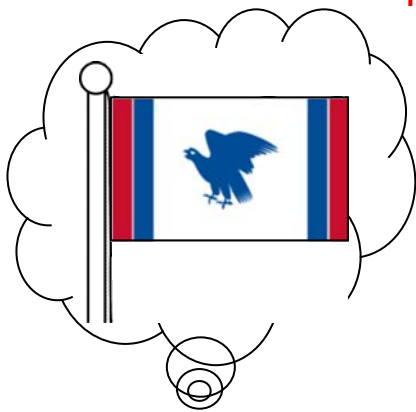
In Illinois, shortcomings in all three contributed to the poor result. The legislation, while well-meaning, did not reflect key learnings from other states. It should be made clear that the flag will change, as in Georgia, Mississippi, and Minnesota, and—arguably—Utah. Going at it half-way, saying “we’ll come up with some designs and then see if we like them more than the current flag”, is a recipe for failure. That is, the decision to change the flag must be separated from the choice of a replacement—the status quo just has too much momentum otherwise. If the decisions are com-

bined, the “no change” and the “not *that* new design” will likely form a majority of “no”. Still, in case, 57% voted for something *other than* the current flag!

Illinois appropriately decided to consult the public, but did so in ways that delivered murky results. First, it followed the long-time tradition of “vote early and often”, allowing people to cast a vote every day for months. Second, it offered up 13 designs (including the current flag) for a single “winner take all” vote, without any rating system to gather robust public feedback.

And the flag commission chose finalists that all fell short of outstanding designs. This too-common outcome reflects a lack of adequate training in flag design.

The commission will deliver its report—likely with an addendum from active NAVA members providing an analysis of the results and suggesting next steps—it will be up to leadership in the General Assembly to chart a path forward.



*I think that the commission  
still has work to do...*

—Illinois State Sen. Doris Turner

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

## March 2025 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our March meeting, hosted by Mike Hale at his home in Beaverton and streamed via Zoom, five members enjoyed three hours of flags and video conversation.

As host, Mike asked Ted Kaye to moderate the session, with the PFA flag draped in front of the room.

Mike shared his experience using Zwift—a massively multiplayer online cycling and running physical training program that enables users to interact, train, and compete in a virtual world—showing how the thousands of participants use flags as part of their identities; he then related how his local grandsons (ages 8 and 10) love pirates and showed the pages on pirate flags in a large book he is reading to them.

Ted Kaye brought recently-published flag books, including former PM Stephen Harper’s engaging *Flags of Canada*, which cites Ted and 20 other NAVA members as sources; he showed the flag of NAVA 59 and the proposed flag for Raleigh, North Carolina (it incorporates Sir Walter Raleigh’s coat of arms—a red shield with five silver diamonds in diagonal—into the iconic acorn emblem that symbolizes the stately “City of Oaks”); and he gave an impromptu presentation (with 100+ images) on outdoor flag use in China, as observed during his month there last August (it appears as a Field Report on p. 4 and in a future *VT*).



Mike Hale describes pirate flags and their meanings (backed by the PFA flag).



Ted Kaye unfurls the proposed flag for Raleigh, North Carolina, with an acorn emblem symbolizing the “City of Oaks” and colors/elements from the arms of Sir Walter Raleigh (see [newraleighflag.com](http://newraleighflag.com)).





**Max Liberman introduces his presentation on flag use during this year's Commonwealth Day.**

Max Liberman delivered a colorful PowerPoint presentation on flags displayed during the recent celebration of Commonwealth Day, with a discussion of their protocol, messaging, and history (Ted noted that the June *Vexillum* from NAVA will feature an article by Dean Thomas on the flags of the Commonwealth Games and their predecessors).

Alden Jencks, participating on-line from a hostel in Colima, Mexico, gave a PowerPoint presentation on flag use in the capital's Zocalo during the recent International



**Alden Jencks keeps his hostel-mate awake during the PFA meeting.**



**David Koski explains his wife's Ukraine-and-Heart flag.**

Women's Day and national defiance demonstrations which drew hundreds of thousands of participants (Mike then brought out a large hand-painted Mexican flag acquired in the 1970s by his stepfather, Elmer, when running Elmer's Flag & Banner).

