

The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 19 October 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Flag Flying Days	1
Flag Related Websites	2
Next Meeting Announcement	3
Flags in the News	3
October 2008 Flutterings	4
Book Reviews	5
The Flag Quiz	6

Flag Flying Days

By John Hood

Many of you know that I collect 3' x 5' flags and fly two, plus the current U.S. flag, from the front of our house daily. At the last meeting we started telling how we got interested in flags, but quickly ran out of time. My interest initially began with geography, but in San Francisco we lived on a busy street and had a second story porch which lent itself perfectly for flying flags. Almost eighteen years ago we moved to Portland and our house was even more appropriate for flying flags. It is a corner lot, on a rise, on an even busier street.

At first I wanted the flags of the states and countries I had visited. Mike Hale and his staff were very accommodating. From there I expanded exponentially, acquiring the unusual flags from wherever I could—Ron Strachan in Australia, Doreen Braverman in Canada, Paul Hemple in Northumberland and James Babcock in Hampton Roads. The late Harry Oswald gave me some that I could not have gotten anywhere else.

Part two of this collection was knowing when they should be flown. Having been born a Catholic, it was vital to know when to



It seems like the less a statesman amounts to, the more he loves the flag.
—Frank McKinney Hubbard



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.

Flag Flying Days

(Continued from page 1)

genuflect, whether or not I knew the words. Therefore I needed to find the occasions to fly these flags that were accumulating. From the library (this was before the internet was popular), I got the addresses of every country's embassy or mission in Washington, D.C. and wrote to each, asking for their official flag-flying days. Surprisingly, I received responses to about half of my letters. A second letter got almost half of those remaining. Some even put me on their mailing list for newsletters. Others responded in their native language, which made for some interesting translations; and one, Bahrain, said it was not allowed for non-nationals to fly the flag without their government's permission.

Realizing that half measures availed me nothing, I decided to collect the dates for every entity I could—country, region, province, state, county, city or municipality. Then I had to decide which dates to use for the "Flag Day." That proved to be daunting, so I became somewhat arbitrary. After all, this was not an academic exercise, it was for fun! Some flags, particularly in the Commonwealth, had multiple dates of adoption: date approved, date gazetted, date adopted, etc. Then the occasions the flag should be flown came into question. Of course the national days were there, as were the birthdays and death days of significance, but I also added those non-official days that sometimes encapsulate the spirit of the region:

D.B. Cooper Day for Cascadia, Guy Fawkes Day for England (although it is official in Bermuda), Senior Citizens' Day for Oklahoma. Some countries have a lot of days to fly the flag (Mexico has 24) and some have few (United Arab Emirates has one).

At NAVA28, held here in Portland in 1994, Kevin Harrington of the Canadian Flag Association was kind enough to review my first draft of "Occasions to Fly Flags" and offered me some excellent suggestions that I have used. Then Mike Hale wanted to incorporate the list into his web site so that people browsing for flags could also see when they could be flown.

Sometimes people come to the door to acknowledge my flying their county's flag on the occasion of independence, or to ask if this is a consulate. One man said he had not seen the Maltese Flag since high school in Valletta, while the Manx family up the street always insures that the triskelion is flown on Tynwald Day.



To augment the dates I had, I poured over travel books, UPS calendars and the CIA Factbook. Then the internet came along and things got a lot easier, but I do

miss prowling through the Central Library. To keep current, I rely on the scholarly publications from the various vexillological associations I belong to.

Each year the list must be corrected to update the occasions that have moveable dates. This has caused me to download lunar calendars, Hebrew calendars and Islamic calendars. It becomes a fun puzzle because in some cases the date depends upon which side of the International Date Line is being referenced.

Currently there are many sites with flag flying days posted, including an excellent one at Flags of the World (FOTW). Occasionally I will cross check one of my dates with another list, but usually I let it stand. After all, it was just created for my own amusement and use.

