



The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 95 August 2022

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Grayscale Signal Flags

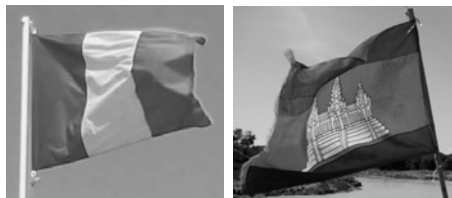
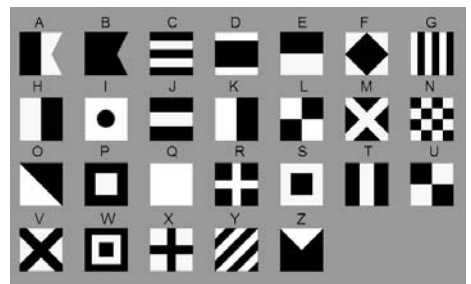
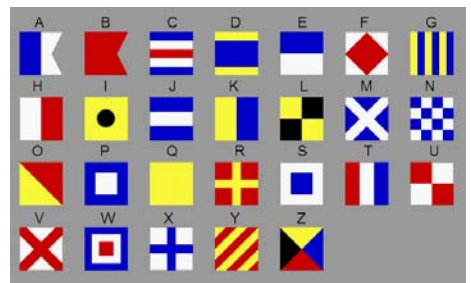
By Max Liberman

Ted Kaye’s “Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag suggests that a good flag design should work even in grayscale. If a flag’s colors can’t be made out—at a distance or in bad weather, perhaps—the design should still be recognizable.

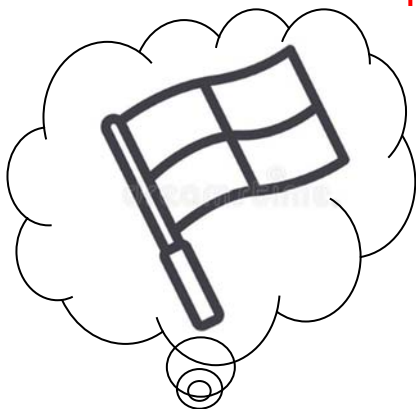
By that criterion, a busy design may hold up better than a bold and simple one. In a black-and-white photo, the Cambodian flag is still unique; the French flag is indistinguishable from a dozen other national flags.

Whether by design or fortunate accident, the flags of the International Code of Signals pass this test. If all that can be distinguished is dark and light, the I.C.S. alphabet flags are all still unique . . .

Except for two. The letters H and K are both vertical bicolors, light at the hoist and dark at the fly. It’s surely too late to change things now—but it would have been helpful if one of those two could have been oriented the other way around.



For signal flags at sea, this is even more important. These flags’ sole purpose is to communicate clearly, even when visibility is poor; a single mistaken letter could lead to mistaken messages or danger.



***At sea, flags became a necessity
from the first time a ship
ventured out of its home waters.***

— Whitney Smith

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

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 2022 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our July meeting, moderated by Alex Zimmerman on Zoom, just four PFA members and out-of-town guests enjoyed an hour of flags and video conversation.

Many members were traveling; Max Liberman and Ted Kaye were in Slovenia attending the international congress of vexillology (see p. 4).

Alden Jencks shared a fringed 48-star U.S. flag he'd bought at an antique store in Sellwood, planning to give it to Graham Houser for use in the classroom. He gave a short lecture on the history of the flag, to which he'd pledged allegiance as a child (and recalled his aversion to the addition of "under God")—see p. 5.

Graham Houser delivered a polished presentation on flags with optical illusions, which we hope will be expanded and published in some form.



Alden Jencks celebrates the 48-star United States flag, under which he was born and learned the Pledge of Allegiance.

Alex Zimmerman described a campaign for a new flag for the state of Washington by Brad Lockhart, the designer of the flag of Bellingham, Washington.

Phil Allen, joining from Berkeley, related how he once designed flags for the grandchildren of George Cahill, the then-executive director of the National Flag Foundation (see p. 8).

Our next meeting, on September 8, 2022, will be at the home of Ted Kaye, and streamed via Zoom. He retains the PFA flag and will have it on display.

We expect to welcome our local members as well as far-flung friends to the meeting.



Graham Houser unfurls a Slovenian flag in honor of ICV 29, taking place during the PFA meeting.



