



# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 103 December 2023

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Minnesota on the Cusp	1
November 2023 Flutterings	2
Mailboxes Were Viet Cong Flags	5
Confessions of a Flag Vigilante	6
Vertical Display of the Union Flag	7
Flags at Timberline Lodge	7
The ABC's "Cyclone Tracy" Flag	8
Louth GAA (Ireland)	9
Roundup	10
The Flag Quiz	11
Portland Flag Miscellany	12
Next Meeting	12

## Minnesota on the Cusp

By Ted Kaye

Minnesota has joined other U.S. states in pursuing flag change, in part because its current flag's design is indistinguishable at a distance from over 20 other state flags, and in part because some find the depiction of a Native American on the seal offensive (he is riding into the sunset as a settler takes his place).

and expert input and polish each of the six with sound vexillographic principles in mind.

NAVA members and others have offered to help; at the same time I've given a number of media interviews and politely shared my own opinions about potential improvements.

Minnesota is on a very tight timeline—to have a new flag by year-end. By the next issue of the *VT* we may see a great design in place. The eyes of vexillology are watching the process eagerly!

We meet in odd-numbered months, usually the second Thursday. Please mark your 2024 calendars for PFA meetings at 7 PM at the following dates/locations:

- 1/11/24 Mike Hale
- 3/14/24 Patrick Genna
- 5/9/24 Jessie Spillers
- 7/11/24 Ted Kaye
- 9/14/24 SAT, 1 PM Graham Houser
- 11/14/24 Larry Snyder

Thank you to our generous hosts for their hospitality to the PFA!



*I think it's kind of funny that someone can call themselves 'experts' on something as subjective as judging aesthetics.*

—Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, 2001, criticizing NAVA's state flag survey

The State Emblems Redesign Commission ([mnhs.org/serc](http://mnhs.org/serc)) has just chosen finalist designs for both the flag and the seal. Three weeks before, I had the honor of briefing the commission members on the basic principles of flag design as they began their work narrowing down the 2,000+ submissions to a final six. (They also chose five seal designs from about 400 entries.)

While (in my opinion) all six flag finalists need work, they represent a bold departure from the current “seal on a bedsheet”. I commend the commission for its work thus far, and expect it will receive public

[portlandflag.org](http://portlandflag.org) | [facebook.com/portlandflag](https://facebook.com/portlandflag) | [instagram.com/portlandflag](https://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](mailto:editor@portlandflag.org). If you wish to complain, call your mother.

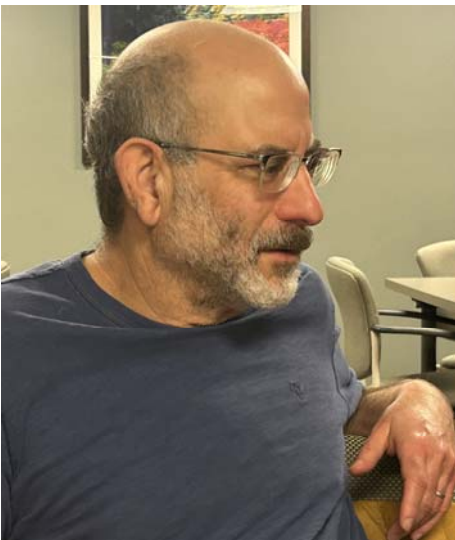
## November 2023 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our November meeting, hosted by Larry Snyder in Lake Oswego and streamed via Zoom, 13 PFA members and friends enjoyed two and a half hours of flags and video conversation. At Larry's request, Ted Kaye moderated the meeting, with the PFA flag tilted under the low ceiling.

Mike Hale brought some unusual flags from his collection, including the city of Bruges, Belgium, and a very long personal heraldic pennant from a one-time customer of Elmer's Flag & Banner.

Max Liberman introduced his latest area of study: flags of heads of state; he has found them very intriguing and is developing a taxonomy for them.

Star Pesetsky described her intention to follow up on her prior work on pride flags (see *VT* #102 and #99); her father, Scott, joined in the conversation.



Scott Pesetsky observes.



Mike Hale shows the armorial pennant of a one-time customer.



Max Liberman describes flags of heads of state.



Star Pesetsky participates.

Larry Snyder brought out the casket flag of his grandfather, a veteran of the Great (First World) War, along with a contemporary medal and photograph with Polish soldiers (see *VT* #91).



Larry Snyder shares his grandfather's casket flag for Veterans Day.



