

NAVA NEWS

NORTH AMERICAN VEXILLOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



VOLUME XX, No. 5

JULY/AUGUST 1987

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT DOREEN BRAVERMAN

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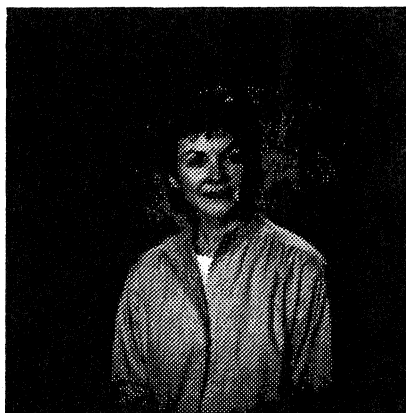
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Within a few days, this NAVA year will draw to a close in San Francisco. NAVA 21, so ably organized by Jim Ferrigan and Ted Kaye, has all the markings of a great conference. Meeting concurrently with FIAV XXI, there will be something of interest for all delegates, whether vexillologists, hobbyists or convention groupies. I look forward to meeting you in the beautiful Bay City.

Because of geography and finances, your Executive meets just twice a year: the day after a NAVA Convention and the day before. The rest of the year, we communicate by letter, telephone and occasional personal visit. It is not an ideal situation. It is difficult to plan for growth and new ideas my mail. Each officer is expected to work pretty much alone with the bylaws as his or her rulebook.

At NAVA 21, you will be asked to deliberate on a permanent address for our association. I would like us to also consider a person at that permanent address who would act as a secretariat for the membership. Membership applications, fees, letters, ideas and complaints could be directed to that person who would handle the routine transactions and pass along the other inquiries to the appropriate

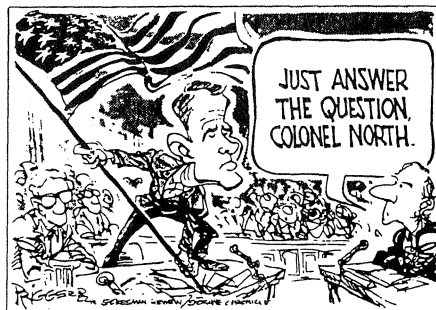
officers. We could save so much time and energy with a central office. The same time and energy could be much better spent planning for NAVA's growth and fulfilment.

Yes, there will be a cost involved. If we were lucky, there may be some member in our midst who would take on the task for a modest fee.

NAVA's membership now stands about 320 members. It has not changed much since I joined in 1981. The members who have so readily volunteered for Executive positions and committee chairs over the past twenty years deserve more than just thanks. They deserve our pledge that we will continue to plan for new ways to extend NAVA throughout North America. We should aim to grow by at least ten percent a year. If we did, at NAVA 41, we would be representing 900 members.

There will be plenty of time in San Francisco to discuss our twenty, or ten, or one year plan. NAVA belongs to you, the member. What kind of NAVA do you want?

To those of you who are unable to attend NAVA 21, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your letters and encouragement. I enjoyed serving you as president this year.

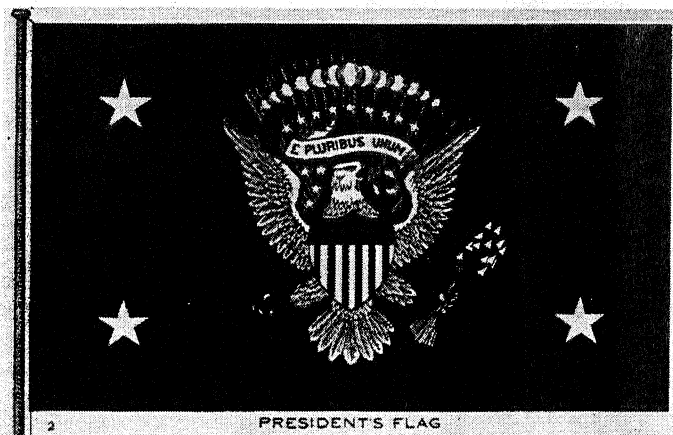


Thomas J. Carrier
2005 N. Daniel No. 301
Arlington, VA. 22201

Dear Dev

Surprises, even for vexillologists, can at times come in bunches. For me it has been a great time for vexillology of the World War I Era. First, NAVA Member Nick Artimovich uncovered a WWI Era presidential flag that measured 10 by 16 feet. Undoubtedly used as a standard when the president was aboard a naval vessel, the flag survived until this time in remarkable condition. A field of dark blue (navy) wool bunting sets off the large silk screened white eagle and four stars. Since this flag predates the Truman presidential design of 1945, the head of the eagle faces its own left (toward the arrows). Truly a magnificent piece of early flag Americana. I'm proud to say the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. has added this flag to its collection and I hope that it will be displayed sometime soon.

