

# The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 2 July 2004

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## New Flag for the City of Portland



Portland 1969-2002



Portland 2002-

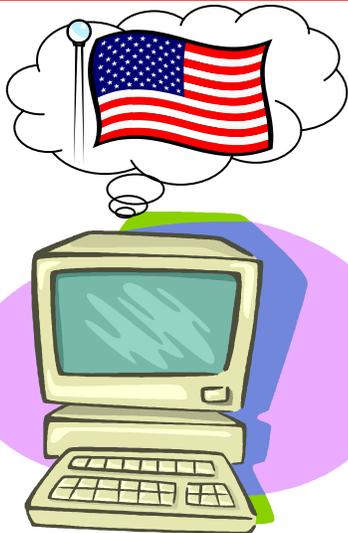
For those of you who have drifted away from our quarterly flag meetings and may have missed the article in *The Oregonian*, Portland has adopted a new (revised) flag. In early 2002, Doug Lynch, the designer of the then current city flag, came to the Portland Flag Association (our official title) with the proposal to adjust the design of the flag to more represent his vision before politics entered into the original design in 1969. We were more than happy to get involved with the project, and with the help of the mayor's chief of staff, we drafted an ordinance and testified before the city council. On September 4, 2002, the ordinance was passed, included here in part:

**for the City to be known as the City flag and described as follows:**

**A. The standard size measures 5 feet in length by 3 feet in height. The background shall be green, symbolizing the forests and our green City. The design includes a four-pointed directional star, formed by the vertical and horizontal intersection of counterchanged light blue stripes, symbolizing our rivers. The blue stripes are paralleled with yellow stripes, symbolizing agriculture and commerce. The yellow stripes are separated from the green background and the blue river stripes by white lines called fimbriations. The white central star is positioned slightly left of center, toward the staff end of the flag, called the hoist.**

**(Amended by Ordinance No. 176874, effective October 4, 2002.)  
There is designated an official flag**

*(Continued on page 2)*



I'd like to thank Ted Kaye for fleshing out some of my articles and for writing others. Without his help, this would have been much less of a newsletter. I would also like to thank Marshall Goldberg for volunteering his home in October (see page 4).

If you wish to compliment the editor, or to contribute in the future, contact John Hood at 503-238-7666 or vivijohn@comcast.net. If you wish to complain, call your mother.

## A New Flag for Portland

*(Continued from page 1)*

At the 20<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Vexillology in Stockholm, Sweden, Mason Kaye presented a paper on the flags of Portland. In it he described these flags and the flags that came before. Here is the abstract of that paper:

### Abstract

Portland has had five municipal flags. The city of Portland is the largest in the state of Oregon, in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Its flags were designed in 1917, 1950, 1958, 1969, and 2002. The designs vary from a simple horizontal tribar to seals on bedsheets. In 2002, members of the Portland

Flag Association teamed up with Douglas Lynch, the designer of the 1969 flag, to improve it. The new design removed the city seal added to the canton by the city council despite the designer's preference, and simplified the other graphic elements. The vexillologists testified at city council in support of the new flag, which was unanimously adopted in September of 2002. Today, Portland's flag features offset crossed bars (similar to a Scandinavian Cross) in light blue, on a medium green field. The bars, fimbriated in white and gold, represent Portland's two rivers. The intersection of the bars forms a white hypocycloid four-pointed star, symbolizing the city.

In his conclusion, Mason points out that individuals have designed better flags than committees. "...the city hired a design expert...then over-

ruled him at the last minute, substituting a more complex and less appealing flag." Then when the designer was allowed to proceed on his own, a successful flag was adopted.

At NAVA 37 in Montreal, President Dave Martucci announced that Doug Lynch had received the Vexillonaire Award, which recognizes a significant and successful act of activist vexillology, involving flag design or usage, in North America.

The award honors actions that change the way people interact with flags, as opposed to flag scholarship or boosterism. The difference between a vexillonaire and a vexillologist (flag scholar) is analogous to that between a politician and a political scientist, or a musician and a musicologist. In announcing the award, Martucci said, "Doug Lynch is a pioneer in civic flag design. His efforts to bring Portland's art commission and city council together are a model for other cities."

