



**Mission Statement**  
*To provide exemplary experiences,  
services & spaces that create  
opportunities for everyone to learn,  
engage and thrive.*

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## **YANKTON BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS**

Work Session Meeting beginning at 6:00 P.M.

**Monday, February 24, 2020**

City of Yankton Community Meeting Room

Located at the Career Manufacturing Technical Education Academy formerly  
known as Technical Education Center • **1200 W. 21<sup>st</sup> Street • Room 114**

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1. **Roll Call**
2. **Public Appearances**
3. **Principles of Vexillology – City Flag Project**
4. **Other Business**

*Other business is a time for City Commissioners to address the commission regarding matters not on the agenda. These items will be deliberated by the governing body and will not be acted upon at this time. Items mentioned may be added to a future City Commission meeting or work session for deliberation or action.*

5. **Adjourn the Work Session of February 24, 2020**

# Principles of Vexillology

## City Flag Project

City Commission Work Session—February 24, 2020



### Background

According to the North American Vexillology Association (NAVA), good flags share these common traits:

1. Simple: a child can draw them from memory.
2. Meaningful: images, colors or patterns should relate to what they symbolize.
3. Use 2-3 basic colors.
4. Don't include any writing or seals.
5. Don't copy other flags, but can show connections to other places through similarities.

Meta-Analysis of 100 flag redesign efforts between 2015 and 2017 led to these conclusions:

- Approval of a process from elected officials increases the likelihood of successful adoption.
- Attempts to create a flag for city without a flag fare better than efforts to replace an existing flag.
- Providing guidance on flag design principles leads to better design and stronger winners (possibly a prize of some sort for the winning design).
- Organizations can be more successful than individuals acting alone.
- Involving students advances the cause- and involvement can create political support for flag designs.
- First, we need to build public support.

### Recommendations

1. Gather feedback from community members on the potential of Yankton having a city flag. Next, community members can create a City Flag Study Committee that would learn about the process of flag designing for a city, discuss best methods to gather flag designs, and outline guidelines for flag design submittals. The committee would need to build public support before we can gather flag designs for our city. Otherwise, we would be using time and resources for a cause that the public may not yet be invested in. Our goal should be to gather a cross-section of local groups and citizens.
2. If a study committee of interested citizens chose to move ahead, it would be tasked with reading materials that would help them become more educated on the flag design process. Once the members have completed their respective research, they will come together and reach a consensus on whether or not the city should begin fielding flag designs
3. A town hall meeting can be where the committee will present their findings and their recommendations to the public. If it is shown that there is a positive response by the community, then City staff will recommend to the commission that the flag design process should begin and the city will begin fielding flag designs.

### Administrative Considerations

- Budget—Technology solution to accommodate the voting processing and/or collection of submissions. Costs associated with printing gallery show images. Design professional services polishing and finalizing the art for the graphics and brand standards. City supply of the final design flag and potentially a long-term wholesale supply plan for public availability of flags for purchase.
- Identifying a manufacturer to make the flags as well as intellectual property and licensing policies.
- Getting the community to fly it—creative promotional ideas like giving one away at each new Chamber ribbon cutting, etc...
- Where will the City of Yankton fly it on city-owned properties?

## GOOD FLAG, BAD FLAG

### How to Design a Great Flag

This guide was compiled by Ted Kaye, editor of *RAVEN*, a Journal of Vexillology (published annually by NAVA).

These principles of good flag design distill the wisdom of many people who have written on the subject, including Philippe Bondurand, Frederick Brownell, William Crampton, Michael Faul, Jim Ferrigan, Richard Gideon, Kevin Harrington, Lee Herold, Ralph Kelly, Rich Kenny, David Martucci, Clay Moss, Peter Orenski, Whitney Smith, Steve Tyson, Henry Untermyer, and Alfred Znamierowski.

### What is NAVA?

The North American Vexillological Association (NAVA) is dedicated to vexillology, the study of flag history and symbolism. For more information about its activities, publications, and membership, visit [www.nava.org](http://www.nava.org) or write:

NAVA  
P.O. Box 55071, #58049  
Boston, MA 02205-5071, U.S.A.

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ISBN-10: 0-9747728-1-X

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# GOOD FLAG, BAD FLAG

## How to Design a Great Flag



USE 5 BASIC PRINCIPLES TO CREATE AN  
OUTSTANDING FLAG FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION,  
CITY, TRIBE, COMPANY, FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD,  
OR EVEN COUNTRY!

