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## FLAG UPDATE: NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

*by Carl Gurtman*

My wife & I really like this Province, comprised of two parts, the island, Newfoundland, "The Rock", and the mainland portion, Labrador. We do enjoy visiting Labrador, and we've just returned from a visit there; our third.

Vexillologists come in all flavors, some are more interested, for example, in national flags; others may specialize in civic flags. Some collect actual flags, others table (4"x6") flags, others flag books. Of course, there's no hard and fast divide between these interests.

A major interest of mine is to see, and document when I can, what's actually happening on the ground. What flags people actually fly is often at variance with what the applicable flag law specifies as the flag they should be flying. Dave Martucci, the New England Vexillological Association's (NEVA) Secretary-Treasurer, and certainly the most knowledgeable person in regards to the State of Maine flag, Maine flag law and the actual Maine flag usage, can attest to the fact that no-one flies the proper Maine flag, and the one shown in every flag book is not one that anyone flies. Both the predilections of flag manufacturers, and the wishes, hopes, desires, and loyalties of the people actually flying their flags are of much more import than the wording of any law.

What flags should be flown in Newfoundland & Labrador, at least officially? Clearly, the Canadian and Provincial Flags.



*The author with his Labrador hat and Republic of Newfoundland shirt.*

Additionally, Canadian law gives special prominence to the British Union Flag (the so-called "Union Jack"), even naming a special day when its display is encouraged. (Interestingly enough, this British nation emblem was at one time the Provincial Flag of Newfoundland and Labrador.)

But, there are other flags flown in the Province. The vexillologist's eye is drawn to them, for they are different. And of particular interest to me, they aren't specified by law; and their use is unregulated. They are not officially recognized. In my view, their display fosters pride, a certain independence, and has especially in the use of the "Newfie" flag, a certain sense of protest. Though there may be a few people who share a contrary

view, I haven't found any true, organized, separatist movements coalescing about these flags.

What are they?

There's the Labrador Flag.

I have done a bit of reading, and some research on this flag. Its provenance is hardly unknown. Designed by Michael S. Martin, who also was instrumental in publicizing it, a comprehensive, thorough, description of the process, the flag, and its meaning, written by Mr. Martin himself, can easily be accessed on the "Flags of the World" website: <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/> [Go to Pages ordered by country, choose Canada, then under Provinces and Territories, select Newfoundland and Labrador, then Labrador.]

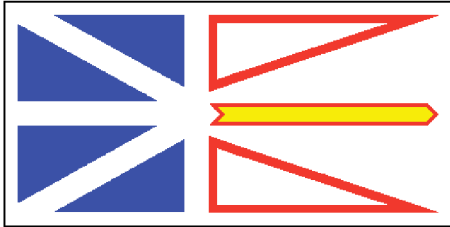
At the Labrador Heritage Society's Labrador City location, the Copyright is on display.

However, contrary to one of the statements on FOTW, the use of the Labrador flag is not a rare sight there, limited to separatists. Quite the contrary! Its use is ubiquitous. The National and Provincial flags are flown on public buildings, of course; post offices, libraries, etc. At a private home, especially if there's only a single flagpole, the odds-on chances, better than 20:1, is that the Labrador flag will be flying, not the National or Provincial one. If there are two flagpoles, it's often flown next to the flag of Canada, no Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Flag being evident.

Some anecdotal instances: In  
*Continued on Page 2*



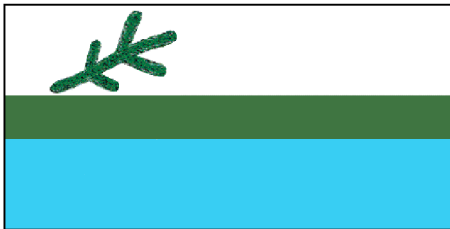
Canadian National Flag



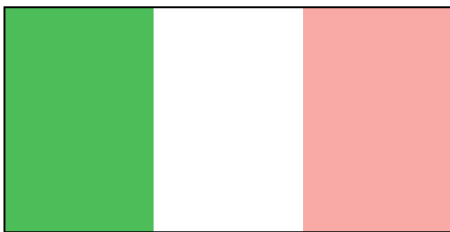
Newfoundland &amp; Labrador Provincial Flag



British Union Flag



Labrador Flag



Green-White-Pink "Newfie" Flag



Naskapi Flag

Labrador folk art, I saw not a single instance of the Provincial Flag, and only very few of the National Flag being incorporated in anything. But the Labrador Flag motif was very common. On my last visit, a craft building was painted in the colors. This summer I purchased a wide headband & a wool hat, hand-knitted, based on the Labrador flag. In the Town of North West River, every trash can was painted as the flag. The horizontal stripes make it well-suited for such use.

