



# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 118 June 2026

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## Minnesota’s Flag Challenges

By Ted Kaye

We’ve seen this play out before: a new flag meets political opposition and resistance to its adoption, with objections more about how it was chosen (and who chose it) than about its design.



**Minnesota.**

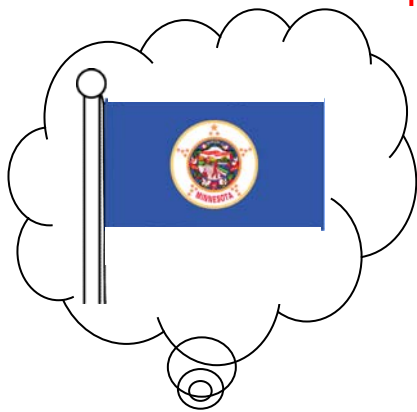
Canada saw years of debate before and after its iconic maple leaf flag debuted in 1965. Opponents saw it as the pet project of the Liberal Party, as the Progressive Conservatives vehemently decried flag change and the legislative process that accomplished it.

As I speak to the press in Minnesota, I emphasize that the issue is not really about flag’s design, or even, in fact, about its adoption process. Rather, the flag is a cudgel that one side of the political spectrum is using to beat up on the other (and to rally its own base). In one interview I counseled Minnesotans: “Don’t hold your state symbol as a hostage to your political differences.”

Now, in Minnesota, the state flag adopted in 2024 has seen resistance, with smaller cities and towns in more rural parts of the state refusing to fly it. While the stated objections include “the people didn’t get a say/vote”, “the old flag better represents our heritage”, and “the new flag looks like Somalia’s”—all patently false—the actual objection is that the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party rammed through flag change without support from Republicans.

Canada’s flag saw rocky years after 1965, with two provinces adopting flags based on the old national flag. However, a vast majority of Canadians came to love their flag, as time and familiarity eventually worked their magic.

I expect the same will happen in Minnesota . . . eventually.



*People... are simply choosing not to learn what this flag actually symbolizes.*

**—Anita Gaul, vice chair, Minnesota State Emblems Redesign Commission**

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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.

## May 2026 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our May meeting, hosted by Ted Kaye and streamed via Zoom, 11 PFA members and friends enjoyed two-plus hours of flags and video conversation. The PFA flag flew over the street, with the electronic readerboard announcing “Welcome Portland Flag Association”.

As the host, Ted moderated the meeting, and gave a report on the just-adopted (the day before) flag of Boulder, Colorado; he had advised the selection panel on flag design and participated in the NAVA Flag Design Forum session which honed the 10 finalists and recommended the design ultimately chosen by the panel.

Graham Houser unfurled several flags, including a mock-frog California in honor of the jumping frog contest this month; the city of Lisbon, Portugal; the county of Kildare, Ireland; an old Iran, and an Irish “Starry Plough”.



Graham Houser unfurls a vintage Calaveras Jumping Frog California Flag.

Ralph Bartlett’s presentation on the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Australian Commonwealth’s Parliament (part of a year-long series of commemorative events) was abridged by technical issues (perhaps due to the distance from Melbourne, Victoria, but it appears on p. 8).

Phil Allen, joining from Berkeley, California, talked of lately taking screenshots of online images of flags, which led to a vigorous discussion of how some rural Minnesotan cities are refusing to fly the new state flag (more a political issue than a design statement; see p. 1).



Ted Kaye exults in the brand new flag of Boulder, Colorado.



Ralph Bartlett attempts to present on Australian Commonwealth 125.



Phil Allen explores the politics of the 2024 Minnesota state flag.



Max Liberman describes flags of heads of state.

Max Liberman gave a preview of the talk he will deliver in July at the 31st International Congress of Vexillology (ICV 31) in Paris on flags of heads of state; he hypothesized that the unusual multicolored borders on a large group of such flags could be traced to the Austro-Hungarian imperial banner which once flew over the areas they represent and showed many examples.