David Koski unfurled a garden flag made by his wife, using Ukrainian colors and a counterchanged heart.

Our next meeting, on Thursday, May 8, 2025, will be hosted by Mike Funke at his Portland home.

Ted retained the PFA flag for him. We expect again to welcome our local members as well as far-flung friends.



## Flags in China: Field Report – Part 1

By Ted Kaye

Before and after the 10-day International Congress of Vexillology in Beijing in August 2024, I had the opportunity to travel in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China, including Tibet. Such extensive travels provided me with a quick but broad exposure to exterior flag use in China.

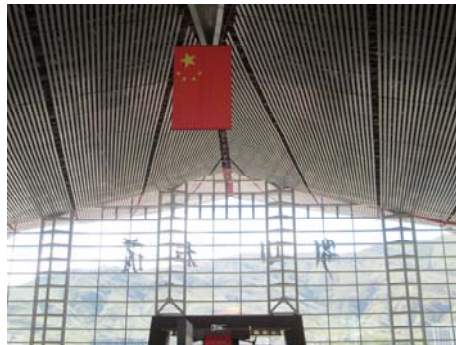
While purely anecdotal, my observations may provide insights in to Chinese cultural norms and traditions regarding flags, especially the national flag.

In this Part 1, I'll describe flag use in mainland China and Tibet. Part 2 will deal with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and non-fabric and miscellaneous depictions of flags.

It appears that the primary (and nearly only) government flag displayed publicly is the “five-star red flag” of the People’s Republic of China. I saw no subnational or municipal flags at all, with the exception of those of the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau. “Flag culture” focused on the national level.



On the bank of the Yangtse River.



In the Lhasa airport's main lobby.



At the Dacien Temple in Xian.



On a storefront in Lhasa.



A two-flag display in Hong Kong.



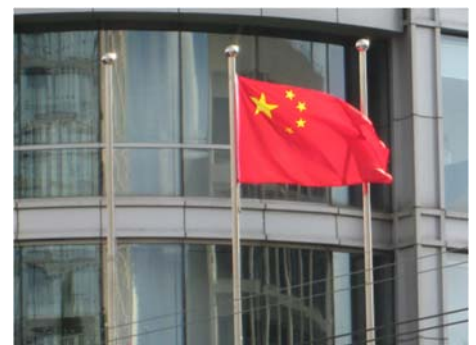
At the Macau Center in Beijing.



The Buddhist flag in Xian.



Demonstrating a flag display bracket.

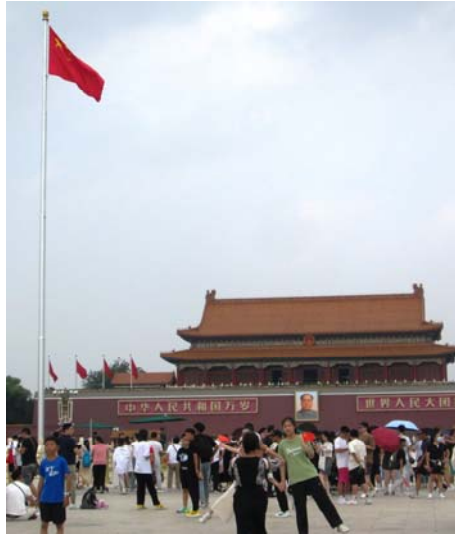


Two empty flag poles in Beijing.



The national flag usually flew only on government buildings, large commercial sites, schools, hospitals, and hotels. It always flew on its own pole, never with other flags below it. It rarely appeared indoors.

I never saw a flag on a private residence, although our guide pointed out how some homes had a flag bracket which folded into the wall and opened to hold a flag on national holidays.



The large flag at Tiananmen Square.



