



The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 119 August 2026

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Oregon City's New Flag	1
July 2026 Flutterings	2
Report: ICV 31 in Paris	4
Suffrage Flags in D.C.	6
'Red Flags' Visits San Francisco	8
The Flag of Burning Meeple	9
Roundup	10
The Flag Quiz	11
Portland Flag Miscellany	12
Next Meeting	12

Oregon City's New Flag

By Ted Kaye

Our neighbor to the south has a new city flag, spurred by PFA members William & Joyce Gifford and aided by vexillographers in NAVA, replacing the 1989 SOB.

Threading a delicate political needle, Oregon City staff balanced concerns about pioneer and native symbolism as it considered proposed designs and the opinions of the city commissioners and the public. I was honored to help.

While I believe the most obvious symbol for Oregon City would be a covered wagon or a wagon wheel (it is the end of the Oregon Trail), other symbols competed, including Willamette Falls (the head of river navigation and source of power) and the Abernethy Bridge.

Ultimately, an anodyne landmark (known to locals but likely not to others) appeared on the flag: the Municipal Elevator. Built in 1915 and replaced in 1955, the only “vertical street” in North America, takes passengers between two levels of the city in 15 seconds.



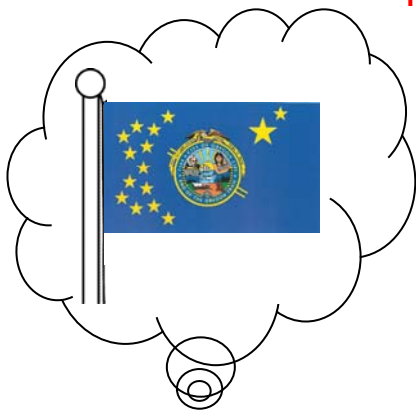
Oregon City, 2026.



Runners-up, representing Willamette Falls from above and the south.

NAVA members submitted scores of prospective designs, then culled and polished them in NAVA's Flag Design Forum. When none of the proposals passed muster with the decision-makers, a NAVA member submitted the elevator design.

City leaders saw in it the stylized elevator as well as a representation of a native fishing platform. While the public preferred a falls design in a low-participation poll, the city commissioners chose the elevator design, adopting it in July (the flag becomes official after two readings of the ordinance this month).



***Our [old] flag has
too many things on it.***

**—Oregon City Mayor
Denyse McGriff**

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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. If you wish to complain, call your mother.

July 2026 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our July meeting, hosted by Alex Zimmerman and solely streamed via Zoom, 5 PFA members enjoyed 40 minutes of flags and video conversation (many regulars were traveling, including some at ICV 31 in Paris).

Alex, whose mother lives in Helsingborg, Sweden, showed the flag of that city, a banner for its soccer team, and a shopping bag with the team flag and an image of the flag of Scania, the southernmost province.

Graham Houser shared examples from a batch of metal flag pins he'd picked up and a garage sale, then excused himself for his daughter Clementine's 8th birthday, taking with him flags with one star, two stars, etc. up to eight for party décor.



Alex Zimmerman shows souvenirs from Helsingborg, Sweden.



Flag of Helsingborgs Idrottsförening, a Swedish professional football club.



Flag of Scania, a province of Sweden.



Graham Houser shares his flag pins.



Joyce Gifford tells an anecdote.

Joyce Gifford reported on the impending new flag of Oregon City and told of a 1976 U.S. Bicentennial 50-flag collection rescued at a garage sale and renovated for gifting to a local house museum; Alden Jencks attended the presentation ceremony at the Ermatinger House.



Alden Jencks attends the presentation of a set of 50 historic U.S. flags, a once-discarded keepsake of the 1976 Bicentennial, retrieved, cleaned up, and donated by Joyce and William Gifford.

Phil Allen (joining from Berkeley, California) described a current art exhibit at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco: Andy Goldsworthy's *Red Flags* (2020) featuring 50 5'x8' flags, each stained red with earth collected from one of the 50 U.S. states; he intends to interview the curator to learn more about how they were made (see p. 8).

Riffing on "state soils", Deniz Iyigün regaled the meeting with information about state symbols—in the relevant Wikipedia article he himself had added the entry for Oregon's state steak: the T-Bone.



