



# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 91 December 2021

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Mississippi's Flag—A Year Later	1
November 2021 Flutterings	2
World Vexillology Day 2021	5
Red/White/Blue on National Flags	6
Flag Training for Chinese Teams	8
Flag Images Available at OHS	8
When Is a Flag Not a Flag?	9
Roundup	10
The Flag Quiz	11
Portland Flag Miscellany	12
Next Meeting	12

portlandflag.org | facebook.com/  
portlandflag | instagram.com/portlandflag



*Off with your hat as the flag goes by  
And let the heart have its say;  
You're man enough for a tear in your eye  
That you will not wipe away.*

—Henry Cuyler Bunner

## Mississippi's New Flag—A Year Later

By Ted Kaye

NPR recently re-ran a RadioLab episode (“The Flag and the Fury”) in which I was quoted about the efforts leading up to the 2020 flag change in Mississippi. That led me to reflect on the role that artist Laurin Stennis played in laying the groundwork for flag-change.

Laurin’s 2016 proposal for a new state flag achieved widespread publicity and popularity—it had its own license plate and sold in the thousands.

I believe that not only did the Stennis design allow Mississippians to see that there was a viable alternative to the 1894 flag, but it formed the design inspiration for choosing the new Mississippi flag.

Both designs have a large central panel flanked by vertical red stripes; in the panel in blue and white a large central emblem is surrounded by a ring of stars (20, representing Mississippi’s statehood).

While the central emblems differ (star vs. magnolia blossom), the central panel’s colors are reversed,



Laurin Stennis’s 2016 proposal.



Mississippi, as adopted 2020.

and the new flag also has “IN GOD WE TRUST” (amid the ring of stars), the basic design concept is the same.

The yellow fimbriations on the new flag are needed to separate the two dark colors (the Stennis flag avoided that issue).

The flag commission members (and Mississippians who were polled on the finalists) may well have subconsciously favored the eventual winning design because of its familiar similarity to the Stennis flag.

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.

## November 2021 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our November meeting, held in person at the Iron Workers Museum in Lake Oswego (hosted by Larry Snyder) AND via Zoom, 18 PFA members and out-of-town (and -country!) guests enjoyed three hours of flags and video conversation. At the request of the host, Ted Kaye moderated the meeting.

We welcomed distance guests Phil Allen (Berkeley, Calif.), Ralph Bartlett (Melbourne, Vic., Australia), and Bard & Benjamin Cosman (La Jolla, Calif.); five local members also joined via Zoom.

Alden Jencks delivered a presentation on Aab, his personal country (a childhood creation by him and his brother, seeking first alphabetical place among nations), and sought feedback on prospective designs for its flag. He bestowed the “Jolly Good Fellow” award on Larry for his help on the presentation.

Matt Bray was able to attend for part of the meeting.

Ralph Bartlett described the flag history of his home town, Waverley, a suburb of Melbourne.



**Ralph Bartlett plays hooky from work to attend the meeting.**



**Alden Jencks describes a possible flag for his personal country, Aab, then presents Larry Snyder with a “Jolly Good Fellow” award in thanks for his assistance.**

As the meeting took place on November 11, Veterans Day, two members came in uniform and several gave presentations that touched on the holiday’s theme.

Larry Snyder recognized the day with an image of his grandfather, a WWI artillery officer from the Midwest, posing with five Polish soldiers.



**Garland Hanson, Larry Snyder’s grandfather, with WWI Polish soldiers.**



**Phil Allen shares some of his early flag designs.**

Phil Allen described his grand-uncle (b. 1900) lying about his age to enlist in WWI and then becoming the first aerial military photographer.



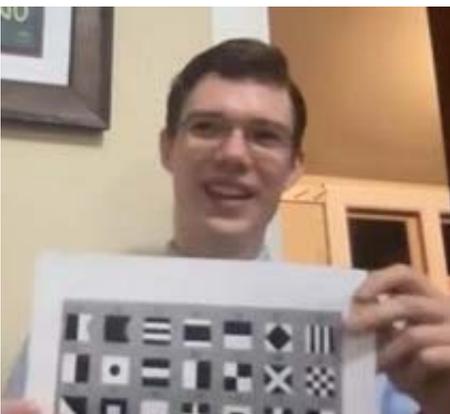
Michael Orelove explains a poppy remembrance flag for Veterans Day.