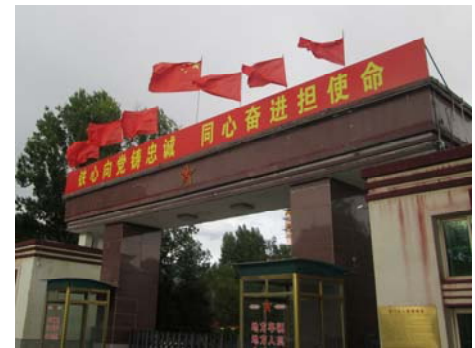
At a wharf on the Yangtse River.



At a shopping building in Lhasa.



At a hospital in Beijing.



"Loyal to the Party" in Lhasa.



Flags at a bank in Lhasa.



Two flags over a store in Lhasa.



Flag seen from the city wall in Xian.



The national flag flies above the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa.



Flag with images of China's prominent current and past leaders in Lhasa.



Flags at a government office in Lhasa.

*Continued on next page*



Nearly all flag displays were solely the national flag; when flown with other flags it was always on a taller pole or in the center of the display. A frequent arrangement was the national flag flanked two (or more) identical corporate flags.

I often saw three poles, with one taller for the national flag; many were set too close together and one flag would hit the next pole. At times I observed bare poles.

Other flags I did observe included those of commercial entities (banks, hotels, etc.) and the government maritime agency, Buddhist flags, historical flags, and plain-colored decorative flags.

In Tiananmen Square, a central gathering-place for Chinese tourists on summer vacation visiting from around the country, many visitors waved stick flags and posed in front of Tiananmen Gate.

Some historic sites and restaurants in tourist areas would fly ancient-style banners (often with script), sometimes triangular and sometimes with tongues.

Small commercial enterprises did not fly the national flag, with the exception of in Lhasa, where it seemed that cooperation (or encouragement) led entire blocks of shops to fly the flag (all identical in size and hardware).



SPD Bank flags in Shanghai.



Commercial flags in Beijing.



Business and national flags in Shanghai.



The Jin Jian Hotel's flags in Shanghai.



Commercial flags at the Lhasa airport.



The Regent Hotel's flags in Beijing.



Commercial flag display in Lhasa.



At the Fu Rong Ge Hotel in Xian.



Multiple commercial flags in Xian.





Many visitors to Tiananmen Square pose for photos with the national flag.



Historic flags at a restaurant in Xian.



Old-style flag atop the city wall in Xian.



Guide's flag in Beijing's Forbidden City.



Banners in historical flags' style at the Feng Yan San Guo "Three Kingdoms Show" alongside the Yangtse River.

*Continued on next page*





National flags festoon stores on a main street in Lhasa.



Flag atop the Potala Palace in Lhasa.



Flag over the Sera Monastery in Lhasa.

At Buddhist temples, the Buddhist flag sometimes flew, but never without the national flag. Even atop the Sera Monastery and the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, the national flag flew prominently. Of course, prayer flags were ubiquitous and for sale near religious sites in Tibet.

I saw no instances of the national flag flown in multiples, however, in Lhasa, it often appeared centered (and higher) in a multi-flag display, flanked by 2, 4, 6, 8, or more plain pastel (or all-red) flags. Some similar displays could be seen in Xian and at the Three Gorges Dam visitor center in Chongqing.



Promotional flags line the causeway to Baidichen, the White Emperor City, now on an island in the Yangtse River.



3-flag display in Lhasa.



5-flag display in Lhasa.



7-flag display in Lhasa.



11-flag display in Xian.



19-flag display in Lhasa.

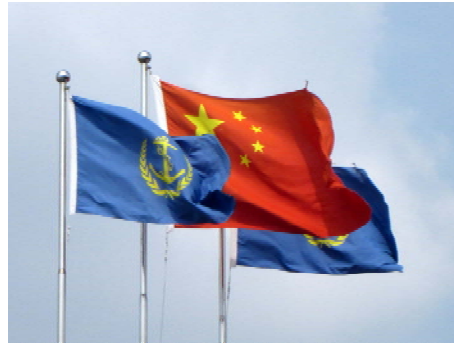


Many plain flags at Three Gorges Dam.





The Chinese ensign on a boat on the Yangtse River.



Flags of the Maritime Safety Agency flank the national flag.



River traffic in Shanghai may be flying a house flag.

