

# The flags of Portland, Oregon (1916-2002)

*Mason Kaye*

## Abstract

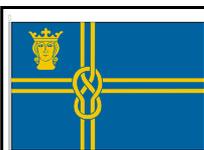
Portland has had five municipal flags. The city of Portland is the largest in the state of Oregon, in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Its flags were designed in 1917, 1950, 1958, 1969, and 2002. The designs vary from a simple horizontal tribar to seals on bedsheets. In 2002, members of the Portland Flag Association teamed up with Douglas Lynch, the designer of the 1969 flag, to improve it. The new design removed the city seal added to the canton by the city council despite the designer's preference, and simplified the other graphic elements. The vexillologists testified at city council in support of the new flag, which was unanimously adopted in September of 2002. Today, Portland's flag features offset crossed bars (similar to a Scandinavian Cross) in light blue, on a medium green field. The bars, fimbriated in white and gold, represent Portland's two rivers. The intersection of the bars forms a white hypocycloid four-pointed star, symbolizing the city.

## The city

Portland, the largest city in the state of Oregon, is located at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States (Fig. 1). Founded in 1845, it received a charter from the state on January 23, 1851. Known as the "City of Roses", it holds an annual Rose Festival, a centerpiece of civic activity. Mt. Hood is a prominent landmark. In its 150+ years Portland has flown at least five municipal flags. I was pleased to play a role in the adoption of the most recent version.

## The first flag

Portland's first flag was designed during the patriotic fervor of the First World War. In November 1916 Mayor Harry R. Albee appointed a committee to consider whether Portland needed a municipal flag to accompany its new slogan: "Your Portland and Mine". The committee comprised Morris H. Whitehouse, Charles F. Berg, C. C. Hall, H. C. Camphall, and Charles Weeks. Berg, a woman's clothier and prominent booster of the city, had originally suggested to the mayor that Portland should have a municipal flag, noting that 31 cities of the United States had adopted flags and had found



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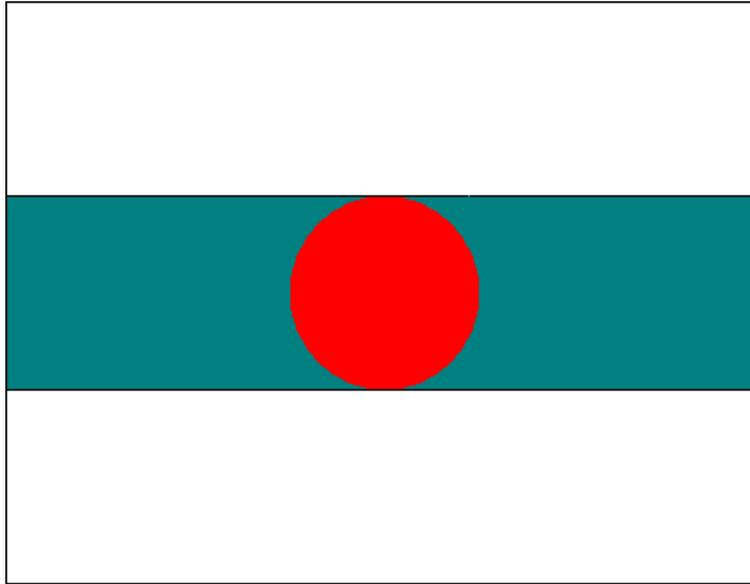
*Figure 1 Portland is the largest city in Oregon, located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States.*

them of value in stimulating local pride and patriotism; two things especially important during a war.<sup>1</sup>

The committee determined that Portland should indeed have a flag. This led to a flag design contest, announced in March of 1917, by the city council's appointed advisor, M.H. Whitehouse, a member of the original committee. An award of \$25 would be given to the designer of the best and most appropriate flag. According to Whitehouse, the flag's purpose was "to decorate buildings and streets in conjunction with the American flag for official days and occasions".<sup>2</sup> (At that time, Oregon had not yet adopted a state flag). The flag's size would be nine by twelve feet. Parameters for the contest were set in March of 1917, with a deadline of late April.<sup>3</sup> After reviewing the entries, the committee selected design number 8, by H. W. Frederick (Fig. 2). A month later, in May of 1917, Frederick was awarded first prize and \$25 for his design, a horizontal tribar with top and bottom stripes in white and a middle stripe in blue-green, representing the Willamette River. A red circle was centered on the middle stripe, representing the city of Portland.