North American Vexillological Association  
The Flag Experts of the United States and Canada

COMPILED BY TED KAYE

# WHAT IS A FLAG?

A flag's purpose is to represent a place, organization, or person, generally on a rectangular piece of cloth, to be seen at a distance, often moving, and reproduced in quantity and in many sizes.

The 5 principles of good flag design will lead to a successful flag that accomplishes that purpose.

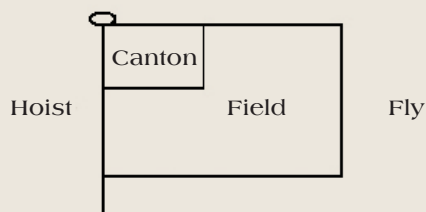
Flags began thousands of years ago, first used for military purposes on land and then as identifying signals at sea. They evolved to represent royal houses, then countries and other levels of government, businesses, military ranks and units, sport teams, and political parties.

Flags grew out of heraldry—the practice of designing coats of arms—and follow many of the same design principles. Following this guide will help any person or group produce a great flag.

*A flag should be simple, readily made, and capable of being made up in bunting; it should be different from the flag of any other country, place or people; it should be significant; it should be readily distinguishable at a distance; the colors should be well contrasted and durable; and lastly, and not the least important point, it should be effective and handsome.*

— National Flag Committee of the Confederate States of America, 1861

## ANATOMY OF A FLAG



## THE FIVE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FLAG DESIGN

### 1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

*The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory . . .*

### 2. USE MEANINGFUL SYMBOLISM

*The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes . . .*

### 3. USE 2—3 BASIC COLORS

*Limit the number of colors on the flag to three, which contrast well and come from the standard color set . . .*

### 4. NO LETTERING OR SEALS

*Never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal . . .*

### 5. BE DISTINCTIVE OR BE RELATED

*Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections . . .*



# 1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

THE FLAG SHOULD BE SO SIMPLE THAT  
A CHILD CAN DRAW IT FROM MEMORY . . .

**F**lags flap. Flags drape. Flags must be seen from a distance and from their opposite side. Under these circumstances, only simple designs make effective flags. Furthermore, complicated flags cost more to make, which often can limit how widely they are used.

Most poor designs have the elements of a great flag in them—simplify them by focusing on a single symbol, a few colors, large shapes, and no lettering. Avoid the temptation to include a symbol for everybody.

Ideally the design will be reversible or at least recognizable from either side. Don't put a different design on the back.

GOOD



*BANGLADESH*

With two strong colors and a single symbol—the rising sun of independence (slightly offset to the hoist), this flag succeeds admirably.

BAD



*TURKMENISTAN*

This very complicated rug contains 5 traditional patterns! Better to leave it off and keep the moon and stars.

GOOD



*CONGO*

With bold, contrasting colors, large shapes, and parallel lines, this flag is also easily recognized when reversed.

BAD



*WEST VIRGINIA (USA)*

The seal itself is complex, the white background is boring, and the overall design differs from other state flags only in its blue border.

GOOD



*ALASKA (USA)*

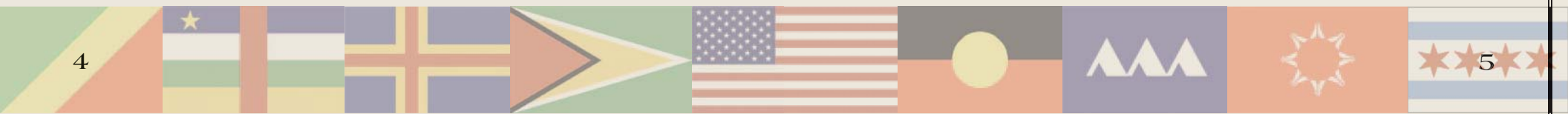
The stars, a standard U.S. symbol, form the "Big Dipper" constellation and the North Star, representing the northernmost U.S. state.

BAD



*BEY OF TUNISIA*

Replete with stars, crescents, and the Sword of Ali, this 19<sup>th</sup>-century design's overwhelming complexity defeats its purpose.







### 3. USE 2–3 BASIC COLORS

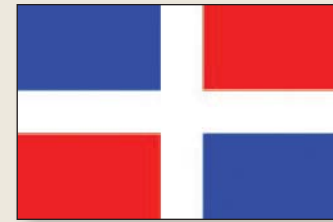
LIMIT THE NUMBER OF COLORS ON THE FLAG TO THREE, WHICH CONTRAST WELL AND COME FROM THE STANDARD COLOR SET . . .

