Notes from
Grace Rogers Cooper
NAVA President

CACAPON, WV: It is my philosophy that organizations are best served by all the members. After serving you as president for the past three years, I have chosen not to run again for this important office. We need to share the work, the responsibility, and the honor. You have received your new NAVA Handbook and read the Bylaws. Please use your talents and serve on NAVA's Executive Board, if not this year, consider some future year. If you will note the list of past officers, you will see that most of NAVA's officers have served in more than one office. This is good preparation for serving as President. I have had excellent support from my fellow officers; for this I wish to thank them. And I wish to thank you, my fellow members, for your support and for the opportunity to get to know you a little better.

I will be in Trenton October 10-12, NAVA XX. I hope to greet each of you there. Attend the Annual Meeting, listen to the presentations, and share good vexillological conversation. Best wishes to all.

Sanford Lee Cooper, Grace's husband, died on July 20, 1986, just after the July/August Issue had gone to press. Although Sanford was not a NAVA member, he had attended six of the last eight Annual Meetings, in Montgomery, Salem, Pittsburgh, New York, Vancouver, and Kansas City. He was very supportive of Grace's work first as Treasurer and then as President of NAVA. We extend our sympathy to Grace.

Vexillology at the United Nations

by Nathaniel O. Abelson

The following article was originally delivered at NAVA 13 in Salem, Mass., as a banquet address. It has been slightly altered by being updated; its discussion of the origins of the United Nations flag will be published separately in THE FLAG BULLETIN.

Part 2 of 2

Mention has been made of the flags which fly in front of the United Nations Headquarters. They are of a standard size, four by six feet. For indoor use we have sets whose dimensions are three by five feet. Each day at 0800—except on Saturday and Sunday or when the weather is inclement—a team of from eight to eleven security officers hoist the one hundred and fifty nine flags. This operation usually takes from twenty to twenty-two minutes. On weekends, unless a meeting takes place, only the United Nations flags are raised: they are located apart from the line of national flags. During the daily ceremonies, these flags are raised first and lowered last. The flags are all stored in three small shelters at different points near the row of flag poles.

Except on the days when the flags of new member states are raised, all flags are flown in alphabetical order with A to the north and Z to the south. For the ceremony of the raising of the flags of new member states, poles are left vacant in front of the delegates' entrance to the General Assembly building. On the following day, all flags resume their alphabetical order. To avoid errors and to speed the process, each flag is numbered as well as identified by name at the top of the hoist. At 1600 the flags are retired. The flags used outdoors last from six to twelve months before they are considered unfit for display. When they are removed from use, they are cut up and the pieces are burned.

Replacement sets are obtained through the Purchase and Transportation Service. For quite a few years they have been obtained from Annin & Co. In the 1970's, because a number of production errors were not caught before the flags were raised, I incurred the additional assignment of checking each new flag received from the manufacturer. While this function virtually eliminated complaints from government sources, we still receive criticism from vexillologists who occasionally know about changes of flags before the representative of the states concerned have been officially informed.

It was originally determined through a drawing by lot from regional groups by the Secretary-General that the flags of the first sixteen member states, to appear in 1980, would be Bangladesh, Democratic Yemen, El Salvador, France, Guinea, Hungary, Iran, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Rwanda, Suriname, Turkey, Venezuela, Viet Nam, and Yugoslavia. This list, however, was modified because of the possibility of changes in the flags of some of these countries before the date of issue. These flags probably received closer attention than any flags previously published by the United Nations. Mr. Konopiaty and I went over them time and time again trying to insure their authenticity. The obstacles are unbelievably great, since the best source material we can obtain through official channels is often less specific than the accuracy required. Every effort is made to insure that, where there is reason to believe that count-
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tries whose flags have been chosen may make changes in their flags before the date of publication, the flags of those countries will be withdrawn for issuance at a later date.