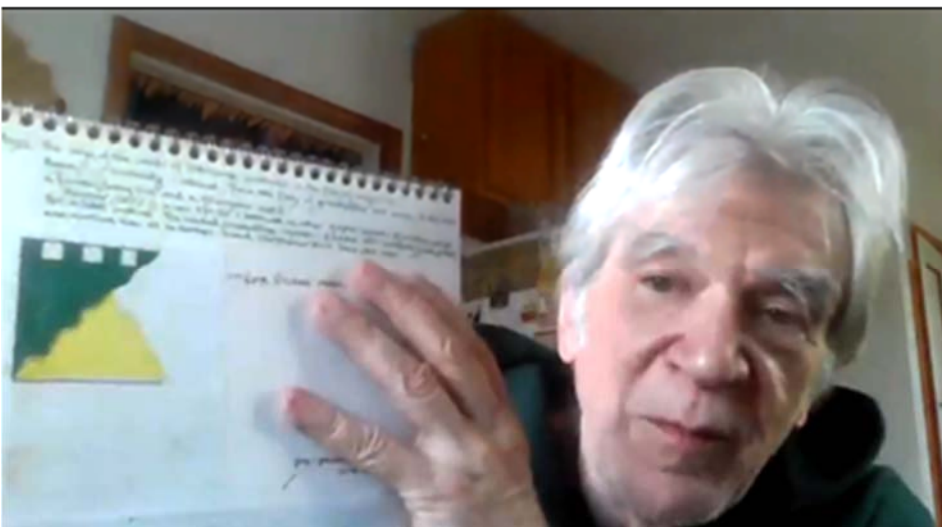
A Penrose triangle (beloved of Alden Jencks) forms the title page of Graham Houser's presentation on "Flags with Optical Illusions".



PFA meeting participants engage in a lively discussion.



Alex Zimmerman shows a newspaper article about Brad Lockhart's initiative to change the Washington state flag.



Phil Allen shares a drawing of one of his proposed flags developed for the family of George Cahill.

Roundup



Mike Funke, PFA member at our local steel company, ESCO, sends this image of a beautiful flag paint job on the back door for a large mining dipper bucket. The back opens up to scoop from the front and dump in the back. A Canadian ESCO shop painted it for a Canadian customer.



The Balladeers at the Multnomah Athletic Club recently honored Ukraine with a concert illuminated in its colors and flying an authentic flag lent by Ted Kaye.



In 2021, Lou-ann Neel, a descendant of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation, put her own artistic spin on B.C.'s flag. Canada's Flag Shop brings her vision to the public through these flags. The artist receives royalties from the sale of each item. See flagshop.com.

ICV 29 Report

By Ted Kaye

The 29th International Congress of Vexillology (ICV 29) took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia this year. Delayed from 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the biennial conference of vexos from around the world welcomed representatives of over 40 flag-studies groups, members of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques (FIAV).

The Portland Flag Association joined FIAV at its 2013 congress. Max Liberman has served as the PFA's delegate five times in a row.

During the FIAV general assembly, the applications for membership from the flag-studies groups in Lithuania, Transylvania (Romania), and Singapore were approved. The three officers were re-elected.

The organizers of ICV 30 (Beijing, 12–19 August 2024) delivered a report; and the bid from the French Vexillological Society (SFV) to hold ICV 31 (August 2026) in Paris was accepted.



Ted Kaye receives an Oregon flag proposal from Alan Hardy, which he'll share with the PFA.



The Portland Flag Association flag stands among the flags of fellow FIAV member organizations.



HGZD's (Croatia) president, Željko Heimer, presents its gold medal to Ted Kaye for meritorious service.



Max Liberman delivers his presentation "Representing Languages with Flags".



Ted Kaye answers questions after his presentation on NAVA's flag Q&A, "Identifying Mystery Flags".

Among 28 presenters, Ted Kaye delivered "Identifying Mystery Flags: Museums Ask and NAVA Experts Answer" and Max Liberman delivered "Representing Languages with Flags", expanding on a topic he first explored at a PFA meeting.

The Croatian Heraldic and Vexillological Association (HGZD) bestowed its first Gold Medal and an honorary membership on Ted Kaye for his many contributions to the HGZD—foremost his editing the English text of its journal for 10 years.

Many flags fly in Ljubljana and beyond (see the Field Report, p. 6).