Phil Allen relates his plans to visit the *Red Flags* exhibit at Fort Mason in San Francisco.



Deniz Iyigün, a frequent Wikipedia editor, shares his screen to show the list of Oregon state symbols.

Our next meeting, on Sunday afternoon, September 13, will be hosted by Graham Houser at his home near Rocky Butte (we hold the September meeting at a different time and day to accommodate members who otherwise might be unable to attend on our usual schedule).

Ted will deliver the PFA flag to Graham. We expect again to welcome our local members as well as far-flung friends at our end-of-summer meeting.



The Fort Mason Center for Art and Culture hosts *Red Flags*, a work by artist Andy Goldsworthy: A set of 50 5'x8' flags representing the 50 U.S. states, each stained red with earth collected from the respective state.

Report: ICV 31 in Paris

By Ted Kaye

Representatives from vexillological associations around the world convened in Paris in July for the 31st International Congress of Vexillology.

Hosted by the SFV (the Société française de vexillologie) at the ASIEM Conference Center near UNESCO's headquarters in the 7th Arrondissement, ICV 31 met under the auspices of FIAV (the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques). More than 50 flag-studies groups belong to FIAV.

Participants heard 40+ formal scholarly presentations during the week and enjoyed tours and a gala banquet.



Arnaud Balard describes how he created the Sign Union Flag.

Max Liberman, the Portland Flag Association's delegate to the General Assembly of FIAV, voted "yes" on the key issues: admitting the Fundación de Estudios Vexilológicos (Spain) as a FIAV member, electing Annie Platoff as secretary-general for congresses (succeeding Graham Bartram), and accepting the bid for ICV 32 from the Czech Vexillological Society. Do attend!



John Cartledge gives a short talk.



Bruce Berry observes WWII flags.



The display board at the ASIEM Conference Center welcomes ICV 31, shows the daily flag, and announces World Cup matches with flags.



Max Liberman represents the PFA (with our flag appropriately displayed).



Participants hear Max Liberman's talk.



Patrice de La Condamine sells books.



Flags of FIAPV member organizations decorate the ASIEM Conference Center, including that of the Portland Flag Association (center).



A local market displays national flags, seen at night.



Near the ICV 31 venue, national flags fly at the headquarters of UNESCO with the Eiffel Tower in the background.

Suffrage Flags in D.C.

By Alden Jencks

The Women's Equality National Monument is a small gem of a museum in the historic Sewall-Belmont residence. The modest structure stands resolutely in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, D.C., within a hoot and a suffragist's holler of the U.S. Capitol.

Between 1931 and 2016, this house served as the headquarters of the National Woman's Party, where it functioned as a militant "laboratory of feminism" and "a citadel of women's independence". Today, the National Park Service administers the house as the "Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument". The museum chronicles the entire historic sweep of American women in their ongoing struggle for voting equality.

And of course—suffragist flags and banners make up a large part of the museum's engaging collection.

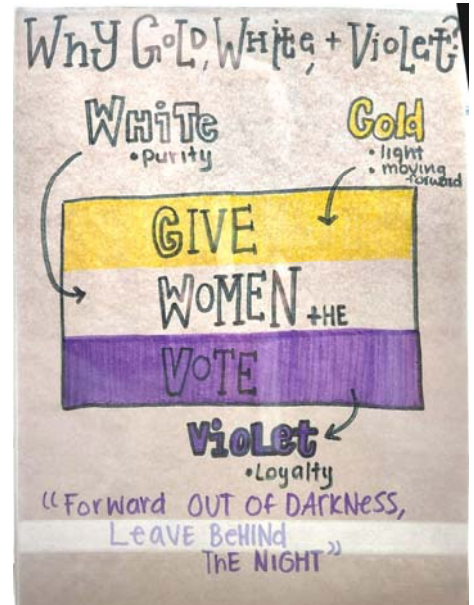
The revered Gold, White, and Violet flag from the years of struggle occupies an honored position in the array. That flag is pictured on the right, held proudly by an enthusiastic and committed contemporary feminist.

A placard, reflecting those dizzying years which led up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, explains the symbolism of the flag.



The Sewall-Belmont house, built in the early 1800s, was the headquarters of the National Woman's Party.