The basic flag colors are red, blue, green, black, yellow, and white. They can range from dark to light. Occasionally other colors are also used, such as purple, gray, and orange, but they are seldom needed in a good design.

Separate dark colors with a light color, and light colors with a dark color, to help them create effective contrast. A good flag should also reproduce well in “grayscale”, that is, in black and white shades.

More than four colors are hard to distinguish and make the flag unnecessarily complicated and expensive. Flag fabric comes in a relatively limited number of colors—another reason to stick to the basics.

GOOD



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

These colors provide balance and contrast, leaving a white cross as “negative space” in the middle of the flag.

BAD



DOMINICA

By using ALL six basic flag colors, this flag creates unnecessary cost and complexity. Who can see the parrot’s red and black eye?

GOOD



AMSTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

These colors contrast well, even though the red and black are not separated by a light color.

BAD



CHINESE ADMIRAL (1882)

Too many colors! At the least, the yellow and white should be separating the dark colors. While the dragon is in the position of honor, it is very hard to distinguish.

GOOD



NEW MEXICO (USA)

Red and yellow recall the state’s Spanish heritage, while the sun symbol comes from the Zia Indians. This design was voted the best U.S. state flag by NAVA members.

BAD



VIRGINIA (USA)

Imagine, 18 different colors in the official flag specifications! Not only are they difficult to distinguish, but having so many colors drives up the manufacturing cost.



## 4. NO LETTERING OR SEALS

NEVER USE WRITING OF ANY KIND OR AN ORGANIZATION'S SEAL . . .

**W**ords defeat the purpose: why not just write "U.S.A." on a flag? A flag is a graphic symbol. Lettering is nearly impossible to read from a distance, hard to sew, and difficult to reduce to lapel-pin size. Words are not reversible—this forces double- or triple-thickness fabric.

Don't confuse a flag with a banner, such as what is carried in front of a marching band in a parade, or draped behind a speaker's platform—such banners don't flap, they are seen from only one side, and they're usually seen closer-up.

Seals were designed for placement on paper to be read at close range. Very few are effective on flags—too detailed. Better to use some element from the seal as a symbol. Some logos work; most don't.

GOOD



CÔTES D'ARMOR  
(FRANCE)

Rather than the logo style frequently used by French departments and regions, CÔtes d'Armor uses a stylized seagull in the shape of its coastline.

BAD



LOIR-ET-CHER  
(FRANCE)

All those words, plus an indistinguishable gray shape . . . Better to have used the stylized dragon on a more interesting background color.

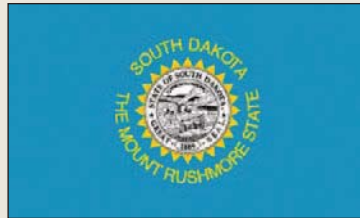
GOOD



SOUTH CAROLINA (USA)

The palmetto tree represents the "Palmetto State" far better than the state's seal could. The crescent moon is in the position of honor.

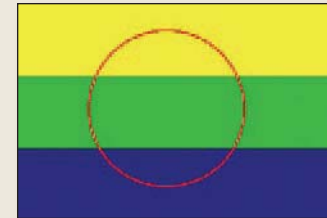
BAD



SOUTH DAKOTA (USA)

This flag uses a seal AND lettering! The name of the state actually appears twice.

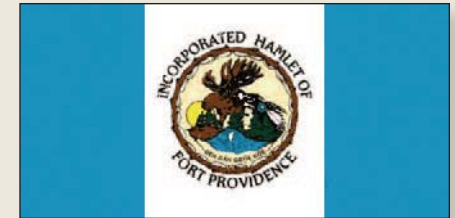
GOOD



PEGUIS NATION  
(CANADA)

The contrasting colors with a single central symbol represent this Indian nation far better than could any seal.

BAD



FT. PROVIDENCE, NWT  
(CANADA)

Despite the overall pattern recalling Canada, this flag (for an Indian community) stumbles with a virtually indistinguishable seal.



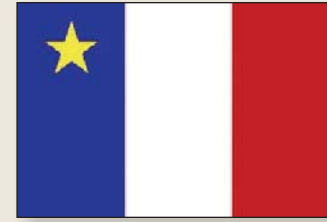
## 5. BE DISTINCTIVE OR BE RELATED

AVOID DUPLICATING OTHER FLAGS, BUT USE SIMILARITIES TO SHOW CONNECTIONS . . .