However, the committee members suggested that in view of the present war situation (the United States had entered World War I in the previous month) and the fact that the design, though considered the best, did not follow the guidelines, the American flag should be used as the municipal flag.<sup>4</sup> Following the committee's suggestion, the city council named the Stars and Stripes as Portland's municipal flag for the time being (Fig. 3). It was not discussed how the Frederick design failed to meet the specifications, but there are a few noticeable differences between the design and the parameters for the contest. Apparently, the flag did not have "certain important requisites, such as historical association dating back to the earliest periods of the city's

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*Figure 2 The first flag (unofficial) of Portland, designed by H. W. Frederick in 1917.*



*Figure 3 Portland city council did not adopt the Frederick design, and decided to instead fly the 48-star U.S. flag.*

history”, as M. H. Whitehouse had so clearly required in the specifications. The flag did not express any apparent “robust civic ideal” or “common aim and purpose”, nor did it convey “civic spirit”, with the possible exception of a single red dot representing the city.<sup>5</sup>

## **The second flag**

After Frederick’s design was not adopted, the enthusiasm supporting the creation of a municipal flag subsided for over 30 years. Then, in June of 1950, Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee “had to have a city flag to complete the burst of color” along with the state flag, flying in the Rose Festival Parade. Benson Polytechnic High School’s shop teacher, Harry Matheson, designed a flag at the request of the band director, Norman Street. It consisted of the city seal centered on a white background (Fig. 4). The words “City of Roses” appeared centered above the seal, and the words “Portland, Oregon” appeared centered below. The city’s seal included a representation of the Queen of Commerce holding a trident, with a local landscape behind and the words “City of Portland, Oregon 1851” in the surrounding ring. The flag design so pleased Mayor Lee that “she promised to adopt it officially as the city’s flag by any necessary legal hocus-pocus”.<sup>7</sup> However, it appears that she failed to do so, because the city council never acted on the Matheson design.

Years later, Commissioner Ormond R. Bean would joke, “Mrs. Lee might have ‘hocused’ — but she forgot to poke us”.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps that omission stemmed from the sometimes-rocky relationship between the mayor and her fellow city commissioners, whom she once relieved of all departmental assignments in order to implement one-way streets in downtown Portland. In any case, it is not known why the council did not adopt the Matheson design. However, an unofficial flag was manufactured, and flew for several years in the Rose Festival Parade, borne aloft by the color guard of Benson’s band, the only school band in the city with its own armed color guard.<sup>9</sup>

## **The third flag**

The Matheson design, though never officially adopted by the city council, hung at Benson High School, and was eventually forgotten by city officials. Then, in December of 1957, the Lang Syne Society (a businessmen’s club) invited students from Portland’s dozen high schools to design a flag for the city. The society, dedicated to historical aspects of Portland, was prompted to sponsor this contest after it learned that Portland was one of the few major U.S. cities without an official flag.<sup>10</sup> A \$200 U. S. savings bond prize was offered to the student who won the contest. The 500-member society was eager to have a flag ready for its annual meeting on February 26, but this deadline passed.

In March of 1958, a winner was chosen out of the 51 students participating in the contest: Phil Shaffer, a senior at Franklin High School. Schaffer’s winning design was a circular emblem combining images of the city’s pioneer beginnings and current landmarks on a background of aquamarine (Fig. 5). On a vertical stripe at the hoist was the date “1851”, the year of the city’s incorporation, in large block numerals. The emblem

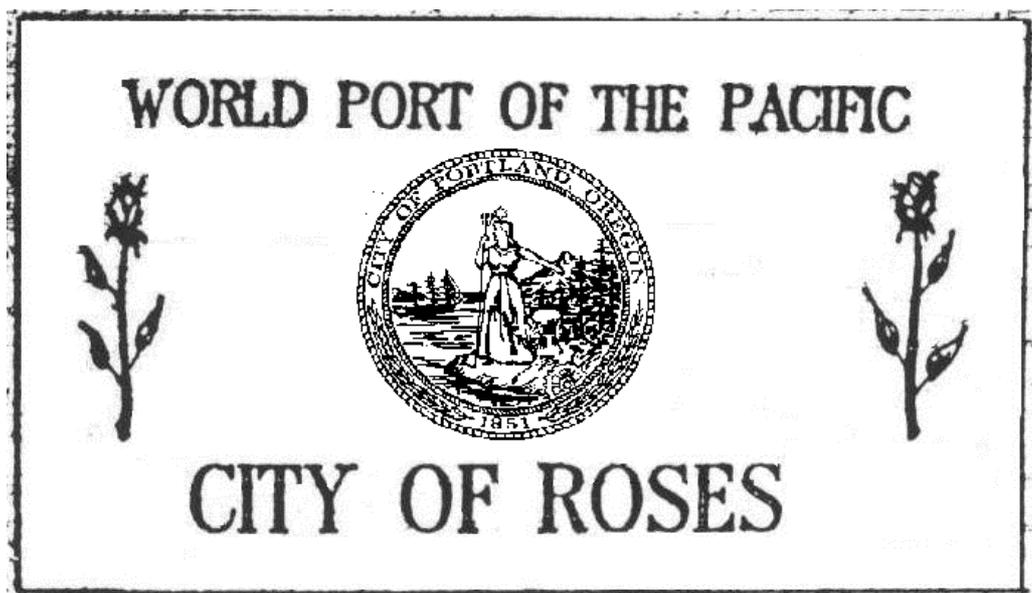
*The flags of Portland, Oregon (1916-2002)*



*Figure 4 The second flag (unofficial) of Portland, designed by Harry Matheson in 1950.*



*Figure 5 The third flag (unofficial) of Portland, designed by Phil Shaffer in 1958.*



*Figure 6 The flag designed and proposed by the Commercial Club of Portland in 1969.*

bore the words “Portland” and “Rose Festival City”, separated by roses.<sup>11</sup> It included representation of Mt Hood, Bonneville Dam, utility towers and power lines, a covered wagon, a log cabin, fir trees, and a downtown street scene with tall buildings. At the time, many other cities were known as “The City of Roses”, so the word “Festival” was added to distinguish Portland. Commissioner Bean, a member of the Lang Syne Society, submitted the winning design to Mayor Terry Schrunk and the city council. Although the flag was not adopted, it was hung in the council chambers.

