Alaska Native Village Banners

Also in this issue:
How I Used Flags in the Classroom • Current E & M Award Flags
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Phil Allen’s New Flag
NAVA Member Phil Allen has a new flag as of June, 2006, at least the third since NAVA started the Member Flag Registry. The black field signifies that “We are all we have.” The blue circle represents the Earth; the gold crescent, Sol, life’s Earth animation. The gold Greek letters Pi and Alpha mean “Only Phil Allen can save us, but at a price (gold & chicks).”

Members are encouraged to send in their personal flag designs for inclusion in the NAVA Member Flag Registry. Send your photos, drawings and descriptions to dbm@nava.org or mail to NAVA Member Flag Registry, PMB 225, 1977 N Olden Ave Ext, Trenton NJ 08618-2193 USA.

THE CANADIAN CLUB OF NEW YORK, INCORPORATED

SOTHEBY’S FLAG DAY SALE BREAKS RECORDS
The four flags illustrated in NAVA News #189 sold on Flag Day for a record $17.38 million, far exceeding the estimates for these flags. The actual hammer price was $15.5 million plus commission of 20% of the first $200,000 and 12% of the rest. The Flag of Sheldon’s Horse, 2nd Connecticut Light Dragoons sold for $12.33 million and the three flag set of the 3rd Virginia Detachment sold for $5.05 million.

Jeff R. Bridgman of Jeff Bridgman Antiques, who specializes in antique American Flags, said, “The flag market will be affected by the results of the sale, but not to the degree that some might think. It may or may not raise prices, but it will certainly stand to validate high prices at future sales when they occur. My hat’s off to Sotheby’s; it was a huge success on their part. The catalogue was outstanding and the media coverage was huge. It was a great risk in my opinion to publish such lofty estimates without previous results for validation, to reassure new and past players. But they came through and made it a reality.”

“The single flag with Connecticut and New York relationships (appealing to the great population in these two states with the means to buy it), a very visual flag in an easy size to display, with the right colors to appeal to patriotic collectors, and being more recognizable as a precursor to the Stars & Stripes, would likely far outweigh its counterparts. The South Carolina flags were less visual, more fragmentary, larger, and simply less marketable. Three items instead of one might seem better at first, but they require more wall space and that’s actually a big drawback. The single flag could find wall space much easier and, sadly enough, that’s a reality of selling, no matter how great and historically important an object is. If you are going to sell it for a lot of money, it better be decorative and it better not be huge or it will take a lot more effort to place it.”

CHICAGO F.D. FLAG
The flag of the Chicago Fire Department is reminiscent of the city’s flag. It has a white field with a light blue horizontal stripe in the center that bears the four six-pointed stars from the city flag, but in white. In the center and overlapping the white areas and the light blue stripe is the monogram of the department, “CFD”, in ornate, entwined, Victorian script. The letters are gold outlined in black. Above and below are two red horizontal stripes interrupted in the center of the red stripes are the words “CHICAGO FIRE” on the top stripe and “DEPARTMENT” on the bottom stripe. These words are written in plain block letters of red on a white ground.

ICE FLAG & BEAR
An image of the US Flag along with that of a polar bear was made on a melting ice floe in Scoresbysund, East Greenland on July 4, 2005 by Bernard Mcleod (pictured), a crew member of the Greenpeace MV Arctic Surprise. The vessel was in Greenland waters for research. The image of the bear was included because its environment is threatened due to climate change. The flag is a call for the United States to join the other forces battling global warming. Photo by Steve Morgan ©2005 Greenpeace.

Cover photograph by Ted Kaye. Centerfold courtesy Brenda Holden.
Dear NAVA-ites,

Those of you who attended NAVA 39 in Nashville last year may remember that I presented a 4-part Venn diagram showing the different interests of NAVA members. While all NAVA-ites are interested in flags (presumably, or else they wouldn’t be NAVA-ites!), we seem to comprise four different kinds of interests: researchers, collectors, “evangelists” (i.e., activists who promote flag design and use), and corporate members who make and sell flags. Of course, many members are involved in more than one of these activities. The point is that NAVA exists to support them all.

Although I’ve dabbled in the collectors’ and evangelists’ worlds, my primary interest remains in research. This is the purpose for which NAVA was originally founded in 1967, and it remains one of our most visible and important functions. Articles in Raven and NAVA News are cited as reliable sources in print media and in online reference forms such as Wikipedia. As Whitney Smith is fond of saying, our publications are “for the ages,” and will be referred to by researchers all over the world long after all of us have departed the scene. They will be referred to by the general public—people who write popular literature and create web sites dealing with the American flag and other flags, even though they do not have specialized knowledge of vexillology.