Deniz İyigün reports on the Kirkland city flag committee.



Ken Dale points out a detail on a lion-and-sun flag of Iran (one of many variants currently in the news), brought by Graham Houser.

Ken Dale offered his usual insightful historical commentary on all of the topics discussed.

Deniz İyigün, joining from Vancouver, Washington, where his Seattle-based rowing team was visiting, gave an update on the effort to design a flag for his home city, Kirkland, Washington.

John Niggley arrived at the meeting straight from the airport after business travel, and confessed to acquiring a commercial sewing machine to allow him to make flags (he has worked in manufacturing at large flag companies); he then related amusing flag stories from a visit to Lake Como in Italy.



John Niggley sews havoc.

*Continued on next page*

Alex Zimmerman, joining from Vancouver, Washington, displayed the flags of the fur-trading enterprises which had dominated the Oregon Territory and beyond in the 1800s, with flags of the Northwest Company (Canadian-made) and the Hudson's Bay Company (U.S.-made).

Alden Jencks joined from Indiana, his current stop in extensive travels starting in the Northeast, reporting on flags seen in Philadelphia (including a close-out sale where he acquired 35 full-sized Annin flags at \$1 each) and leading a discussion of the historically high monetary cost of flags due to the usually high value of fabric.



**Alden Jencks generates envy for his incredibly fortunate flag purchase.**



**Joyce Gifford reacts to progress in the design for a flag of Oregon City.**



**Alex Zimmerman discusses the flags of the 19th-century rivals and eventual merger partners Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.**

Joyce Gifford, joining from Oregon City solicited flags for the Ermatiger House's semiquincentennial exhibit, and received offers from Alden (from his recent purchases) and Alex (from the NAVA Classroom Collection inventory).

Max Liberman took the PFA flag to display at ICV 31 in Paris, where he will serve as our delegate.

Our next meeting will take place on Zoom only—hosted by John Niggley and Alex Zimmerman (see p. 12). We expect again to welcome our local members as well as far-flung friends.



**A County Kildare flag, brought by Graham Houser, entertains Ken Dale.**



## 50th Anniversary Logos Based on Flags

John Moody, our colleague in New Zealand, has been tracking the logos commemorating national 50th anniversary celebrations.

Among those which he identified for 2025 are several based in one way or another on the national flag—an obvious design choice.

Angola, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde, and Suriname all feature a big “50” in their logos.

While Angola just uses the country’s flag colors to differentiate the items represented (note the tank!), the others make explicit reference to flag design elements.

Others all use their flag’s stars, colors, and star patterns in the logos, and Papua New Guinea also sports the *kumul* (bird of paradise).



Papua New Guinea.



São Tomé and Príncipe.



Cabo Verde.



Angola.



Suriname.

## Philly Flag Day 2026

By Brenda Embrey Exon

On March 27, Philadelphia celebrated its historic flag in a day filled with ceremony and color. One may say with confidence, after extensive research, the Philadelphia flag was the first official city flag in the country, adopted March 27, 1895. It stirred tremendous enthusiasm in an event at City Hall organized by Partners for Civic Pride (PFCP) in collaboration with the City of Philadelphia.



Rose Scott, North Philly, sings the national anthem.



Frankford High JROTC cadets, Northeast Philly, recite their Philly Flag Jody chant.



Brenda Exon thanks H. Chase Lenfest for supporting the Philadelphia Maneto Awards and Philly Flag Day and presents him with an honorary Philadelphia Maneto Award and a city and state citation.



Philly jazz musicians play as attendees gather.



Philly flags adorn the Caucus Room luncheon.



Councilman Mark Squilla, South Philly, waves his flag.



Volunteers with funder Eileen Butler, enjoying the Philly Flag Luncheon.



Spectators applaud the event.



Victoria Wylie, 2020 Philadelphia Maneto Award Recipient for Prosperity, speaks about the beauty of the award.



Jim Mundy, West Philly, relates the Philly flag's history and accepts a mayoral proclamation from Kyra Harris of the Office of the City Representative of Philadelphia.