Controversy soon erupted when Harry Matheson’s wife remembered that her husband had designed a Portland city flag for Mayor Lee, and produced the 8-year-old newspaper clippings to prove it. Since 1950, the 4 by 5 foot satin flag had resided at Benson High School, where it was used each year in parades as the Portland city flag. Realizing there might be two municipal flags, Portland’s afternoon newspaper stated that “City council members agreed that they had a bit of a problem on their hands... Whatever may happen to Matheson’s flag, young Shaffer’s seems certain to remain the official one of the city. The ‘legal hocus-pocus’ was, in his case, finalized by formal city council ratification”.<sup>12</sup> In this way the issue was resolved, and Commissioner Bean presented the design to the council. But once again, despite the newspaper’s reports, the flag was not officially adopted. However, the Lang Syne Society did commission a flag, and presented it to Mayor Schrunk in January of 1959.

### **The fourth flag**

In April of 1969 the Commercial Club of Portland (the oldest civic organization in the city) proposed a new design for a flag for the city, asserting that there was no record that the Shaffer design had been officially adopted. This prompted Terry Schrunk, still

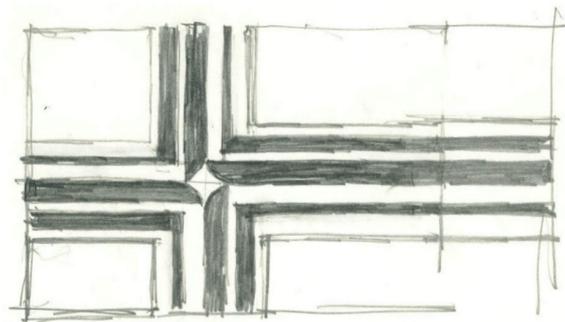
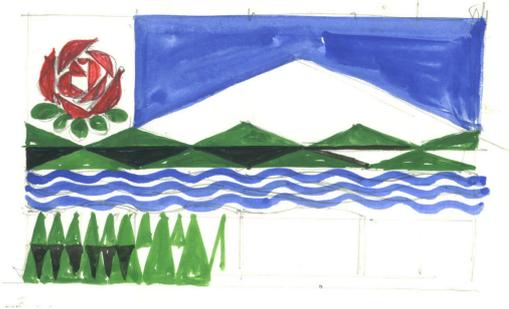
### *The flags of Portland, Oregon (1916-2002)*

mayor of Portland, to examine the flag that had been hanging in the council chambers for more than ten years, but the Commercial Club was correct: it was not official (Fig. 6). The design it presented to the city council consisted of the city seal in gold, centered on a white field, flanked by two red roses with green stems. The flag bore the words "World Port of the Pacific" across the top and "City of Roses" across the bottom. Club members claimed that Portland, as well as organizations such as the Commercial Club, needed a city flag to fly in parades and other events. It suggested that a municipal flag might even attract more tourists to Portland.<sup>13</sup> However, the flag was simply presented to the city council, without due design process, leaving its members unimpressed. But an important step then was made in the evolution of Portland's flags: the mayor referred the design to the Portland Art Commission.<sup>14</sup> He especially wanted a good flag to present to important visitors from the Orient.<sup>15</sup> The Art Commission quickly announced its plan to hire a qualified designer to design an official Portland flag for \$500.<sup>16</sup>

Art Commission chair Libby Solomon asked her predecessor, Douglas Lynch, to take on the project. Lynch was the most prominent graphic designer in the city, having taught art locally, won awards nationally, and worked in the profession for well over 30 years. He declined, later describing the process of creating and adopting an acceptable flag as "a project where even angels fear to tread".<sup>17</sup> Instead, he offered to draft criteria "by which an appropriate flag might be created".<sup>18</sup> But under pressure from Mrs. Solomon, he relented and agreed to design the flag on the condition that the city council members and the members of the art commission answer a questionnaire on five subjects. He polled them on: "General character of the flag, lettering and/or numerals on the flag, color symbolism & preference, use of the city seal as a motif, and use of a single representational symbol or combinations".<sup>19</sup> These topics dealt with questions such as whether the design should be realistically pictorial or abstract; whether the flag should display mottoes, slogans, or dates; what colors should be used; whether or not it was appropriate to use the city seal; and what symbol should represent the city if one were desired. He believed that although "a number of civic entities and national entities used a seal...it wasn't very appropriate".<sup>20</sup> Lynch insisted that every person who received a questionnaire complete it before he started designing a flag. He considered the questionnaire vital to the design process, believing it would pave the way to acceptance: "It would be good, for a change, to accomplish something worthy and beautiful for the city with a minimum of stirred-up controversy".<sup>21</sup>