On the Yangtze River, some government-affiliated vessels and facilities flew the flag of the Maritime Safety Administration. There and on the Huangpu River in Shanghai most boats and ships flew the national flag as an ensign at the stern and sometimes house flags at the bow.

In Shanghai, on the Bund (the European-style 19th- and early 20th-century commercial strip along the river), every one of the classic buildings flew the national flag, usually alone but sometimes with commercial flags. It also flew at a school in the French Concession (but for the flag, the architecture could have indicated an American or European neighborhood!).

*See the next issue for Part 2.*



Flag at the Qua Ren Temple seen from the city wall of Xian.



Flags (and vexilloids) festoon a shopping street in Lhasa.



Flags adorn the historic buildings on Shanghai's Bund.



Flag raised in a schoolyard in the French Concession in Shanghai.



The national flag flies above bank buildings on the Bund in Shanghai.

## Flags on Australia's NAIDOC Coin

By Ralph G. C. Bartlett

I recently received some shiny new Australian 50-cent coins in change, showing the new king, Charles III, and dated 2024, in a local shop here in the Melbourne area.

When I turned over the coins, I found that they commemorated “NAIDOC 50 Years”, showing an indigenous design, the number 50, and small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Flags!

NAIDOC stands for “National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee”. Its aim is to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Every July since 1957 a version of NAIDOC week has celebrated the peoples’ history, culture and achievements.

Beginning in the 1920s, various indigenous groups and individuals called for improvements and equal rights. Following the successful 1967 national referendum which fully recognised all indigenous Australians as citizens and transferred assistance to them from the states and territories to the federal government, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was formed in 1972.

To further advance the improvement of Aboriginal Australians’ lives, NADOC (National Aborigines Day Observance Committee) was established in



The NAIDOC 50th anniversary 2024 commemorative 50-cent cupro-nickel coin, struck by the Royal Australian Mint, showing flags and the new monarch.

1974, composed entirely of Aboriginal members. In 1991 it expanded to become NAIDOC by including the indigenous Torres Strait Islanders, from the insular region between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The flags of both groups have co-equal status with the Australian national flag and are usually flown in a group of three. The aboriginal flag was first designed in 1971 (and its copyright is now owned by the national government); the Torres Straits Islanders flag was adopted in 1992.

The commemorative coin itself was designed by 27-year-old Cortney Glass, a contemporary digital artist, who is originally from Katherine, Northern Territory. She is a Dagoman, Wardaman, and Gurindji woman living on Gadigal land (Sydney, NSW). Her designs are inspired by her passion for her culture, family, and the art form of digital art.



Aboriginal Flag, 1971.



Torres Straits Islanders Flag, 1992.



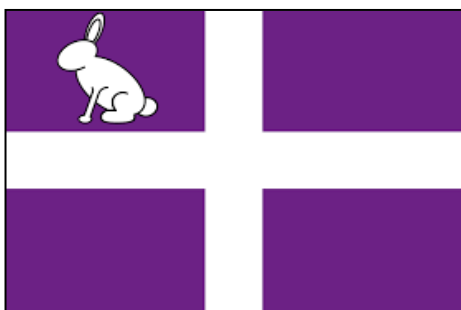
Cortney Glass, digital artist and designer of the NAIDOC 50-cent commemorative coin, celebrates its issue in 2024.



## What's that Flag?

By John Cartledge

Identify these flags and the theme that connects them.



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

By Bruce R. Stewart

These are burgees of historic yacht clubs.

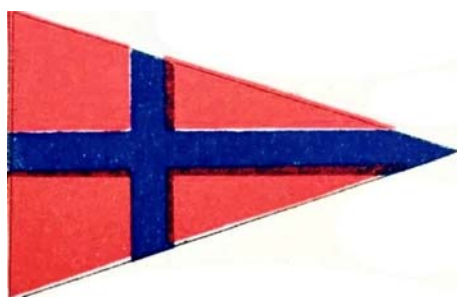
Congratulations to solver John Cartledge, who poses the next quiz.



New York Yacht Club, New York, N.Y. & Newport, R.I. (1844).



Annapolis Yacht Club, Maryland (1886).