Tina Fennell wears a "memorial tee" for her late mother, Denise Fennell, a founding member of PFCP.

You are cordially invited to attend  
**PHILLY FLAG DAY 2026!**

~ EVENT HOSTED BY CITY OFFICIALS ~  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARTNERS FOR CIVIC PRIDE (PFCP)

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026

CITY HALL ~ NORTH SIDE ~ THE FLAG APRON

NOON TO 1PM: PHILLY FLAG CEREMONY  
~ OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!  
FOLLOWED BY VIP LUNCHEON  
(CITY HALL CAUCUS ROOM 401)

Garland of



PEACE

Anchor of



HOPE

Scale of

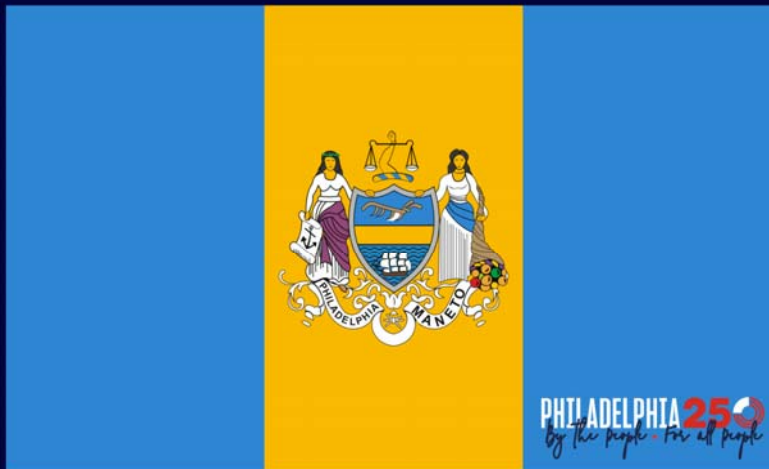


JUSTICE

Cornucopia of



PROSPERITY



America's 1ST Official Flag!  
March 27, 1895

**250 FREE-Philly Flags 250!**

**PHILADELPHIA MANETO**  
"Let Brotherly Love Continue"



ELIJAH POMPEY  
"My Pledge To  
Philadelphia!"



TONY SMITH  
Philly Flag Trumpeter



FRANKFORD ARMY  
JROTC CADETS



RYSHEE SHAW  
2020 Philadelphia Maneto  
Award for Justice!



CHASE LENFEST  
Founder  
North 10  
To be honored for  
his visionary work for  
the betterment of  
Philadelphia



ROSE SCOTT  
National Anthem  
Singer



ALVIN ALEXANDER  
Philly Flag Saxophonist

## Opening of the First Australian Parliament – 9 May 1901

By Ralph G. C. Bartlett

125 years ago, on 9 May 1901, the parliament of the new Commonwealth of Australia met for the first time, in Melbourne.

On 1 January 1901, after years of debate, the various colonies in Australia had joined to form a federation of states. While the new constitution of Australia called for a new capital away from the major cities, until that time Melbourne would host the government of the new nation.

After elections were held, the new federal parliament of Australia was sworn in at the Royal Exhibition Building in the Carlton Gardens in front of 12,000 people.

Flags and flag images featured prominently in the celebrations. Murals with state shields and other imagery were designed by John Ross Anderson and painted during the 15 weeks before the event.

In recognition of the significance of the opening of the Australian Parliament, the new king of the United Kingdom, Edward VII, sent his son and heir, the duke of Cornwall and York, to Australia as his representative. The duke formally opened parliament, as painted by Tom Roberts.

Later in the year, a version of the national flag would be adopted, with its “commonwealth star” and Crux Australis symbolism. Meanwhile, British and state emblems prevailed.



An invitation (replete with state symbols) issued by the government of Victoria to a “Conversazione”, as part of the Australian Commonwealth celebrations.



*The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York [later King George VI], May 9, 1901.*



Australian State Shields Mural, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne.