Ted Kaye posed the latest *VT* quiz, passed around recent vexillological publications, and unfurled some interesting flags, including a white-fringed Salem, Oregon, and a Khalistan (Sikh) flag.

Shane Erickson shared his proposal for a new flag for the state of Oregon, echoing the Cascadia flag and using a beaver as a central charge.

John Niggley displayed his new Oregon “bee” license plate, his ideas for a new flag for the soccer club in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and a central panel for a Croatian flag (from his days at National Capital Flag in Washington, D.C.).

Alden Jencks led a lively discussion on how flags and the wind do not always cooperate with vexi-photographers—except when assisted by technology (fans or compressed air), as seen recently in China.



Ted Kaye challenges participants with the Khalistan (Sikh) flag.



Shane Erickson describes a flag design.

Ken Dale, recognizing Veterans Day two days hence, delivered a stirring recitation of the Gettysburg Address, then described his dedication to participating in graveside services for veterans several times a month as a Cold War veteran himself.



Alden Jencks ruminates on the technology for “artificial wind”.



John Niggley shares the insert for a Croatian flag.



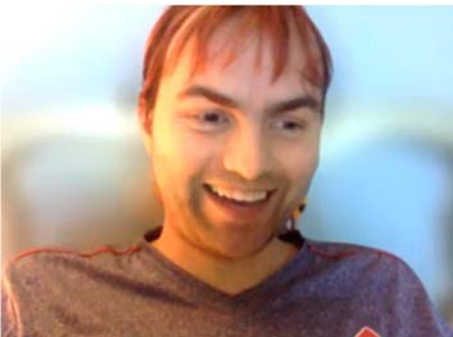
Ken Dale recites the Gettysburg Address in honor of Veterans Day.

*Continued on next page*



Some of those in the room (others are out of frame) greet the participants Zooming in.

Kota Owens, newly-arrived in Seattle, expressed his hope for a new regional flag-studies group there, modeled on his success in Kansas City starting the VAKC.



Kota Owens joins in from Seattle.



Joyce Gifford weighs in on Minnesota.



Ralph Bartlett shares a replica of the ABC flag from Darwin's 1974 cyclone.

Ralph Bartlett described a recent long-distance train trip from Melbourne to Darwin, Australia, and shared images of our colleague Ron Strachan and his flag store there, as well as the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) flag which famously survived the 1974 Darwin cyclone (see p. 8).

Joyce Gifford recounted the latest activity of Minnesota's State Emblems Redesign Commission (see p. 1).

Our next meeting, on Thursday, January 11, 2024, will be hosted by Mike Hale at his home in Southwest Portland. He took the PFA flag to him.

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





## When Mailboxes Became Viet Cong Flags

By Phil Allen

Last August, I was escorting a friend home from Berkeley's hospital. In a shaded area just a few feet from entrance was an object I never expected to see again, one I'd last seen in 1972.