I thought about this while reading the fine article in NN 190 about Charles Kissel’s flag collection. The centerfold, with its wonderful display of variations on the US flag, was a beautiful piece of work and has deservedly received many kudos. What made me uneasy, however, was that some of the variations were almost certainly not “real”—they were based on secondary sources of dubious authenticity, or were proposals that were never adopted. I don’t think that this will confuse serious researchers—after all, the article did include a caveat that “Some of the early documents are artistic interpretations that may or may not have existed as actual flags.” However, I doubt that the general public will pay much attention to this, and it wouldn’t surprise me if some future web site stated that the “John Paul Jones colors” or the “Bowles Flag” were real flags because they appeared in a NAVA publication. I’m sure that everyone is familiar with the notorious “Flags of 1775-1777” color plate in George Preble’s history of the American flag. Many of the flags in that color plate almost certainly never existed, but they’re assumed to be factual nowadays because they appeared in an authoritative source back in 1872. We need to make sure that NAVA does not inadvertently perpetuate similar misinformation.

On the other side of the coin, it was very exciting to be able to publish Norman Fuss’s article on the so-called Simcoe watercolor. This painting has been cited as a primary source for Revolutionary War flags in a number of publications, and Mr. Fuss’ research provided what appear to be some much-needed corrections to previous interpretations of the painting. We were also privileged to receive permission from the Williamsburg Foundation to reproduce the entire painting. Details have appeared in other publications (for example, Furlong and McCandless’s So Proudly We Hail!, but the entire original is hard to come by.

We just had a fine 40th annual meeting in Reno—it was good to see many old faces and also some new ones. We’ll have a detailed wrapup in a future NN, but I wanted to mention one item that was discussed at the business meeting. Membership dues for active members have not increased since 1990, and the board believes that we will need to raise them in the near future. There are two immediate reasons for this: we want to continue to produce NAVA News to the standards of the last three issues, and we want to professionalize our printing and mailing operations. The membership in Reno gave us the authority to increase the dues up to a maximum of $40 (they’re currently $30 for active members), but the actual increase will not necessarily be that much—it will be based on our best estimate of how much revenue we really need.

Vexillologically,  
Peter Ansoff, President  
pres@nava.org
Each day of our lives has importance in history. Flags are a part of that everyday life, yet most students, not to mention the general public, know little of the history, symbolism, and usage of flags: generally they are only attracted by the colors and motion of flags. Flags are powerful symbols. They tell us a great deal about the nations (and the subdivisions within those nations), territories, political, ideological and religious movements, and organizations that use them. Flags represent the aspirations and lives of people through the pages of history. They emphasize a people’s past, its heroes, its culture, its political and social systems, its hopes, and aspirations for the future. Flags are among the oldest forms of identifying peoples, as well as being a method of communication. Therefore, they need to be studied. Important questions need to be asked: what are the meanings of the symbols and inscriptions? What is the significance of the colors? How are they used? Knowing about the flags of a historic period gives better insight into primary source materials which reference those flag. Why should educational institutions ignore this subject? Is it not better to introduce vexillology to students throughout their academic careers? The use of flags in a social studies classroom (especially history, political science, and geography) is an ideal venue to begin such a study.

Over the course of a teaching career that spanned nearly four decades I quickly realized that flags can kindle curiosity, trigger discussion and research, as well as be a great stimulus. This is true at the junior high, high school, college, university, and graduate levels of education among students of all ages. The flags I used can have relevance not only to the lesson of the day, but also to current events. When I taught, I found myself many times saying out loud: “Not that I planned it this way but . . .” and point to the flag being displayed as it ties into the lesson or a current event.

I brought both current and historic United States and world flags to class. They can be purchased in 4” x 6” size mounted on a plastic staff. If the flags you desire are not available, they can be made on poster board in varying sizes. Of course paper or poster board flags are the least expensive to produce; teachers can even have students construct them as part of a project (they should be of uniform size). The poster board sized flags can be displayed around the room with flags being changed as new topics and different periods of history are introduced. Poster board flags can be stored and re-used the following year.

Another feature that I incorporated in my teaching that utilized flags was the use of overhead transparencies. Today, these are easy to create and produce with computers. I gathered a reference set of flag graphics by downloading and scanning them. I used graphics whenever possible in creating history-related transparencies. This is due to the fact that most students are attracted to visual images quicker than text. For example, in a World History class I displayed a transparency I had made showing the use of the crescent moon and stars so prevalent in many Islamic flags, during a study of that religion. I inserted the appropriate flags (of that period) at the top of any visual, above the text, that dealt with topics relating to alliances, war, treaties, land cessions, and other events. These transparencies add life to the display of the text on that subject when produced on a color printer.