Ken Dale describes the annual Iwo Jima flag-raising re-enactment by the Canby\Aurora VFW Post.

Michael Orelove, in uniform, read the WWI poem “In Flanders Fields”, the inspiration for the poppy as a remembrance symbol, then showed a U.K. poppy flag.

Max Liberman shared his thoughts on flags depicted in monochrome, noting that international signal code flags are unique in monochrome except for “H” and “K”.



Max Liberman discusses monochrome flags and the issue with “H” and “K”.

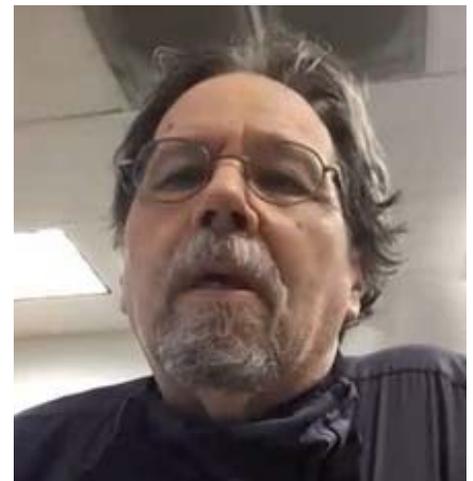
Ken Dale, also in uniform, reflected on the celebrations of the day, including an annual recreation of the Iwo Jima flag-raising.

David Koski, another participant combining work and the PFA meeting, zoomed in from his workplace, a FedEx office.

Nick Boswell attended his first meeting, although he had to leave early.



Nick Boswell rocks the Chicago flag.



David Koski closes out the FedEx office as he attends the meeting.

*Continued on next page*

Ted Kaye shared two new books featured in a recent Flag Institute event (*Flag Waves* and *What Ship, Where Bound*), posed last issue's quiz (Max nailed it), and unfurled the flag of the Saami people (honoring the anniversary two days before of the 1973 establishment of the *Sameparlament* in Finland).



Alex Zimmerman displays the Estonian flag and wimpel.



Ted Kaye shows the flag of the Saami people, which he acquired in their territory in the north of Sweden in 2003, as John Schilke looks on.



(L) The late John Wild, and (R) his extensive flag collection staged for distribution to teachers in Alex Zimmerman's warehouse.



Participants zoom into the meeting.

Alex Zimmerman reported on the status of the Wild collection—more than half of the 475 flags have been distributed, and described a Estonian wimpel he'd recently acquired.

In response, Bard Cosman made his screen background a landscape recapitulation of the Estonian flag, then delivered a formal presentation on the Revolutionary War-era Easton Flag.

Benjamin Cosman joined the meeting to hear his father's presentation, just as Nathaniel Mainwaring attended with his father.

Scott Mainwaring presented a thoughtful analysis of “political flags”, examining the issues posed by the recent controversy in Newberg, Oregon, where the conservatives on the school board have banned such flags in their public schools.



Bard Cosman, backed by an “Estonian flag” landscape, presents an insightful analysis of the Easton Flag seen through historical paintings.

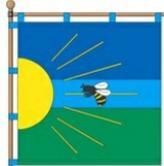


Scott Mainwaring explicates his theory that all flags are political.

Why bees on flags?



Flag of Sandovsky, Russia



Flag of Emil'chyne (Zhytomir, Ukraine)



Graham Houser explains why bees are the most common “bug” on flags.

Graham Houser delivered a formal presentation on his new passion: bees on flags, showing the wide variety of designs using the most popular “bug” on flags and comparing biological evolution to flag evolution.

John Schilke appreciated attending his first meeting since COVID.

Our next meeting, on January 13, 2022, will be hosted at the home of Jessie Spillers. Ted Kaye took the PFA flag to deliver it to him.

We expect to stream the meeting via Zoom again.



John Schilke returns!

World Vexillology Day 2021

The Portland Marathon preempted the venue of the PFA’s VexiDay event, so instead members celebrated flags that day at home.

**Graham Houser:** On VexiDay I played my vexi guitar! I decorated it with as many stickers as I could fit from a flag sticker book found in a PPS library free box. Recycle, reduce, and reuse!