Also from the Wilson Era comes a White House invitation featuring the bent leg Eagle whose design is very close to the original presidential eagle as designed for President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. The invitation was issued in February of



1916, just one month before the eagle (as featured on the presidential flag described above) was changed to the fuller styled with straight legs in March 1916. This invitation was found in the autobiography of Mrs. Wilson published in the early 1920s.

Thomas J. Carrier

OFFICERS NOMINATED

Thomas J. Carrier reports that as Chairman of the nominating Committee, the following have agreed to be nominated as the NAVA Executive Board for the 1987-1988 term: *PRESIDENT* - Woody Ridgeway of Kansas; *VICE PRESIDENT* - Jim Ferrigan of California; *CORRESPONDING SECRETARY* - Don Healy of New Jersey; *RECORDING SECRETARY* - Rich Kenny of California; *TREASURER* - Gus Tracchia of New York. Nominations for these offices may be made from the floor of NAVA's General Meeting during the upcoming convention in San Francisco this August. This is an important membership privilege. Don't miss it!

Editor

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The 4" x 6" Corner

Here are some more flags to be on the lookout for when hunting down 4" x 6" flags:

Pittsburg
Metro Toronto
Newfoundland
Tonga

I hope you have luck in obtaining these latest issues.

Don Healy, 523 Centre St., Trenton, NJ 08611

THE COLLECTOR'S CORNER

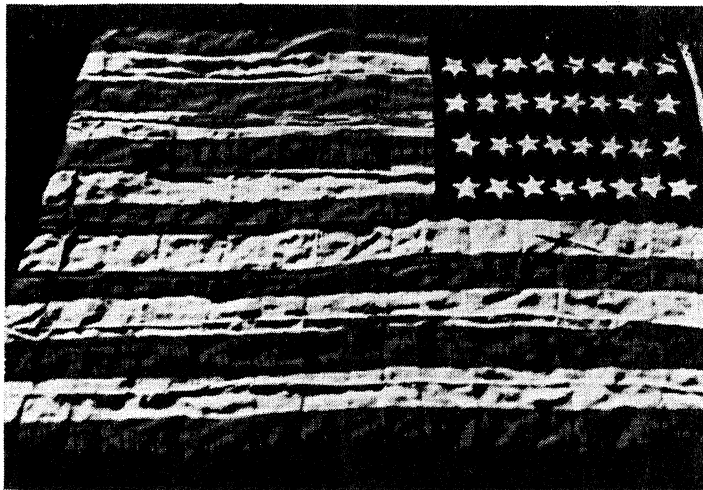
With this issue of NAVA News we continue a column designed to expose members to the world of collecting flags and flag related memorabilia. The illustrated articles will feature antique U.S. flags from the collection of Nicholas Artimovich.

Collector's Corner 5

This large 32 star flag is quite a rarity. It was the official flag of the U.S. for only one year: July 4, 1858 to July 3, 1859 (Minnesota became the 32nd state on May 11, 1858.) It is made of single ply wool bunting, with stripes hand sewn, and one set of stars hand stitched to one side of the flag. The blue field was cut out to reveal the stars on the other side.

The 32 star flag is indeed rare, as the author knows of no others in public collections. One example in private hands, also of a large size, was found to be made of two ply wool bunting – a material not found in flags until the mid 1860's. This, of course, makes the authenticity of the flag questionable.

The principal reference for the textile analysis of flags is Grace Cooper's **Thirteen Star Flags – Keys to Identification**. This 1972 Smithsonian publication is unfortunately out of print, but may occasionally be found in used book stores or public libraries.

