



The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 101 August 2023

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Government vs. People's Flags

By Ted Kaye

I believe a primary reason that so many cities and states place seals, arms, or seal-like charges on their flags is that in the United States we have scant tradition of differentiating between civil, government, and military use (and between land and sea use).

In many other countries, these uses can result in up to six major classifications: Civil Flag, State Flag, War Flag, Civil Ensign, State Ensign, War Ensign—with different designs for each—and up to 64 combinations of those uses.

In fact, to describe these distinctions with a symbolic shorthand, in the early 1970s FIAV adopted Whitney Smith's 2x3-grid convention as the standard when describing flag usage (fotw.info/flags/vxt-fis.html#fiavcode).

But in the U.S., we tend to use just one design for all six uses. In fact, the coding for our national flag looks like this:



I discussed my earlier thinking on this subject in “A Theory of City SOB Flags” (VT #67, Dec. 2017).

All those seal-on-bedsheet designs may well have been adopted by governments thinking that the resulting flag were “state flags”, representing the government—as indeed they were. But in the U.S. the flags also have to do double-duty as “civil flags”—representing the people, and in that sense they fail. Very few cities or states have separate flags for these uses.

We argue that a seal doesn't belong on a flag because of design considerations (difficult to see at a distance, not reversible, more expensive to manufacture). But another strong argument against a seal is that it represents the *government* rather than the *people*.

Contrast non-governmental flag display in Chicago (widespread) with Los Angeles (rarely seen). Why would an individual fly a government flag? I believe people want flags that represent them, not the government of their place.



#We have room but for one flag, the American flag...

—Theodore Roosevelt (1919)

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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 2023 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our July meeting, hosted by Ted Kaye and streamed via Zoom, 11 PFA members and friends enjoyed three hours of flags and video conversation. In the usual role of the host, Ted moderated the meeting on his deck with the PFA flag standing behind him.

We welcomed new member Shane Erickson and his father, Samm, plus two other members who also joined by Zoom.

Ted showed flags from a recent trip to southern France, including those of Provence and Marseille; he shared the quiz from the last *VT* and updated members on a possible partnership with the Portland Marathon for VexiDay in October.

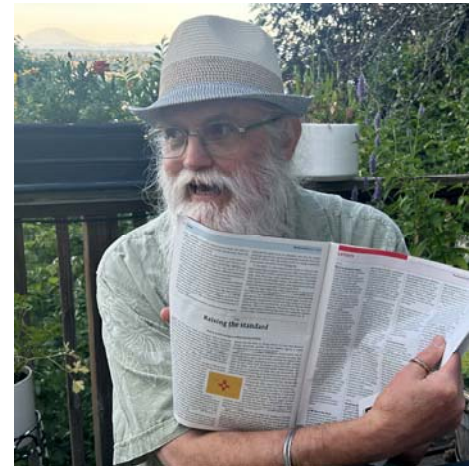
Alden Jencks streamed in from Toronto to report on the massive flagpole at the Essex Scottish Regiment Dieppe Raid Memorial in Dieppe Gardens, Windsor, Ontario (opposite Detroit, Mich.).



Ted Kaye holds up the flag of Provence, France.



Alden Jencks reflects on different possible reasons to display extra-large flags—nationalism, mourning, etc.



William Gifford reads *The Economist*.

William Gifford related how he and the late Michael Orelove had shared a passion for sundials, then exulted in a recent *Economist* article about flags (in which Ted was cited).

Max Liberman explored possible mnemonics to differentiate national flags with extremely similar designs, such as Slovakia–Slovenia (Slovakia has a ‘kross’), Puerto Rico–Cuba (Puerto Rico echoes the U.S. colors of canton and stripes), or Senegal–Cameroon (Senegal has a green star).



Shane Erickson joins for the first time.

Shane Erickson, who attended a school where Graham taught, debuted his concept for a new flag for the United States (see p. 9).



Max Liberman plays memory tricks.

Ken Dale exhibited a Flag of Honor, bearing the names of the 3,000+ victims of the 9/11/2001 attacks; he had rescued it from disposal.

Scott Mainwaring, zooming from Salem, talked about research he’s beginning on connections between the U.S. flag and its far more esoterically symbolic companion, the Great Seal—including Francis Hopkinson’s role and the concept of a “new constellation”, citing the late Henry W. Moeller’s book, *Inventing the American Flag* (which Ted had helped edit).