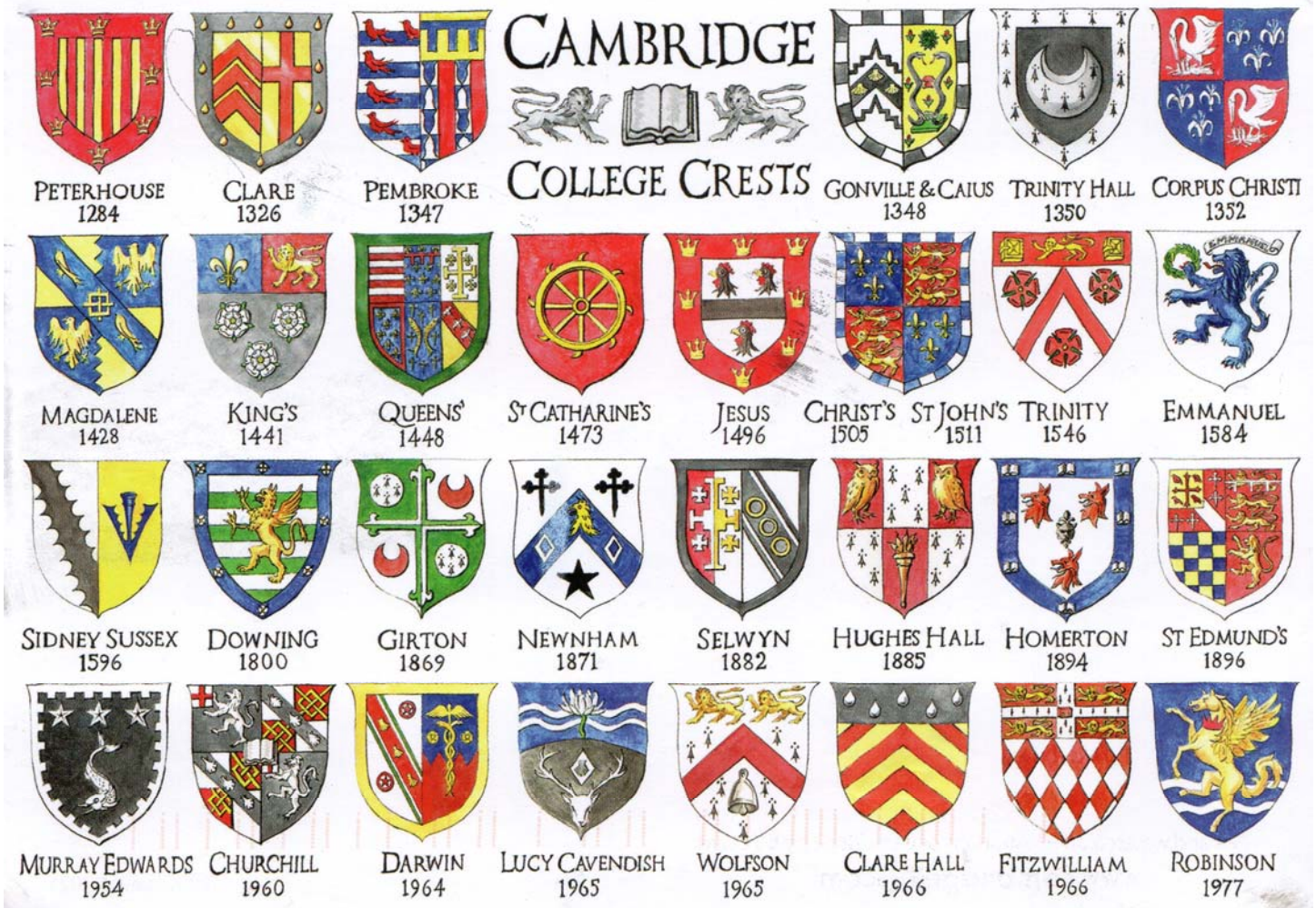
Viet Cong flag.



USPS mailbox in 1960s/70s livery.

At some point during the Vietnam War (1964–75), gold stars began appearing on the sides of USPS mailboxes, where the red rounded top met the blue of the lower bin. The result intentionally resembled the flag of the Viet Cong (also known as the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam).

The USPS soon painted boxes all blue. How did this box manage to retain its undefaced original livery? Sheer oversight is the likely explanation, or perhaps a hands-off order from a sympathetic official. In any case it abides in its sheltered corner, slowly rusting away.



This post card recently received from the U.K. illustrates the “crests” of Cambridge University’s many colleges—using pen and watercolor drawings by KJ Lewis (cambridgeart.com).

## Confessions of a Flag Vigilante, Part I

By Alden Jencks

I am a mild-mannered octogenarian and I enjoy, with great serenity, the peaceful activities appropriate to my twilight years. But I have loved flags all of my life. And so, when this old man sees egregious improprieties in flag displays, especially ones which can be easily remedied, he springs into action. He becomes, in a flash of youthful energy, a Senior Action Hero. He becomes ... THE FLAG VIGILANTE!!

In this and future articles, I will narrate flag-infractions which I, the Flag Vigilante, have observed and which I have gently and tactfully pointed out to “offending” homeowners, shopkeepers, school principals, public officials, and others.

For this article, I mention two lapses which are so basic and so self-evident that they do not even merit mention in the United States Flag Code ([legion.org/flag/code](http://legion.org/flag/code)).

***A flag should be displayed right-side-up and not upside-down.***

Many flags have a definite top and bottom, though their proper display can be confusing. The Union Jack, the flag of the Republic of Korea, and the flag of my home town of Portland, Oregon, come to mind as examples.

As a Portlander, I had grown weary of seeing at least half of the flags over the city’s fire stations upside-down. But, when I saw the



Portland in distress?

flag in front of City Hall upside-down, the Flag Vigilante sprang into action. I sat down and wrote a letter to “hizzoner” the mayor himself.