The museum also pays tribute to luminaries of the American suffrage cause, such as Alice Paul, leader of the National Woman's Party; Inez Milholland Boissevain, who famously led a 1913 suffrage procession in Washington in white, astride a white horse (dying three years later at age 30); and Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, the "Joan of Arc" and financial benefactor of the movement.



Alice Paul altered the British suffrage colors of green-white-purple by substituting in the already-traditional yellow of American suffrage—this attribution for gold-white-violet spells "Give Women the Vote".



A young woman holds a fringed version of the suffrage flag, displayed in the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.



A sash in suffrage colors.

This life-sized marble statue of Joan of Arc (bedecked with *fleurs-de-lis*) sculpted by Prosper d'Épinay was a 49th birthday gift to Alva Belmont from her husband, likening her role in the suffrage movement to that of the French warrior-saint.



Alice Paul sewed a star on the National Woman's Party suffrage flag each time a state voted to ratify the 19th Amendment.

(photo: Library of Congress)

Note also the "Alice Paul Flag" which shows a running tally, by means of attached gold and violet stars, of those states which had ratified the 19th Amendment so far.

Hooray! Tennessee has finally come on board for the 19th! There are now 36 stars—that's the 2/3 of the 48 states required for ratification and certification.



Alice Paul and her 36-ratifying-states-star flag.
(photo: National Park Service)



When Tennessee, the 36th state, ratified the 19th Amendment on Aug. 18, 1920, Alice Paul, co-founder of the National Woman's Party, unfurled the ratification banner from suffrage headquarters in Washington, D.C.

(photo: Library of Congress)



A small replica of the "Alice Paul Flag" with 36 stars.



Suffragist martyr Inez Milholland Boissevain depicted bearing a banner.

‘Red Flags’ Visits San Francisco

By Phil Allen

From 2008 to 2014, Scottish environmental sculptor Andy Goldsworthy created four permanent works within San Francisco’s Presidio, her original military fort and now a multi-use park.

In July, just in time for America’s 250th anniversary, his *Red Flags* project was exhibited for a month at the city’s Fort Mason Center for the Arts. It had debuted in 2020 in New York’s Rockefeller Center, briefly replacing the flags of U.N. member nations.

In the exhibit, he reaches beyond his world-wide exploration of red pigments in natural sites by applying iron oxides to 50 blank 5’x8’ flags. Each stain was derived from soil native to each state, resulting in a range of tones from pale ochre to near-black umber.

In this way, Goldsworthy aims to show the country’s unity over symbolically imposed political separation, and further relating reddened soil, as Earth’s veins, to human veins which have carried the sacrificed blood represented by red in so many actual flags.

The work appeared in the artist’s 2025 retrospective *Andy Goldsworthy: Fifty Years* at the National Galleries of Scotland. The current exhibit ran in Fort Mason’s Gateway Pavilion, presented by FOR-SITE, which creates large-scale, site-specific contemporary art installations.



Andy Goldsworthy’s *Red Flags* represent all 50 U.S. states, stained by their own soil, exhibited at Fort Mason Center for the Arts in San Francisco, July 2026.



Red Flags fly at Rockefeller Center in 2020, displacing national flags for a while.

The Flag of Burning Meeple

By Kryštof Huk

Burning Meeple is an annual board gaming gathering organized by a group of friends living in and around Ann Arbor, Michigan. The event was conceived in the closing months of 2023 as the group's first "friend-con", a multi-day opportunity to leave the city, play board games, and spend time together. The name combines that of the famous Burning Man festival with the word "meeple", a common term for the stylized human-shaped wooden figures found in many board games.

The first Burning Meeple gathering took place 5–8 July 2024 in Tawas City, Michigan. I attended the inaugural event, invited by one of its organizers.

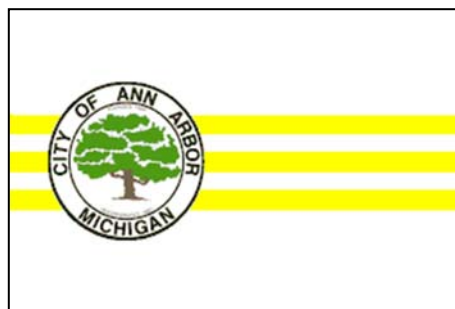
As preparations for the event progressed, it developed a distinct visual identity. Markus Borsch, an artistically gifted German physics researcher and group member, designed and distributed hand-made block-print invitation cards featuring an enflamed meeple. Inspired by this emerging symbolism, I wanted to contribute and undertook to design a flag for the gathering.