John Niggley described how he would fill idle Zoom meeting time at work with flag talks, then showed a Flags of the World game, a U.S. Soccer Federation flag, and a “Tibetan knot” flag.



Ken Dale (r) reads names on the 9/11 Flag of Honor.



Joyce Gifford shrinks Utah flags.

Joyce Gifford compared mini-patches for pairs of old and new designs for U.S. state flags.



Graham Houser enjoys the unofficial (historic) flag of Yucatán, México.

Our next meeting, on Saturday afternoon, September 9, 2023, will be hosted by Graham Houser at his home. He took the PFA flag with him, the customary task of the next host.

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



Scott Mainwaring links the Great Seal with the U.S. Flag.



John Niggley goes wild with a “Tibetan knot” flag.

Graham Houser unfurled a modern version of the historic flag of the Republic of Yucatan (1841–1848) used now in the Mexican state of Yucatan (an unusually popular design supplanting the typical official flag placing the state arms on a white field); he then described the diffusion of his Rocky Butte neighborhood flag and his use of flags in teaching.

Flags in the Grand Floral Parade

Every year (pandemics excepted) the Portland Rose Festival treats the city to the Grand Floral Parade. As its PR describes it: “A colorful reflection of local, regional, and international communities, the parade draws hundreds of thousands of cheering viewers along its two-mile march on Portland’s east-side city streets.”

“Each year the parade features the traditional large all-floral floats we all love, as well as the popular mini-floats that help make the Grand Floral Parade so unique! With bands, equestrian units, marching groups, drill teams, vintage vehicles, dancers, llamas, **flags**, and so much more, there’s something for everyone to enjoy!”

That shout-out to flags introduces this vexilliferous compilation of from the parade of June 2023.



Local Ukrainians assemble behind a national flag-banner of blue over yellow.



The pro-Ukrainian flag banner evokes the national flag.



Members of the Portland Peace Corps Association (including Alden Jencks) prepare to march with their country flags.



High-school groups wave flags ahead of their marching bands.



Carl's Jr. employees show their colors.



League of Women Voters of Portland members march in suffrage white.



The LWV waves the Alice Paul banner.



Amalgamated Transit Union members.



Portland-Kaohsiung Sister City Assn.



Portland Fire Bureau—no city flag!



Portland Fire Bureau—still no city flag!



TSA employees disregard the Flag Code.

Continued on next page



The Vietnamese Community of Oregon proudly flies the flag of the Republic of Viet Nam (1944–1975).



Fleet Week sailors wash ashore to march behind their banners.



Mexican-American participants wave national and dance-troupe flags.

Timbers Army Swag

By Ted Kaye

Portland’s major league soccer team, the Timbers, boasts an engaged supporter group. Members of the “Timbers Army” are known for their loud, enthusiastic support and the raucous atmosphere they create at home games, occupying much of the north end of Providence Park. They form a European-style rooting section, with constant chanting and cheering, drumming, smoke bombs, scarves, and **flags**.

At a recent game I wore my Portland-flag jersey, waved my Portland flag-themed Timbers scarf, and visited the Timbers Army pop-up store, where I saw a wide offering of Portland and Cascadia flag merchandise.



Ted Kaye, sporting a Portland flag-themed jersey and scarf, watches a Timbers game.



Cascadia flag-themed artwork next to a log slice on a Portland flag scarf.



Cascadia flag scarf.



Portland and Cascadia flag patches.

Purple in Flags

From interestingfacts.com, 5/9/23; submitted by John Schilke

Vexillologists (people who study flags) have noticed a strange color conundrum: Only one national flag in the world contains the color purple, and that flag belongs to the small Caribbean island nation of Dominica.

The flag, adopted on November 3, 1978, after the country gained independence from Great Britain, features a green field representing the island's forests, accompanied by yellow, white, and black crosses. [any resemblance to Portland’s flag is purely coincidental.]

At its center is a red disk with 10 stars (for the 10 parishes on the island)—all encircling the purple

plumage of the sisserou parrot (*Amazona imperialis*), the country’s national bird.



Although Nicaragua and El Salvador do feature rainbows on their flags, purple technically isn’t found in a spectral rainbow, so the flag of Dominica stands alone in its purple splendor.

[Note: past national flags, such as Spain (1931–39) have used purple.]