“Sir”, I wrote, “Portland’s motto is ‘The City that Works’, but the upside-down flag in front of City Hall tells me and the world that the city does *not* work. Indeed, it signifies that the city has capitulated and is surrendering.”

I blush to report that three days after I hand-delivered my letter, City Hall affirmed, with its flag now right-side-up, that Portland worked again. And, with it, 100% of the fire stations!

***A flag should be up-to-date. It should not appear in a discontinued earlier form.***

Countries, provinces, and cities do change their flags. And often, new and/or redesigned flags proclaim momentous social and political shifts.

A specific example...

Every year the returned volunteers of the Portland Peace Corps Association (I am one) march in Portland’s Grand Floral Parade. Volunteers carry the flags of their host countries.

Among the countries to be saluted one year was Haiti. But the Haitian flag provided to our group was the old, now-despised, red and black flag of the Duvalier years (“Papa Doc” and “Baby Doc” 1964–1986), not the red and blue bicolor of the modern republic.

The returned Peace Corps volunteers, led by yours truly, the Flag Vigilante, rushed out to get the appropriate flag.

In the parade, the current and correct flag went on to evoke energy and breast-swelling pride among Haitian onlookers and all of their Portland friends. This was, of course, the reaction that a flag review is supposed to create—not the anger, disappointment, and disgust that the old red/black flag would most assuredly have unleashed.

This is the Flag Vigilante signing off—ever vigilant but never too serious. Be watching for future accounts of my pedantry (oops, I mean pedagogy) out there in the field.



The Flag Vigilante marching with his Peace Corps cohort under the flag of his country, Côte d’Ivoire (not Ireland!) followed by (modern) Haiti.



## Vertical Display of the Union Flag

Dear Editor:

I am afraid that a (surely unintentional) error has crept into an image on page 5 of issue 102 of the *Vexilloid Tabloid*, in which various flags are shown hanging vertically from a horizontal line.

In each case the obverse of the flag is depicted, having been turned clockwise through 90°—but with one exception. The British “Union Flag” is the seventh from the left, and in this instance it is the reverse of the flag that appears.

The result is that the design is inverted, with the white saltire of St Andrew (representing Scotland) appearing above the red fimbriated saltire of St Patrick (representing Ireland) in the fly.

This should be the other way round, the saltires being counterchanged, because precedence is given to St Andrew’s in the hoist, Scotland having joined



A display for Vexi-Day 2023.

the union in 1707 to be followed by Ireland in 1801.

What appears is this:



when what should appear is this:



The error is readily made evident by comparing the British flag with that of Australia, second from the left in the same photo, on which the union flag appears in the canton correctly.

But it should be noted that the practice varies from one country to another, so that in the case of (for example) the United States, it is usually the reverse of the flag which is hung vertically, to maintain the canton in the “point of honour” at the top left corner.

Yours sincerely,

John Cartledge  
Boreham Wood, United Kingdom

PS see this entry on FOTW:  
[fotw.info/flags/xf-vert.html](http://fotw.info/flags/xf-vert.html)

*John, a loyal VT reader and frequent solver of our quiz, also contributed this issue’s quiz (see p. 11).*

## Flags at Timberline Lodge

At Oregon’s historic Timberline Lodge, on the flank of Mt. Hood (60 miles from Portland), seven flags could be observed flying in the brisk air on a recent visit, those of (left to right): Cascadia (designed by PFA member Alexander Baretich), Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, United States, Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, and Pride.



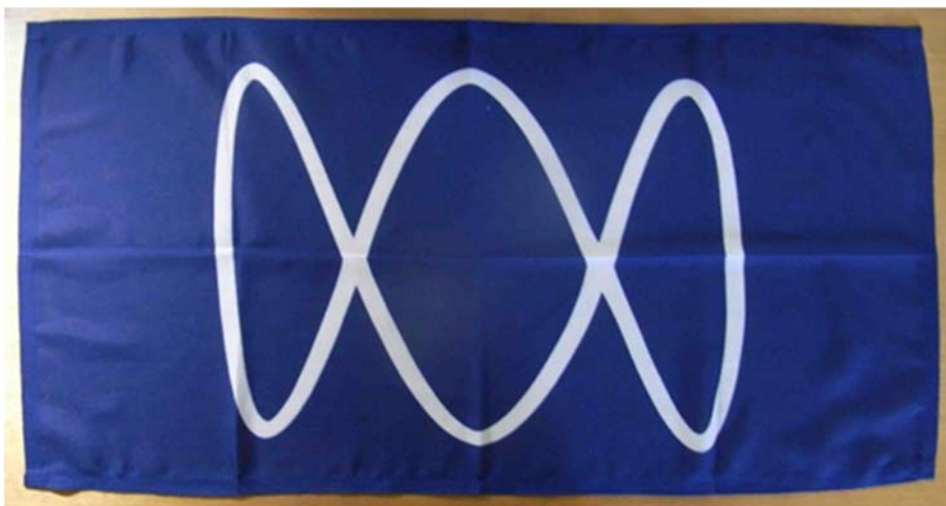
Flags fly at Timberline Lodge, on Mt. Hood, Oregon.