**Ted Kaye:** I flew the Carroll brothers’ World Flag, with 257 individual flags on it.

**Michael Orelove:** I did the flag presentations that I was going to do at Salmon Street Springs. One was with my son Jonathon via FaceTime. The other was for Kathleen. I had 4 flags: Canada, U.S., and Mexico—plus the flag of North America that Elmer’s made for me years ago with sections from those 3 flags.

My presentation was to ask people what countries are in North America (not counting the Caribbean). As they answered, I would show that country’s flag. Then I would ask them what a flag of North America would look like. Then I showed my flag to thunderous applause and cheers.



Michael Orelove celebrates VexiDay with a North America. flag.



Graham Houser’s VexiDay project: a vexi-guitar, festooned with national flags recycled from a school library free box.



Ted Kaye flies 257 flags for VexiDay.

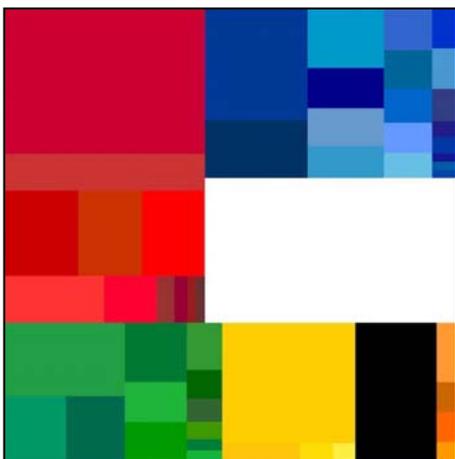
## Why Do Red, White, and Blue Dominate National Flags?

By Ted Kaye

For a recent Flag Day item, an interviewer asked me why national flags seem to favor red, white, and blue.

By nearly any measure, these colors do predominate—in fact at least one appears on every national flag but one: Jamaica. Here’s an expanded and illustrated version of my response (readers, correct me!):

There are six basic flag colors: red, white, blue, green, yellow, and black. Others can be used—pink, orange, brown, gray—but ever since heraldry began 1,000 years ago, those have been the basic six, in varying shades.

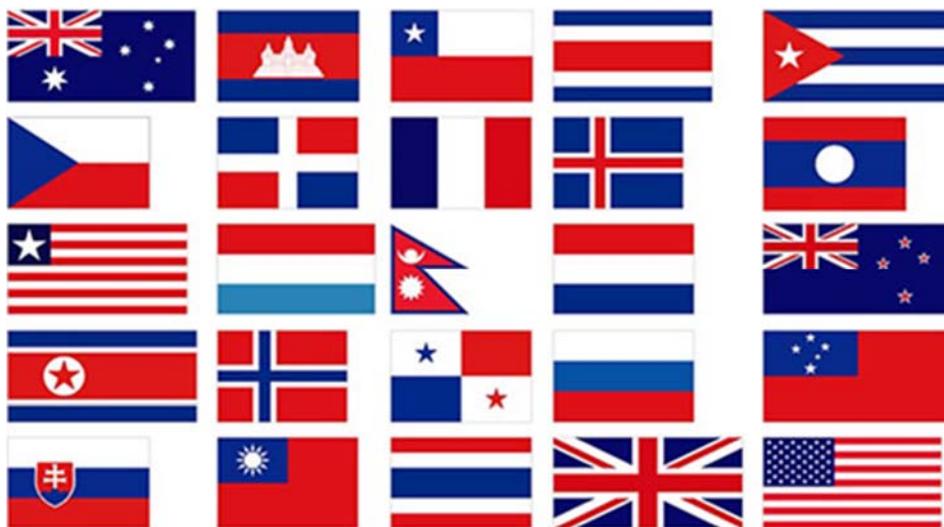


Distribution of colors in national flags.

Source: [flagstories.co](http://flagstories.co)

Three factors appear to explain the red-white-blue dominance, and perhaps a fourth:

- **Practical—Dyes**
- **Imitation and Influence** (perhaps the most important)
- **Meaning** (usually after the fact) plus ...
- **Aesthetics** (human perception)



National flags in red, white, and blue.