I will conclude these lengthy remarks with a short story concerning vexillology. One day many years ago while at my office, I received a phone call from the public lobby, as I do from time to time. It was from a high school student who wished to visit my office to see what we did about flags. We do not encourage this type of inquiry except in the case of persons working towards their doctorates; we are not a public library. However, this young man persisted in a pleasant way, and I finally permitted him to come to the Map Room. That was how, in 1957, I met Whitney Smith.

His enthusiasm for his hobby was contagious and we had a pleasant exchange of ideas. He came back to the Map Room many times after that and we became good friends. The term vexillology has been in the public domain for some 35 years. While you have every right to decide upon its spelling and use within NAVA, your decision may or may not have much effect outside this organization. Regardless of what you call it, who invented it, or how you spell it, vexillology has come into its own, and what I say of NAVA at its 979 meeting was very impressive. In particular I should like to compliment Rev. Szala on the tremendous job he did in organizing that meeting. I have attended conferences which had the full support of governments behind them that were not so well organized.

Which brings me back to my story about Whitney Smith. It has been largely due to his obsession, his inspiration, and his drive that this organization exists today. It is because of him that I am here; I only regret that I did not make it to the earlier meetings to which he invited me. While I may contest that he was alone in conceiving the term “vexillology”, I would be the first to bestow upon him the title of “Mr. Vexillology.”

**My recollection is that Mr. Abelson and I discussed the term for someone interested in flags when I first visited him in June 1957. Whether “vexillologist” was under consideration at that point, I can’t recall, but I did use “vexillology” in print in the October 1959 issue of The Arab World, when my first article on flags was published in that magazine.” Whitney Smith

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Philatelic Flags

The United Nations’ seventh group of stamps depicting the flags of 16 member nations is being issued Sept. 19. With this installment, the world organization will be more than two-thirds of the way toward completing one of the epic undertakings of philately, a series depicting the flags of its 159 members.

The format for the Flag Series remains unchanged from the issuance of the first group in 1980. A sheet of 16 stamps depicts four different flags, each in a block of four. There are four sheets for the issue, for a total of 16 different flags.

Mail orders for stamps or requests for additional information should be sent to U.N. Postal Administration, Box 5900, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163-5900.

from Washington Post, Aug. 24, 1986
Report on Nava XX

Preparations are coming to a head for NAVA XX Host Don Healy and Program Chair Doreen Braverman. Final preparations for presentations, displays, tributes, dignitaries, and guest speakers are being readied for the 70-75 conference expected at NAVA XX in Trenton, New Jersey October 10 through the 12th. The Bordentown Sheraton will house the conference and a shuttle service will be used to transport them to the conference site at the Trenton War Memorial—an easy 10 to 15 minute drive away.

According to an advance, tentative schedule, NAVA XX begins on Friday, October 10, between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Bordentown Sheraton where registration and a reception is planned. This is the time to catch up with old vexillological friends and to greet new members.

Saturday morning starts out with the official opening ceremonies at the conference site with Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland welcoming the conference to his fair city. Immediately following will be the very important NAVA Annual Meeting with the Executive Board reports of the previous year’s activities. Also the new Executive Board for the 1986-1987 term will be chosen (see the Editor’s Notes for the Nominating Committee’s report). Other important organizational items will be presented with a chance for members to contribute items of importance. This is an important membership privilege. Don’t miss it!

The first presentation of NAVA XX tentatively scheduled to follow the annual meeting is the “Ross-Hopkinson Debate”. The debate intends to shed some light on the historical differences surrounding the first adopted design of the American national flag. Other presentations tentatively scheduled throughout Saturday and Sunday are: “Chadwick and the Canadian Red Ensign” by Alistair B. Fraser, “The Flag History and Symbolism of the Five Borough Flags of New York City” by Corinne Deretz, “The American Flag and the Kensington Riots of 1844” by NAVA XIX Driver Award Winner Scot M. Guenter, “Flags of the Federation, Argentina 1814-1853” by Gus Trachia, “Hi-tech Vexillology: An Inventory of the Fort McHenry Flag Collection” by former NAVA VP Nick Artimovich, “Pennsylvania’s Civil War Battle Flags” by Richard Sauer, “Names on Flags” by former NAVA President Whitney Smith who will also do a tribute to the late vexillologist Jim Marill, “Flags of Francophonia” by Kevin Harrington, “Flags of the Texas Revolution” by David Ott, a curious presentation by Phil Allen entitled “The World Color Survey and Inversionism as it Relates to Flags”, Florence Hutchinson will tell us of “The Year of the Three Flags”, and more.