## The Flag Vigilante Returns

By Alden Jencks

On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., I took a walk down “Embassy Row”, admiring the showy architecture and, of course, noting the national flags.

When I passed the Embassy of Burkina Faso, I was shocked to see that the national banner was displayed with an upside-down star, likely due to an error in manufacture. Workers apparently (incorrectly!) assumed that the green band was on top and the red band was on the bottom.

Your tireless Flag Vigilante instantly sprang into action—I marched up to the door of the embassy and knocked. Fortunately (I suppose) an international incident was avoided when no one answered.

(On a personal note, when Burkina Faso was known as Upper Volta, I served in the Peace Corps in neighboring Ivory Coast / Côte D’Ivoire.)

But wait. There’s more...

After returning to Portland, I found myself walking in front of our own city hall. There I checked, as I always do, to see if our Portland flag was flying upside-down, as it so often is (see *VT 103*).

I discovered that this time, our “city that works” had really outdone itself in order to roil the Flag Vigilante.

No way was a little African nation going to outdo Portland, Oregon!

What at first blush appeared to be an upside-down Portland flag was in reality an end-to-end switch.

The manufacturer had mistakenly sewn the header to the fly end of the flag and not to the hoist. And of course, our city fathers had not noticed.



A mis-manufactured Burkina Faso flag flies at the country’s embassy in Washington, D.C., in March 2026.



The plaque on the front of the Burkina Faso embassy, in English and French.

This parallels a Montreal flag I own, with a similar header-on-fly manufacturing error.

*O tempora, O mores!*



A mis-manufactured Portland flag flies at Portland’s city hall in March 2026. The header is sewn on the fly end!



A mis-manufactured Montreal flag, with the header sewn to the fly. (This is the former design, so it really does need retiring. The current design has a pine tree added to honor indigenous Montrealers.)

## Roundup



The flag of Colfax, Iowa, now tops the targets in the Tigerhawk Disc Golf Course. (photo courtesy NAVA member and city administrator Wade Wagoner)



African-American Flag (1990), by David Hammons, exhibited in the National Museum of African American History and Culture. It uses the Marcus Garvey colors of red-green-black (used widely in Africa). (photo by Alden Jencks)



The U.S. flag displayed on the bridge at Oregon City, 9/11/2004.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of 9/11 this year, what flag-related commemorations might we see? (photo courtesy Ken Dale)



Mike Pullen recently received this Oregon variant as a gift (see p. 12).



Man lost out on \$1,000,000 after answering tough final question wrong (courtesy of Jim Croft)

## What's that Flag?

By Mike Thomas

Identify these international flags that fly together, in alphabetical order (some text has been removed to make identification less trivial).



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

By John Cartledge

These are all flags whose protocol requires they be flipped when hung vertically from the hoist (like the U.S. flag).

Congratulations to the solver:  
Mike Thomas.



American Samoa.



India.



Greece.



Egypt.



Barbados.



Lebanon.



Central African Republic.



## Portland Flag Miscellany



Variant of the winning design in the 2009 Oregon Flag competition (sponsored by *The Oregonian*), by Randall Gray (PFA member). It adds colors from the Portland flag.

Oregon Flag Redesign Flag (DT), \$30.

Flagmaker & Print  
flagmaker-print.com



By far the most ample and frequent displays of the Portland flag anywhere must be at the games of our major league soccer team, the Timbers.

At a March home game, 15,000 fans received free flags, courtesy of sponsor Bank of America.



Portland Flag / Oregon Shape  
refrigerator magnet,  
\$10  
Davson Sales.

[davsonsales.com/products/tooloud-portland-oregon-flag-aluminum-magnet-p-ur1348-td-sb5734](http://davsonsales.com/products/tooloud-portland-oregon-flag-aluminum-magnet-p-ur1348-td-sb5734)

## July Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 PM, Thursday, July 9, 2026.

It will take place entirely via Zoom (some of us will be at ICV 31). All PFA members and regular guests will receive 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).