Some Flag Related Websites

NAVA <http://www.nava.org>

Flag Institute (United Kingdom) <http://www.flaginstitute.org>

Flags of the World <http://www.fotw.net>

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

Darwin, Northern Territory (Australia) <http://www.nationalflags.com.au>

Flag Society of Australia <http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au>

Flag Research Center <http://www.flagresearchcenter.com>

Southern African Vexillological Assoc. <http://www.sa-va.org.za>

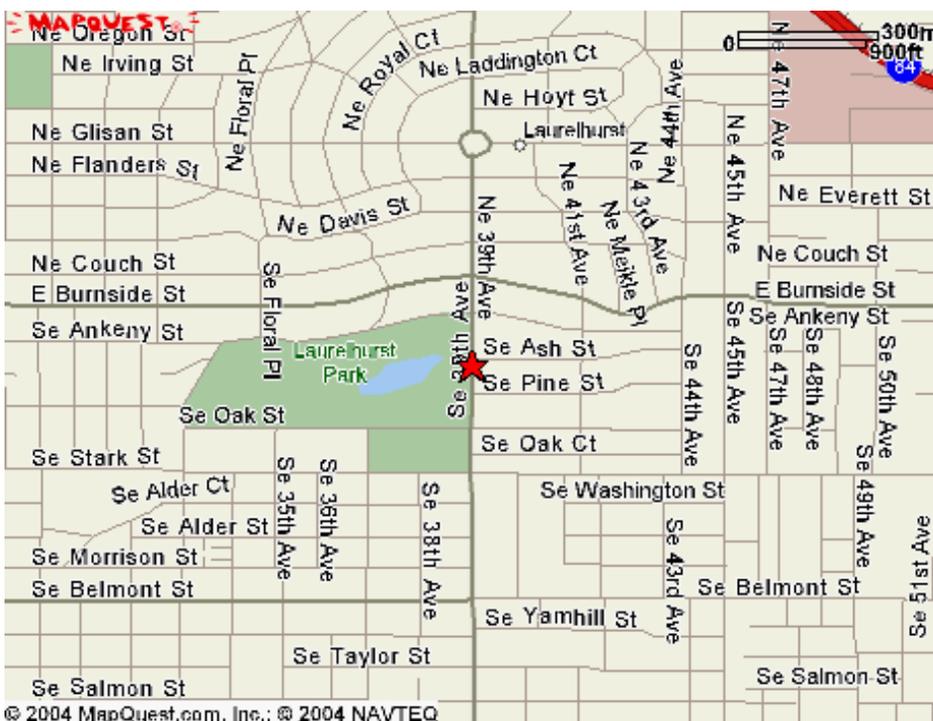
January Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, January 8, 2009, at John Hood's house, 208 SE 39th Ave., telephone (503) 238-7666. See the map below.

We look forward to seeing those of you that have been otherwise committed, and see some different flags, and hear some provocative discussion. There may be some results from the state flag contest.

Any and all flags, books or articles are welcome for "show and tell."

If you can't get to the meeting, perhaps you can give the editor something to share with our readers. As you can see, snippets from anywhere can be used and it gives you an opportunity to add to your *curriculum vitae*.



Flags in the News

Mike Hale told us of the notice in *The Oregonian* of a contest to design a new state flag in honor of our sesquicentennial. In the following Sunday's edition (10/19/08) of the paper was a much longer article on the subject with some history and quotes by Mike, Ted Kaye and Carita Culver of Ashland, a member of NAVA. Then there were the TV stories with Mike showing and talking about the current two-sided flag. Information, rules and design tips can be found at <http://www.oregonlive.com/oregon>. The contest ends November 21, 2008.

Between the campaigning and the economic melt-down, television has been inundated with politicians and talking heads speaking very authoritatively from behind podiums. It seems to be that to speak really authoritatively, one

must have some United States Flags in the background! Marshall Goldberg brought this to my attention some time ago and suspected there was a Jungian answer. I don't know about that, but I did start paying attention. The President usually only has one U.S. Flag and the Presidential Flag whereas the Secretary of the Treasury had three U.S. Flags and two Department of the Treasury Flags. Why didn't he use his personal flag? I haven't seen the Secretary of Homeland Security with either his personal flag (if there is one yet) or the departmental flag. The candidates, however, are keeping the flag manufacturers in business. A few months ago there were two or three flags on stage, but recently I saw nine behind Senator Obama and at least seven behind Senator McCain (but then he had a lapel pin, too). At least half a dozen were behind Senator Clinton and they all started falling down as she left the stage. Perhaps Marshall is right.



Remember, πάντα ρει = everything flows. — John Schilke

October 2008 Flutterings You Need to Know

We had a new member with us at this meeting. He was Max Liberman, a senior at Riverdale High School. Max happened to see Ted at a social function with a mug decorated with flags in his hand—an instant ice breaker. Lets hope Max is not scared off by the eccentricity of our group.