### Practical—Dyes

White is the result of bleaching, it’s relatively easy to create. Red and blue were strong dyes. Black tended to fade, as did yellow.

Green was very hard to make. So dye technology of hundreds of years ago favored red, white, and blue.

### Imitation and Influence

Country flags show ties to other countries and reflect the influence of their symbolism, including colors. These can create “flag families” of related flags.

Flags started out on the battlefield, first in Asia then across the Middle East and into Europe, then became important in the age of maritime trade.



Netherlands, since 1596.

In the 1600s, the Netherlands was a dominant seafaring nation. Its flag was a horizontal tribar of red-white-blue. That set an example for other countries.

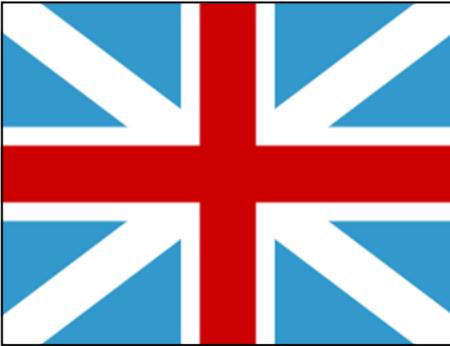
The Dutch flag began as orange, white, and blue (the ruling family was the House of Orange), but the unstable orange dye’s yellow component often faded, turning the blend to red, so it was simply replaced with red in 1596.

When Russia’s Peter the Great visited the Netherlands in 1697 to learn about shipbuilding and how to modernize his navy, he returned with the idea of a flag—Russia’s flag (then and today) is a horizontal tribar of white-blue-red. These became the pan-Slavic colors and variations of these stripes have been flown by Yugoslavia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Montenegro, Crimea; the Czech flag uses those colors, too.

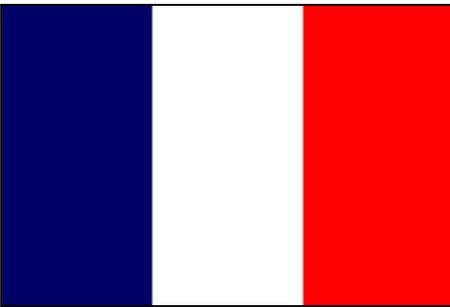
The Dutch flag’s colors also influenced other flags in its orbit: Netherlands Antilles, Sint Maarten, the Dutch East and West India Companies, and many components of today’s South Africa.



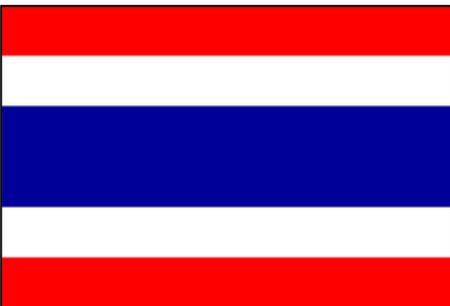
Pan-Slavic flags.



Britain, Union Jack, 1601–1805.



France, since 1794.



Thailand (Siam), since 1917.

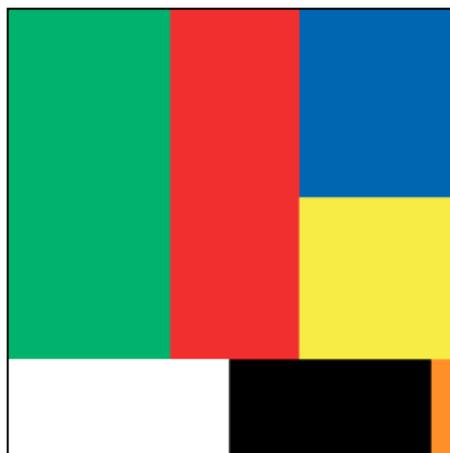
The British Union Jack first appeared in 1601, combining the red-white flag of England with the white-blue flag of Scotland. The red-white-blue scheme continued with the addition of red-white for Ireland in 1805. These colors (the shade of blue has varied over time) evolved into the United States flag

(through the “Continental Colors”, which had red and white stripes and a Union Jack). Those colors have influenced state flags in the U.S., as well as the flags of former parts of the British Empire—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Malaysia—and their subnational flags. In turn, many countries with strong historical ties to the U.S. use those colors: Liberia, Cuba, Panama, Philippines—plus Puerto Rico.

