"In response to the question, "What are you doing for the cause of vexillology?" (NAVA NEWS 12/74), let me report the following:

Carroll County (Illinois) is named after Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737-1832). I had suggested that his coat-of-arms, if suitable, be made the basis for a county flag. I had in mind the heraldic banners of Maryland and the District of Columbia ("heraldic solipsisms"), as I am told, but anyway...which have adopted the arms of founder and namesake, respectively. The suggestion found its way to Jay McCall, then co-chairman of the Carroll County Bicentennial Commission. As Charles Carroll was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, it seemed doubly appropriate at this time to take up my suggestion.

Upon writing a few letters, I found Carroll's arms, and judged them eminently suitable as they were. Upon the advice of heraldic authorities, the arms were differentiated by rendering the sword entirely gold, it being silver with hilt and pommel gold in the original. Whether this is a sufficient difference, I leave for others to decide - it was good enough for us!

Since the County Board made the flag official (3-14-74) the Bicentennial Committee has marketed decals, stationery, 8 x 12 flags, tile trivets, and 3' x 4' flags (the official proportions are 3 x 4). One of the large flags flies daily in front of the county courthouse; others are flown by businesses and private citizens, although not as many as we'd like due to the price ($15.) of the large flags.

I think it would be a good thing to publicize what is being done here at the grass (or corn) roots level. It has produced a resurgence of civic pride and simultaneously beautified those parts of the county where the flag is flown.

Mr. McCall did the drawing for the flag; he was the Business Manager at Shimer College (he's since moved to the Chicago area). I, myself, am an instructor in the Natural Sciences at Shimer and am serving this year as Treasurer of the Bicentennial Commission."

Dr. Albert S. Kirsch
Women and Flags: A Never Outmoded Fashion

English translation of a speech delivered by Mr. Josef Cepek at the annual meeting of the Vexillological Club in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Prototypes of almost all national flags have been sewn by women's hands, although as a rule according to designs elaborated by men (statesmen). Consequently, we find only a few women's names in historical sources dealing with the establishment of one or another national flag.

The preamble to the Constitutional Act establishing the national flag of the African Republic of Liberia is unique in that, in black and white, it is stated that the elaboration of both the design and prototype of the flag have been entrusted to Susannah Lewis, Rachel Johnson, Mary Hunter, Sarah Draper, Collinette Teage, Matilda Newport and J.B. Russworm.

Rather than from official archives, we can learn of patriotic women who made the first flag for their native countries from popular literature. In a particularly affecting manner the poet Miguel Teurbe Tolon describes the part of his very young sister Emilia in creating the Cuban national flag. During his New York exile, he often discussed the future of his native country, the last one in America, still in hands of the Spanish colonizers with other prominent emigrants - the writer Cirilo Villaverde, General Narciso Lopez, etc. Once in 1849 they spoke of what the national flag of an independent Cuba should be like. Emilia Tolon was sitting, as usual without saying a word in a corner of the room, occupying herself with her needlework and apparently paying no attention to the vehement debate of the men present. But that evening, she did not go to bed at the same time as the others did, and when she called them for breakfast the next morning, a great surprise awaited them in the dining room: there was the flag of their dreams, carefully elaborated to the last detail which had been discussed the previous evening. The same symbols are still being plausibly preserved in the present flag of the Republic of Cuba, although they have lost their original symbolism.

Not so frequent, but much more interesting for us are, of course, cases where a woman has not only made, but also designed (or at least essentially influenced) the prototype of her country's national flag. For instance, the author of Panama's national flag was the mother of the first President, Manuel Amador. She sewed together the colours of the two rival parties in a tete-beche arrangement, in order to symbolize their intermittent replacement of each other at the helm of state in accordance with the democratic laws of the political arena, the white colour of peace having been added as an admonition of mutual tolerance, plus stars symbolizing the circulation of the nation's cultural elite in the political sky.

Many legends spin round the origin of the supposed prototype of the United States flag, known as the "Betsy Ross Flag". The fearless hero of the American War for Independence, George Washington, is said to have called on that lady with considerable uneasiness. While members of the Continental Congress agreed unanimously that the flag of the nation about to be born should express above all the idea of federation, they could not agree as to whether the federation should be symbolized by the traditional variegated stripes or by a constellation of stars. At last, Washington put through a compromise: both stars and stripes. And now he awaited with perplexity what an experienced and skilled needlewoman would say about this complicated pattern. Betsy had understanding for Washington's situation. She only asked whether the stars must inevitably be six-pointed. Washington tried to explain to her the Biblical origin of this symbol, known also as the Seal of Solomon (the most intelligent statesman of all times); but when Betsy acquainted him with a simple method of producing the stars in mass by one snip of the scissors, if they were five-pointed only, he immediately gave priority to practicality over dogmatism. What a pity that statesmen do not draw lessons from simple women of the humble folk in more serious affairs too!