Havana Yacht Club, Cuba (1885).



Eastern Yacht Club, Marblehead, Massachusetts (1870).



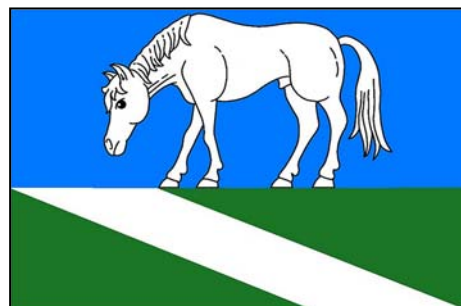
Chelsea Yacht Club, Massachusetts (1886).



San Diego Yacht Club, California (1886).



Anchor Yacht Club, Bristol, Pennsylvania (1906).



## Portland Flag Miscellany



Vehicles in the city of Portland's facilities fleet sport the city flag on the doors. This example was spotted on SW 4th Avenue near City Hall.



A shirt worn by the president of the Portland Area Climber Coalition, representing his organization in November 2024.

Its main symbol (the hypocycloid) and its colors echo the Portland city flag.

(Photo by Graham Houser.)



Retro Portland Oregon City Flag // Vintage PDX Grunge Emblem Sticker, sold by Tee Public, \$2.50.

[teepublic.com/sticker/28065152-retro-portland-oregon-city-flag-vintage-pdx-grunge](https://teepublic.com/sticker/28065152-retro-portland-oregon-city-flag-vintage-pdx-grunge)

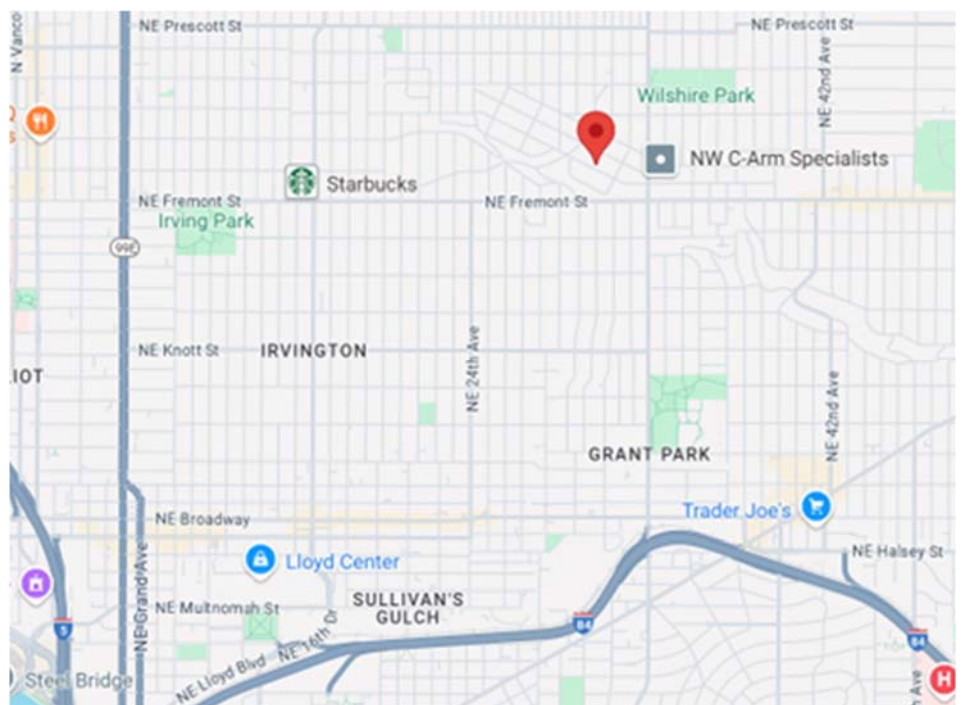
## May Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 PM, Thursday, May 8, 2025, hosted by Mike Funke at his home at 3119 NE Alameda St., Portland, OR 97212.

Those who cannot attend in person should watch for a Zoom invitation.

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

Newcomers and friends from around the world are welcome!



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 [portlandflag.org](http://portlandflag.org).