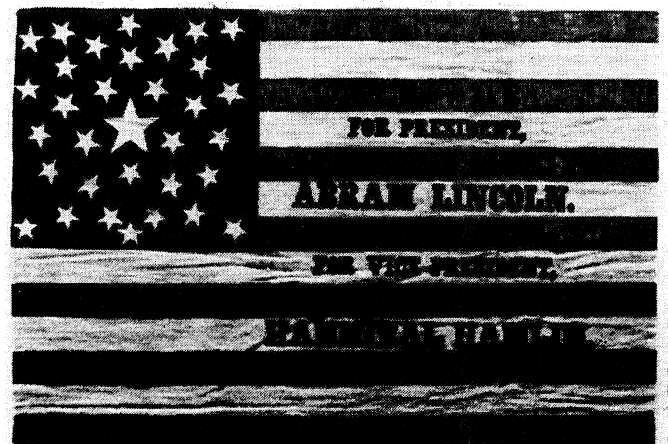


Collector's Corner 6

Flag number six in the "Collector's Corner" series is a political campaign "Flag Banner". This glazed cotton muslin flag of 33 stars is overprinted with the names of the Republican Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates of 1860. The flag measures 11" x 18" and was once part of a quilt made of numerous patriotic textiles. This accounts, in part, for the flag's excellent condition as the quilt was carefully stored for many years.

Political flag banners are among the most sought after flag collectibles. Their popularity, of course, comes from their association with well known public figures. The earliest known flag banners are from the 1840 Presidential campaign of William Henry Harrison. Flag banners are known for most other 19 century Presidential hopefuls including Henry Clay, John Fremont, Stephen Douglass, George McClellan, W.S. Hancock, and James G. Blaine, in addition to every man who was elected president during this period. By the early 20th century, Americans were beginning to realize that exploitation of the flag for political or commercial advertising purposes was improper, and the movement began to regulate the use of the stars and stripes.

The principal source of information on patriotic textiles is Herb Collins' "Threads of History" (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979 at \$60) illustrating over 1500 artifacts from 1775 to 1979.



WELCOME: We wish to welcome the following new members to NAVA:

Pierre Boutin, Longueuil, Quebec, Canada; James J. Cevasco, Greenville, SC.; Patrick Ka'ano'i, Honolulu, Hawaii; Sharon Lapioli, Riverside, CA.; Ian J. Campbell, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Van K. Herridge, Litchfield, CT.; and Martin J. O'Malley, San Francisco, CA.

CIVIC FLAGS: The William H. Cunningham civic flag collection covering both the U.S. and Canada are for sale – all are in mint condition – any members who may be interested should write for a list and prices directly to Florence S. Pollard, 3040 S.W. Periander Drive, Portland, Oregon, 97201 – Phone: (503) 223-1876 or 646-5240.

THANKS: A most heartfelt thanks is due to Mary S. Schaffer of Dettra for her valuable time and effort in the updating and preparation of the members' list as well as the mailing of our NAVA News.

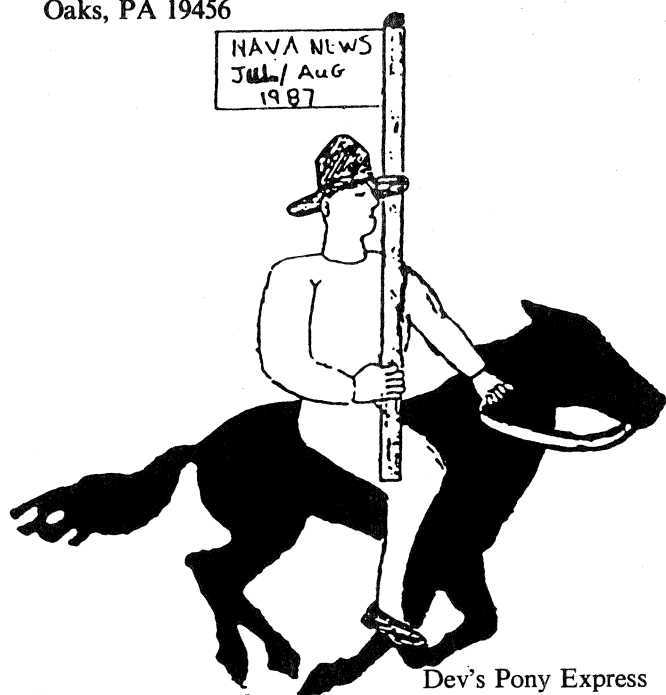
A special thank-you to my dear wife Daphne for her tremendous assistance in the preparation of the last five issues of our NAVA News.

Finally to the many members who have taken their time to send me news items for our NAVA News over the past eleven months, I thank you most sincerely, please keep up the good work. To our other members I repeat my appeal for news items so as to assist your News Editor in his job.

North American Vexillological Association
Oaks, PA 19456

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MAY 5 1987

The North American Vexillological Association was founded twenty years ago and it is perhaps an appropriate time to take a look at its achievements, shortcomings, and the future. Many people have made contributions, sometimes under difficult circumstances, and nothing said here should be interpreted as a criticism of these volunteer efforts. The writer is all too aware of the difficulties faced and certainly cannot point to the record of the Flag Research Center -- for example, with regard to regularity of publication or promptness in answering correspondence -- as an example of what NAVA should do.