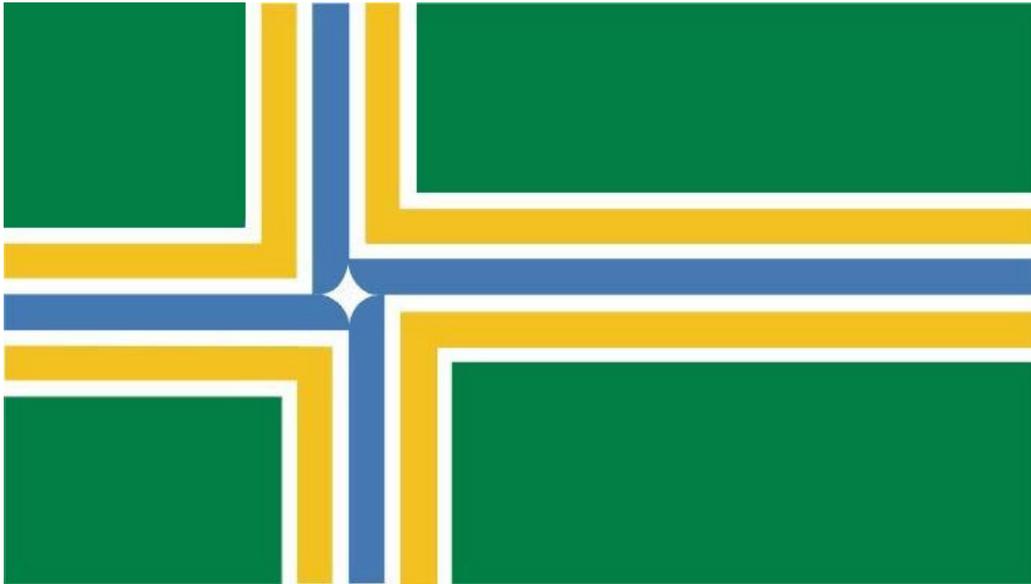
However, Lynch was already secretly sketching out flags, though he would not show them to anyone until everybody had completed his questionnaire (Figs. 7-12). With all questionnaires complete, he found the results compatible with the sketches he was already working on.<sup>22</sup> This reassured him. Lynch later said: "The whole idea of a questionnaire to the people who have to make the decision is a good one and an important one...It's the duty of the city council to approve or disprove, and it is the function of the Art Commission to recommend and advise. That's an important tactic to approach in the design of any new, or old flags".<sup>23</sup>

As might be expected, the opinions of the politicians were opposed to those of the artists. Of the four members of the city council polled (the mayor abstained), all of them disliked the idea of an abstract design. Half wanted to use lettering or numbers. Green was the most popular color within the council, followed by yellow/gold and white. Every council member wanted to incorporate the city seal. All but one thought employing a rose was also a good idea. Lynch concluded that "the city council prefers



*Figures 7-12 Sketches by Douglas Lynch, designer of the current flag of Portland, during the idea phase of the design process in 1969.*

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*Figure 13 The flag for Portland, designed by Douglas Lynch, as proposed to Portland city council in 1969.*

to use the city seal, presumably in gold and white on a green field”.<sup>24</sup> Of the nine members of the art commission, seven favored an abstract design and two favored a design with one central motif. All nine rejected the idea of a pictorial or realistic design. Only one liked the use of numbers or letters on the flag. Their preference for color was broader than the city council’s; the most popular color among the members of the art commission was red, followed by white, green, royal blue, yellow/gold, sky blue, and yellow-green. All but one rejected the city seal as a graphic element on the flag. Lynch concluded that “the art commission members would prefer to start from scratch, and definitely want abstraction or at least one conventionalized symbol. They rather reluctantly will accept a rose or possibly the city seal”.<sup>25</sup>

Over the course of several months, Lynch educated himself on civic flags by reading all the literature he could find on the subject. He wanted “the eclectic image of the flag to look like a flag and not something else”.<sup>26</sup> He also wanted to assure that no other city flew a flag that looked like his. In August of 1969, Lynch finished his design (Fig. 13). It consisted of a green field, with an offset cross of two blue stripes (representing the Columbia and Willamette Rivers) running through the flag at right angles, meeting just left of the center where a small four-pointed white star signified Portland and the rivers’ confluence. Lynch said that “the main reason for the locale of the city of Portland is the intersection of the Willamette River and the Columbia River, so that was the starting point for designing the flag” (Fig. 14).<sup>27</sup> Gold edging along the blue stripes could represent either the golden grain of the region’s agriculture or the commerce which flows through Portland. The green symbolized Oregon’s forests. The stripes and green sections were separated by narrow white stripes which acted solely as fimbriations.<sup>28</sup> Lynch thought that “the white stripes give a certain snap to the color combinations”.<sup>29</sup> He and Mrs. Solomon promoted the design as “attractive and appropriate, as well as easy and inexpensive to reproduce”.<sup>30</sup> Considering it im-