We've had post cards printed up, to help us in our campaign to encourage business owners and building managers to fly the flag more widely across Portland. Recently a new condo building in the Pearl District started flying it, triggering complaints from some observers thinking it was the new Iraqi flag! What planet were they on??? The only real way to deal with that is to have more Portland flags flying...

If you know a business or institution that can fly the Portland flag, invite them to show their true colors and display one of the best flags in the country!



The usual suspects at City Hall: (l to r) Ted Kaye, Mason Kaye, Fred Paltridge (kneeling), Doug Lynch and John Hood

## July 2004 Flutterings You Need to Know

We had rather a sparse turnout at our last meeting at the Kayes' house, but it allowed the snacks and lemonade that Debbie provided to go farther. It was Mason's and Harry's last regular meeting. Mason is off to Occidental College in Southern California and Harry is moving to Texas. It was Harry's idea to form this group of flag enthusiasts that has become the Portland Flag Association. He also travels to every flag event of any importance around the country and has much to share with us who are less inspired. Harry has shared with us some marvelous flag books in a variety of languages and we certainly will miss seeing more of them.

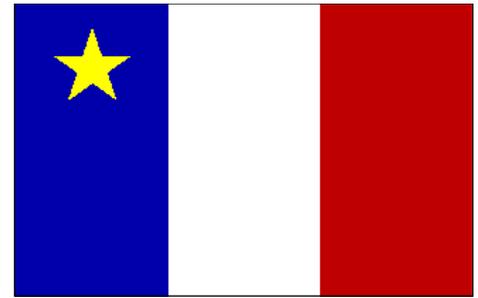
Mason, of course, has raised the bar for those of us who research flags, even if just for fun. In 1999, at age 13, he presented a paper at the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Vexillology in Victoria, BC, on tribar flags of the world. For his outstanding talk, he received the Captain William Driver Award which is given by NAVA for the best paper presented by a member. In 2001, at ICV XIX in York, England, he gave a paper on flags with maps on them. For that paper, he received a commendation from the Canadian Flag Association. Then at ICV XX in Stockholm last year, Mason's was judged the Best Paper (tied with his father's) by the flag manufacturers for his presentation on the Portland Flag (see related story). In addition, he designed the flag for Catlin Gabel School, from which he just graduated. So we will miss Mason's enthusiasm and exper-

tise in the future.

Since there were so few of us, we were able to look over Ted's collection of flag books. He has some true treasures, including all the *National Geographic* magazines that highlighted flags from decades ago. There are also a number of foreign language books, especially from Central and South America. Ted also showed us his collection of flag lapel pins that range from Lapland to the Falkland Islands. His collection of flags and pins is all the more impressive since Ted is a purist who tries only to get them while in the country he's visiting, unlike most of us who will take what we can find, wherever.

John Hood visited the Canadian Maritimes in May and brought back some flags to show to the group in our traditional manner: gradually unfolding the flag until someone guesses it. These flags were, of course, the usual ones of the area:

The more unusual ones of Cape Breton Island, Halifax, and the Micmac were seen, but not acquired. It seems that even the municipal offices frequently have no idea where their flags come from – The Creator, I suppose.



Acadia



New Brunswick



Nova Scotia



Prince Edward Island

### Some Flag Related Web Sites

North American Vexillological Association <http://www.nava.org>

Flag Institute (United Kingdom) <http://www.flaginst.demon.co.uk>

Flags of the World <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/index.html>

Elmer's Flag & Banner <http://www.elmersflag.com>

Darwin's Flagman (Australia) <http://www.nationalflags.com.au>

## A Call for Attendance in October

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, October 14, 2004, at Marshall Goldberg's house, 3080 SW Raleighview Dr., telephone (503)292-0525. See the map below.

It was originally planned to be at Harry Oswald's, but he has cut and run to Texas. He left me with the list, and I am more than willing to remind everyone shortly before the date. It would be good to do this by way of email, but my telephone still works.

A couple of meetings ago, Doug Lynch (designer of the Portland flag) challenged us to rough out a design, or redesign, of the Oregon state flag. It is unique in that it is the only state flag that has the reverse different from the obverse. It is interesting, but expensive to make. In addition, the front is the typical "seal on a bed sheet", the bed sheet this time being blue for a change. The only person to rise to the challenge so far has been Fred Paltridge, but I'm sure

there are other ideas in our group.