NAVA is one of the oldest vexillological associations in the world and the largest membership society, with approximately 350 members. It has held meetings regularly every year, has obtained and maintained status as a non-profit institution under the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service of the United States, has published a newsletter and some other publications, and has always had a healthy financial situation. Membership is currently at an all-time high, there are few if any dissensions within the ranks of members which often make progress difficult in similar associations, and NAVA is on the verge of co-sponsoring its fourth International Congress of Vexillology (Boston 1969, Washington 1977, Ottawa 1981, and San Francisco 1987) or one-third of the total of such congresses.

Despite these undoubted successes, there are some problems in the workings of the association and some indication that members are reacting to these. It is possible that they represent a maturing in an organization now two decades old, a readiness to go on to a new stage of development now that the fundamentals have been clearly established. The following observations are based in part on comments received from members, discussions with non-NAVA members, and personal observations of the author deriving from attendance at all NAVA meetings and all International Congresses of Vexillology. These comments are considered under four headings -- the personality of NAVA, its publications, its administration, and its goals.

Personality: Perhaps more than any other vexillological association, NAVA has brought people of different interests -- flag scholars, flag makers, flag designers, flag collectors, and flag hobbyists -- into equal participation in the organization. Each group has learned from the others and tendencies which might have made NAVA a small elitist group or a trade association or a hobby club have been largely avoided. The quality of presentations and attendance have improved. Nevertheless there is room for improvement and there are dangers in being overly satisfied with the quality of the meetings.

Between annual meetings, NAVA does not make a very strong statement, nor does it outside its own sphere of activities. The voice and standing of the association in the world of vexillology as a whole is much lower than that of associations and institutions far smaller in size and wealth. A number of important flag historians in the US and Canada are not members of NAVA or do not participate regularly; recruitment is frequently talked about in terms of quantity rather than of quality. At times the scholars in the association almost seem to be in a position of performing for the benefit of the other members, as if satisfaction with the annual meeting rather than increasing the amount and quality of knowledge about flags were the purpose of the association.

As part of its tax-exempt status, the association has a legal as well as a moral commitment to educational and scientific goals. If the Internal Revenue Service were to perform one of its periodic investigations, could NAVA justify its activities and budget as warranting continuation of the tax exempt status? The balance between what is done for two and one half days in October and what is done the rest of the year, between contributions to enhancement of vexillology as a science vs. meeting the expectations of flag hobbyists, as well as the concrete results both nationally and internationally obtained from budgetary expenditures might well cause some problems for the association if reviewed objectively by outside investigators. In a word, NAVA should not and cannot try to survive as a "flag club" no matter how successful it is in that capacity.

Publications: Perhaps the most striking difference between NAVA and other members of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations is to be found in their publications. The Belgian vexillological society, which has 24 native members, has produced a monthly newsletter for over six years, each issue of which (generally running to six pages) contains articles and other documentation of substance on current and historic flags, questions and answers by readers, and bibliographical notes on publications from other parts of the world. It also has produced in addition an annual, running over 100 pages each year for the past ten years, filled with scholarly articles on all kinds of vexillological topics. The Dutch, Finns, Spanish, Swiss, British, Australians, and others -- even the Catalonians -- have likewise produced journals and newsletters of consequence on a regular basis.

NAVA NEWS has played an important function for the organization -- making members who are geographically scattered in the largest territory encompassed by any vexillological association feel that they are part of a group, informing them

of meetings and officers and exhibits and everyday occurrences relating to flags. Unfortunately, publication schedule of NAVA NEWS has not always been satisfactory, thus defeating the purpose of keeping the organization together between annual meetings and stimulating interest in participation at those meetings. Too few individuals have done too much of the work in producing NAVA NEWS, making it difficult for the president to take the editor to task when obligations are not met.

The reprints of out of print flag material issued by NAVA have been useful, but none has appeared for many years and the membership lists can scarcely be considered as contributions to scholarship. Since NAVA conducts no research as an organization, maintains no museum or exhibit, funds no scholarship or outside research projects, and has no teaching nor outreach programs, publications are a vital part of the definable commitment the association has to educational and scientific goals.

