

The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

"Free, and Worth Every Penny!"

Issue 4 January 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Flags as Artifacts	1
A Flag for Mesa, Arizona	2
Did You Know?	2
January 2005 Flutterings	3
Yet Another Flag for Kansas City	3
April Meeting	4
The Flag Quiz	5

Flags as Artifacts, Flags as Symbols

By Scott D. Mainwaring

I've been thinking lately about all the different aspects that flags have, and the different reasons people are drawn to them. Until recently, I had thought of flags primarily as symbolic designs or abstract representations, but as I've started to collect them, and attend PFA meetings, I've started to think much more about their physical, material aspects. There is certainly much delight to be had in a flag as a thing, not just as a design. And the meaning of flags can come as much from the stories

brother brought back from his travels a stunningly beautiful rendition of this flag made of a silk-like fabric for indoor display. It is a red-white-blue horizontal tribar with the arms of Samara in the center. The arms depict what looks like a deer, though



Samara (historical)



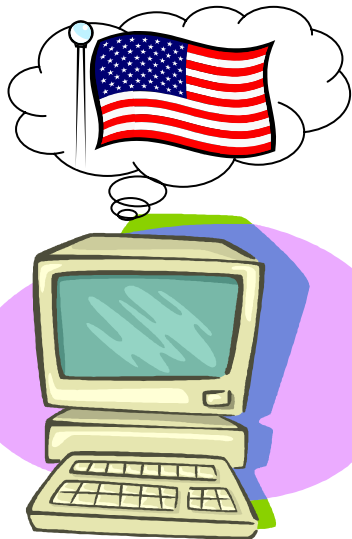
Samara Oblast (current)

of particular past instances (often, first instances) as well as from their symbolic intent or graphic impact. Two flags I recently received as gifts illustrate this well.

The first is the flag of the Samara Oblast, a region of Russia. My

according to the Samaran government (<http://www.adm.samara.ru/en/content/5/51>) it is intended to be a "wild goat" (Russian: "дикая коза"), symbolizing "unshakable power." The flag has its origins in a historical artifact called "The Samara Flag" that had instead a painting of Jesus and Mary in its center (http://www.md.government.bg/nvim/_en/znamena/z1.html). The flag was commissioned as a gift to Slavic re-

(Continued on page 6)



The editor is now giving credit where credit is due by providing by-lines to those who actually do the writing in this publication that Pulitzer missed. All contributions are welcome, whether they are used or not.

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.

By Ted Kaye

The readers of the *East Valley Tribune* have voted a winner among 24 finalist designs for a flag for Mesa, Arizona. The design would rank among the best U.S. city flags, and Mayor Keno Harker and other city officials have agreed to consider it for adoption as Mesa's first official flag, replacing the "pretender" banner currently in use.

In NAVA's recent American City Flags Survey, announced in October 2004, NAVA members rated Mesa's current flag at 1.7 points on a 0-10 scale, ranking it 146th out of the 150 flags rated. However, Mesa actually has *no* official flag. The flag NAVA judged is a pretender, as the *Tribune* learned in reporting on the NAVA survey. Although it had been provided by city officials to NAVA researchers as Mesa's flag during the preparation of *American City Flags*, in fact it is merely a backdrop/banner used by the city in trade shows.



Mesa, AZ "pretender flag"

As a result, the *Tribune* ran a flag-design contest, attracting 131 designs. NAVA judges culled them to 24 finalists, which were rendered into consistent artwork. In many cases words on the designs were removed, some colors shifted, concepts were simplified, and other

A Flag for Mesa, Arizona

minor changes made to make designs more competitive yet retain the spirit of their artists.

All of the finalist designs followed basic flag design principles; the most common symbols were a mesa, a sun, a symbolic "M", and a saguaro cactus.

The NAVA scores for the flags ranged from 5.1 to 9.3 points. All were exemplary designs; most would have placed among the top 20 U.S. city flags in NAVA's 2004 survey (the cut-off was 6.8 points).

PFA members reviewed and rated the finalists in our January meeting. The design most favored was B-2, which also topped the NAVA scores. It placed a large copper-colored mesa under orange and yellow rays evoking the Arizona flag.



B-2 (PFA choice)

However, in voting by Mesa residents, while B-2 finished in the top five, G-2 was the runaway favorite, taking 23% of the votes, more than twice the votes of the second-place entry. It was designed by Mary Jean Crider, of Mesa. It shows a yellow mesa (which could double as an "M", under a blue sky, with a blue saguaro cactus against a rayed sun rising over the mesa. Its original version also had a

counterchanged border, which NAVA's artist removed for simplicity.



G-2 (people's choice)

Mesa is on track to have its first flag in its 127-year history, thanks to NAVA, the *Tribune*, and the citizens of Mesa!