This is perhaps the most difficult principle, but it is very important. Sometimes the good designs are already “taken”. However, a flag’s symbols, colors, and shapes *can* recall other flags—a powerful way to show heritage, solidarity, or connectedness. This requires knowledge of other flags.

Often the best way to start the design process can be looking to one’s “roots” in flags—by country, tribe, or religion. Use some of the many resources available to help you with flag identification and history, such as “Flags of the World”: <http://www.fotw.net>, or your local library.

GOOD



ACADIA  
(CANADA)

French-speaking Acadians in Canada place a yellow star for St. Mary, their national symbol and patron saint of mariners, on the flag of France.

BAD



MANITOBA  
(CANADA)

While the British “Red Ensign” signifies connectedness within the Commonwealth, the distinguishing feature is the small seal. Better to have used the bison as the main flag symbol.

GOOD



GHANA

Using the same colors used by many countries in Africa, this flag shows a strong connection to its neighbors’ flags.

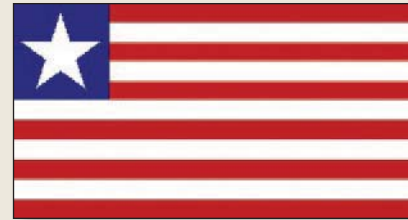
BAD



INDONESIA

Except for its proportions, this flag is exactly the same as Monaco’s (which had it first), but there is no connection between the two countries. Upside-down it is the same as Poland or as Cantabria, Spain!

GOOD



LIBERIA

Founded by freed slaves from the U.S., Liberia reflects that heritage with a similar yet distinctive flag.

BAD



VERMONT  
(USA)

This flag is virtually indistinguishable from 20 other U.S. state flags, all with a seal on a blue field.

A rectangle is the standard flag shape. Keep the width-to-length proportions between 1:1.5 and 1:2. Canadian flags are usually 1:2; U.S. flags are usually 1:1.5 or 1:1.67. Square flags are unusual in North America. Abandon such rectangles only when meaningful.

Flags wear. By retaining a rectangular shape and avoiding symbols at the fly end, a flag can be hemmed repeatedly and given a longer life.

The point of honor is the “canton” area—the upper-left corner. This corresponds to the part of the flag that is seen when it hangs limp from a flagpole. The center or left-of-center position is the most visible spot for a symbol when the flag is flying.

Consider the fabrication methods. Curved lines add to the cost of sewn flags. Holes or “negative space” hurt a flag’s fly-ability and wear-ability. “Swallow-tail” shapes fray more easily.

All rules have exceptions. Colorado’s “C” is a stunning graphic element. Maryland’s complicated heraldic quarters produce a memorable and distinctive flag. But depart from these five principles only with caution and purpose.



COLORADO (USA)



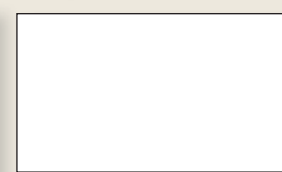
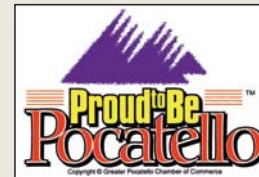
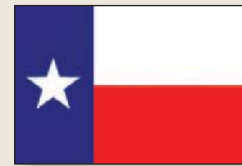
MARYLAND (USA)

Don’t allow a committee to design a flag. Instead, empower individuals to design flags, and use a committee to select among them.

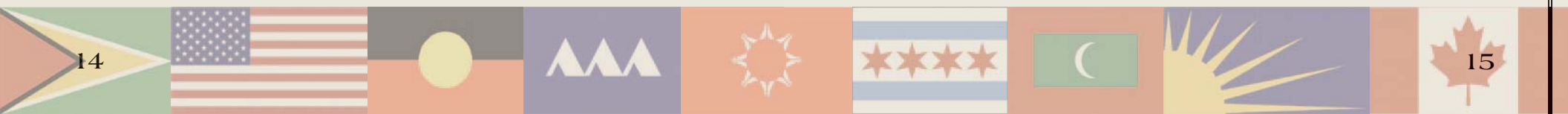
An old rule of heraldry has images of animals look toward the hoist.