When I first integrated flags in my teaching, I had holes drilled into the front edge of my podium into which I could insert 4” x 6” flags mounted on plastic staffs. If a wooden podium is unavailable, a piece of a 2-by-4 will do. In teaching a lesson about World War I, the multiple holes allowed me to add flags progressively as nations entered the conflict. The use of flags as visual cues reinforced what parties were involved and which nations were the Allies and which were the Central Powers. With these smaller flags it would be necessary to hold them unfurled so that students could see the design and coloring of the flag involved.

Many current 4” x 6” flags, including U.S. historic flags, are available from most flag dealers, though not all. Research will enable any educator to locate dealers that are more specialized and have a larger stock of those flags. A good source of modern world flags is the gift shop at United Nations Headquarters in New York. They can ship an order if a teacher can’t get to the shop. What I found over the years is that some nation would announce a change in flag design (e.g. the Eastern European nations and former parts of the Soviet Union) and the U.N. shop would still have the old version for sale for as long as stock remained. Once gone, the older versions are more difficult to locate. It is impor-
tant to keep abreast of flag news to catch the changes. If possible, teachers should ask their library to subscribe to publications such as NAVA News, *The Flag Bulletin*, and *Flagmaster* (UK).

Sometimes, locating older, more historic, or previous versions of world flags can be more difficult. One solution is to make a flag needed by purchasing plain white 4” x 6” flags and using permanent colored markers and a ruler. These plain flags can be found in bulk to reduce costs. For example, I was able to produce the Spanish Republican flag (for my teaching of the Spanish Civil War) and the flags of Katanga, South Kasai, and Biafra, when teaching about the Congolese Civil War (1960-65) and Nigerian Civil War (1967-70). Any good flag book can give a teacher the design patterns and coloring necessary. Of course you can check Flags of the World at [www.fotw.net](http://www.fotw.net) or a host of other web sites for further information.

While using smaller flags in the classroom is effective, I realized that full-sized flags give more options to a teacher. Students sitting in the rear of the room did not readily see the flag involved, unless I walked around the room waving it and holding it out for display. While that is a solution to the size problem it does entail a good deal of time, especially if making a special point about the design and coloring of the flag. Given the short time allotted to most subjects, this problem is hard to overcome. That is why I moved “up” in my vexillological display techniques.

For maximum effect, full-sized 3’ x 5’ flags are ideal. I acquired two break-apart flag staffs. These are made of aluminum and are usually on sale with a U.S. flag around Memorial Day, Flag Day (June 14), and the Fourth of July in most outlets. The break-apart feature (into three parts) makes these staffs easy to store in a classroom and quick to assemble for the lesson of the day. I mounted the bracket holders for the flags on opposite sides of the front of the classroom just a bit above the floor, careful to not block the classroom door. In advance of the students’ arrival, I propped the flags on staff in a corner near the teacher’s desk. Students did not usually notice them until I grabbed a staff and began walking and waving the flag across the front of the classroom. This technique really grabbed the students’ attention. The flags captured the interest of virtually everyone in the classroom. After waving the flag, I inserted it into the bracket holder where it remained in full view for the duration of the lesson. Display and symbolism of specific parts of the design are easier and of course, much larger to boot. An example of this is when I taught about the establishment of Fort Ross, California in 1812 by the Russian-American Company. The same mini-lesson could be taught again when discussion turned to the U.S. purchase of Alaska in 1867 from Russia. With the full-sized flag, I was able to hold up the banner and have the students read the caption under the double-headed eagle that was displayed. I did not tell them what flag this was. When I quickly instructed them that in the Cyrillic alphabet “C” is “S” and “K” is “C”, the students were able to guess what the inscription said.

As an unintended bonus, many students, after seeing various historic flags of the world as well as the subtle changes of more current flags, would frequently ask: “Well, the U.S. flag has never changed its flag since 1777, has it?” Of course they forgot (and those born after 1960 never realized) that our nation’s flag has changed 27 times! (A cautionary note to teachers: I do not recommend waving full-sized versions of the flag of the Nazi Third Reich or the Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America. Due to the political meaning attached to these banners today, it would be offensive to many in the audience. However, use of smaller versions of these flags in historical context, with other World War II era and Civil War era flags, has proven to be accepted). Other applications of flag use in schools include having the drama or play-production teacher use the correct flags in any school play or production that warrants them. English teachers should be encouraged to use flags in their teaching of American and English literature, as well as the great classics, for example, those of Alexandre Dumas or Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Student involvement in the use of flags in the classroom came about as a result of my dressing up in period costume to teach a particular historic period. Whether as a Viking (Raven flag), a Spanish conquistador (Castle & Leon or Spanish raguly cross of Burgundy); a colonial protestor (Sons of Liberty), a Revolutionary-era minuteman (a host of U.S. historic flags to choose from), Confederate soldier (Stars and Bars), Union soldier (33, 34, or 35 Stars U.S.), World War I or World War II eras (48 stars U.S.), or the Gulf War (50 stars U.S.), I would have a student flag bearer precede my entrance into the classroom (often with accompanying period music–via boom box) carrying and waving the appropriate flag. The student bearer would then insert the flag into the flag bracket and I made my entrance in costume. It had, as you