For displays, I’m glad to see that Rich Kenny will bring along his always delightful collection of “City Flags of the U.S.”, Margaret Lyle will have a quilt on hand titled “State Flags”, and Martin Francis has “American Flags and the History of the U.S.A.”.

Trenton, New Jersey goes back before the American Revolution and therefore can boast some important flag sites. Among the tours of the area will be the Old Barracks, built in 1758 during the French and Indian War. There are other tours that will be scheduled (you will be delightfully surprised) but Don Healy, NAVA XX Host, explains that there are so many worthwhile tours that can be arranged and so little time to schedule them all that conference members may have to plan extra time after the conference to enjoy them.

Remember to bring your personal flags for display at the Annual Banquet. This year the guest speaker is scheduled to be Prince Haile Selassie II who will provide NAVA conference with an historical study of the flags and arms of Ethiopia representing the reign of the last emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I. His presentation should be most interesting.

The Bordentown Sheraton is on Route 206 and Dunns Mill Road off New Jersey Turnpike at Exit 7. Call 800-325-3535 for reservations. The NAVA XX rate is $42/day single and $45/day double. The registration fee is a modest $55 which includes conference materials, meals, tours, and banquet seating. Send check or money order payable to NAVA XX to: Don Healy, NAVA XX Host, 523 Centre St., Trenton, NJ 08611 today!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Since I will not seek reappointment after Trenton, I would like to thank my colleagues at the Curry Foundation for their patience and advice during my stint as your editor and especially you, the reader, for your patience and understanding when mistakes were found. Editing the NAVA NEWS has been very self-satisfying. Try it sometime......OFFICERS NOMINATED: According to the Nominating Committee, the following have agreed to be nominated as the NAVA Executive Board for the 1986-1987 term: PRESIDENT--Doreen Braverman; VICE PRESIDENT--Jim Ferrigan; CORRESPONDING SECRETARY--Mark Liss; RECORDING SECRETARY--Rich Kenny; TREASURER--Gus Tracchia. Further nominations from the floor are in order during NAVA XX's general meeting.....CONGRATULATIONS to NAVA student member Anne M. Ripper who was recently married to Michael Platoff of Manhattan, Kansas......UPDATE: Dave Ott of Texas adds other places where flags are displayed to the public (see Letters to the Editor last issue). For Confederate Flags: The Confederate Museum in Austin, TX and The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, VA. The Star of the Republic Museum in Washington, TX and the Texas State Library (Archives Division) in Austin, TX also may have some historic flags for public viewing; and the Institute of Texas Cultures in San Antonio, TX fly flags of various ethnic groups located in Texas......SEALS: Virginia license plates now feature the Great Seal of Virginia...The House Judiciary Committee held hearings August 14, 1986 to amend Title 4 of the US Code to complete the Great Seal of the United States. Remember, the Seal was adopted in 1782, but only a die for the obverse was made. H.R. 1670 would also create a die for the reverse thereby completing the Great Seal of the US. For more information, write your congressional representative......FLASH: Bob Coykendall is improving after a serious heart attack August 20. I'm told that travel to Trenton is out and that Jim Ferrigan will do his best to substitute for Bob on the "Ross-Hopkinson" debate panel. Cards and letters can be sent to Bob at 129 Main Street, Youngstown, New York 14174. We wish you well, Robert!