The PFA Joins FIAV

By Ted Kaye

The International Federation of Vexillological Associations (“FIAV” in its French acronym) welcomed the Portland Flag Association as a full member at its General Assembly in Rotterdam during the 25th International Congress of Vexillology.

This welcome into the world’s vexillological community recognizes the PFA’s large and active membership, frequent meetings, and consistent publication schedule—unparalleled among sub-national groups in the U.S.

In a sense, this recognition also honors the PFA’s primary founders, Harry Oswald and John Hood. In his final remarks at the Congress, FIAV’s president, Michel Lupant, mentioned John’s passing two years ago.

After the close of the General Assembly, the board of FIAV (Kin Spain, Michel Lupant, and Graham Bartram) warmly congratulated Max on the successful vote. He plans to represent the PFA at the next congress, in Sydney, Australia, in 2015.

After Max Liberman, the PFA’s delegate, delivered a compelling and articulate speech about the PFA’s candidacy, the representatives of FIAV’s members voted overwhelmingly for admission.
By Ted Kaye

During a recent tour of Central Europe, Debbie and I visited Válašské Kralovství, the “Kingdom of Wallachia”, in the eastern corner of the Czech Republic.

It is a micro-nation founded in 1997 by photographer Tomáš Harabiš as an “elaborate practical joke”. With a population of 27, it has since become one of the Czech Republic’s biggest tourist attractions. It lies in the region of Moravian Wallachia, which took its name in turn from shepherds from Romanian Wallachia (the Vlachs) who had settled in the area in the 14th–17th centuries. Since its founding, over 80,000 Czech citizens have acquired “Wallachian Passports”—reminiscent of the Oregon passports sold a generation ago.

The kingdom first enthroned comedian Bolek Polívka as King Boleslav I the Gracious with a lavish coronation ceremony in 2000, but the Wallachian “government” soon deposed Boleslav in a palace coup over the profits from the kingdom. Unable to settle the dispute internally, the case went to Czech court in 2007. The court ruled in favor of the “government” of Tomáš Harabiš, who crowned contest winner Vladimír Zháněl as King Vladimír II.

Enthusiastic attempts to forge official ties with other countries have so far proven disappointing and the Kingdom of Wallachia enjoys no formal diplomatic recognition.

The blue-white-green tribar flag bears the arms of the kingdom, crossed axes in brown and blue behind a typical large, pointed black shepherd’s hat, all on a simple yellow shield under a crown.

In the “capital”, Stramberk, I climbed the tower and bought a full-sized flag (I skipped the passport). Our entertainment that night, in a scenic mountain inn in Pustevny, was a local folk troupe dressed in traditional garb, who ended its performance by singing the “Wallachian national anthem”.

The Czech Republic, showing Prague (black) and Stramberk, the capital of the “Kingdom of Wallachia” (red).

Performers in traditional Wallachian dress—note typical hat and axe.

An actual flag of the “Kingdom of Wallachia”—bought in its capital, Stramberk.
Gastro-Vexillology: Flags Good Enough to Eat

To promote the Sydney International Food Festival, Australia’s largest food event (with chefs from all over the world and a million attendees last year), the Australian advertising agency WHYBIN\TBWA recently created 17 national flags using foods common to each country.

Basil, pasta, and tomatoes made Italy’s flag; hot dogs and buns for the U.S.; curry with rice and papadum wafer for India; banana leaf, limes, pineapple, and passion fruit for Brazil; pittaya/dragon fruit and star fruit for China; and olives and feta cheese for Greece.

Seeing this item on-line, Portlander Spencer Ehrman coined the term “gastro-vexillology”, a neologism heretofore not found in Internet searches.


Round-Up

Each year Michael Orelove raises a flag in his flower “bed”.

In past years, he has raised the U.S. flag, the reverse of the Oregon flag, and the Union Jack. This year it is the Canadian flag.

Its maple leaf is cut out of wood and the red and white stripes are petunias. We salute Michael’s green thumb and vex-ingenuity and look forward to what the next season brings.

While on vacation in Portland in July, Chris Bedwell and Joe Cook discovered a business they thought probably should have had the PFA on retainer...a pizza restaurant in the Alberta neighborhood which has a stand at the Saturday Farmer’s Market on the PSU campus.
In our Sept. meeting, hosted by Mike Hale, 12 PFA members enjoyed a lively evening of flags and somewhat related topics.

Mike, as host, led us through introductions and moderated our discussion. He asked each of us to name our favorite flag—the answers: Brazil, Basque, Barbados, Signal Flags, South Africa, Namibia, Maryland, Mars, Buddhist, Cascadia, and the latest acquisition!

David Koski led a discussion of the purported U.S. “civilian flag”, with vertical red and white stripes and blue stars on a white canton.

Scott Mainwaring shared his latest book purchase, which he characterized as likely the most fringe flag book he’d ever seen: *Psychology, Symbolism, and the Sacred: Confronting Religious Dysfunction in a Changing World* [coloroftruth.com]. He also showed images of flags he’d observed in the Portland Art Museum and of an unusual flag he’d seen at a Nepali festival.

David Ferriday brought several flags he’d recently bought for friends, and played a video of Sweden with a clip of the royal flag with three tails flying during a changing of the guard. He also shared a photo of a Portland flag made in Portland Thorns colors.

Max Liberman reported on the 25th International Congress of Vexillology, held the previous month in Rotterdam, describing the schedule and the presentations. He presented the just-starting International Vexillological Index, a project led by Annie Platoff, which will index flag publications (books and periodicals). PFA members agreed to have PFA participate and make available back issues of the *Vexilloid Tabloid*. Max also offered to help Scott with website work.

Ted Kaye added compliments for Max’s superb presentation to the FIAV General Assembly, which accepted the PFA’s application for membership (see page 1). Ted then showed the many flags he’d acquired while traveling after the congress in Central Europe, including national and municipal flags from Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia.

David Ferriday honors his wife’s natal state, South Carolina, as Jesse Spiller, Mike Hale, and David Koski look on.

Scott Mainwaring shares the Brahma Kumaris flag, as observed at a local Nepal festival.

Max Liberman shows “Vlag” the Dutch magazine promoting ICV25 in Rotterdam.
Patrick Genna shared many images of flags he had culled from recent news, passed around the publication of the Irish flag group, and announced he was the first member of the Thai Vexillological Association, showing its flag.

Larry Snyder presented a decorative tassel for use with the PFA Flag. Ted offered the PFA finial and Max will be the keeper of the flag for use at future meetings.

Sam Oakland unfolded several custom-made flags he’s recently acquired, all with some form a cross on them. He did so without speaking, leaving us to guess each one. He eagerly awaits the next shipment from his supplier in Dublin, Ireland.

Jessie Spillers described his fascination with habits, customs, and superstitions, and led a discussion of the origin of the 21-gun salute: did it really begin with the total of the numbers in 1776?

Michael Orelove showed the latest items sent in response to his solicitations—now Canadian provincial flags—and when the conversation turned to astronomy, he showed off his planetary tattoos.

Ken Dale translated some materials in French for Michael, and expostulated on some interesting aspects of language, including the connotations of sinister/dexter and gauche/adroit.

We wished Mike Hale safe travels to Europe and planned to meet at John Schilke’s Mary’s Woods complex in November.

The first member of the Thai Vexillological Association, Patrick Genna, debuts its flag, on which he had consulted.

"Georgia on My Mind"—Sam Oakland and one of many of his cross-themed flags.

The Canadian territory of Nunavut sent Michael Orelove a full-size flag in response to his request for teaching materials.

All nine (!) planets, in correct order and relative distance from the sun, bespangle amateur astronomer Michael Orelove’s left arm.

Linguist Ken Dale lends assistance to Michael Orelove, translating a letter from the Provincial Government of Québec.
Kathleen Forrest and I recently took a 10-day all-expenses-paid cruise on the Baltic Sea with stops in Copenhagen (Denmark), Tallinn (Estonia), St. Petersburg (Russia), Helsinki (Finland), Stockholm (Sweden), Warnemunde and Kiel Germany, and back in Copenhagen.

At the beginning and end of the cruise our Holland America ship, the Eurodam, displayed colorful nautical flags at the bow.

We saw many national flags at the various stops, especially at the tourist areas where they were used to easily identify gift and souvenir shops. I bought a few myself!
What’s that Flag?

Can you name these seven flags and identify the unifying theme?

Answers in the next issue…

What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Max Liberman

- Communist Party of Ireland
- Former province of Meath
- Wicklow County Council
- Commodore, Irish Naval Service
- Dublin Shipping, Ltd.
- Army Comrades Association (“Blueshirts”)
- “Starry Plough” flag (Irish labor movement)

The theme linking these flags: all hail from Ireland. Congrats to Philippe Rault for correctly identifying five of seven.
Portland Flag Miscellany

(Foot) The Timbers Army also supports the Thorns, here with flags at the 6 June 2013 game: “Rose City” in red and black and two massive flags created by combining four individual flags (apparently those of Nigeria and Biafra/Afro-Americans).

November Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, November 14, 2013, at Mary’s Woods, the retirement village of John Schilke, 17400 Holy Names Drive, Lake Oswego.

See the map at right.

We look forward to seeing those of you who have missed recent meetings, and hear some new stories, see some different flags, and engage in provocative discussion.

If you can’t get to the meeting, perhaps you can give the editor something to share with readers.

Enter the DUROCHER parking lot. The number (17440) is over the entrance area of the apartment building. Park in an empty (free) space with a BLUE FLAG in the parking area. If nobody’s at the door, call John’s cell phone: 503-459-1213.