Max Liberman (right) chats with Rachel Phelan and Bard Cosman (both NAVA Driver Award winners).

Midway Airport

Chicago's Midway Airport takes its name from the Battle of Midway, the decisive WWII victory in 1942 that turned the tide in the Pacific. Flag-related art in the concourse commemorates the event.



A 48-star U.S. flag plaque.



The sculpture "American", by Gary Weisman, is usually shown holding an actual 48-star U.S. flag in his hand.

The Tranquility Flag: A Sobriquet for the Current American Flag

By Alden Jencks

Sobriquets or affectionate nicknames abound for the earliest flags in our national history. We have the Betsy Ross Flag (13 stars) and the Star Spangled Banner (15 stars). But American creativity for inspired nicknames seems to fall off as the number of stars increases. One reads occasionally, to be sure, of the Fort Sumter Flag (33 stars). Then come the overly nationalistic and clumsy creations for the 45-star flag: Remember-the-Maine Flag, the San Juan Hill Flag, the Dewey Victory Flag.

Only with the 48-star flag (1912–1958), do Americans finally arrive at a worthy and appropriate sobriquet: the Iwo Jima Flag. Sadly, this name of reverent remembrance is seldom invoked; a great pity, in my opinion.

The current, 50-star flag has now waved in our American breeze for over 60 years—longer than any other American flag. And yet, to my knowledge, no worthy sobriquet has yet appeared. In this situation, I propose the *TRANQUILITY FLAG* as an appropriate nickname of respect, historical awareness, and honorable American aspiration.

In July 1969 the American 50-star flag was planted on the moon in Mare Tranquilitatis—the Sea of Tranquility. "We come in peace", intoned, most appropriately, our



The U.S. flag on the Moon in 1969.

astronauts. The greatest American accomplishment of the 20th century was witnessed by our flag under the sign of peace. And the Tranquility Flag signaled the way for further peaceful, scientific undertakings extending into the 21st century, in full concert with other nations of the world. As we Americans refer to our flag as the "Tranquility Flag", we affirm our better selves as Americans and our hopeful aspirations for the future.

Finally, as a retired teacher, I simply must turn to the children. "tranquility" in Tranquility Flag is a long and mellifluous word which children will love to repeat. But, being a "big word", the kids will want some explanation as to what "tranquility" might mean.

What higher calling, I ask, has a parent or a teacher than engaging the little ones with new words, concepts and symbols involving harmony and peace? Let us have our children pledge their allegiance to a Tranquility Flag!

Field Report: Slovenia

By Ted Kaye

Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, hosted the 29th International Congress of Vexillology in July. The country afforded great opportunities for flag-sightings.



The summer's 70th annual Ljubljana Festival decorated the city with flags.



A plaque in Republic Square commemorates the first raising of the current Slovenian flag in 1991.



The University of Ljubljana flies the city, country, E.U., and school flags.



The national flag hangs at 8 Wolfova ulica, the site of its first raising in 1848 (by student protesters in a pub), over a plaque installed by Heraldica Slovenica, the ICV 29 hosts.



E.U. member flags wave in front of Slovenia's parliament building.



The flag of Slovenská filharmonia flies at the symphony hall on Congress Square.



Protesters stand with an English-language banner in Ukraine flag colors.



The flags of Ljubljana and Slovenia fly atop the castle overlooking the capital.



Multiple Slovenian flags welcome visitors to the Park of Military History.



National flags fly in Republic Square with the flag of Mercosul (Mercosur), the Southern Common Market.



The flag of the town of Pivka flies at the Park of Military History.



Aleksander Hribovšek, ICV 29 chair, waves the FIAV flag.



3-flag displays of E.U., Slovenia, and Ljubljana are common.



The ICV 29 flag (right) flanks the usual 3-flag display at City Hall.



A tile mural approximates the city seal.

Flags for Three Cahill Generations

By Phil Allen

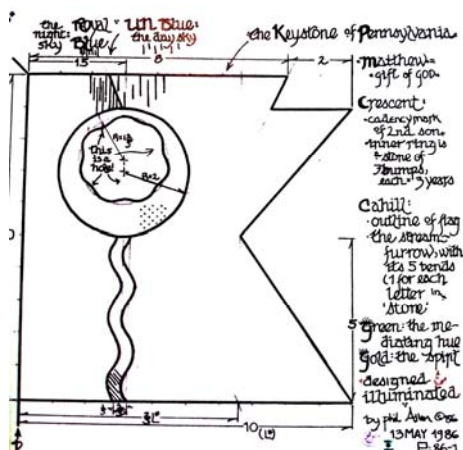
George Cahill, to NAVA members of long experience, was a true character.