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THE FLAG OF THE SAENGER THEATRE
by Ralph Holberg

The Saenger Theatre in Mobile, Alabama, opened in 1927 and was the 61st vaudeville-moving picture house built by Julius and Abraham Saenger during the early 20th century. Their “flagship” was the New Orleans theatre (not far from Shreveport, their home), with its ornate interior, star-spangled ceiling, elaborate chandeliers and other decorations. Mobile’s Saenger was its equal in splendor, but somewhat smaller, and recently saved from the wrecking ball by the University of South Alabama. After some restoration the University transferred the Saenger to the city, and a non-profit corporation was formed to manage it and accomplish long-needed renovations. The new company, Centre for the Living Arts, also acquired a nearby venue for an art gallery.

The Saenger roof bears a single flag pole over a canopied entrance, from which no flag has flown since early days (if one was ever flown). In February, 2006 the Centre’s president asked me to design a flag for permanent display from the pole. (Access is difficult and dangerous, so that Old Glory and subordinate flags cannot easily be raised and lowered.) I re-visited the theatre, scene of many a movie of my distant youth, and took photos inside and out, focusing mainly on original motifs and color schemes. An emblem S, formed like a fanciful sea creature, old gold on crimson, appears throughout, and deep reds and golds predominate. (The most remarkable features are original crystal chandeliers still in use.) I discussed with the president the elements of good flag design, issues of obverse-reverse “symmetry,” color standards, etc. After reviewing my photos and the theatre’s website, I developed 9 color designs which she circulated to her staff. The one selected included a version of the Centre’s logo (9 roundels, 3 rows of 3) centered on the top half, with two recumbent S figures, head to head, below and along the length of the fly. The logo is in gold, except the center roundel is white. The S figures are gold. The field is a deep red. After revisions to the sea creatures we settled on a final design.

Using two S shapes was an effort to solve the letter’s front-back problem and, since there were two Saenger brothers, some added symbolism. Although a departure from the usual standards of geometric simplicity, the design seemed a good solution for a flag of a local institution with rather established symbols. The manufactured flag was received by the Saenger in April, 2006, and it has been shown in the Centre’s newsletter.

Interestingly, Mobile’s Saenger is across the street from the one-time home of artist Nicola Marschall, credited by many with the design of the “Stars and Bars,” the first flag of the Confederacy, for whom there is an historic marker facing the theatre. See Raven 12, p. 11.
ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE BANNERS
by Brenda Holden

An exciting new display of over 40 colorful banners welcomes visitors to the airport in Fairbanks, Alaska. Hanging in the main terminal lobby from a two-story-high ceiling, they represent Native villages with strong images and diverse designs (see cover). First installed for Native events in mid-2005 on a bridge spanning the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks, they now form a permanent and meaningful fixture in central Alaska’s largest airport.

The Fairbanks Banner Project began as a community effort organized by Information Insights, a Fairbanks consulting firm, and Tanana Chiefs Conference, a regional Native non-profit corporation serving 42 villages in Interior Alaska.

The idea for the project first surfaced during a 2003 meeting of tribal representatives facilitated by Information Insights. During that event, a collection of colorful tribal banners of various shapes and sizes had been hung for the occasion. Someone commented that it would be nice to be able to enjoy the banners beyond special meetings—what if they could be displayed on the bridge that could be seen from the meeting room? From that innocent comment came an intensive project that took over two years and eventually involved city, borough, and state governments, Native organizations, the chamber of commerce, the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, airport staff, sponsors, media, and people from all walks of life who pitched in to help out. The goal: to create a replicable set of banners with distinctive yet consistent designs, forming a complete set that could be displayed on the Wendell Street Bridge. Each banner would identify the Interior villages, show a representative symbol using artwork designed by the village community, and name the sponsoring business or organization.

Lining a downtown bridge with banners had three purposes: to welcome village residents to Fairbanks, to let tourists know that Fairbanks is the hub of Interior Alaska, and to welcome delegates to the statewide Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in October of 2005.

Buddy Brown, president of Tanana Chiefs Conference, described the project best when he stated that “It’s a bridge across the river but now it’s also going to be a bridge across cultures”. Challenges along the way involved banner design, severe weather conditions, sponsorship development, and bridge restrictions.

Village leaders were asked for artwork that would be placed in a 36-inch circle in the center of the banners. Over half of the villages submitted artwork that ranged from photos of metal sculptures to pencil drawings and to children’s art done in crayon or markers. In some cases when no artwork was submitted, design elements from existing tribal banners were incorporated into the new banner design. Artwork for the final six banners came from examples of beadwork...
The banner project is a community effort organized by Information Insights and Tanana Chiefs Conference with support by resolution from the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association – Main Street Fairbanks.