Ted Kaye presented a slide show of NAVA 42 in Austin, TX that he attended the week before. It was obvious that a lot of vexilloquacy was heard. It seems those Texans take their historic flags very seriously. Carita Culver of Ashland gave a talk on the history of the Oregon Flag. I hope it will be reprinted in a future issue of *Raven*. Speaking of which, Ted says the next issue is at the printer now and should be in our hands in the near future. He also passed around two new books he acquired; *A Grand Old Flag*, by Kevin and Peter Keim, and *The Star Spangled Banner: The making of an American Icon*, by Taylor, Kendrick and Brodie. Both of these books are reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Mike Hale showed us the first article on the flag contest, since he and Ted are going to be among the judges. More is said under “Flags in the News.” The other day Mike realized that he didn’t have the current Comoros Flag in stock, but rather an old version and an older version. The 1996-2001 flag is actually two flags sewn together so the writing is correct from both

sides. This makes for a very heavy flag and would take a gale force wind to fly properly.



Comoros 1978-1992



Comoros 1996-2001

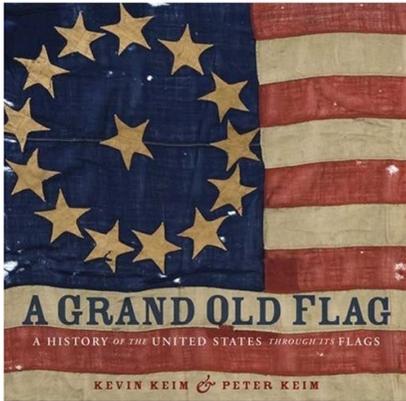
Scott Mainwaring is developing a website that would let one create their own flag using the International Maritime Signal Flags. He introduced the idea to us in the last meeting; now he’s making it happen. While he was in Hawaii recently, Scott saw strong evidence of the movement to give up statehood and, among the symbols, were what would amount to be vexilliods with feathers instead of cloth or metal. He also said that “Freak Flags” are now available for Face Book. Many groups and organizations are using flags of every conceivable configuration these days, with little regard to history or *Good Flag, Bad Flag!*

John Hood brought the group up

to date on what was in the other English speaking vexillological publications from around the world, including the email messages from the Flag Research center. *Flagmaster*, from the Flag Institute in England had several great articles on flags of the Channel Islands, Bulgaria, Latvia and the navy of land-locked Kazakhstan. Many thanks to the editor, Michael Faul. *Crux Australis*, from The Flag Society of Australia had some great pictures of the World Youth Day pageant showing more flags from more places than I have ever seen, with as many as three on a hand held pole. *SAVA Newsletter*, from Bruce Berry in South Africa had a scholarly article on the police flags of Central Africa. There is no end to the esoteric interests of vexillologists.

John Schilke was unable to attend, being on a classical music tour of Europe. However, he did forward an interesting topic for discussion: The National Museum of Language in Baltimore, MD is sponsoring a contest to design the world’s first language flag, the International Flag of Language. It is meant as a contribution to commemorate UNESCO’s International Year of Languages. Experts from language and vexillology have been selected to administer the contest. The contest rules are posted at <http://languagemuseum.org/flag>. The contest runs through November 28, 2008, and the winner will be announced in February, 2009.

Book Reviews



A Grand Old Flag: A History of the United States through its Flags

Kevin Keim & Peter Keim
Dorling Kindersley Ltd. (2007),
192 pages, \$19.80 on Amazon.com

Dr. Peter Keim and his architect son, Kevin, have amassed over 30 years of what they call “one of the richest and most comprehensive collections of antique Stars and Stripes held by one family.” *A Grand Old Flag* uses over 100 of their flags to weave a deeply meaningful interpretation of the history of the U.S. flag. The lavishly-illustrated volume in the full Dorling Kindersley style has active, colorful images on every page bursting from the glossy white background. Nathan brings an architect’s eye to flag design and construction, a welcome and unusual perspective.

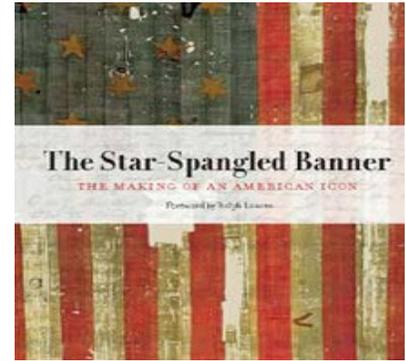
Due to the book’s broad scope, it can be forgiven its propagation of a few flag myths—such as the misidentification of the designer of the Confederate Stars and Bars as Mrs. Napoleon Lockett, and for committing other minor historical errors—it places the 1846 compromise boundary of the Oregon Ter-

ritory at 40 degrees rather than the correct 49.