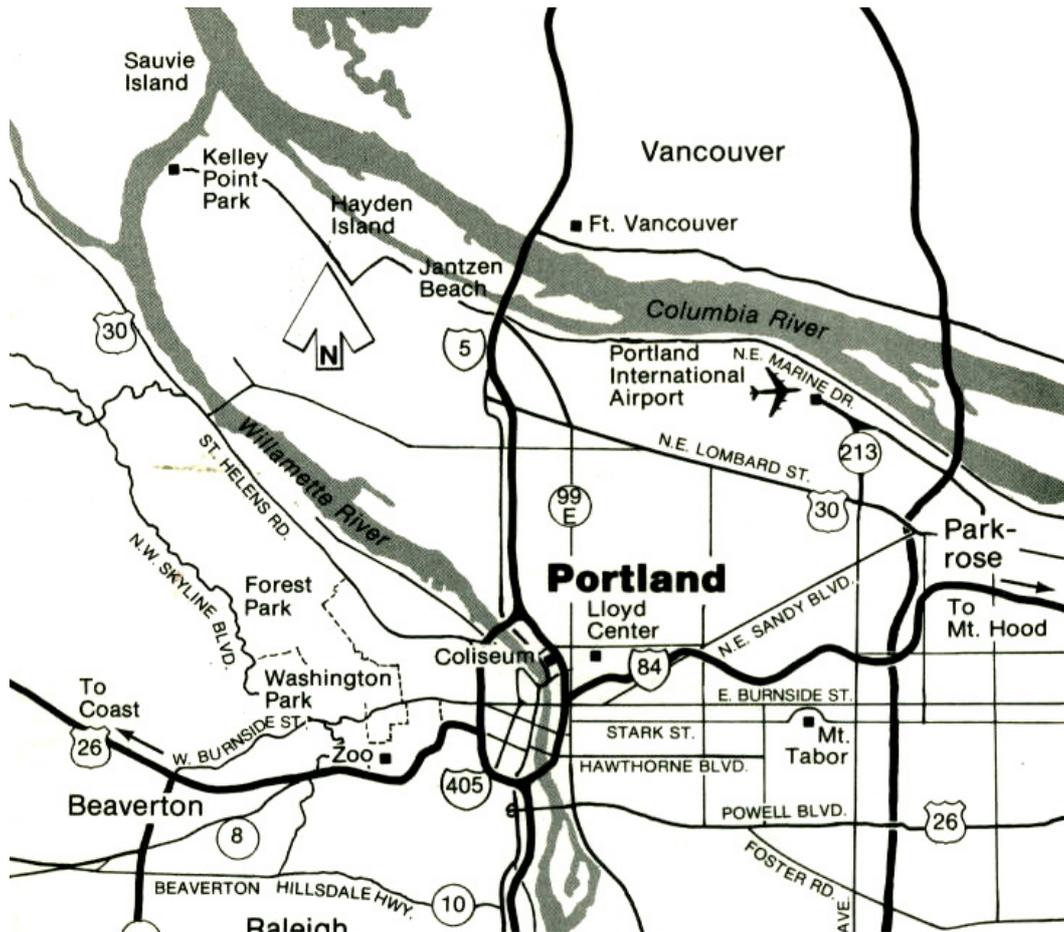


Figure 14 The Willamette and Columbia Rivers converge near Portland.

portant to see a flag flying before making a final decision, Lynch later lamented that he was unable to have an actual flag made before it was officially adopted.

Lynch presented the design to the city council. However, its members overruled the art commission's guidance and the expertise of the professional designer and amended the flag before adoption, placing the city seal in the canton and changing the canton's color to dark blue (Fig. 15). Lynch felt disappointed that his design, based on sound graphic principles and extensive polling of the key decision-makers, had been altered so unfortunately. This action also enraged members of the Portland Rose Festival Association, but for a different reason: they believed that if any symbol were placed on the flag, it should be a rose. In order to pacify them, the embattled Lynch proposed that the flag be double-sided: one side with the city seal in the canton, and the other with a rose in the canton. The *Oregon Journal* editorialized: "It mercifully avoids the temptation to go in for a pictorial mish-mash showing a maiden climbing Mt. Hood with a rose in her teeth while welcoming the ship of commerce and waving farewell to the departing British".<sup>31</sup>

In December of 1969, the city council officially approved the amended Lynch design amid protests by one traditionalist, who called it "too abstract, and similar to Socialist countries". She said the design resembled a fallen cross, denouncing it as an

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*Figure 15 The first official flag of Portland, designed by Douglas Lynch in 1969, after the city council voted to place the city seal in the canton and make the canton blue.*

anti-Christian image. She feared that “the central star might stand for a metropolitan form of government ‘which will take us all over eventually’”.<sup>32</sup> The city council ignored her protests as preposterous. Portland’s first official city flag was made by Meier & Frank, at the time the largest department store in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>33</sup> It took the seamstress more than one hundred hours to sew the flag. Another flag was presented to the city by the Commercial Club, the group which had reopened the flag issue the year before.