Women - as far as they were members of ruling dynasties, of course - could influence, sometimes even without their own endeavor, the flags of monarchical states as well.
Thus, for instance, the Brazilian Emperor Don Pedro I added to the colors of the Portuguese dynasties of Braganza (green) and Alfonso Henrique (blue and white) of which he himself was an offspring, the yellow from the black and yellow flag of the Austrian monarchy in honor of his wife, the Archduchess Dona Leopoldina of Hapsburg-Lorraine. All these colors were taken over into the new flag of the Brazilian Republic, of course, with a brand new symbolism and consequently in a different arrangement.

More active in creating the highest state emblem was Queen Isabel of Castile. She was a very pious woman, adoring above all among the saints the Evangelist John. The Biblical symbol of this Evangelist - the eagle - in her personal standard was, however, complemented by further heraldic elements when Isabel married Ferdinand of Aragon. As a matter of the medieval chivalry, the queen had in her seal a symbol beginning with the same initial letter as her husband's name (F) and the king in his seal a symbol recalling by its initial letter of the name of his wife (Y) Isabel. Isabel included in her seal a bunch of arrows (Spanish flechas) and Ferdinand - obviously as a demonstration of his grim sense of humor - a yoke (Spanish yugo). These two objects, along with the eagle, are still preserved in the Spanish national flag. According to fervid interpreters, they express the device "Unity and Discipline!" which national leaders with dictatorial tendencies in some countries are advocating even nowadays.

Either directly or indirectly, women play or may play an important role also in vexilology. Now they have a further opportunity to manifest an interest in their husband's hobby, or their own contributions to it, by attending the 6th International Congress of Vexillology to be held (on board ship) in the Netherlands, 16-20 April, 1975.

SYMBOL OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
.. note the flag of Palestine incorporated within the symbol

Please, your help is needed to make NAVA NEWS an interesting, informative line of communication. Clip and send the editor any item of vexillological content. Be sure to indicate the source. Also, short, original manuscripts may be submitted for possible publication.
I have just received the December edition of NAVY NEWS for December 1974 (the sea journey does of course mean some delay) and my attention has been drawn to the extract from The Pittsburgh Press for 1st December 1974 headed "British Navy, Church feud over flag".

I should like to correct a mistaken impression which may be obtained from this brief article.

It is perfectly true that the White Ensign is today the flag of the Royal Navy and it is also perfectly true that under the Merchant Shipping Act '89' there are very stringent penalties upon master of non Royal Naval vessels who fly the White Ensign (and it may be said also the Union Jack) at sea.

However, the position on land is quite different. There is in English Law nothing to prevent any individual flying the White Ensign anywhere he chooses on land and this applies to private houses just as much as to churches. No doubt the admiralty permits the church of St. Martins-in-Field in Trafalgar Square to fly the White Ensign because the Admiralty buildings happen to be in that parish, but there is no special law relating to that particular church.

Undoubtedly it is a breach of etiquette for private citizens or a private church to fly the White Ensign, but breach of etiquette is something quite different from breach of law. The spokesman for the Admiralty Board who said "we are the only people entitled to fly it; anyone else doing so is breaking the law", was speaking incorrectly in law.

The Admiralty Board can be strangely pedantic and they try to insist that the correct name for the "Union Jack" is the "Union Flag" basing this on incorrect historical assumptions and ignoring the fact that the Union Jack has been so called in Royal Proclamations.

Your readers may not be aware that almost precisely the same situation relates to the White Ensign relates also to the Union Jack itself. The Union Jack is a badge-flag belonging to the Queen and no individual citizen has any legal right to use it even on land. On the other hand, there is no law to prevent a citizen flying the Union Jack on land and several times in Parliament statements (which have had no legal force whatsoever) have been made saying that there is no objection to a private citizen flying the Union Jack on land. At sea, however, it is another matter and if he dares to fly the Union Jack from his private vessel, he will incur dire penalties under the Merchant Shipping Act. The study of English logic is almost as interesting as the study of flags!

Yours sincerely,

David Lister