The book is a visual and vexillogical delight, with excellent production values. Among the gems: a rare 19-star printed parade flag and a 33-star flag flown by Union troops at the Battle of Bull Run in 1861. The book is particularly strong in its explanation of textile technology, history, and terminology, and of their application to flags.

The outsized book includes a separate poster, with an innovative “Timeline of the Stars and Stripes”; a 64-inch fold-out showing the years 1755-1975 with presidents, wars and conflicts; states’ admission dates and maps; key events in national, flag and textile history; along with a nice little “Star -Spangled Banner History” and, on the back, 16 more flag images.

More than another pretty “picture book” on the U.S. flag, *A Grand Old Flag* is a loving but discerning tribute to the Stars and Stripes, and a beautiful and important addition to the libraries of flag enthusiasts.—Ted Kaye



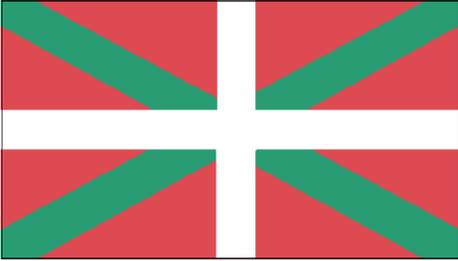
The Star Spangled Banner: The Making of an American Icon Lonny Taylor, Kathleen M. Kendrick and Jeffrey L. Brodie Smithsonian Institution (2008), 182 pages, \$21.86 on Amazon.com

I bought this book to help with the talks I have been giving to DAR chapters about flags of the Revolutionary War, ending with The Star Spangled Banner. However, I found that it went well beyond what I could use.

The Star Spangled Banner provides an overwhelming number of topics that have evolved into a mythology surrounding the flag and the anthem. The book gives a reasonably balanced story of the making of the flag by Mary Pickersgill, the symbolism at Fort McHenry, the rare displays over the next ninety years, and the creation of an icon by the Smithsonian. The book does not make grand pronouncements but rather leaves many conclusions to the reader. Was the smaller storm flag flying during the battle and the larger (thirty by forty-two feet) garrison flag only hoisted later in triumph? Is the damage to the flag due to the war, insects or souvenir hunters? How was the poem actually set to music? Toward the end of the book, the Smithsonian waxes a bit heavy on its own marketing, but that is trite considering the quality in general—the artwork, illustrations and history. This is a treasure for anyone curious about this American icon.—John Hood

What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

These flags do not represent countries, but rather cultures. Here are people whose homelands transcend geographical boundaries.



Basque Country/Euskadi/Iparalde

The Basque Country covers four regions in Spain and three in France. The red is from the flag of Biscay where it all started. The St. Andrew's cross is for independence in a historic battle on St. Andrew's Day. The green for the oak tree on the Biscay coat-of-arms, as well as the white cross.



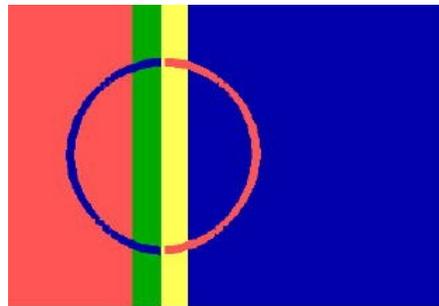
Mavrolachians/Morlaci/Black Vlachs

Originally these were probably Illyrians who eventually became Christian peasants living in the interior of Dalmatia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia). They are known for their dark complexions, but their language counter indicates any North African heritage, as was first thought. The flag is from *Flags of Aspirant Peoples* with no information on its symbolism, although the crescent and star would indicate a Turkish (Ottoman) influence.



Roma/Rom/Rrom/Gypsy

The people usually referred to as Gypsies call themselves "The Roma". While generally in Southern and Eastern Europe, Roma are found in most countries. They originally came from India beginning about 1000 A.D. "Gypsy" may have come from Europeans thinking they were Egyptians. The blue in the flag is for the heavens, the green is for the earth and the chakra is for their Indian origin.



Sami/Saami/Sámi

The Sami, or Laplanders, are mostly in Northern Norway, but they do inhabit Northern Sweden, Finland and Russia. Known for their herds of reindeer, the Sami have recently become more politically active because of threats by progress to their way of life. The symbolism of the flag is vague but it could be based on the colors of the traditional dress with the circle representing unity (such as it is).

What's that Flag?

Last time we had flags without borders. This time we have regional flags with vague borders.