*And most of all, design a flag that looks attractive and balanced to the viewer and to the place, organization, or person it represents!*

## FIND THE GOOD FLAGS AND THE BAD FLAGS:



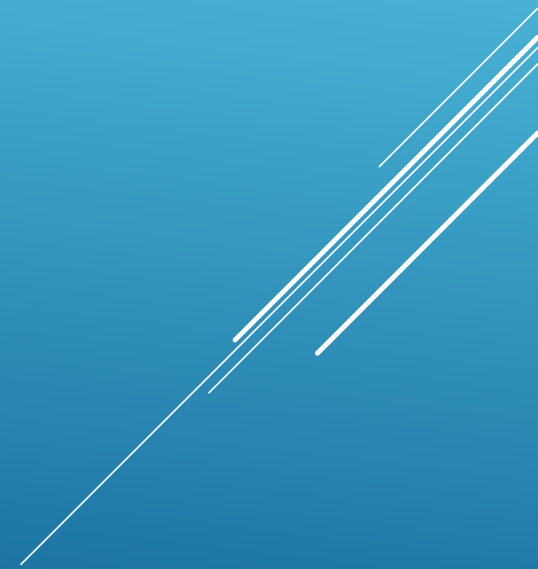
DRAW YOUR FLAG!



# PRINCIPLES OF VEXILLOLOGY- CITY FLAG PROJECT

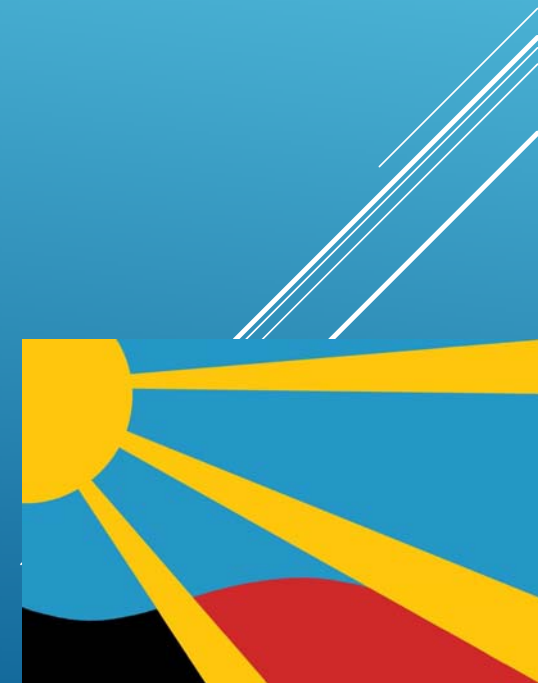
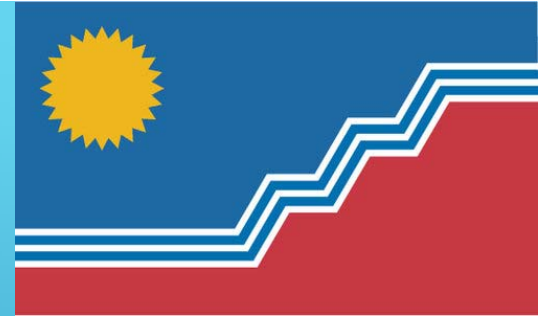
By: Jolly Omar

# INTRODUCTION TO VEXILLOLOGY



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD FLAG?

- ▶ Keep it simple.
- ▶ Use meaningful symbolism.
- ▶ Use 2-3 basic colors.
- ▶ Don't include any writing or seals.
- ▶ Be distinctive or be related.





# LESSONS FROM CITY FLAG EFFORTS

1. Approval from elected officials greatly increases likelihood of successful adoption
  2. Attempts to create flag for city without existing flag fare better than replacing an existing flag
  3. Providing guidance on flag design principles leads to better designs
  4. Community participation > Individual participation
  5. Student involvement advances the cause
  6. Smaller cities have more success due to community impact
  7. Building public support leads to a more successful campaign
  8. Most contemporary flag-change efforts employ social media to gauge the public's interest
  9. Process can take longer than expected (efforts ranged from as quick as two months to more than two years).
- 



## CONCLUSION

- ▶ Feedback from the community is key for the city flag design process
- ▶ If interest exists within the public, a study committee of community leaders should be created to examine the flag design process.
- ▶ Administrative topics from the flag design process

# REFERENCES

- ▶ Kaye, Ted.(2018). Lessons from American City Flag Redesign efforts. Vexillum. [https://nava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Lessons-from-American-City-Flag-Redesign-Efforts-Vexillum\\_no4\\_2018-pp-18-23.pdf](https://nava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Lessons-from-American-City-Flag-Redesign-Efforts-Vexillum_no4_2018-pp-18-23.pdf)