Irascible, ornery, and yet lovable, this Boy Scout official hosted NAVA's 16th annual meeting in Pittsburgh in 1982. He also served as the executive director of the National Flag Foundation (see his obituary in *Vexillum* 5).

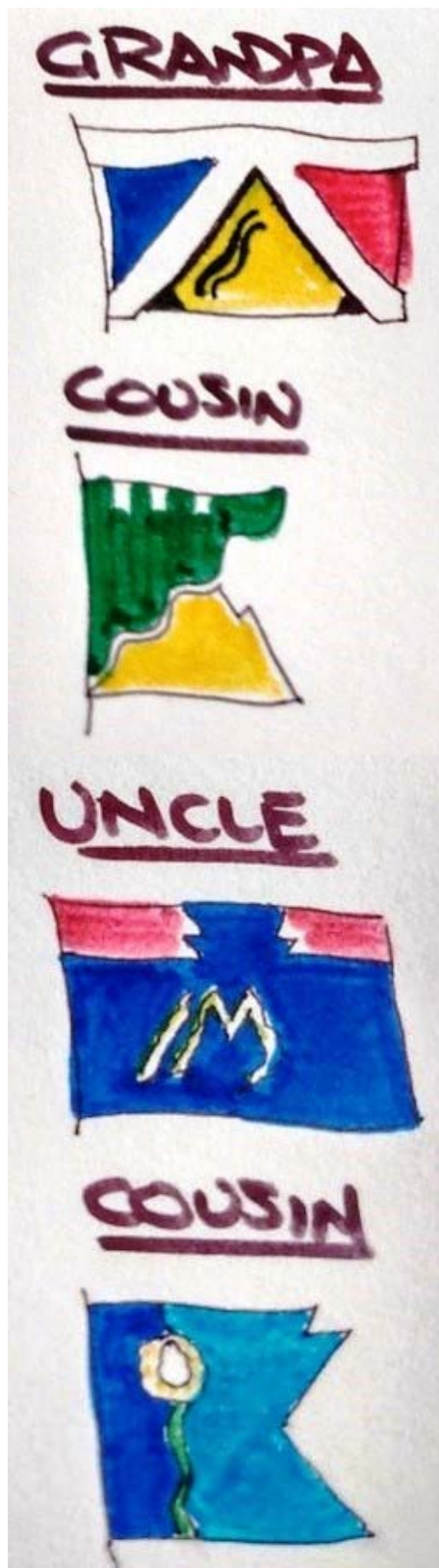
In the mid-1980s, I designed flags at his behest for his son and two grandsons after my sending one for him on a whim.

My aim was to relate them by name (visual pun), residence (Pittsburgh and area, and Pennsylvania), and birth order (cadency marks).

The grandsons were encouraged to design their own flags upon reaching adulthood or vexi-awareness. However, I don't know if any flags were made.



Specifications for the flag for Matt Cahill, grandson of George Cahill.



The flags for George Cahill, his architect son Mark, and grandsons Matt and Chris Stone—designed in the 1980s by Phil Allen.

Alaska Corrected

By Michael Orelove

I am an amateur astronomer and have added an additional star to my Alaska flag to make it astronomically correct (see VT #18).

The official song of the State of Alaska, known as the Alaska Flag song, begins with the following description of the Alaska Flag: "Eight stars of gold on a field of blue..."

The flag was created by 13-year-old Bennie Benson as part of a flag contest in 1926 (although he may actually have been 14). The flag was adopted on May 2, 1927.

The current Alaska Flag is not astronomically correct. It displays the Big Dipper (the Plough, part of Ursa Major, the "Great Bear") and the North Star. Most depictions of the Big Dipper show 7 stars. However, the second star in the handle of the Big Dipper is a multiple star system. To the keen unaided eye, or through binoculars or telescope, two stars can be seen, the brighter 2nd magnitude Mizar, and a fainter 4th magnitude nearby star, Alcor. Together they are known as the Horse and Rider.