During the French Revolution in the 1790s, the country’s new flag combined the colors of Paris—blue and red, with the color of the monarchy—white. However, to symbolize the upending of the traditional social order, the stripes became vertical. Thus the French flag not only inspired other flags with the same colors, it inspired many more with its vertical tribar (its blue has also varied over time—the latest change in November!).

Interestingly, the modern Thai flag is red-white-and-blue because in 1917 Siam joined the Allied side in WWI and added blue to its existing red and white flag because red-white-blue were the colors of most of the allied countries: Britain, France, Russia, and the U.S.

Green, yellow, and black are relatively more popular in Africa—perhaps as an anti-colonial reaction



Distribution of colors in African flags.

to red-white-blue. Black-green-yellow are the colors of the African National Congress in southern Africa, red-black-green the Marcus Garvey pan-African colors, green-yellow-red those of the influential Ethiopian flag, and green-red-white-black the four colors of Islam (common in northern Africa).

## Meaning

Colors often have meanings attributed to them. Usually it’s after the flag is designed and adopted, but still that helps people remember them and connect to the flag.

- **Red** is commonly associated with blood, and therefore bravery and sacrifice.
- **White** often means peace or purity.
- **Blue** can mean truth or tranquility, and sometimes water or sky.

Some say the colors of the French flag symbolize the nobility (blue), the clergy (white), and the bourgeois (red), which were the estates of the old regime in France.

The U.S. flag’s colors have no official meaning, although in the Great Seal’s 1782 description, white signifies purity and innocence; red—hardiness & valor; and blue—vigilance, perseverance, & justice.

## Aesthetics

My neighbor, acclaimed artist and animator Joanna Priestley, asserts that there may well be an visual appeal to red and blue—especially when seen together. More research into human color perception is needed to explore this intriguing potential explanation.

I look forward to more discussion.

## Flag Training for Chinese National Taekwondo and Karate Teams

By Xinfeng Zhao

I recently gave a lecture on national flag culture and etiquette for the Chinese National Taekwondo and Karate Teams.

I was invited to speak to the two teams' athletes, coaches, support staff, and management personnel who are participating in military discipline training. My purpose was to enhance the athletes' awareness of the national flag and establish their sense of mission as the national team.

I delivered a special lecture titled "I raised the national flag and played the national anthem for the motherland on the stadium".

I gave a detailed interpretation of the national flag, national anthem, national emblem regulations and knowledge, reviewed the ceremony

of raising the national flag and singing the national anthem at the 2020 (2021) Tokyo Olympics award ceremony, and explained the etiquette norms for athletes in major international competitions.

Finally, the audience stood up and made a solemn promise to the five-star red flag:

*I am determined to raise the national flag and play the national anthem for the motherland in the international arena.*

This national flag lecture is an important part of the first military training activities of the two teams preparing for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

We look forward to the athletes' growth and progress under the national flag. Their excellent performance was a good start in



**Zhao Xinfeng instructs the Chinese National Taekwondo and Karate Teams on national flag culture and etiquette.**

the preparations for the next Olympic Games. Their hard work and sweat will add luster to the five-star red flag.

*Xinfeng Zhao, 赵新风, chairs the Vexillological Research Center of China, 中国旗帜学研究中心 vrcc.org.cn*

## Flag Images Available at OHS

By Kevin Harrington

The Oregon Historical Society's research library makes available to everyone a world-class collection of documents, books, maps, recordings, and images.

Using keywords, especially 'flags', I was able to peruse 19 pages of entries, over 300 images. I found photos of Argentine, Swiss, Japanese, Canadian, Chinese, British, and state flags; event flags (e.g. Bicentennial, rodeo—bucking horse, E flag for Achievement), Lewis and Clark Exposition; flags

of organizations (Oregon Alpine Club) and institutions (University of Oregon, Port of Portland [the word 'port' appears three times on this flag!], Salvation Army); a flag at half mast; and innumerable occasions employing the Stars and Stripes—a living flag, a flag-decorated carriage, parades, flag-bedecked street scenes, a 32-star flag; and also photos of U.S. presidents making statements on flags. Photos are black-and-white, copies are purchasable. Visit [ohs.org](https://www.ohs.org) and click on Research & Library | Search the Catalog.