However, it was very difficult to find the right rose image to put on the reverse of the flag, and the first flags were not double-sided due to the high production cost, for which the art commission had not yet found funding. The rose was dropped from the flag design. The Portland Rose Festival Association pressed the art commission to raise the funds for the flag’s production with the rose back on the flag. Once again, the art commission hired Douglas Lynch, this time to design the rose. However, no flag came of this effort, and the entire project stalled for lack of financial support.

More than three years later, Mrs. Solomon decided to help complete the unfinished flag business before her term as chair of the art commission ended. In August of 1973 she offered to provide \$1,000 of the \$3,500 production cost estimated by Elmer’s Flag & Banner, a local flag store, for the production of 100 flags in the version with the city seal (without the rose). Her initiative revitalized public interest in the city’s flag. Responding to Mrs. Solomon’s proposal, citizens, organizations, and building owners pledged enough money to purchase the flags.<sup>34</sup> In January of 1974 outgoing Mayor Terry Schruck received the very first mass-produced flag as a salute to the impact he made on the city of Portland during his 16 years as mayor. Mrs. Solomon and her grandson presented the flag to Schruck. The flag would begin flying in a few public locations around the city, but remained generally unknown to its citizens.

## **The fourth flag, revisited**

In 2002, Doug Lynch joined the Portland Flag Association and made a full presentation about the Portland flag and his role in the design process (Fig. 16). Among the association's members are Mike Hale, who now heads Elmer's Flag and Banner, the largest flag store in the world and manufacturer of the Portland flag; Harry Oswald, the founder of the group; John Hood, a retired telephone company employee and owner of over 300 full-sized flags, Ted Kaye, an enthusiast of good flag design, Fred Paltridge, a customer service specialist with an interest in historical flags, and the author. During his presentation, Lynch noted that "the blue river stripes were being overwhelmed by the combination of gold and white".<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the combined width of the white and gold fimbriations exceeded the width of the central blue stripe. He also lamented the city seal and meaningless blue canton placed on the flag by the city council, saying he wished he could do it over again. Association members encouraged him to improve the design and offered their support.

At the same time, through conversations with his neighbor, mayoral chief of staff Sam Adams, Lynch was aware that the current city administration was curious about the flag hanging in the council chambers. They began a "discussion of a possible update" of the 1969 flag.<sup>36</sup> Inspired by the enthusiasm of the Portland Flag Association, Lynch proceeded to develop an adjusted and improved version. He made four major changes: removing the city seal from the canton, changing the canton to green, doubling the width of the blue stripes, and enlarging the central star to nine times its former size. He also shifted the star slightly toward the fly (Fig. 17).<sup>37</sup> Working with Sam Adams, association members drafted the ordinance and testified before city council on behalf of the improved flag. The author provided testimony on the city's flag history.

When asked what he thinks makes a good flag, Lynch says: "Flag images are generic; they come down to us from not only medieval times but ancient times. They have a certain kind of look that emerged probably from limitations of fabric and dyes ... We inherit that — it is important that flags look like flags."<sup>38</sup> He says all the area of a good flag is integral to the design; no part of the space should be merely background. "It is superfluous to say that flags are wonderful because they wouldn't be so popular if they weren't. It would be nice if more of them were designed with these principles involved instead of made from some pretty sketch that some lay person has done. And that's sort of a dangerous thing to say because there are people who make claim to be a designer but who aren't really designers at all; they are decorators. That's a different function and that's a different discipline. The two differ mainly in the activation of the space. An ornament can be put on anything; a badge can be put on a flag or a wall. It's a different visual perception arrived at by a different mental process. Flags should be done by designers."<sup>39</sup> He adds: "It is common to say that you can't design anything by committee. But in reality, and in social/governmental custom, you have to deal with a committee. It has to do with a professional discipline. If you have a medical problem, you go to a doctor. If you have a design problem, you go to a designer. Committees do that also, they turn to a professional to solve problems of that kind. Of course, that doesn't always work, but the committee *should* do that. I'm glad they chose me, because I think that some of my colleagues would have led the community into terrible controversy".<sup>40</sup>

On 4 September 2002 the city council passed Ordinance 17687 amending the

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*Figure 16 Members of the Portland Flag Association testified at the city council hearing in 2002 in support of the new flag.*



*Figure 17 The current official flag of Portland, altered by Douglas Lynch in 2002.*

	SIMPLICITY	SYMBOLISM	COLORS	LETTERS/SEALS	DISTINCTIVE	TOTAL
	2	1	2	2	2	<b>9</b>
	0	1	2	0	1	<b>4</b>
	0	1	0	0	1	<b>2</b>
	1	2	1	2	2	<b>8</b>
	0	2	0	0	2	<b>4</b>
	1	2	1	2	2	<b>8</b>

*Figure 18 Using the K scale demonstrates that in Portland's case a flag designed by someone skilled in graphic design and knowledgeable in design principles is both quantitatively and aesthetically superior to a flag designed by a lay person or a committee.*

City Code Section 1.06.010, adopting the new flag design. Mayor Katz applauded the initiative and oversaw the raising of the new flag on the council chamber's pole. Elmer's Flag & Banner manufactured the first flag on one week's notice and donated it to the city. The mayor sent the old flag to the city archives.