Being able to detect the two stars as separate is considered a test of good eyesight.

I have added an additional star to my Alaska flag so my flag will be "astronomically" correct.

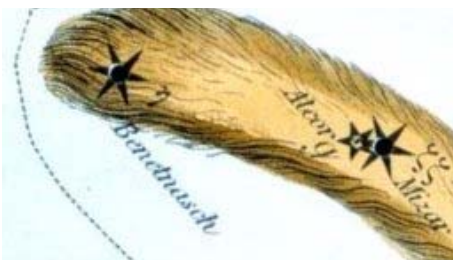
[images at right]



Ursa Major (the Great Bear).



The current Alaska flag.



Alcor and Mizar in Ursa Major (right).



The corrected Alaska flag.



Alcor and Mizar on the corrected flag.

Russian Sister Cities

By Phil Allen

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late winter 2022, several Western nations and alliances undertook various forms of divestment, including economic sanctions and refusal to import plentiful energy sources. Low on the list—but significant to some—were the actions taken by two American cities, Berkeley, California, and Portland, Oregon, toward their Russian “sister cities”.

This concept, of American municipalities pairing up with foreign counterparts, is an Eisenhower-era relic intended to help soften Cold War/Last War tensions. (In some other countries the concept is called “twin cities”.) See: sisterscitiesinternational.com.

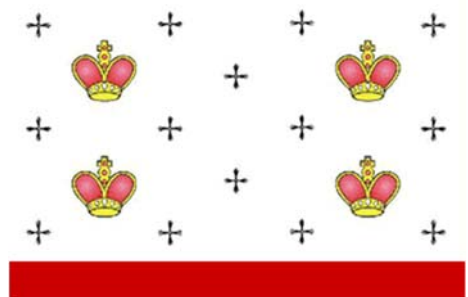
Portland’s nine relationships began in 1959 with a city in a recent a wartime enemy—Sapporo, Japan. Berkeley’s first was also in Japan—Sandai. Since 1966, Berkeley had accumulated 16 more world-wide, including *two* in Russia, all advanced by citizen groups.

Among the frenzied reactions to the invasion, and perhaps equating all with some, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy urged severance of all such American-Russian comities.

Berkeley quickly agreed; our council made it formal in a June 28 resolution. One casualty was Dmitrov, a virtual suburb of Moscow; the other, Ulan-Ude, southeast of Lake Baikal.

Meanwhile, Portland has held firm in her alliance with the far-Eastern city of Khabarovsk, where anti-Putin protests have had a tradition.

What so amazes this Berkeleyan is the sudden rise to newsworthiness of these long-dormant relationships, never exploited throughout the years when every other sort of headline emerged from a city bent on notoriety. That they should just re-appear, prominently placed on the city’s website, calls to question our “think globally” pretensions and is just plain bad timing.



Dmitrov



Ulan-Ude



Khabarovsk

Portland Parade Flags

By Alden Jencks

This June I participated in the Portland Rose Festival's Grand Floral Parade, marching with the Portland Peace Corps Association, and attended the Portland Pride Parade. I enjoyed seeing all the flags in both.

In the Pride Parade, the traditional rainbow flag was by far the most widely used. The sundry variants were few. Many participants wore their flags instead of waving them.



Portland Peace Corps Association assembles in the Coliseum, preparing march in the Grand Floral Parade.



Caitlin Lerch, Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine 2017–19, carries its flag.

When I asked, most of the bearers of the alternate flags were hard put to explain exactly what the colors and symbols meant.

Of the alternates, pink-yellow-blue was most popular. I did not get a clear, unambiguous answer on its meaning, though I understand it is the pansexual pride flag.



What's that Flag?

By David Ferriday

Identify these flags, the theme connecting them, and the missing flag. Answers in the next issue...



What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Tony Burton

These are flags with a single star of more than 5 points, presented in ascending order: 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 24.

Congrats to solvers Matt Bray, John Cartledge, Michael Orelove, Mike Thomas, and Larry Wentworth.