**Flag of the Port of Portland.**



**Flag of Oregon Agricultural College.**

## When Is a Flag Not a Flag?

By Michael Orelove

When is a flag not a flag? That brings to mind Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte's 1929 painting of a pipe with the words *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*—This is not a pipe. (It's really a painting.)

We all know what a flag looks like and one can get into discussions of whether a picture of a flag is really a flag. When we hand out the postcard of the Portland city flag we think of it as being a flag. We say "This is the Portland city flag". (It's really a postcard.)

Most definitions of the word "flag" included the words "cloth" or "fabric".

I was born in Chicago in 1942 and lived there 30 years. I have a Chicago flag. I moved to Juneau Alaska in 1973 and lived there 33 years. I have a Juneau flag.

When I moved to Gresham, Oregon, in 2006 I wanted to get a Gresham flag. I went to the mayor's office and asked for an old flag. They gave me one.

I wanted to find out the history of the Gresham flag so I went to the Gresham History Museum and asked if they had any information about the Gresham flag. In surprise, they answered with a question: "Gresham has a flag?".

They didn't know that Gresham had a flag.

I contacted the mayor's office and worked with the staff there to get a Gresham flag for the Gresham History Museum.

The flag is now on display at the museum but it doesn't look like a flag to me. The flag is tightly affixed to a board and framed, under glass. The hoist edge with the grommets is not visible and there are no wrinkles in the fabric.

It look like a poster.

I know it is a flag but I don't think most people who see it will recognize it as a flag.

Is it a flag? Yes.

Does it look like a flag? No.



The framed flag of Gresham, Oregon (the largest suburb of Portland, located directly to the east), adopted 24 July 1984.

## Roundup



The Japanese-goods store Kinokuniya (located in the old Guild Theatre building on S.W. Park) has an LGBTQ book section which is currently decorated with various appropriate flags.



Made to burn?

A workshop in Iran produces U.S. flags in response to the “all-consuming” local demand for flags to immolate in anti-American demonstrations.

Photo from a European magazine forwarded by Mike Thomas.



Since Graham Houser loves Halloween, in October he raised his only “monster” flag, the flag of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, in preparation for the spooky season.



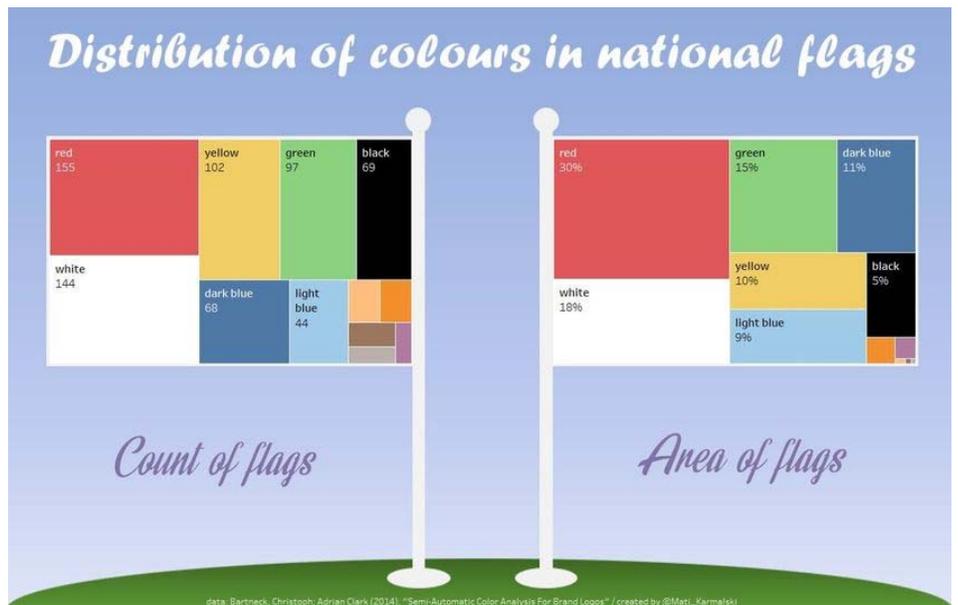
**MYSTERY FLAG**

Alex Zimmerman has acquired this flag and wonders what it might represent. Readers: contact editor@portlandflag.org with the solution.