The banners are arranged by subregion: Yukon-Koyukuk, Upper Tanana, Upper Kuskokwim, Yukon Tanana, Lower Yukon and Yukon Flats.

Each banner includes the name of an Interior Alaska village, artwork designed by the village community, and the name of a local sponsor. The banners are intended to welcome village residents to Fairbanks, to tell tourists that Fairbanks is the hub of Interior Alaska, and to welcome the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention to Fairbanks.
The owner explained who produced the artwork and in which village, assuring that each village had original work displayed on its banner.

The task of constructing durable banners that could survive Alaska’s harsh winter and summer conditions went to The Flag Factory (Main Street Banner U.S.A.), of Carpinteria, California. Vice President Jonathan Alburger and his talented staff spent considerable time making sure that the banners were produced in a consistent format while honoring the artistic designs submitted. Last-minute changes to background colors required express shipping of bolts of fabric from other parts of the country in order to meet the delivery deadline. Alburger utilized a combination of woven mesh with vinyl on a base of woven acrylic for the unique cross-fabric banner creations. This “hybrid” of fabrics allowed the logos to stand out, while paying particular attention to color retention and strength in the face the windy and inclement Alaskan weather. The results dazzle.

Banner sponsors donated an average of $750 each, other organizations contributed more. The total project cost exceeded $40,000, not counting all the time and services donated by local organizations. The generous businesses ranged from large corporations, such as Cellular One and Wells Fargo Bank, to small firms such as Gabe’s Truck & Auto and Big Ray’s (an outdoor clothing store). Other sponsors included unions, the hospital, and local governmental agencies. Additional support for the project came from the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Fairbanks Downtown Association/Main Street Fairbanks.

The 42 banners were hung on 22 July 2005 from the Wendell Street Bridge in downtown Fairbanks, just in time for three major events: the annual Golden Days Festival hosted by the chamber of commerce, the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, and the Midnight Sun Intertribal Powwow. They hung parallel to the bridge’s span (as if on a clothesline), so they could be seen by motorists as well as river traffic (boaters in the summer and dog-mushers, snow-machiners, and skiers in the winter). The city’s public works department, with the leadership of Mayor Steve Thompson, provided phenomenal support. The city’s electrical contractor, Grasle Electric, used its bucket truck to place the banners on the bridge.

The next day the Fairbanks News-Miner headlined its story “Banners symbolically bridge cultural divide”, writing: “A light breeze and cloudless sky offered a perfect backdrop Friday along the Wendell Street Bridge as it was adorned with banners representing Interior Alaska villages in a symbolic bridge of the rural and urban divide.”

Later in 2005 the banners moved to the Fairbanks International Airport, a site with its own regulatory and logistical challenges. First came getting approval to use the air space, then determining the grid for the false ceiling so the banner wires would be centered under the ceiling support wires. The banners had to avoid the mounted animal heads on the side wall, the light fixtures in the ceiling, the car rental desks, and the plane that hangs in one end of the lobby. Finally, the hardware to attach the banners had to be earthquake-proof. On the day the banners were going up, one person came through and noticed the commotion. Suddenly she said with excitement, “That’s my village—I recognize the design”.

The banners hang in groups representing subregions of the Alaska interior: Yukon-Koyukuk, Upper Tanana, Upper Kuskokwim, Yukon-Tanana, Lower Yukon, and Yukon Flats. The airport terminal has turned out to be an ideal location to display the banners. During the course of a year over 900,000 passengers pass through the terminal, including a large number of Interior village residents, since air travel is often the only practical method of getting to Fairbanks from their home communities. Each can see in the banners a colorful and attractive visual reminder of the role of Native villages in the history of the state and in the Alaska of today.

Brenda Holden, coordinator of the project, is a senior consultant at Information Insights, a Fairbanks-based public policy and economic consulting and facilitation firm.
CURRENT “E” AND “M” AWARD FLAGS
by Dave Martucci

In NAVA News # 189 (Jan.-March 2006) World War II flag awards were discussed. Two of these, the Army-Navy “E” Flag and the Maritime “M” Flag, were described in detail. It is little known that both of these awards, albeit in slightly modified forms, still exist and are still being awarded.

On December 5, 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10978 establishing a new “E” Flag award, “made to persons, firms, and organizations engaged in the marketing of products who make significant contributions to the expansion of the export trade of the United States.” The award may also be awarded to persons, firms, and organizations who make contributions to export expansion, but who are engaged in activities other than the marketing of products. Most recently, “E” Awards were made in 2004.