### **Comparing the flags**

I know of only one quantitative system for measuring a flag's design quality. Recently devised by Ted Kaye, the system rates a flag based on the five basic principles of flag design: Simplicity, Symbolism, Colors, No Lettering/Seals, Distinctiveness.<sup>41</sup> A flag can receive 0, 1, or 2 points per principle; 0 for the worst and 2 for the best. In this way, a flag's overall score can range from 0 to 10 points. I call this the "K Scale". According to *Good Flag, Bad Flag* (the NAVA guide to flag design), upon which the scale is based, "The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory; the

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*Figure 19 Portland's new flag now flies all over the city.*

flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes; it should limit the number of colors on the flag to three, which contrast well and come from the standard color set [red, white, blue, green, yellow, black]; it should never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal; and it shouldn't duplicate other flags, but use similarities to show connections".<sup>42</sup>

Applying the K Scale can help us understand and compare the design quality of Portland's flags (Fig. 18). The 1917 Frederick design rates 9 on the K Scale: 2 points on each of the five principles except meaningful symbolism. The 1950 Matheson design rates 4 points: 1 point for using somewhat meaningful symbolism, 2 points for using two colors, and 1 point for distinctiveness. The 1958 Schaffer design merits only 2 points: 1 point for using somewhat meaningful symbolism and 1 point for distinctiveness. The original 1969 Lynch design, without the seal, would have received 8 points, losing only 1 point for some complexity and 1 point for using four colors. But with the seal added, the 1969 Lynch design as adopted scores only 4 points: 2 for using meaningful symbolism, and 2 for distinctiveness. The city council-altered version of the flag scores only half the points of the original design. The 2002 Lynch design rates 8 points, losing only 1 point for using four colors and 1 point for complexity. The changes made to the 1969 version of the Lynch flag as adopted doubled its score on the K Scale, providing quantitative support for a change that was aesthetically pleasing as well.

What can we conclude from comparing these flags? The flag design contests of 1917 and 1958 were not informed by sound design principles. While the 1917 Frederick design was a masterpiece of simplicity consistent with some of the great civic flags of its era (such as Chicago's), it was in fact rejected by the city leaders. The 1950

Matheson and 1958 Shaffer flags were selected by people unskilled in flag design. In 1969, the city hired a design expert, who invested significant time and effort in researching flags and polling the decision-makers. However, the city council then overruled him at the last minute, substituting a more complex and less appealing flag. Only in 2002, when the designer was allowed to present his best design, unaltered by any committee, did the city finally adopt a successful flag.

The flag now flies prominently throughout the city (Fig. 19).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Municipal Flag is Recommended as a Feature of Slogan; Mayor Albee Names Committee to Act in Connection With Suggestion Made”, *Oregon Journal*, 12 November 1916. The 31 cities were: Altoona (PA), Atlantic City, Baltimore, Buffalo, Camden (NJ), Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Easton (PA), Erie (PA), Jacksonville, Kansas City, Lancaster (PA), Lawrence (MA), Lebanon (PA), McKeenport (PA), New Rochelle (NY), New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, Reading (PA), Richmond, Rochester, San Francisco, Schenectady (NY), Scranton (PA), Toledo (OH), Wilkes Barre (PA), York (PA). 39% of the municipal flags were in Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> “Flag Plans Ready; Rules for Contest for City Ensign Prescribed; Entries to End April 19”, *Oregonian*, 20 March 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Actual contest guidelines, as decreed by M. H. Whitehouse: “Failure to comply with any mandatory requirements will preclude the competitor thus failing from admission to the competition or from receiving the award therein. No design shall be submitted unless it has been produced by a resident of a city in Oregon. Failure to furnish upon request proof that a competitor is a resident of a city in Oregon, satisfactory to the City Commissioners, will constitute ground for the annulment of any award made in favor of such competitor. If any participant or competitor desires information of any kind whatever in regard to the competition or the program after the publication of the program, he shall ask for this information of the advisor. Competitors may submit more than one design. If a competitor submits more than one drawing, each drawing must be sent separately. The drawing must be mounted on mounting board, but not framed. The drawing shall be accompanied by a plain white opaque sealed envelope, without any superscription or mark of any kind, in which shall be placed the name of the competitor. A typewritten description of the design (not to exceed 600 words) on paper eight inches by eleven inches shall be submitted. The drawing shall bear the inscription ‘The Municipal Flag Competition for City of Portland, Oregon’ in plain Roman capitals and the scale at which it is drawn. There shall be no further descriptive matter written on the drawing. The drawings must not be signed, nor shall they or their inner wrapper bear any motto, device, or distinguishing mark. The drawing, description, and sealed envelope must be securely wrapped in ordinary plain paper and sealed. This package must again be wrapped and the outer wrapper must be marked ‘Municipal Flag Competition for City of Portland, Oregon’ and addressed to M. H. Whitehouse, advisor. A municipal flag, in order to be available as a suitable selection should embrace certain important requisites, such as historical association dating back to the earliest periods of the city’s history, artistic and decorative qualities, and sufficient originality to make it distinguishable from all other flags adopted by various cities, states, and nations. It should be expressive and symbolical of the following: First, a robust civic ideal; second, a common aim and purpose; third, a new civic spirit; and fourth, peaceful industry, moral, material and civic progress and achievement. The drawing submitted shall be made as follows, at the scale given and rendered as noted: The drawing should be in pencil on tracing paper, mounted flat, or having drawing paper board that will be flat. Water color is to be used to show the color scheme of the competitor. Drawing shall have a single hinge border one-half inch from margin. Scale is to be one inch equal to one foot. The flag is to be in size nine feet by twelve feet. Size of mount shall be 15 inches by 18 inches. The package containing the drawings, typewritten description and sealed envelope must be consigned to an express company or registered mail, delivered to M. H. Whitehouse, advisor, not later than 12 AM, April 18, 1917”.