## The ABC's "Cyclone Tracy" Flag – Christmas Eve, 1974

By Ralph Bartlett, Secretary,  
Flag Society of Australia / Flags Australia

From late afternoon on Christmas Eve to early morning on Christmas Day, 1974, Severe Tropical Cyclone Tracy devastated the Northern Territory's capital of Darwin with wind gusts reaching an estimated 240 km per hour (150 mph). Over 250 mm (10 in.) of rain fell. Tracy destroyed over 70% of the city and killed 71 people. Two-thirds of the population had to be evacuated; many never returned.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation), the national broadcaster of Australia, played an important role in covering the event, one of Australia's most significant natural disasters.



Replica ABC "Cyclone Tracy" Flag,  
produced in 2019 by National Flags, Darwin.

Throughout the 10–12-hour "bashing" of Darwin, the ABC's flag remained attached to the broadcasting building's flag pole, although it was peppered with dozens of holes from airborne debris.

In mid-September 2023, as part of a trip on the Trans-Australia Train, Elizabeth and I visited Darwin for a few days. During this time we and a local Flags Australia member, Ron Strachan (National Flags, see p. 10), visited the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's radio/television office to view the historic flag that survived the cyclone.

Before seeing the actual flag, Ron and I posed outside of the ABC's Darwin offices with a half-size replica ABC flag that Ron kindly had made for me in 2019.

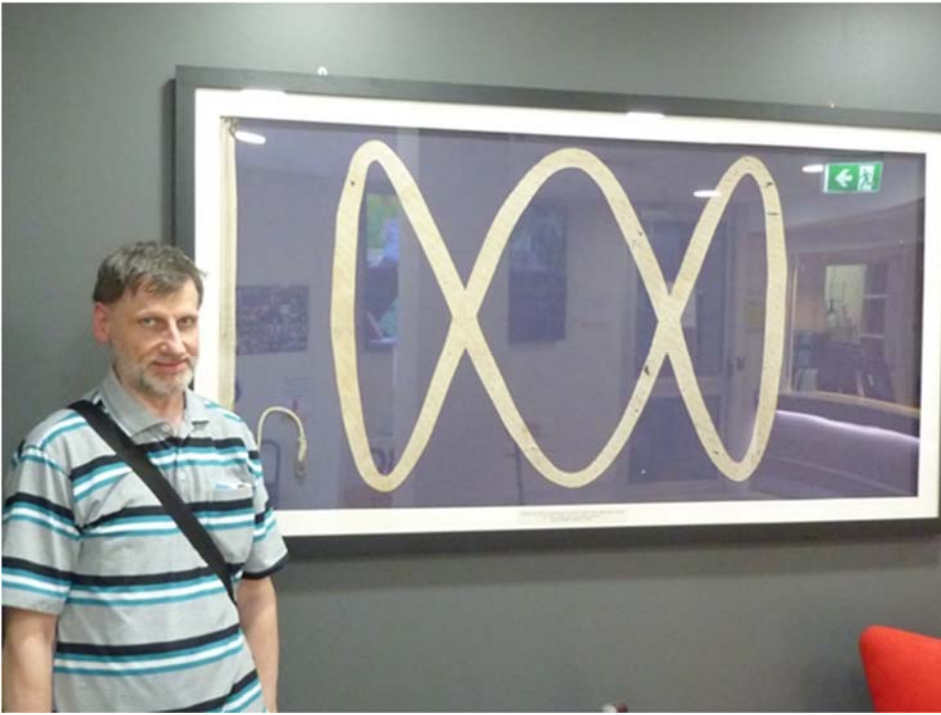
The flag shows the ABC's logo, a rendition of the cathode ray oscilloscope's "Lissajous Curve" (representing the wavelengths for both radio and television broadcasts), in white on a mid- or dark-blue field.