It consists of a pennant-shaped flag with a white field bearing a blue “E” as well as a Certificate of Service. The pennant is exactly the same as the first Navy “E” Award with the colors reversed. The “E Star” was authorized in 1969 to recognize “E” Award winners for continued efforts in export expansion.

A recipient of either type of award may be authorized to issue to their employees a suitably designed pin inscribed with the President’s “E”, to display a designated style of award emblem in advertising, and to make other appropriate use of the emblem.

Although the Maritime “M” Award was discontinued after World War II, it was not forgotten. Today’s Administrator’s Award of Merit is identical to the Maritime “M” and is conferred “for extraordinary efficiency and accomplishment.” The inaugural presentation of the Administrator’s Award of Merit was made to the officers, crew, and cadets of the Training Ship Texas Clipper II of Texas A&M University at Galveston Texas State Maritime Program on May 23, 2003.

The certificate for this award even includes the same Eagle with Anchor that appeared on the Victory Fleet Flag that accompanied the Maritime “M” Award flag in the 1940s.

Another “M” flag award also exists, although it is derived from the “E” Flag, not the Maritime “M” Flag. The Edward R. Madigan U.S. Agricultural Export Excellence Award was created as a part of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. As a part of the Farm Bill, its purpose was to celebrate those companies that achieve great developments in new products and services or creative marketing for agricultural export markets.

Edward R. Madigan was an accomplished congressman from the state of Illinois when he became the US Secretary of Agriculture in 1991 to 1993. During his tenure he introduced a new aim for the department, overseas exporting. According to Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, “Secretary Madigan realized that vigorous export growth is vital to the future prosperity of rural communities across America as well as the entire US economy.”

The award consists of a white pennant bearing a blue “M”.
BUFFALO’S MUNICIPAL FLAG: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE
by Ethan Cox
“...a history that will invite scorn from everybody.”

When you start wondering about something, you never know just how far down the rabbit-hole you might end up. In this case, my curiosity about the Buffalo, New York municipal flag has taken me to the library numerous times, to City Hall three times, to Ace Flag once (and several phone calls before that), Buffalo Place, and to the website of the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA). Not to mention a number of meandering walks about downtown.

What I learned was that our flag has something of a beleaguered past—and present. But my intention is to create a brighter future for it.

Past
Buffalo’s first flag was adopted by the common council in 1912. Then-mayor L. P. Fuhrmann had received a request from a publisher in NYC to provide a copy of the city flag graphic “for a work which includes colored illustrations of the municipal flags of various larger cities.” The mayor and commissioner of public works, Francis G. Ward, proposed a flag composed of the city seal superimposed on the state coat-of-arms “all in blue upon the field of the flag in Continental buff.” Shortly thereafter, the Ad Club submitted a competing design by Charles Rohlfis. This design was of “a white bison in a field of blue, which is surrounded by a bar of white, and on the exterior, a bar of red.” Ultimately, the council adopted the mayor’s proposal as the official flag and the Ad Club’s as the official “trade flag” on July 15th, 1912.

Buffalo’s first flag was not exactly a success. In 1922, Mayor F. X. Schwab remarked to the council that he did not feel that the adopted flag “sufficiently represent[s] the City of Buffalo.” He continued: “I have never seen the flag in use in this city, and I do not know that any flag has ever been made of the design...” At this time, the mayor proposed a flag design contest “open to all the residents of the city including the school children as well as the students at the Buffalo Art School.”

This contest yielded no winning design. On October 31st, 1923, chairman of the city planning committee George H. Norton reported “while several of the designs submitted are inherently merituous, these designs are, for the most part, complex and are not readily adaptable for reproduction for flag use or for decorative purposes.” A new contest was proposed, with a higher award. “The dignity of the city, with the significance of its history, demands a distinctive flag reflective of the past achievements and suggestive of the resources of the present and the potentialities of the future” said Norton on March 5th, 1924.

Seventy-three designs were submitted in this contest, and the city planning committee (with input from the Fine Arts Academy) proposed that submission #16 be selected “as the most suitable one (with certain modifications) for Buffalo’s new city flag because of its simplicity, distinctiveness and economy of manufacture.” The award—$250—was given to local architect Louis Greenstein. Interestingly, his design was in fact a modification of his own prior design for the Old Home Week contest in 1907. This prior flag had been manufactured by A. J. Binnie, who went on to start Ace Flag (still in business today), but never adopted as official.

At the flag dedication ceremony on June 14th, 1924 (Flag Day), mayor Schwab said that he hoped the flag, which exemplified the “energy and zeal behind the spirit of a new Buffalo” would be a point of pride for every Buffalonian:

“We can make it an honor to our people or we can give it a history that will invite scorn from everybody. To this flag must be given our highest respect and deepest affection. It signifies the love and admiration which every Buffalonian should have for his city as his home and the home of his friends. And hereafter, Buffalo’s flag and Buffalo’s community spirit are one and the same thing: as the flag and ourselves are identical and inseparable.”

Fast-forward to 1953. On February 25th, Mayor Joseph Mruk was presented with a new flag for his office, complementing a new flag given to the city council for the chamber the prior year. The next day, however, it was reported that the mayor’s flag was, well, wrong. Reader Harold Spog wrote the Courier Express to say that the flag the mayor posed with was short one star and one lightning bolt—12, rather than the official 13. Original designer Louis Greenstein was contacted, and he confirmed that indeed, his winning design contained 13 stars—one for each of the original colonies—and a matching number of bolts, signifying the power of Niagara. Further reportage indicated that the flag given to the Council was flawed in the same way.

The error was ultimately attributed to the manufacturer. When the new flags were commissioned, permission was not sought to remove the existing flag from the mayor’s office in order to get the design, as the ‘Buffalo Know Your America’ committee wanted the gifts to be a sur-
prise. Rather, the manufacturer sent someone to hand-copy the design, and he was not sufficiently careful in so doing.

Even with all this exposure, a scant ten years later The Buffalo Evening News was reporting “The Official Flag of Buffalo—Forgotten Symbol of the City” (September 17th, 1963 p. D-8; by Tom Mitchell.)

“Ever notice the blue-and-white flag flying with the American flag in Niagara Square across from City Hall? Or the similar flag on City Court? Ever wonder what they represent? They’re Buffalo’s official flag. And most people don’t even know an official flag exists.”

Present

Today, we might say much the same thing. In fact, it has truly become worse—the flag no longer flies even before City Hall, of all places. According to the common council resolutions of 1924 (and restated in 1938), the flag should fly in front of “… every municipal building, every school and every branch library…” Moreover, according to the council, an official copy is to be kept by the city clerk’s office. However, when I went there to enquire as to the “official graphic,” I saw not a one on display, despite the fact that the office is positively festooned with national flags. And, they could not even readily supply me with the image, but rather had to call the printer, K. Knab of Orchard Park, who kindly mailed me the graphic.

While I did not peer into the Mayor’s office, I did take a look in the council chamber, where surprisingly, two, non-identical versions of the flag are displayed. One, a great framed silk rendering, sits behind the council president’s chair. The other hangs on a flagpole in the right-hand rostrum. Both appear to have the center graphic in gold rather than the official white.

Elsewhere, I could find only five more locations where the flag, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, is displayed. Official versions fly at the B Precinct police station (on the corner of Main and Tupper), and at the “5 Flagpoles” display at Division St. Unofficial versions (with “Downtown Buffalo” printed below the graphic) can also be found. Four are flying at the Rotary Rink, one in the Market Arcade Film Center, and one behind the offices of Buffalo Place, on Washington St. Further investigation revealed that it was Buffalo Place who last ordered flags—from Ace, as it happens—about two years ago. Despite their efforts, however, the flag remains essentially invisible. It is easier by far to find a New York State flag, but I have to ask: when was the last time Albany did us any favors? The Canadian flag is similarly more common, but here I admit, it seems in keeping with our international outlook and “City Of Good Neighbors” attitude. That said, I wonder if we shouldn’t put ourselves first?

Future

So, on February 11, 2006 I set up a group action there, for the purpose of generating an order of 50 flags. I asked folks to send the URL for this drive—or to make a pledge—to all friends, family, neighbors, bosses, councilmember, etc. I suggested they organize a bake sale for the kid’s school, and make a pledge for them. Pool resources with co-workers, and get one for the office. I said “Let’s all do something small (but I think symbolically Fuccillo-sized) for the city that’s as easy as it gets—no petitions, no politicians, just the people—so that we might no longer have a flag which invites scorn from everybody.” The fund-raising drive ran until March 8 and raised $2,166! Buffalo will now get flags!

See Raven 9/10, pp 51-53.

This article could not have been written without the help of: D. Martucci at NAVA; W. M. Smith at Buffalo Place; the staff of the Grosvenor room; Sheryl at Ace Flag, K. Knab, and the staff at the city clerk’s office.
THE WASHBURN PATENT

Learning a flag's story is sometimes similar to detective work. One clue may lead to another if one is paying attention, plus a little luck never hurts! This flag is a case in point.

Searching Patent Office records for something completely different, I noticed that recent applications for U.S. Flag designs all seemed to reference Patent Number D020,097, dated August 12, 1890.

William R. Washburn of Rockland, Massachusetts filed an application on March 6, 1890 with the US Patent Office for a design of the placement of the stars in a U.S. Flag. Patent number 20,097 was granted to Washburn on August 12 of that same year.