Did You Know?

From: *The World of Flags* by William Crampton, Rand McNally & Co., 1994

The first flag to fly at the North Pole was a Stars and Stripes with 46 stars. It was raised on a snow mound by Robert Peary on April 6, 1909. The flag was made by Commander Peary's wife.

The Norwegian flag was the first to fly at the South Pole. It was raised by Roald Amundsen and his team on December 14, 1911. His rival, Captain Scott, arrived a month later and found the flag still there.

A Stars and Stripes was placed on the moon by Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong on July 20, 1969. The flagstaff had a special arm on top to hold the flag out with no wind.

January 2005 Flutterings You Need to Know

The January meeting had a great turnout with several separated brethren who have not been able to attend for awhile. Dan Patterson brought a friend, Kevin Muir, who may become a regular. Dr. John Schilke came up from the deep South (Oregon City) and Stewart Cameron was able to make it in from the wilds of Warren.

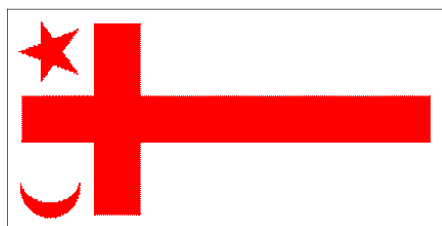
Stewart is known for his ability to glean unusual flags from Goodwill Stores throughout the area. He says he hangs them in his barn and is getting quite a collection. This time he brought St. Kitts and Nevis and the Third Flag of the Confederacy. He also had a flag no one could identify! Hopefully, by the next publication we'll have a digital image of it. It was a vertical tribar of red-yellow-red with the historical abbreviated arms of Spain, first used in 1700 by Felipe V, centered on the yellow bar. The arms are described thus: Overall an escutcheon quarterly of Castile and Leon enté en point of Granada (a pomegranate), overall Anjou (three fleur-de-lis). It is surmounted with an imperial crown. It looks like someone put the old abbreviated arms on a civic flag of Spain turned sideways similar to the fictitious flag used in the 1998 motion picture, *Zorro*.

Since there were so many members present who missed Ted Kaye's presentation of the American City Flag Survey, he gave another brief description of it before having us participate in his latest review. He said that Mesa, AZ and Kansas City, MO

have taken the survey to heart and are trying to do something about their flags (see associated articles in this newsletter).

Scott Mainwaring brought a striking flag from Samara Oblast in Russia and an article dealing with the Eureka Stockade flag (see associated article).

John Hood showed flags he saw in the Canadian Maritimes last Spring. They included the Mikmaq Grand



Mikmaq, Canada

Council and the Oka Warriors. The warriors' flag is a modification of the Mohawk Nation Flag and has come to be used as a rallying symbol, somewhat like the Confederacy Battle Flag.



Oka Warriors, Canada

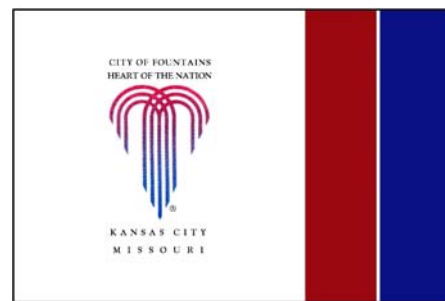
John also had on hand some CD's of his "Occasions to Fly Flags" database for those who had MS Access on their computer.

After to "show and tell" there was more discussion of new designs for the Oregon flag. It seems that Doug Lynch and Fred Paltridge are still the only members who have introduced new designs so far.

Yet Another Flag for Kansas City

By Ted Kaye

Kansas City, Missouri, has had more flags than any other city documented in *American City Flags*—one more than Portland's four. However, NAVA members recently rated the current flag at 3.4 points on a 0-10 scale, ranking it 103rd out of the 150 flags rated. This low score (equivalent to a "D+" grade) likely reflects the flag's relative complexity, use of lettering, and gradient color. Greg Wald, of All Nations Flag Co. in Kansas City, reports that most people don't know what it looks like and it's rarely flown.



Kansas City flag (current)

Spurred by the results of the NAVA survey, the *Kansas City Star* held a flag-design competition, attracting over 250 entries. Unlike the contest in Mesa, Arizona, where a NAVA team chose the finalists, in Kansas City staffers at the *Star* narrowed down the field themselves. They avoided the flags depicting hearts (a city motto is "Heart of the Nation") and chose 20 great designs. The *Star* then asked NAVA to assemble a team of judges to score the flags.

In our January meeting, the

(Continued on page 4)

April Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 14, 2005, at Mike Hale's house, 4904 SW Martha St., telephone (503)245-5283). See the map below.