An Independence Day U.S. flag display on N.W. Belgrave.

L to R: Indian “presentation” flag, 15-star/15-stripe flag, current 50-star flag, “Betsy Ross” 13-star flag, and the Bennington Flag.



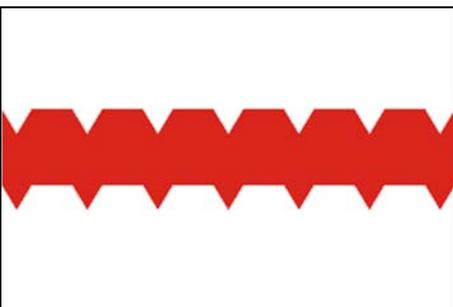
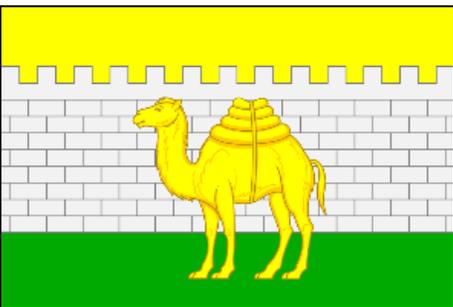
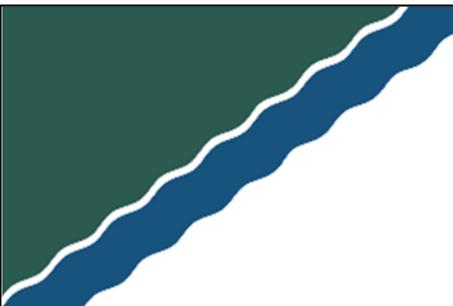
This graphic appeared on the Facebook site of Dane-Wizualnie. It constitutes a simpler version of the graphic on p. 6, but adds the wrinkle of the simple count of flags (in addition to weighting by area).

See <https://time.com/patriotic-flag-colors/> for an extensive analysis

### What's that Flag?

By Tony Burton

Name these flags then identify the track connecting them. Answers in the next issue...

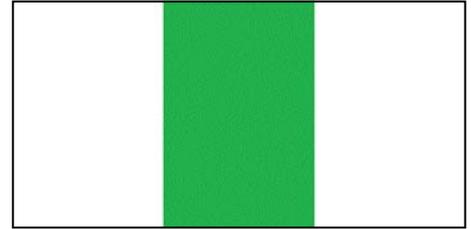


### What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By David Ferriday

These are two-color flags, depicted with the colors reversed.

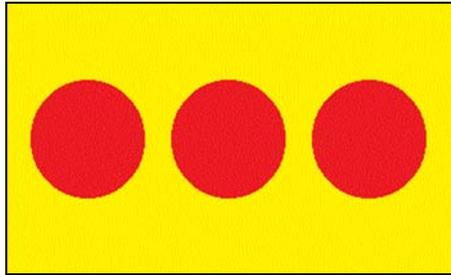
Congrats to solvers Tony Burton, John Cartledge, Bruce Stewart, & Mike Thomas.



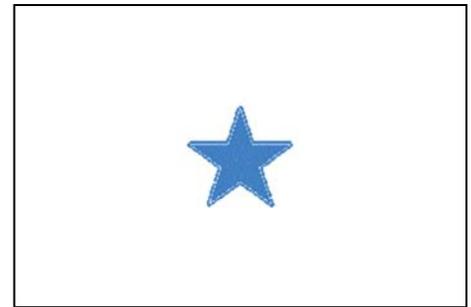
Nigeria (reversed)



Alabama (reversed)



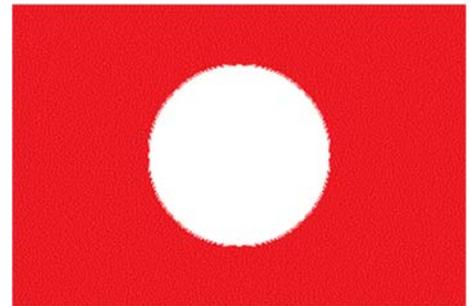
Christiania (reversed)