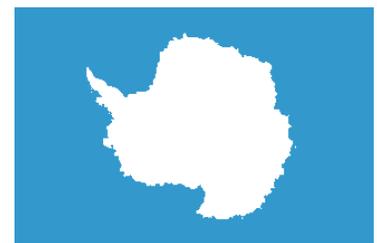
Our meetings have turned into a real "show and tell" recently, with some very interesting subjects. There have been flags from our travels or flea markets, books in various languages with incredible pictures of current or historical flags, the various types of flag fasteners, even flag card collections. So bring something to share with the group. Or there might just be some questions that haven't been answered by Google®. Or maybe you just want to eat cookies and drink sodas, whatever, come on down and join the conversation! Some people will have just returned from the NAVA 38 meeting in Indianapolis and will have something to say, I'm sure.

In the future, the meetings are tentatively scheduled for the second Thursday of January, April, July, and October. These are always subject to weather (ice) or other flag meetings that lead people astray.

## Flags Over Antarctica

Over the 2002-03 New Year, the Kaye family traveled on a 12-day expedition from Argentina to the Antarctic Peninsula aboard the M/V Orlova, an ice-strengthened Russian vessel, and making landfall in the South Shetland Islands and on the Antarctic continent. Ted Kaye took along two dozen full-size versions of Graham Bartram's unofficial 1995 flag for Antarctica. He raised the Antarctica flag for the first time ever over the White Continent on the last day of 2002. He presented flags to the commanders of the scientific bases of Brazil, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine and flew one on the ship's stern. One of several flags for Antarctica, the most recent design displays the continent in white on a field of United Nations blue. The designer explicitly intended to fulfill both reasons for "mappy flags" later identified by Mason Kaye (Maps on Flags, ICV XIX, 2001): *uniqueness* and *neutrality*. The actual flags were provided by Outpost Flags (Wisconsin).

At ICV XX in Stockholm Ted presented a paper on "Flags over Antarctica" describing this vexillographic "first". He shared the "best paper" award with Mason—the first father-son team ever to present at an international congress of vexillology.



## Raven 9/10: American City Flags Is Available

Volume 9/10 – 2002/2003 of **Raven: A Journal of Vexillology** appeared in April 2004 and was well worth the wait. Entitled **American City Flags**, it was an enormous undertaking by NAVA members John M. Purcell, James A. Croft, and Rich Monahan with our own Ted Kaye as Managing Editor. A description of the work, as taken from the introduction: “This work documents, as far as possible, the past and current civic flags of the major cities of the United States, including the capitals and largest cities of each state.” Included are the flags of the 100 largest cities in the country, all 50 state capitals, and at least two cities per state.

150 articles document the flags and their histories, in 400 pages, 250 gray-scale illustrations, and 16 color plates with all 150 current flags. It was a formidable project, but for those of us who are interested in flags closer to home than Azerbaijan or Zimbabwe, it provides a detailed description of how flags are adopted. It also proves that our own city’s flag is among the very best in the nation.

How can the largest cities in two states not have flags at all? How can some cities adopt a flag that looks more like a logo for a T-shirt? What are the politics that spoil a good design or champion mediocrity? Maybe all of these questions won’t be answered, but some will and innumerable anecdotes will be provided.

Members of NAVA (North American Vexillological Association) have received this book as part of their

annual membership. Non-members can buy it on the NAVA web site at <http://www.nava.org> for \$35. In a special offer, you can join NAVA for \$30 and get the book for just \$15 more.

Even if you decide not to buy the book, while you’re on the web site, scroll down and fill out the survey. While rating 150 flags from 0 to 10 may seem daunting, over 300 respondents have done it already and it will be quite helpful to Ted and the others who will be using it. In 2001 NAVA’s survey of US and Canadian state and provincial flags generated a lot of interest from governors, legislators, and flag enthusiasts around the country, and helped with at least one flag change (Georgia). Come to the next meeting and peruse a copy that someone is sure to have.

Mike Hale of **Elmer’s Flag & Banner** has a few copies of this **Raven** for sale, as well as one copy of the 1996/1997 **Raven** entitled **Flags of the Native Peoples of the United States**. For anyone with an interest in Native Americans, Don Healy has done an exemplary job of documenting their flags and seals.



Navajo Nation

## What’s That Flag?

Name these flags and bring your answers to the next PFA meeting:

