



The Vexilloid Tabloid

Portland Flag Association

“Free, and Worth Every Penny!”

Issue 99 April 2023

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Utah's New Flag

By Ted Kaye

The beehive state has crossed the finish line! With the governor's signature on SB 31 in late March, Utahns have a new state flag.

This marks the first time in recent memory that a state has changed its flag to improve its design, rather than to remove offensive symbolism (as in Georgia and Mississippi, and perhaps soon in Massachusetts and Minnesota).

The flag update taken a long time. 20+ years ago the *Salt Lake Tribune* ran a contest to design a new state flag—NAVA members helped and I served as the lead judge.

A commemorative flag for the 125th anniversary of Utah statehood in 2021 likely influenced preferences for the new state flag.



Utah's new flag, 2023.

Driven by constituent interest and personal enthusiasm, Rep. Steve Handy and Sen. Dan McCay shepherded the multi-session effort, ably supported by staff from the Utah Department of Cultural & Community Engagement. They launched the “More Than a Flag” initiative in January 2022; I attended the ceremony at the state capitol.

It resulted in over 5,700 entries and in October I moderated the Design Review Subcommittee's final meeting, which culled and upgraded the finalist designs for the legislative task force.

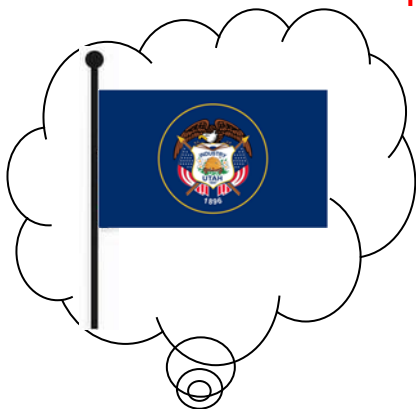
Unless a referendum challenging the flag gathers enough signatures by mid-April, it will fly officially starting in March 2024.



Utah's 125th anniversary flag, 2021.

portlandflag.org | facebook.com/portlandflag | 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. If you wish to complain, call your mother.



A new flag can help us reframe our ideas of what's important—and to remind us that our state's greatest days are still ahead.

—Utah Governor Spencer J. Cox

March 2023 Flutterings You Need to Know

In our March meeting, hosted by Jessie Spillers and streamed via Zoom, 12 PFA members and out-of-town (and -country) guests enjoyed two-plus hours of flags and video conversation.

At Jessie's request, Ted Kaye moderated the session and began by leading introductions.

He then presented the quiz from the last issue (Max solved it), showed a flag from the Italian Communist Party, and described the Confederate flags flying off Interstate 5 in "Jefferson Davis Park", 20 miles north of Portland (see p. 5).

Alden Jencks appreciated reader feedback on his *VT* #98 item on flag sobriquets (see p. 7), and displayed a T-shirt bearing the very flag and attribution he'd described (the Appomattox Flag), then shared Admiral Preble's landmark book:

The Symbols, Standards, Flags, and Banners of Ancient and Modern Nations (a partial reprint by Whitney Smith's Flag Research Center in 1980): <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002001719013&view=1up&seq=17>



Alden Jencks wears the Appomattox Flag.



Graham Houser displays a Portland, Oregon, flag of the 1969–2002 design, traded out from a classroom.

Graham Houser displayed a Portland flag (1969–2002) he'd traded out of a classroom for a current version, then distributed the draft of his history of Rocky Butte, his neighborhood.

Star Pesetsky gave a detailed presentation on Pride flags, analyzing their use of color and the number and sequence of stripes; that started a discussion of more ways to analyze the design and usage of such flags (see p. 8).



Star Pesetsky presents on pride flags.

Max Liberman shared a website offering socks themed in national flags, and reflected on how the orientation varied (vertical for some, horizontal for others): choosetorep.com/collections/socks.



Max Liberman socks it to flags.



Scott Mainwaring Zooms in to share some AI-generated flags.

Scott Mainwaring explored the opportunities and limits of recently released artificial intelligence applications, asking DALL-E 2 (from Open AI) to create flag images based on varying requests (see p. 10).

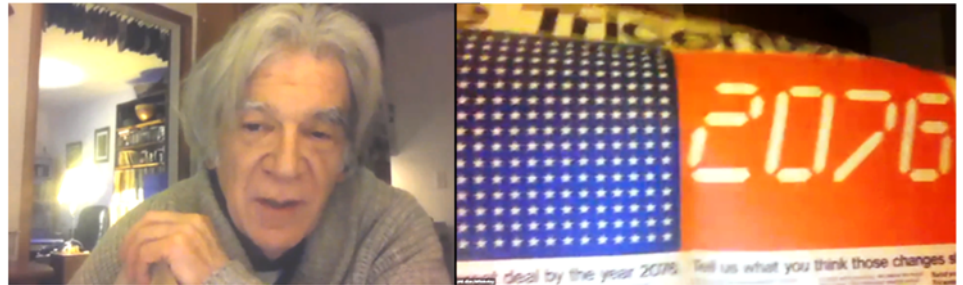
Jessie Spillers showed an entertaining YouTube video “The Worst Flags Proposed For Countries (That They Didn’t Use)”, which spurred an interesting discussion and debate.



Jessie Spillers queues up a YouTube video on flags.



Alex Zimmerman explains a mystery flag from the collection of the late PFA member Leo Gardella, destined for the classroom.



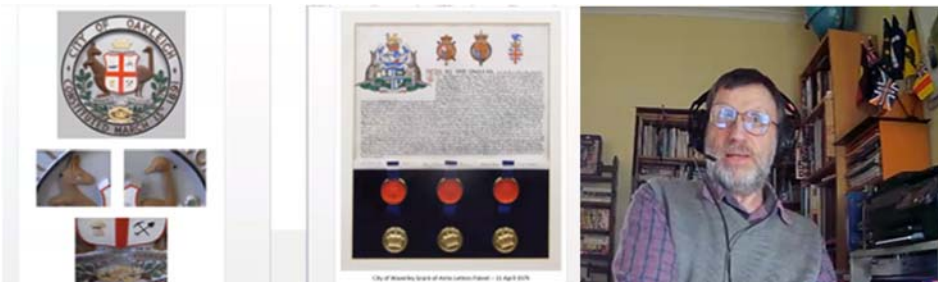
Phil Allen shows an anticipatory tricentennial U.S. flag with 300 stars.

Alex Zimmerman interpreted the symbolism of a flag promoting Nijmegen, Netherlands, from the Leo Gardella collection (see p. 6).

Phil Allen, joining from Berkeley, California, shared a speculative 1976-era “Tricentennial” U.S. flag design, a flag from the 1984 protests in Greece, and the status of his effort to spur flag adoption in Berkeley.

Ralph Bartlett, joining from Melbourne, Australia, described his ongoing research into the flags and symbols of the municipal councils in his area.

Larry Snyder, a one-time Philadelphia resident and historic preservationist, announced the recent restoration of the national flags on the Ben Franklin Parkway.



Ralph Bartlett explains the symbols of Oakleigh, Victoria.



Larry Snyder revisits Philadelphia.

Continued on next page

Ed Murphy, joining from Arnprior, Ontario, described his ongoing research into its current and former flags, unfurling two large examples.

Our next meeting, on Sunday, May 14, 2023, will be hosted in person, at the Iron Workers Museum in Lake Oswego, courtesy of Larry Snyder. Ted retained the PFA flag to deliver it to him. Members and friends—please note this is an experiment to test a mid-day weekend event to provide alternatives for some who can't join us at the regular day and time.

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



Ed Murphy points out the similarities between the old flag of Arnprior, Ontario, and the 3rd Confederate National flag



Ted Kaye shares a PCI flag destined for Manuela Schmöger.



The PFA flag anchors the meeting.

Confederate Flags on I-5

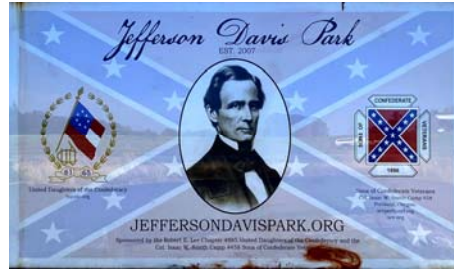
By Ted Kaye

Drivers on Interstate 5 in Washington view a startling sight to the west between exits 11 and 14, near Ridgefield. Two tall flagpoles fly a changing array of Confederate-themed and other flags along a frontage road.

There the private “Jefferson Davis Park”, a fenced-in grassy area operated by the Pacific Northwest chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, honors the president of the Confederate States of America.

The flags vary, but usually include the 1st and 3rd CSA national flags, a “Bonnie Blue” flag, a Gadsden Flag, and a U.S. flag (sometimes a “Betsy Ross” type), one or two to a pole.

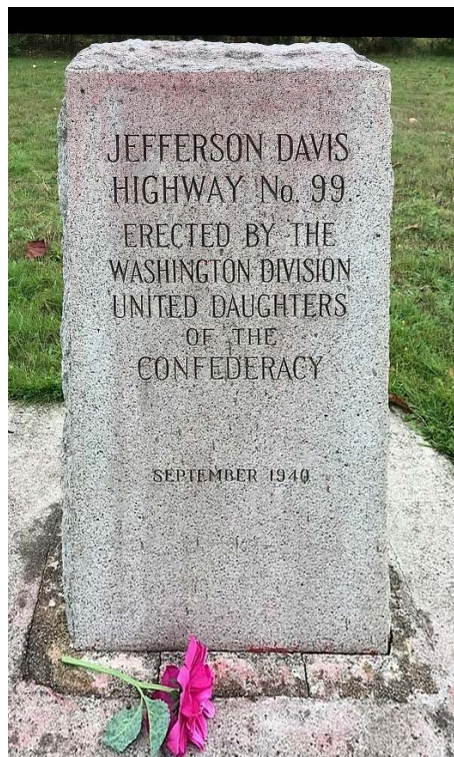
The story starts with the 1913 effort by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to dedicate a route across the southern U.S. as “Jefferson Davis Highway”, which later included Highway 99. In 1939–40, stone markers were placed at each end of the Washington segment (in Vancouver and Blaine) with unofficial state and federal approval.



The park's large interpretive panel.

After the markers' removal from public property, they eventually landed in the private park in 2007. An interpretive panel there lauds Jefferson Davis and credits the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), a hereditary association of male descendants of Confederate soldiers.

Controversy has surrounded the park and its display, with repeated vandalism, calls for removal by the NAACP, protests and picketing, and delisting of the markers from heritage designation.



The highway marker from Blaine.



3rd National CSA & Bonnie Blue.

Officials in nearby Ridgefield (ironically, founded in the 1860s as “Union Ridge”) receive frequent constituent complaints about the park, but can only respond “It’s not in our city, so we have no say over it.”

After each incident, the SCV replaces the flags and cleans up the graffiti. It has maintained that the park will not move. Observers call it everything from a “touching experience” to a “roadside abomination”.



A broad view of the park.



Betsy Ross, Gadsden, 1st National CSA.

[illegible]

April 2023

The Atlantic/Pacific and Big Stick Flags: Sobriquets for U.S. Flags

By Alden Jencks

The middle of the 1840s saw the United States extend its borders to the Pacific, making our country a continental nation.

During a single, decisive year, 1845/46, President Polk advanced his bold expansionist vision. On June 15, 1845, he signed the Oregon Treaty, which extended our northern border along 49th parallel to the Pacific coast.

The next April, Oregon Trail immigrants could now move west into internationally recognized American territory. On December 29, 1845, Congress admitted Texas to the Union—an act which led to the May 12, 1846 declaration of war on Mexico and the ensuing occupation of the Southwest.

These momentous dates fall under the tenure of the 27-star flag (July 4, 1845–July 3, 1846), with the exception of the Oregon Treaty, which was signed just two weeks before the change from 26 stars.

Former generations would have been comfortable calling the 27-star flag “The Manifest Destiny Flag”, but this will not do for us today. That phrase is as problematic as is the tidy accommodating of 27 stars on the updated flag.

I therefore suggest “The Atlantic-Pacific Flag” as a less inflammatory and jingoistic moniker.



27-Star “Atlantic-Pacific Flag”

And what are we to name the 45-star flag (July 4, 1896–July 3, 1908), under which the U.S. burst upon the international stage?

1898—Spanish-American War
1898—Hawaii is annexed
1898—Philippine War and Cuban imbroglio begin
1900—American troops fight the “Boxer Rebellion” in China
1905—Treaty of Portsmouth
1906-08—Great White Fleet sails around the world

Had “Manifest Destiny” morphed into Imperialism?

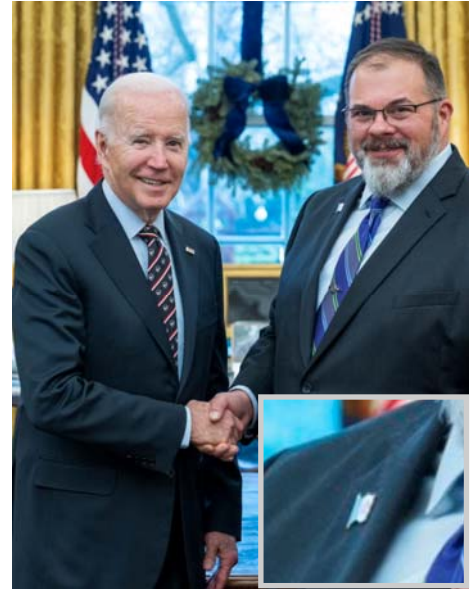
Alas, 45 is nearly as troublesome as was 27. “The Imperial Flag”? Once again, no. Let’s tone things down a bit. Let’s go with Teddy Roosevelt and call 45 “The Big Stick Flag”.



45-star “Big Stick Flag”

The is the third in a series of three proposals for sobriquets for American flags. The others ran in VT#95 and #98.

Roundup



Salem’s flag visits President Biden.

Salem, Oregon’s new flag visits the White House. Salem’s new mayor, Chris Hoy, wearing a lapel-pin Salem flag, meets President Joe Biden in December.



A Garvey Flag for Black History.

For Black History Month, at Washington School for the Blind, a flag from the collection of the late PFA member Leo Gardella has been translated into Braille and displayed in the school commons area. The flag has many dates and important references celebrating African American advances. The flag, donated to NAVA’s flags in the classroom project, has found a great location to be displayed and educate students.

Too Much Uniformity in Gender and Sexuality Flags



A variety of gender and sexuality flags at a Pride Parade in 2019.

Photo by May H. Pham via Wikimedia Commons (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flags.jpg>), CC BY-SA.

By Max Liberman

We're in the midst of a great proliferation of flags to symbolize diverse forms of sexuality and gender, and the communities and subcultures that emerge around them.

Many of these flags are proudly flown, waved, hung and even worn; many more seem to exist primarily as digital artifacts.

I recognize and celebrate the impulse that leads people to create and use flags to represent what matters deeply to them.

The designs themselves, however, often leave much to be desired. A great many are strikingly similar: plain fields of colored horizontal stripes, with specific meaning supposed to be attached to each color (see following examples).



Non-binary gender.



Abrosexuality.



Polysexuality.

These are presumably, and understandably, inspired by the iconic 6-striped rainbow flag. But it's been overdone. The notion seems to have taken hold that this *must* be the pattern for gender and sexuality flags; I believe that is unfortunate.

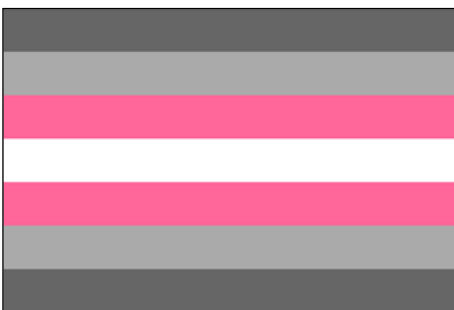
When too many designs follow this same limited model, they are not distinctive, not recognizable, and not memorable. Rather than clearly expressing identity, they risk fading into monotonous uniformity. In short, they become less effective symbols.



Male homosexuality.



Aromanticism.



Demi-girls.

A flag like this can come off as uninspired. It will too easily be confused with others. And while the detailed color symbolism may be meaningful to the designer, it will likely not be apparent to viewers—and there is nothing else unique or characteristic about the flag.

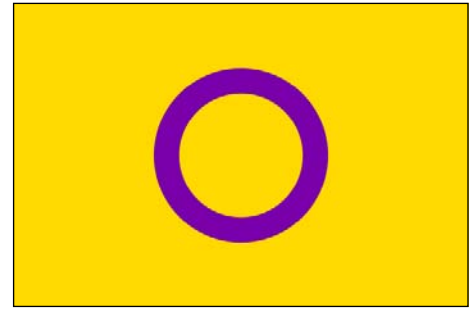
It's ironic that we see this rigid adherence to formula in a family of flags which is all about the seemingly limitless diversity among humans.

Happily, there are examples of gender and sexuality flags with more varied and iconic symbolism (see examples at right).

They stand out from the crowd. They won't be mistaken for any of dozens of other flags. They're meaningful even if someone doesn't remember what each color is supposed to stand for.

I urge prospective designers to remember that plain horizontal stripes aren't the only option. Try out something more original. Consider other emblems which will stand out better and be remembered more readily. Break the mold.

You're striving to represent something important to you: it deserves a strong and distinctive symbol.



Intersex.



Bear subculture.



Lesbianism.



Transgender.



Polyamory.

Will AI Replace Vexillographers?

By Scott Mainwaring

Image-generating computer systems using advanced, hugely data-intensive machine learning techniques (usually called AI), continue to make strides. Open AI, an extremely well-funded nonprofit R&D lab, has risen to prominence in this rapidly evolving field with its DALL-E system. DALL-E 2 is the latest revision, released last September on the website labs.openai.com. (DALL-E recalls the Pixar movie WALL-E and the surrealist artist Dalí.) Quite controversial, it bases its creations on millions of images hoovered from the internet, with no credit (or payment, obviously) to the original artists and photographers.

I was curious how DALL-E 2 would do when asked to generate images of flags. At right are my text prompt and the first four images generated in response.

It appears that flag designers don't need to fear being replaced by this strange system...yet. But DALL-E 2 did a decent job of reflecting that U.S. city flags and political flags typically have words, and made a reasonable effort with clip-art-like tree and log symbology for the requested rural Oregon flag. Even when it failed to produce a family flag, at least it incorporated relevant national flags for the English surname "Mainwaring".

Once the algorithm is taught how to make proper English words, and fed *Good Flag, Bad Flag*, watch out!



"A new city flag".



"A bad U.S. city flag".



"The lovely new flag of the state of Utah".



"The flag of a small city in Oregon that used employ lots of timber industry workers".



"A great new flag for the Mainwaring family".



"An evil racist flag used in American politics".

What's that Flag?

By Carlos Morales-Ramírez

Identify these flags and the theme that connects them.



What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

By Mike Thomas

The **wonderful** theme that connects these **seven** flags: on 7.7.2007, the “7 wonders of the modern world” were announced.

Congrats to solver (of the theme): Max Liberman.



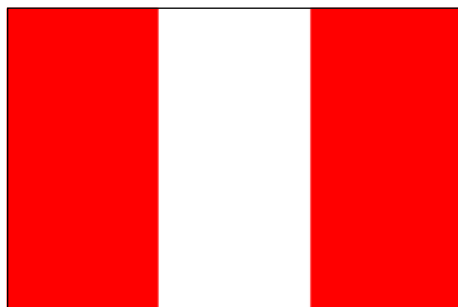
China (The Great Wall).



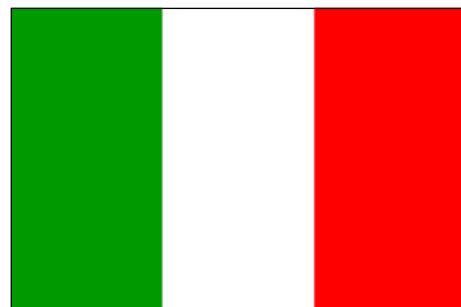
Mexico (Chichén Itzá).



Jordan (Petra).



Peru (Machu Picchu).



Italy (The Colosseum).



Brazil (Christ the Redeemer).



India (Taj Mahal).



Portland Flag Miscellany



Portland “Camp Flag”, \$160 from Oxford Pennant, Buffalo, New York.

<https://oxfordpennant.com/collections/camp-flags>

“A camp flag is a kind of flag used all around a camp, not a campsite. They are used for directional purposes, activities, marking important locations, and more.”



Soccer City, USA – Portland, Oregon
Flag patch by artist Steven Stults, 2021.

Used by fans of Portland’s MLS team, the Timbers.

Documented on: <https://patchpatrol.com/patches/soccer-city-portland-flag/>



“Portland Oregon 3D tattered waving flag illustration on Flagpole.” Isolated on white background with space on the right side—by “Birgit”.

<https://stock.adobe.com/ca/images/portland-oregon-3d-tattered-waving-flag-illustration-on-flagpole-isolated-on-white-background-with-space-on-the-right-side/296988210>

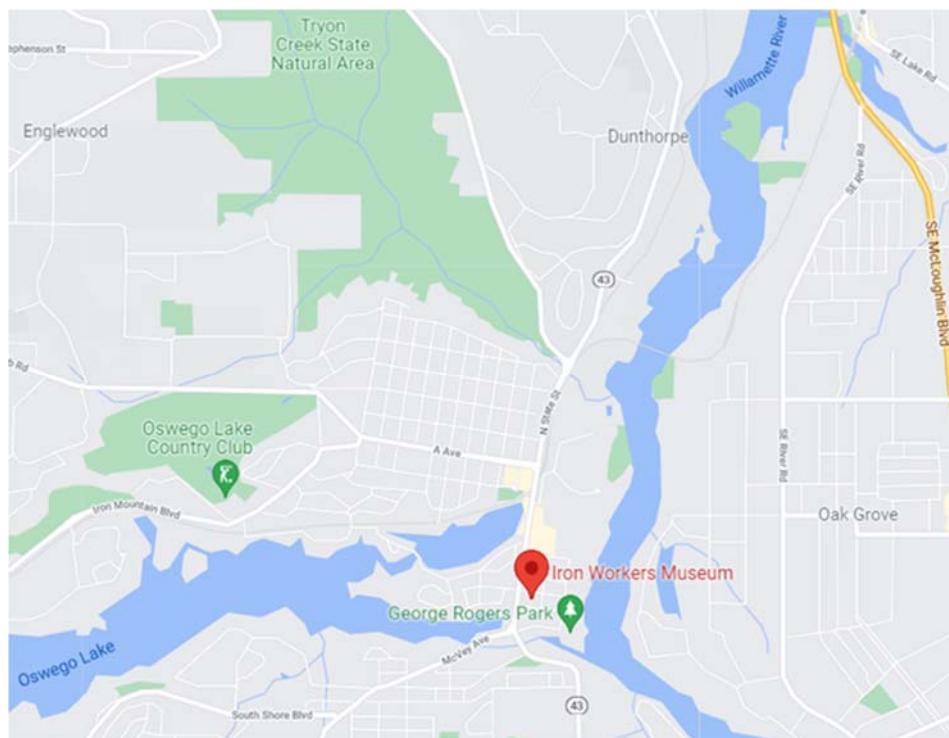
March Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 1 PM, Sunday, 14 May 2023, hosted by Larry Snyder at the **Iron Workers Museum** at **40 Wilbur St., Lake Oswego**. See map at right.

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.