The design was created in July 1963 by an ABC staff graphics designer, Bill Kennard, and has represented the ABC ever since.



The ABC Flag flies after surviving Cyclone Tracy in December, 1974,  
looking across Cavenagh Street to the Don Hotel, now known as "The Cav".  
(Historic photo supplied by Rocci Scali – ABC Radio Darwin, Properties Dept.)





Ralph Bartlett views the ABC “Cyclone Tracy” Flag at ABC Darwin.  
(Photo: Elizabeth Dangaard)



Ralph Bartlett and Ron Strachan unfurl a half-size replica “ABC Cyclone Tracy Flag” outside the offices of ABC Darwin. (Photo: Elizabeth Dangaard)

This “over and under” logo has proven very popular and immediately identifiable—over the years it has become known affectionately as “The Worm”.

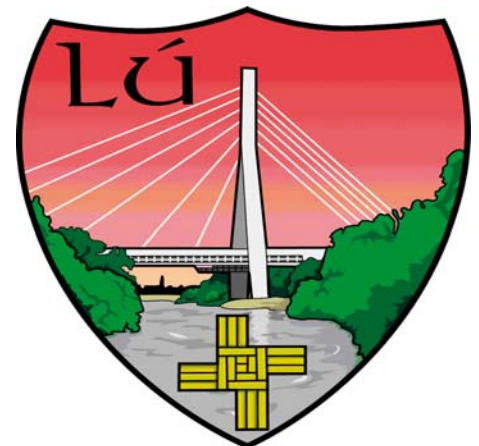
The full history of the logos and flags of the Australian Broadcasting Commission/ Corporation was published in the journal of Flags Australia: *Crux Australis*, Vol. 35/3, No. 143, July–Sept. 2022, pp. 122–129, to commemorate the ABC’s 90th anniversary.

## Louth GAA (Ireland)

The Louth County Board of the Gaelic Athletic Association (Irish: Coiste Chontae an Lú), or Louth GAA, one of the 32 county boards of the GAA in Ireland, is responsible for Gaelic games in County Louth. In its branding it uses a version of St. Bridgid’s cross—relevant to Portlanders as this “offset cross” resembles our own city flag.



The current Louth GAA logo.



The former Louth GAA crest.



A current Louth GAA flag.



## Roundup

The **Africa Fashion** exhibition opened this month at the Portland Art Museum, sharing the exuberance and cosmopolitan nature of the contemporary African fashion scene. A panel of African nations' flags welcomes visitors coming to see more than 50 outfits designed by over 40 designers hailing from 21 countries. Each flag is explained.



Chapman School in Northwest Portland exhibits this “Pledge of Allegiance”/ U.S. flag made with handprints and thumbprints by kindergartners in 2002. (A Chapman grandparent, Robin Gates, bought the artwork at auction and donated it back to the school.)



A replica of “Washington’s Headquarters Flag” went into space and is exhibited at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, as seen by NAVA 57 attendees.



Ron Strahan’s store in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, promotes flags, as does his car with flag-themed signage and license plate (“FLAG NT”).

**A Revolutionary War Flag in Space**  
 Washington Headquarters Flag (reproduction)  
 Sally Queen & Associates  
 Arlington, Virginia  
 1998  
 Silk, Linen  
 Museum of the American Revolution

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress resolved that the flag of the United States should represent the union of 13 original states as a “new constellation” of 13 stars. In 1998, this example of that “constellation” literally went into space!

This flag is a reproduction of the original blue flag with white stars that, according to tradition, General George Washington used to mark his headquarters during the Revolutionary War. The original flag descended through the family of Washington’s sister, Betty Washington Lewis, and is now in the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution. It is believed to be the earliest surviving 13-star American flag.

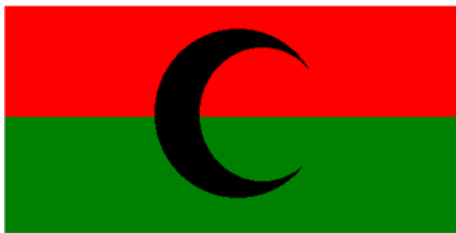
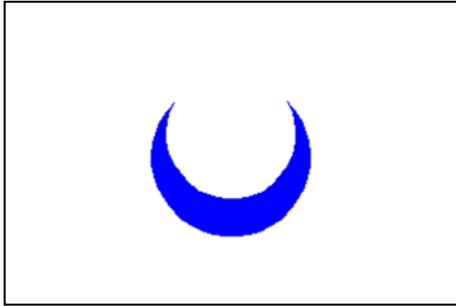
Astronaut John Glenn carried this reproduction of Washington’s headquarters flag into space as part of the lead up to the 1999 bicentennial commemorations of Washington’s death in 1799. Glenn, who had become the first American to orbit the earth in 1962, returned to space aboard the Space Shuttle *Discovery* in 1998. He and the other members of the *Discovery* crew traveled 3.6 million miles and orbited the earth 134 times. This flag accompanied them on the entire journey.



## What's that Flag?

By John Cartledge

Of what are or were these the flags, what do the entities which they represent have in common, and what is the significance of their sequencing here?



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

By Nikita L. Dudko

These flags represent Russian closed cities (towns), with travel/residency restrictions due to military, nuclear, scientific, and other infrastructure.

Congratulations to solvers: John Cartledge and Mike Thomas.



Mezhgorye (Bashkortostan Republic).



Znamensk (Astrakhan Oblast).



Vlasikha (Moscow Oblast).



Zvyodny Gorodok (Moscow Oblast).



Severomorsk (Murmansk Oblast).



Raduzhny (Vladimir Oblast).



Krasnoznamensk (Moscow Oblast).



## Portland Flag Miscellany



Portland-themed socks appear to be available from the former sockhopssocks, now part of the

**FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD** gift shop, located inside @cyclepdx 180 NW 3rd Ave., Portland, OR 97209 See: [instagram.com/sockhopssocks](https://www.instagram.com/sockhopssocks).



A Portland flag charged with a white pacifier flies at a home at 2260 S.E. 35th Place, south of Division.

Is it announcing the arrival of a new Portlander, perhaps?

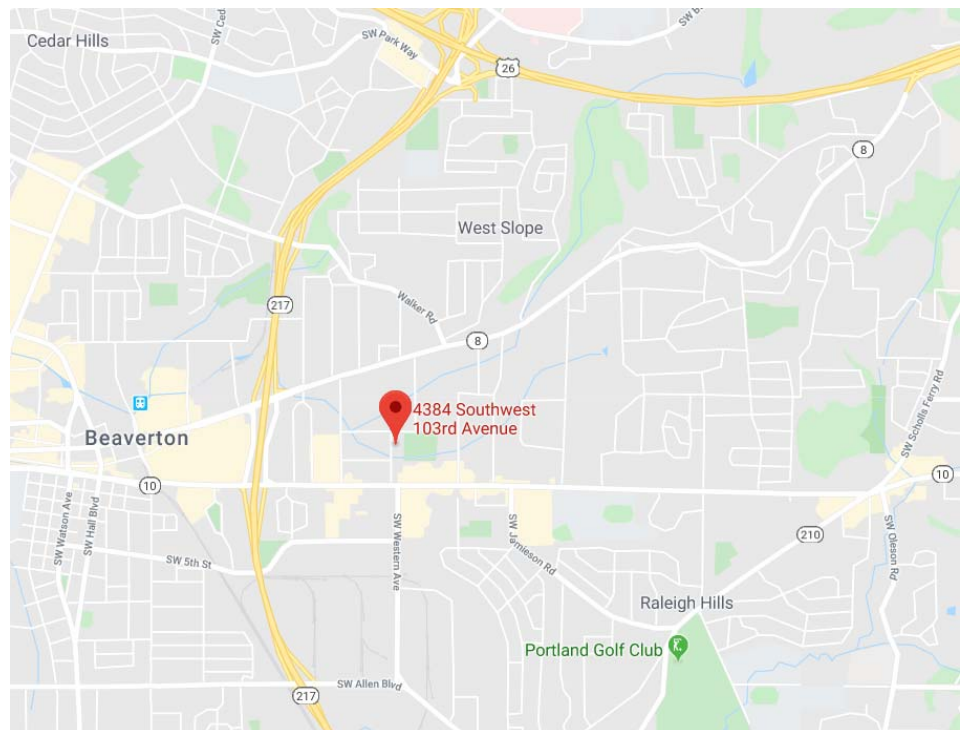
## January Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 PM, Thursday, January 11, 2024, hosted by Mike Hale at his home, 4384 SW 103rd Ave., Beaverton.

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](https://portlandflag.org).