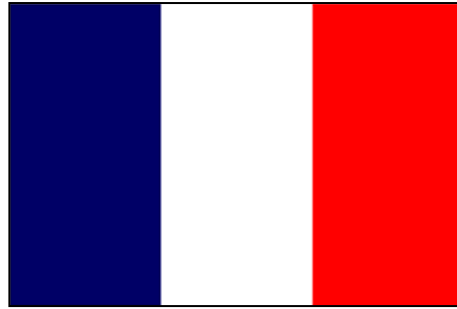


Commonwealth of Dominica, 1978– .

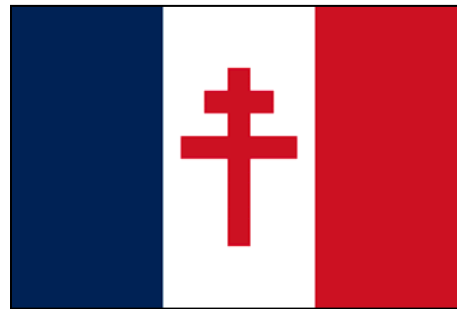
Six Things You Might Not Know About the French Flag

By Alden Jencks

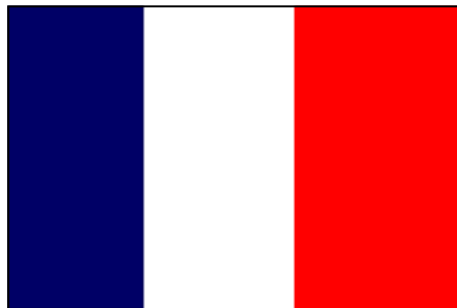
1. France has no official arms. The *tricolore* represents France in situations where other nations display their arms.
2. As has the United States, France has resisted “defacing” its flag by layering on symbols. There have been exceptions, to be sure (the Cross of Lorraine in WWII and some presidential flags). But all such defacings were suppressed during the administration of President Jacques Chirac (1995–2007). *Vive l'Égalité!* French president or Norman peasant—the simple, unaltered tricolor belongs to every French citizen and represents all the French.
3. Since the tricolor’s approval in 1794, the three vertical bars, as often as not, have not been starkly symmetrical. The proportions 30% (blue), 33% (white) and 37% (red) have always been official for naval ships wearing the tricolor. The reason? Viewed at a distance and on a flat horizon, an extension of the red in the fly is necessary in order to create the perception of red/white/blue symmetry. Flags displayed on land often play this same optical trick.
4. The blue and red of the French flag are the livery colors of the City of Paris. Red is the color of St. Denis, a protector of Paris. Blue is the color of the cloak-dividing St. Martin. Inherited wisdom states that white represents the Bourbon white of Louis XVI.



France (1794–1815, 1830–1848, 1848–).



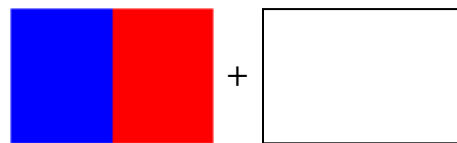
The flag of Free France during WWII.



French naval ensign (30% | 33% | 37%).



Liberty Leading the People,
Eugène Delacroix (1830).



Flag of Paris; French ensign (1638–1790).

This assertion is, at best, only partially true. It is based upon King Louis’ *beau geste* of July 17, 1789, as he stood on the balcony of the Paris city hall and faced the angry masses. Here, the king took a blue-red cockade from a Parisian demonstrator, pressed it together with his white Bourbon cockade and pinned the new, tricolored cockade to his hat. This explanation is fine as far as it goes.

But, more importantly, white—then and now—has always been the national color of all the French. Joan of Arc’s banner was white! And the Parisian insurrectionists knew full well that they needed to reach out to the distant provinces.

Finally...the definitive design of the flag was overseen by the renowned painter Jacques-Louis David, whom the National Convention had appointed to that role. David was mindful of the historic, heraldic desirability of separating two colors (blue and red) with a heraldic “metal”. Here the obvious choice was silver (white) rather than gold (yellow). David was also swayed by the need to use the “national white”.

5. The shades of the tricolor’s blue and red have changed frequently over time. In 2020 France’s president, Emmanuel Macron, advocated for a return to the darker blue and a darker red used at the time of the Revolution and which French vessels have always worn at sea.



President Emmanuel Macron with flags in 2018 and 2021, showing the return to a darker shade of blue.

President Macron reversed the lightening of colors ordered by his predecessor, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in 1976, who wanted France's blue to match the blue of the European Union's flag.

6. The French flag is not always made of fabric. At times, the tricolored flag has sprung from the fertile soil of the *Patria* itself.