Israel (6)



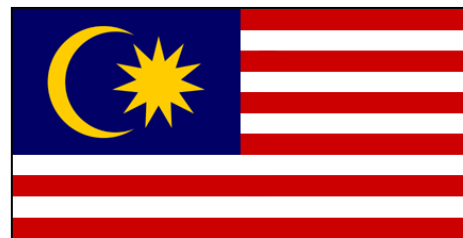
Jordan (7)



Azerbaijan (8)



Sarawak (9)



Federation of Malaya 1950–1963 (11)



Nauru (12)



Marshall Islands (24)



Portland Flag Miscellany

Portland's flag has reached a significant milestone! 20 years ago Portland's city council adopted the new city flag, a week after members of the Portland Flag Association testified in support of Doug Lynch's updated design.

Lynch, then 89 and longtime dean of the graphic design community here, had joined the PFA two years before. After a meeting where he shared his experience of designing the city's flag in 1969, fellow PFA members encouraged him to push for a revised design (Ted Kaye said "we have just the right people sitting around this table"). Doug welcomed the opportunity to address some weaknesses and political compromises embodied in his earlier design.

On August 28, 2002, Doug Lynch, Ted Kaye, Mike Hale, and Mason Kaye testified before city council. Doug recounted the story of the previous flag's design, Ted supported the new design in terms of the five basic principles from *Good Flag, Bad Flag*, Mike spoke of the cost savings to the city of the simpler version, and Mason gave the historical background of Portland's previous flags.

As council members expressed excitement about the new design, Mayor Vera Katz asked that a real flag be ready the next week for the vote on the ordinance. Mike's company, Elmer's Flag & Banner, quickly manufactured one.

In the following council session, on September 4, 2002, Mayor Katz

sent the old flag the city archives, then called for the unanimous vote which amended the city code, making Portland's new flag official.

PFA members applauded as her gavel marked the council's approval.



PFA members pose with the newly-adopted flag in Portland's city hall in September 2002. R to L: Ted Kaye, Mason Kaye, Fred Paltridge, Doug Lynch, and John Hood.

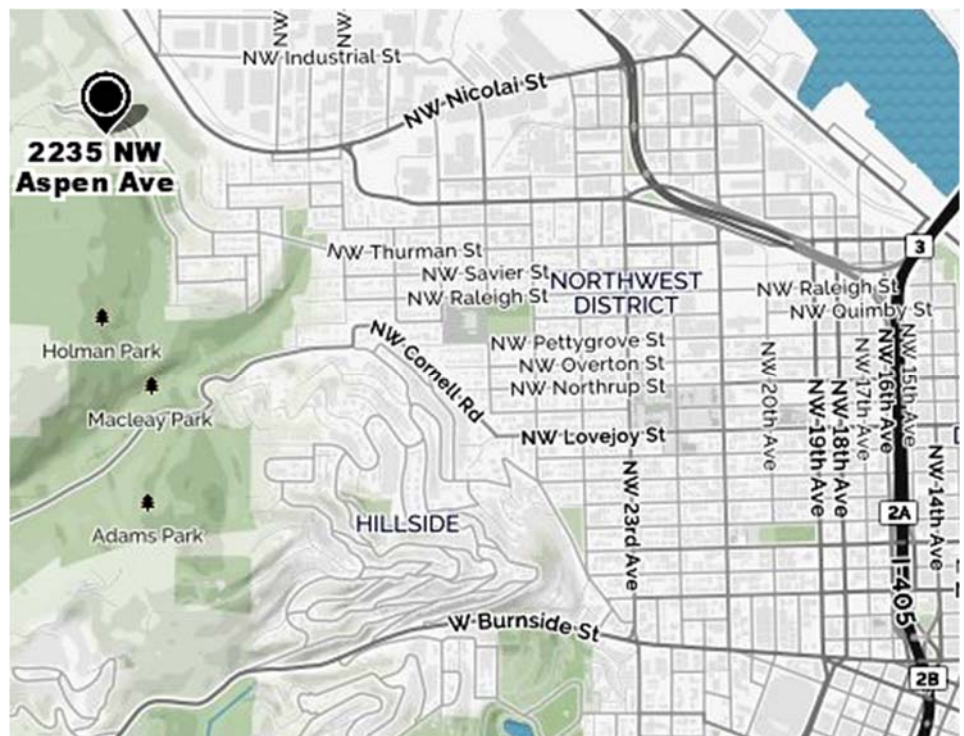
September Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be held at 7 PM, Thursday, September 8, 2022, at the home of **Ted Kaye: 2235 NW Aspen Ave., Portland, OR 97210**—enter on Belgrave.

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.