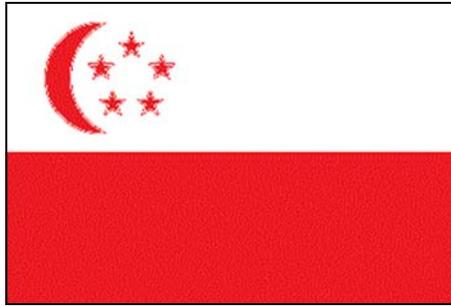
Somalia (reversed)



Honduras (reversed)



Japan (reversed)



Singapore (reversed)



## Portland Flag Miscellany



Lights illuminates the Morrison Bridge in the colors of Portland Flag for Portland Reopening Weekend, July 21–25, 2021. (Photo by James AM Crawford.)

The lighting is a project of the Willamette Light Brigade—visit [lightthebridges.org](http://lightthebridges.org) to customize your own Morrison Bridge lighting project!



Whose bright idea was this? It seems to be one of the worst possible uses for a flag design.

“Flag of Portland (Oregon, US city) Doormat”

Available on Zazzle.com:

18” x 24” = \$11

24” x 36” = \$36



Portland Prayer Flags by WBainStudios on Etsy.

Hand cut, sewn, and printed in Portland. Each flag is 9 in. x 11 in., printed with black or white ink, and threaded with hemp cord. The flag colors are green, red, white, yellow, and blue.

Three of the prints include iconic local architecture, such as the Hawthorne, Broadway, Burnside bridges. The other two flags are printed with Portland’s classic rose and the words “PORTLAND OREGON”.

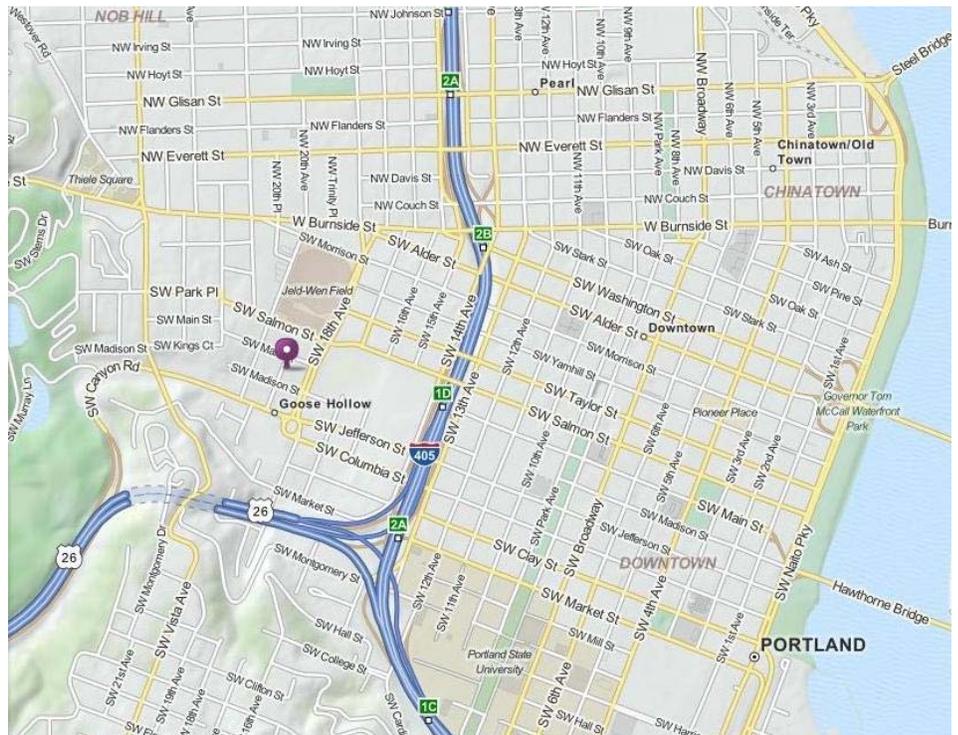
## January Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 PM, Thursday, January 13, 2022, at the home of Jessie Spillers (Legends), 1132 S.W. 19th Ave., Portland, OR 97205. MAX runs close by.

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