<sup>4</sup> “American Flag Will Likely Be the Only Municipal Design; Committee Recommends to Council No Other Selection for the Present”, *Oregon Journal*, 26 April 1917.

<sup>5</sup> “Flag Plans Ready; Rules for Contest for City Ensign Prescribed; Entries to End April 19”, *Oregonian*,

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nian, 20 March 1917.

<sup>6</sup> “Flag Designed for Portland; Emblem Slated for First Flying”, *Oregonian*, 9 June 1950.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “So Sorry, Benson; 1959 ‘City Flag’ Has ’58 Council in Dither”, *Oregon Journal*, 11 April 1958.

<sup>9</sup> “Flag Designed for Portland; Emblem Slated for First Flying”, *Oregonian*, 9 June 1950.

<sup>10</sup> “Official Flag Offered City”, *Oregonian*, 13 December 1957. Membership in the Lang Syne Society is limited to men who have been in business in Portland for more than 30 years.

<sup>11</sup> “Flag Offered For Portland”, *Oregon Journal*, 3 April 1958.

<sup>12</sup> “So Sorry, Benson; 1959 ‘City Flag’ Has ’58 Council in Dither”, *Oregon Journal*, 11 April 1958.

<sup>13</sup> “What Kind of Flag Should City Wave?”, *Oregon Journal*, 13 May 1969.

<sup>14</sup> “2-Flag Portland ‘Flagless’”, *Oregon Journal*, 4 April 1969.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas Lynch, Oral history recorded 12 December 2002, by Mason Kaye, Portland, Oregon.

<sup>16</sup> “Flag Design Study Asked”, *Oregonian*, 18 April 1969.

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Commissioner Francis Ivancie from Douglas Lynch, 10 July 1969.

<sup>18</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Douglas Lynch to members of Portland’s city council and art commission, 21 May 1969.

<sup>20</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Douglas Lynch to members of Portland’s city council and art commission, 21 May 1969.

<sup>22</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> City Flag Questionnaire from Douglas Lynch to Portland’s city council and art commission, May 1969.

<sup>25</sup> City Flag Questionnaire from Douglas Lynch to Portland’s city council and art commission, May 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> “Portland’s New Flag Design Abstract with Bit of Realism”, *Oregonian*, 19 August 1969. [29] Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> “Portland’s New Flag Design Abstract with Bit of Realism”, *Oregonian*, 19 August 1969. [31] “O, Brave New Banner”, *Oregon Journal*, 19 December 1969.

<sup>32</sup> “Socialist? Anti-Christ? Where’s the Rose?; City Approves Basic Flag Design over Heated Protests”, *Oregon Journal*, 18 December 1969.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Jack L. Meier to Portland’s mayor, Terry Schruck, and city council, June 22, 1970: “Gentlemen: When you recently adopted an official flag for the City of Portland, it was our pleasure to create one with the counsel and direction of its designer, Douglas Lynch. In executing the design and completing the flag according to Mr. Lynch’s specifications, over one hundred hours were expended by a seamstress in our alterations department. The flag has been on display on the street floor of Meier & Frank’s downtown Portland store, where during the past several weeks it was seen by thousands of Rose Festival visitors. We are delighted to present this flag to the City of Portland, and hope it will be permanently exhibited in the Council Chamber. Sincerely yours, Jack L. Meier, Chairman”.

<sup>34</sup> “Official flag of Portland now headed for production, use”, *Oregonian*, 26 August 1973.

<sup>35</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Kaye, Ted, *Good Flag, Bad Flag*, North American Vexillological Association, 2001, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Kaye, Ted, *op. cit.*, 2.

## **About the author**



Mason Kaye has written and published in vexillology since 1998. He won NAVA's Driver Award for his lecture on tribars at 18 ICV, and presented on "Mappy Flags" at 19 ICV. His articles have appeared in *NAVA News*, *Flag Data Bank*, the JAVA website, *Raven*, and *Flagmaster*. He belongs to several vexillological associations around the world. Currently a high school student in Portland, Oregon, he helped change that city's flag in 2002.

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