The Burning Meeple flag.

The burning meeple naturally became the principal charge of the design, serving as a canting reference to the event's name. To avoid the appearance of a logo on a plain field, I incorporated additional elements to create a more cohesive flag design.

Inspiration came from the flag of Ann Arbor, which was actually only months away from being replaced. The three horizontal stripes of the group's home city became a recurring motif throughout the design process.



Ann Arbor, Michigan (until 2024).

The final major design element was a stylized hexagon pattern suggesting a beehive, upon which the meeple stands. This feature was inspired by the logo of Bløm, a local café and mead brewery that regularly hosted the group's gaming sessions. The color palette of yellow, white, and red further reinforced the symbolism, reflecting both the colors associated with Ann Arbor and Bløm while also evoking fire and the concept of burning.

In May 2024, participants chose among six design proposals. Since then, the flag has flown annually at Burning Meeple. Its central motif has been adapted for T-shirts, invitation cards, awards, medals, badges, and other event materials.

A blue-and-white variant of the design has been proposed for a future winter gathering, in which the flame would be replaced by a hexagon to continue the freezing canting theme, transforming the Burning Meeple into, fittingly, a "Frozen Meeple".

Kryštof Huk divides his time between Prague and Ann Arbor.



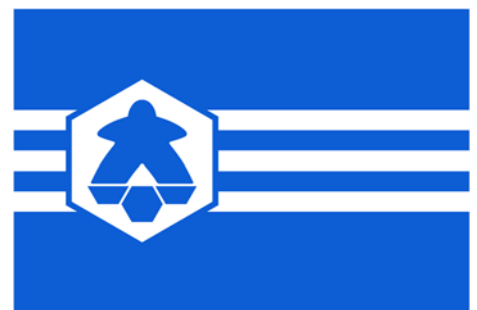
Burning Meeple participants with flag.



Enflamed Meeple.



Bløm logo.



Frozen Meeple flag (proposal).

Roundup



Another instance of the Green Mountain Boys flag being embraced in Vermont.
(photo courtesy Jim Croft)

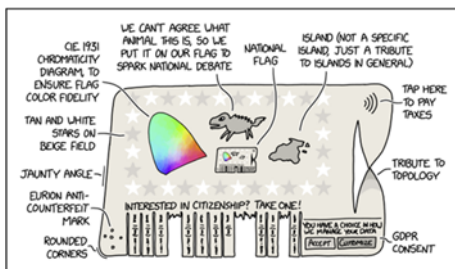


Pete Loeser celebrated the nation's 250th birthday with an enthusiastic flag display in Morgan Hill, California.



A "State of OR" flag, designed by Portland's famed advertising firm Wieden+Kennedy, hangs in front of its headquarters on N.W. 13th Ave.

It sprung from a campaign for Travel Oregon, which challenged the country—and the world—with a question: "What if you didn't have to choose between either, OR?"



I THINK OUR FLAG DESIGN COMMITTEE REALLY KNOCKED IT OUT OF THE PARK.

"Flag Design" by XKCD.



Tourist pennants commemorating sites in the Columbia River Gorge, displayed in the Troutdale Barn Exhibit Hall of the Troutdale (Oregon) Historical Society.

What's that Flag?

By Ted Kaye

Identify these flags and the theme that connects them.



What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Mike Thomas

These flags fly together at international events such as Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan:



Congratulations to the solver:
John Cartledge.



Association of South East
Asian Nations.



European Union.



International Committee of
the Red Cross and Crescent.



International Solar Alliance.



International Science and
Technology Center.



International Thermonuclear
Experimental Reactor.



United Nations.