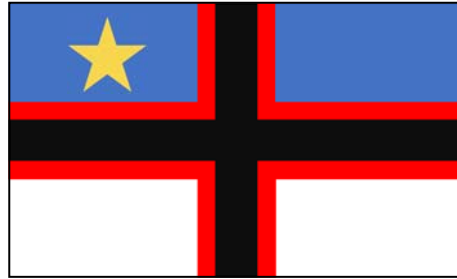
During the long years of imperial German occupation of Alsace and Lorraine (1871–1919), Alsatian villagers cultivated flower gardens in front of their homes. What could be lovelier than three squared-off flowerbeds, with cornflowers on the left (blue), marguerites in the center (white), and poppies on the right (red)?

Vive la France!



A French flag depicted in primroses, evoking the protest vexi-flower gardens of Alsace.

A U.S. Redesign



With no expectation of its acceptance, a new PFA member has begun his vexillographic explorations with a new flag for the United States.

By Shane Erickson

This is my idea for a re-design of the USA flag. I know no one would accept a re-design of the Stars and Stripes, but I just did this for fun.

The symbolism is: the black represents the people of the USA. The red represents the sacrifices of the soldiers in the many wars the USA has fought.

The blue, being divided into two, represents the Atlantic and Pacific oceans which the USA controls large swaths of, but it also represents the sky and, as the sky appears endless, endless possibilities for the nation. The white represents peace and understanding between the people of the USA.

The yellow star represents hope and prosperity. The cross is not a religious gesture but rather it represents the USA as a crossroads of people, ideas, and faiths. Red, white, and blue are in the original USA flags.

Star

The PFA and NAVA help channel flag collections to new users—teachers who use them in the classroom. Incoming batches of flags need sorting, identifying, and inventorying with flag knowledge.

PFA member Star Pesetsky worked on two such collections last summer, processing several hundred flags at Ted Kaye's house.

In her honor, he flew "star" flags across N.W. Belgrave Ave.



Star Pesetsky identifies a flag.



A display with "star" flags, including Somalia, PRC Benin, Chile, and East Timor (note name on readerboard).

Roundup



Flags at the World Trade Center in downtown Portland.

The World Trade Center Portland at SW 2nd and Taylor is a licensed member of the World Trade Centers Association (wtca.org) represented in 88 countries.

Its three buildings house many companies, event spaces, and the corporate headquarters of Portland General Electric.

National flags enliven its courtyard, seen in these photos from above.



The flag of the Italian Communist Party, circa 2007.

PFA member Lorraine Bushek recently offered us this flag, writing “I have a flag I want to donate to you. It has special meaning for me. My husband nabbed it when he was in Italy in 2007. He was watching a protest by the Italian Communist Party. One of the protesters left this flag behind and my husband picked it up. He was not a communist but just thought this flag would make a great souvenir. At the time we were returning to the States after living in France for a year.”

We have relayed the flag to our colleague Manuela Schmöger, in Germany, an expert in Italian political party flags with a large personal collection and extensive published research on the subject.



Naprijed Hrvatska!

During last year’s FIFA World Cup, an employee at Multnomah County’s Mid County Health Center borrowed a national flag cape from Ted Kaye (a gift from the president of the Croatian flag-studies group) to root for her native country. Croatia took third place overall in the tournament, its third time on the podium in six appearances. The cape combines a flag with sleeves in red-and-white checks.



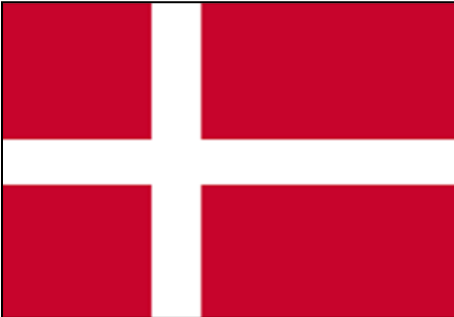
38-star U.S. flag on the *Tacoma* model.

The Transportation Interpretive Center of the Port of Kalama, Washington (on the Columbia River downstream from Portland), holds a wealth of exhibits. In one, a 38-star U.S. flag flies on a model of the rail-car ferry *Tacoma* (of the Northern Pacific Railroad), which in 1883 linked the Northern Pacific lines in our two states at Kalama.

What's that Flag?

By Pete Loeser

Identify these flags and the theme that connects them.



What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Max Liberman

These are flags of heads of state.

Congrats to solvers Matt Bray, Tony Burton, and Mike Thomas.