Vexillologists recognize that year as one of great flag confusion in America. The stars for new states are officially placed on the flag on July 4th following admission. At the time Washburn filed his application, there were 42 states. His original drawing shows this number of stars, each inscribed with the abbreviation of a state name.

On July 3, 1890, however, Congress admitted Idaho in a special session, thereby requiring 43 stars the next day for flags to be official. One week later Wyoming was admitted, thereby dooming the 43-star flag to a very limited production.

Actual flags produced under the Washburn patent display 44 stars rather than the 42 shown in the patent drawing. These flags are marked “Patent August 12, 1890” and the stars are an unusual heavy felt material, appliquéd to each side.

The identical design appears on souvenir stationery from the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. This design is one of a small set of sub-designs that use the stars to spell words or make images.

Washburn's original Patent drawing.

The most famous in this category of course are the Great Star flags, where the stars are arranged as one bigger star. A few others are the “Free” flag, The Centennial Flag, the 13-star anchor flag, and the Civil War Tripartate Shield Flag (See flag #176 in last issue’s centerfold chart). Readers who know of other designs in this vein should send their information to the editor.

Over the years, students whose interest has been stimulated have asked me where to obtain various flags, including one who wanted a Gadsden “Don’t Tread on Me” flag to fly from his car! Thus, there are a myriad of ways to incorporate the use of flags in teaching. I hope that readers of this article will begin to do so.

Now retired, I have amassed a collection of over 455 world and U.S. flags, which I fly at home, along with the “Stars and Stripes” (illuminated at night) on the anniversary dates of independence days, and historic events, both American and foreign. Some of my neighbors of course, are now curious about “what flag is flying today?” One even suggested I get an outdoor LED display so they will know what the flag of the day is! I continue to have a deep fascination with and love of vexillology and in a small way hopefully have instilled that love in my students and neighbors.

Dr. Steve Carol is a retired professor of history, with specialties in U.S. history, the World Wars of the Twentieth Century, the Cold War, and the Modern Middle East. He is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Middle East Studies (www.cames.ws ) and the official historian of The Middle East Radio Forum (www.middleeastradioforum.org ). Dr. Carol can be reached at drhistory@cox.net
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THE FLAG

AND THE BANNER

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The symbolism of the Flag of Remembrance 1865™ is the resurrection of an important piece of American history in the twenty-first century. This new symbol is the making of history, by awakening history, remembering facts about American history which encompasses the African-American experience into impartial freedom. The passing of the Thirteenth Amendment on January 31, 1865, its three-fourth state ratification on December 6, 1865, and its delivered proclamation on December 18, 1865, confirmed that the Constitution of the United States had totally abolished the institution of slavery in all areas of the United States forever.

The Flag of Remembrance 1865™ has a corresponding symbol, the Banner of Remembrance 1865™. The flag and banner are original designs depicting America’s agricultural foundation—economy built on slave labor; and in conjunction with the positive reparation concept of forty acres and a mule. Both symbols have been created to commemorate the year 1865 as the historical cornerstone of freedom for African-Americans.

The spirit of these of these symbols is beseeching atonement through unified-diversity. Unified-diversity is social cohesion that exists between people who have a mutual unconditional respect, support, and acceptance for each other. The symbols promote an inclusive inspirational positive social initiative. Rodney Deal has self-published an educational text The Flag of Remembrance 1865™: In Commemoration of the Thirteenth Amendment, which combines historical, spiritual, and psychological perspectives in reference to the symbolism of both the flag and the banner.

For information contact NAVA member Rodney D. Deal, PO Box 24868, Detroit MI 48224-0868 USA.


Confederate flags 100% Australian made suit retailer dealer 11 x 16 in. hemmed headed AUD$6.00 each. Email flagman@austarnet.com.au

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FlagBerlin 2007

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August 5-10

Our German colleagues have unveiled the new web site for the 2007 International Congress of Vexillology in Berlin. Visit http://www.flagberlin2007.de/index2.html to find information about the preliminary program and the venue, to register for the congress, and to respond to the call for papers.
THE NAVA 40 FLAG

The proportions of the NAVA 40 flag are 5:8; it is swallow-tailed to denote a decennial NAVA meeting. The blue field, the silver star in the canton, and the golden-yellow stripe recall the Nevada State Flag. The three blue-white-red stripes represent NAVA. The four stripes celebrate 40 years of NAVA. The stripes are V-shaped for Vexillology. The flag was designed by NAVA Member Sophie Rault of Rostrenen, France (Brittany). Jim Ferrigan, one-time NAVA VP and organizer of NAVA 30 (Sacramento) and NAVA 40 (Reno), supported the tradition of the swallow-tail flag for NAVA meetings in years ending in “0”—the first such flag was NAVA 20 (Trenton), which Jim designed. NAVA 10 (Toronto) had no flag.

The NAVA 20 Flag.

The NAVA 30 Flag.