Following is the schedule for the remainder of the year:

July 14 — Ted Kaye's

October 13 — Marshall Goldberg's

All for this, of course, is subject to ice storms, wind storms or other flag events that may conflict.

We look forward to seeing those of you that have been otherwise committed, and hear some new war stories, see some different flags, and hear some provocative discussion.

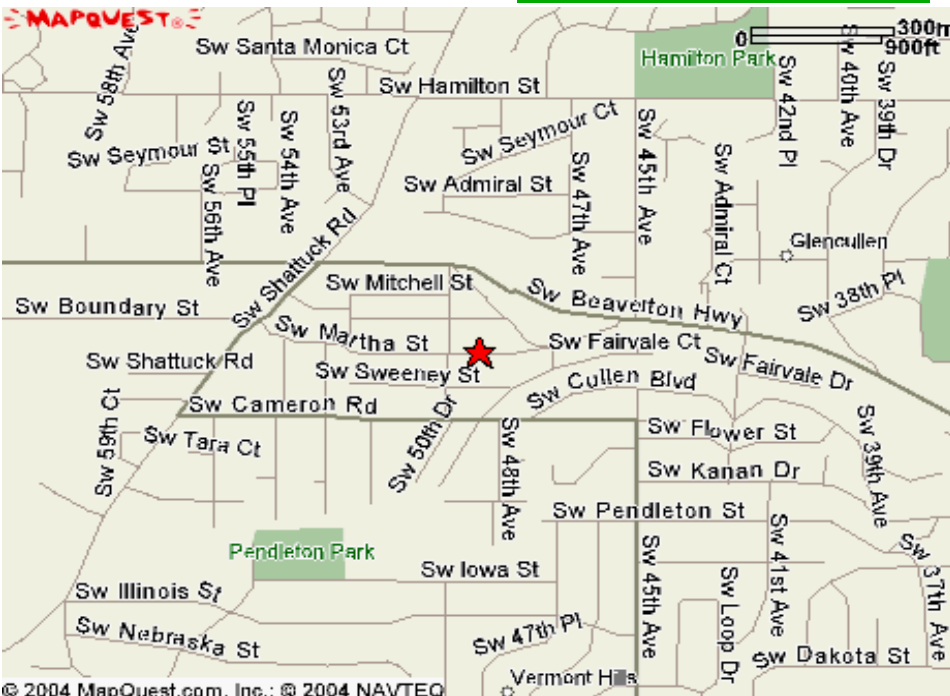
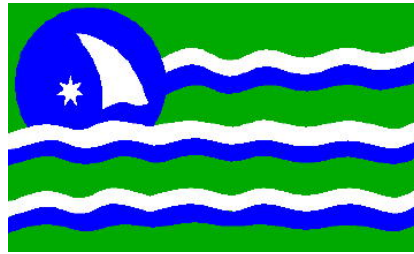
In addition, bring an idea for a new Oregon state flag. So far we don't have many to choose from.

Discussions at the meeting are very

unstructured, but a topic for the next meeting may very well be the new flags that have been adopted around the world.

Many of us belong to other flag associations, e.g., The Flag Research Center (Massachusetts), The Flag Institute (England), SAVA (South Africa), The Flag Society of Australia, and The Canadian Flag Association. The publications of these organizations keep us abreast of what's happening in vexillology and recently have described new flags for Chechnya, Montenegro, Cyprus and the most recent proposal for Iraq.

We also might discuss the several flags that have been proposed for the Cascadia Region in which we live.



Kansas City Flag

(Continued from page 3)

assembled PFA members served as one of those NAVA judges. That is, our composite scores (converted from each of us selecting our three favorites) were counted along with those of the other seven judges. We discussed the merits of each of the designs, admiring the creativity and vexillography of the Kansas City citizens. Doug Lynch, a Vexillonnaire-winning city-flag designer, had especially insightful comments.



#12 (PFA choice)

The flag more of us chose than any other was #12, which used map-like imagery to show the Kansas-Missouri border, the Missouri river, the major trails leaving Kansas City, and the city's location. It was also the top choice of NAVA's president, Peter Ansoff, who said "It says 'Kansas City'—it couldn't be the flag for anyplace else." Our next-most-frequent choice, #18, was first in the NAVA scoring. It centered a stylized fountain (another city motto is "City of Fountains") Over wavy horizontal lines representing the Missouri river, on a field of blue over red and with a white star in the upper hoist.

(Continued on page 6)

What was that flag? Answers to October's quiz

Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes!



Somalia

Five points for the five regions of Somalia.



Solomon Islands

Five stars for the five administrative districts (not the islands, of which there are six.)