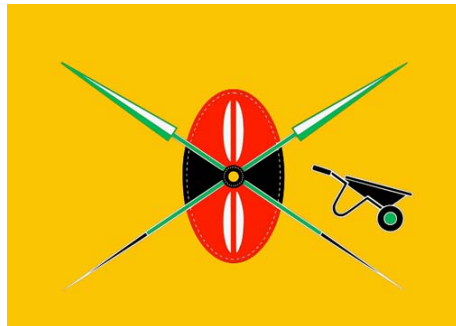
King of Jordan.



President of South Korea.



President of Cuba.



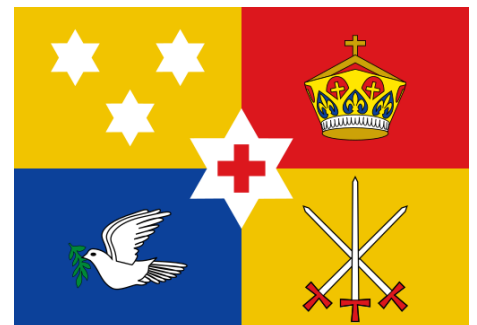
President of Kenya.



President of Suriname.



President of Lithuania.



King of Tonga.



Portland Flag Miscellany



The Portland-Kaohsiung Sister City Association sponsors a float in the Grand Floral Parade—its logo combines the flags of the two cities in the U.S. and Taiwan: pkzca.net.



Walmart sells 3-packs of the Portland City Flag, 3'x5', in 150D Printed Polyester, for \$35.99.

The manufacturer is G128, of Willowbrook, Illinois, which appears to make more than 1,000 different products for Walmart, and has its own store at g128store.com.



“I Love Portland, Oregon realistic balloons, green wooden background, HD wallpaper”, free download. Documented on: peakpx.com/en/hd-wallpaper-desktop-ayhti.



State and city flags hang from a balcony of the Brio Flats Apartments at 2405 N. Vancouver Ave., Portland.

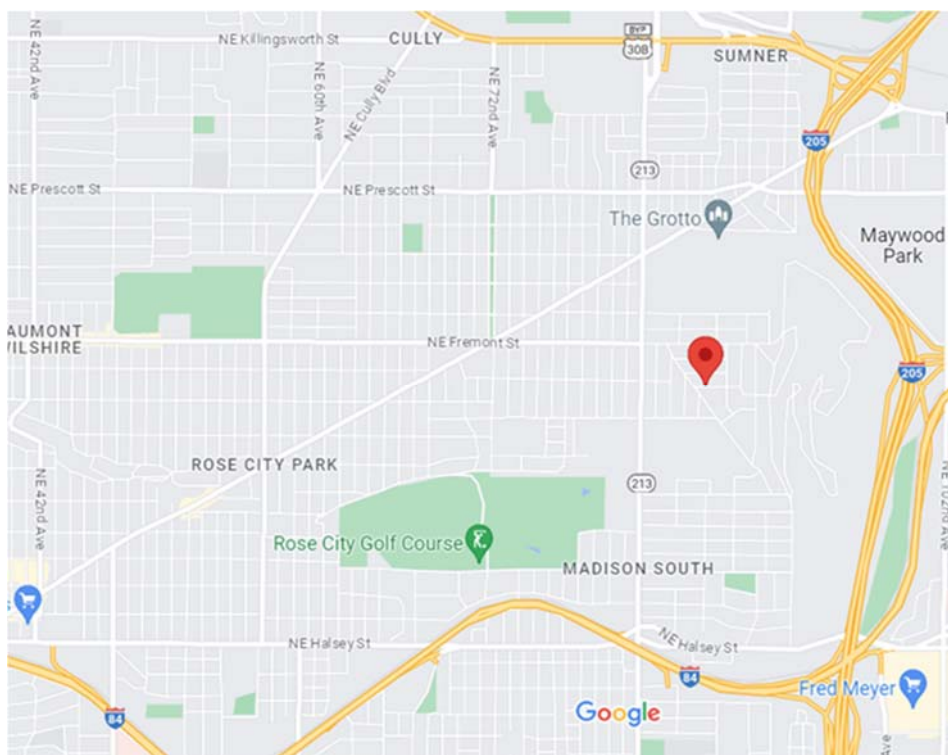
September Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 1 PM, Saturday, September 9, 2023 at the home of Graham Houser: 8617 NE Dyer Street, Portland.

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.