Portland Flag Miscellany

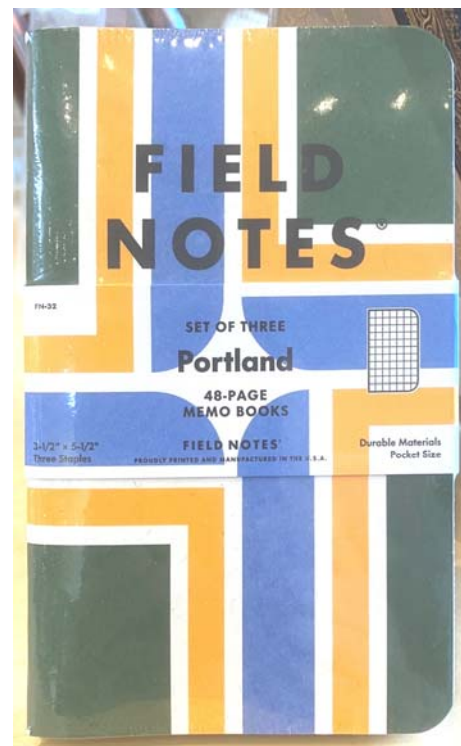
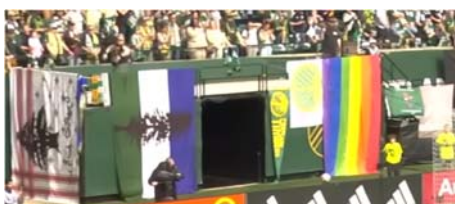


Portland's men's major league soccer team, the Timbers, may well be the greatest contributor to the dissemination and popularity of the Portland flag.

Earlier this year 15,000 fans got Portland flags, courtesy of Bank of America, at a game against Los Angeles (the match tied 1-1).



Timbers fans wave their Portland flags (apparently ~12" x 18") as the team scores its first goal against the Galaxy. The flags join many others displayed from the stands (below).



Field Notes with the Portland flag. (Spotted by David Koski at Portland's iconic Powell's Books; \$14.95 for a pack of three.)

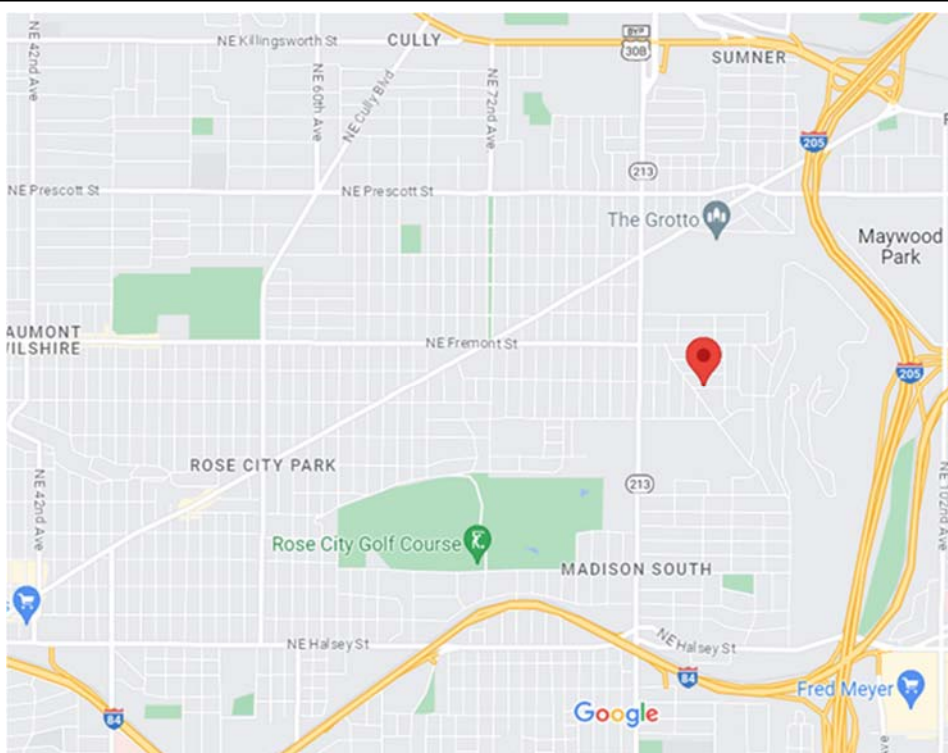
September Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 1 PM, Sunday, September 13, 2026, at the home of Graham Houser: 8617 NE Dyer Street, Portland. See map at right.

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.