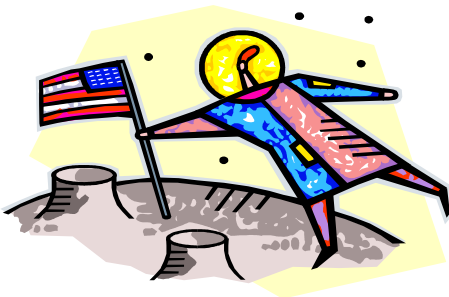
St. Kitts and Nevis

Two stars for the two islands or for *Hope and Charity*.



Vojvodina, Serbia

Three stars for the three parts of Vojvodina which is becoming an autonomous region of Serbia and Montenegro.



Madrid Autonomous Community, Spain

Seven stars for *Ursa Major* (the great bear on Madrid City's coat of arms)

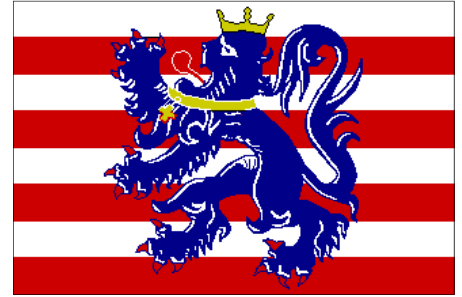
The Autonomous Community of Madrid used to be the Province of Madrid, but now has become autonomous with respect to the national government which has its seat in Madrid City which is within this community. Make sense?



What's That Flag?

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!
Narwhals and unicorns, too.

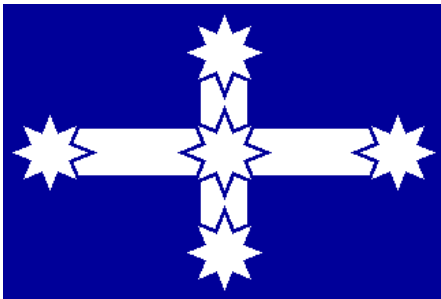
Please bring your answers along in April so we can review the zoo.



Flags as Artifacts

(Continued from page 1)

bels fighting the Ottoman Turks in Bulgaria, sewn by nuns in a local convent, sent into battle during the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-78, and was awarded a medal “for bravery” that the Bulgarians incorporated into its pike! Judging from the photographs on the web, the Samara Flag has actually little resemblance to the contemporary flag of Samara, but nevertheless gives it much of its meaning.



Eureka Stockade

The other flag is the Eureka Flag of Australia; quite famous actually, though I had never heard of it until an Australian colleague excitedly told me about it. It’s a dark blue flag with a white cross on which are placed five, 8-pointed stars – a fairly unwieldy design, in my opinion, lacking the aesthetic impact of Samara’s flag. But the story of its original instantiation is actually quite powerful and touching, and I think makes up for whatever graphical deficiencies it may have. Like Samara, it was sewn by women for a battle – but in this case, the women were members of a gold miners’ encampment (called Eureka) that was rebelling against the heavy-handed collection of monthly

licensing fees. The flag was constructed not from high religious art, but from literally the fabric of everyday life: the Prussian blue background from woolen fabric for dresses, the cross from Indian cotton twill for bed sheets, and the stars from a fine cotton fabric called “lawn” (from Laon, France) for petticoats.

The 1854 rebellion was quickly crushed with 22 “diggers” killed, and actually changed very little, politically. However, the flag has lived on as a populist symbol of defiance, somewhat like a left-wing version of America’s Confederate Battle Flag. In some ways, its humble, hastily-assembled medium is the message – and pieces of the original flag have been snipped away, almost like pieces of a religious relic, so that only 2/3 of the original flag is still intact.



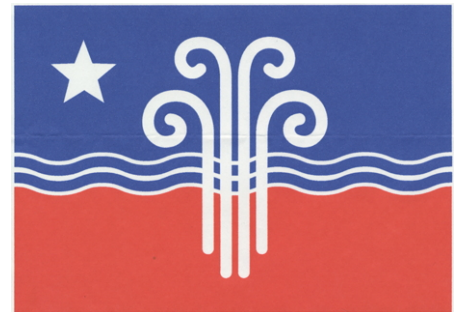
Eureka Stockade (original)

For more info, see <http://www.eurekaballarat.com/>, the website of the Eureka Centre, and Vol. 18/1 No. 73 of *Crux Australis* (Australian Flag Society, <http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au/>).

Kansas City Flag

(Continued from page 4)

On February 1, the *Star* announced #18 as the winner (the top-scoring flag according to NAVA judges), presenting the designer, Bruce Quade, with \$100. Second and third places received \$50 each. While the mayor voiced support for the concept of a good flag, she was non-committal about adopting any of the finalists, and the city manager said that the matter was the responsibility of the city seal commission.



#18 Winner

Don’t expect any time soon to see the city flag “up to date in Kansas City”, but if they ever take up the matter, they have some great designs to choose from!



Neil Armstrong, July 20, 1969