The fact of the matter is, NAVA should be publishing or sponsoring the publication of a journal of North American vexillology. Not to do so is to suggest that it is not interested in the attempt since clearly more than enough subject matter for such a journal exists. The success of FLAGSCAN indicates that both the talent and material exist within NAVA to do something about this. There need be no conflict with THE FLAG BULLETIN. Although it is published in North America, THE FLAG BULLETIN is an international journal in character and content which in any event can publish only a small fraction of the potential material available.

Administration: By and large the Executive Board of NAVA has worked smoothly over the past two decades, but certain recent trends are ominous. More than once an officer has failed to carry out his responsibilities, causing loss of membership and of records, frustration on the part of members, and potential crises for organizational stability. Unfortunately, these situations were not dealt with decisively, possibly in part in recognition of the fact that in a volunteer-run organization the administration has to be cautious in criticizing those who fail to do their duty. Recently, also, there have been frequent changes in membership of the Executive Board, placing a high premium on short term requirements to the detriment of long term goals. From the very beginning of the organization committees have been ineffectual and the number of individuals both willing and able to serve in administrative positions has been quite limited.

Ultimately, there is a limit to what elected officers can do if membership contributes little more than annual dues. If only a certain number are willing to organize meetings, provide lectures, and serve as officers the daily "mechanics"

prevent attention being given to other objectives. Moreover, people of talent become frustrated in dealing with paper work which only allows the organization to exist rather than to act and move ahead.

NAVA has been fortunate in having real vexillologists as president throughout its history. Others have served faithfully in positions that do not require the knowledge and vision absolutely essential to the president, but perhaps the flag scholars have been called on to do too much that could have been handled by others. If the annual meeting had a chance to select an Executive Board of three persons who clearly spelled out in advance their intended objectives, it might well be possible to put such technical functions as membership renewal notices, accounts, dealing with printers and post office, etc. in the hands of a paid secretary serving at the pleasure of the Executive Board. This would free the members of the board for the most important tasks facing them -- publication, the annual meeting, and long-term development.

Goals: Implicit in all that has been said so far is the idea that NAVA should have a clearly stated and agreed upon objective, a standard by which its success and that of its officers can be measured. This would not replace the statements made in Art. 2 of the NAVA Bylaws but would expand and make more concrete their meaning. None of our achievements would be jeopardized by such an approach; rather, it would mean moving forward to a new level with more ambitious undertakings. Different groups within the organization which now have feelings about priorities or have not come to grips with such questions would be encouraged to frame and set forth publicly their perceptions of what NAVA is all about.

Perhaps lulled by the many positive characteristics it can claim, NAVA has been subject to drift in the past few years. Membership dues have been increased without any clear statement of purpose; international contacts are virtually nil; emphasis is put on the annual meeting while relatively little attention is paid to other aspects, real or possible, of the association; no attempt is made to state clearly what it is NAVA would like to achieve in five years let alone in twenty. Almost no consideration has been given to the important implications of the founding and growth of the Canadian Flag Association nor to the possibility of a review of NAVA status by the Internal Revenue Service.

Conclusions: To the degree that other members feel that one or more valid points have been made here, they will want to consider concrete action. Obviously,

the questions are important ones for all members regardless of their feelings, so the forum for discussion should be as wide as possible. To this end, the following recommendations are made and will ^{be}/brought up at the annual meeting of NAVA in San Francisco in August:

1. Not later than 1 October 1987 NAVA NEWS shall print the results of whatever discussions are held at San Francisco of NAVA's future. After all different views have been outlined, comments and further suggestions from all members of the association will be solicited, to be sent no later than 1 January 1988 to a special Committee on NAVA Goals. The topics to be covered should include (but not necessarily be limited to) the advantages and disadvantages of NAVA's current personality, long term goals which should be worked towards including possible new publications, and structural changes which might be required.
2. The Committee on NAVA Goals will survey all of the material submitted and submit a written report to be published by NAVA NEWS no later than 1 May 1988. Further comments, additions, and changes will be solicited from members, to be sent to the committee no later than 1 July.
3. The Committee shall submit a written report to be sent to members with the notice of the annual meeting for 1988, including any proposed amendments to the bylaws. The Committee report shall make specific recommendations on all points raised by members as part of a coherent plan which would be implemented -- if approved by the annual meeting -- immediately. That plan should look forward to a minimum of five years, specifying goals for the association and means of obtaining them. It should be made clear that candidates for the Executive Board are expected to indicate their intention to work towards those goals or to seek to have them modified and that regular progress reports should be submitted to the membership regarding any programs so adopted.

Dr. Whitney Smith