A yacht crew, flying the Canadian and Provincial flags as courtesy flags, apologized that they weren't flying the Labrador flag. The car ferry out of Cartwright, as a typical example, flew the Canadian flag at the stern, and the Labrador Flag at the mast; no Provincial Flag. There were hundreds of similar instances.

And all this on top of an almost non-existent actual separatist movement in Labrador! And no formal, legal, acknowledgement of the flag.

What's the other flag? The old Green-White-Pink flag of Newfoundland.

While my wife and I did see this flying once, back on our first trip to Newfoundland & Labrador, in 1970, on our honeymoon, I haven't seen or heard about it since, although vexillologists have known about it and researched its history and origins. It does have a history of past usage, but what is interesting is the resurgence in its use and popularity.

It would seem that the old Green-White-Pink flag of Newfoundland is being flown by people with some serious interest in Newfoundland separatism, in undoing the union of the late '40s of Canada and Newfoundland. It is fueled, I imagine, by hard times. These hard times follow from the collapse of the fishery, a downturn in lumbering, and resentment of (Canadian) federal control of off-shore fisheries and oil resources. I saw the old flag flying with the Canadian flag at roadside "Welcome to Town" signs, and on a newspaper masthead. I bought a tee-shirt with it labeled as "The Republic of Newfoundland".

To conclude, the most popular flag in Labrador, is an unofficial one, and you'll see it flying everywhere. And the other news; the old Green-Whit-Pink "Newfie" Flag is experiencing a resurgence.

Addendum:

In preparation for our trip, we did some research online, and found the flag of the *Naskapi*, a Canadian First Nation, who live (mostly) in Labrador's interior. The flag in not in the usual flag format, but is quite similar to other Native American tribal flags. I haven't yet seen it on flag web sites. More details and explanations of the symbolism can be found at: [http://www.naskapi.ca/en/our\\_nation/flag.htm](http://www.naskapi.ca/en/our_nation/flag.htm)



Also, at an Information Kiosk in New Brunswick: Right-to-left; "Information" flag, Canada, New Brunswick. I've never liked this symbol, for I'd like the Information kiosk to use a symbol denoting "answers", not "questions", as the latter symbol means to me, "I don't know". Alas, there's no such symbol. I've never seen this flag before.



Labrador Flag Folk Art.



# THE FLAG POLICE



The *New Hampshire Gazette*, The Nation's Oldest Newspaper™, and published fortnightly on alternate Fridays contains an ongoing, regular column titled "The Flag Police" which uncovers local flag desecration. You can read a number of their past columns on the paper's web site, <http://www.nhgazette.com/>. Here is one sample, followed by a brief history of the publication.



## THE FLAG POLICE:

**AN ODD SALUTE TO VETERANS**  
from *The New Hampshire Gazette*  
Vol 250, No 4, November 18, 2005

Buffeted for far too long by the winds blowing off the salt marshes along Sagamore Creek, this tattered flag was aloft on Veterans Day, 2005.

The Flag Police's chronic existential malaise has been in remission lately. This is probably due to an apparent string of successes. Three recent busts seem to have resulted in flag renewal, one at a shopping

plaza in the west end of town, and two on side streets downtown.

Another likely ameliorative factor is the generally good state of local flags this time of year. The Flag Police don't generally see a lot of bad flags in the fall.

After a summer-long succession of patriotic holidays, from Memorial Day through Flag Day and the Fourth of July, almost anyone who is responsible for one has had plenty of reminders to inspect their flag for wear and tear. By the time Veterans Day rolls around, it's usually pretty slim pickin's.

Which is fine with the Flag Police. Their point is not to meet some arbitrary quota of busts per fortnight, but to combat the rising tide of vexillological carelessness which is an insult, not only to the flag, but to the First Amendment which gives us all the right to burn one. But as their old drill sergeant used to say, there's always someone who doesn't get the message. In this case, it's whoever's in charge of the flagpole at a commercial condominium complex located where Sagamore Creek crosses Lafayette Road.

## The Nation's Oldest Newspaper™

The *New Hampshire Gazette* was founded in Portsmouth, on October 7, 1756. It was the first newspaper in

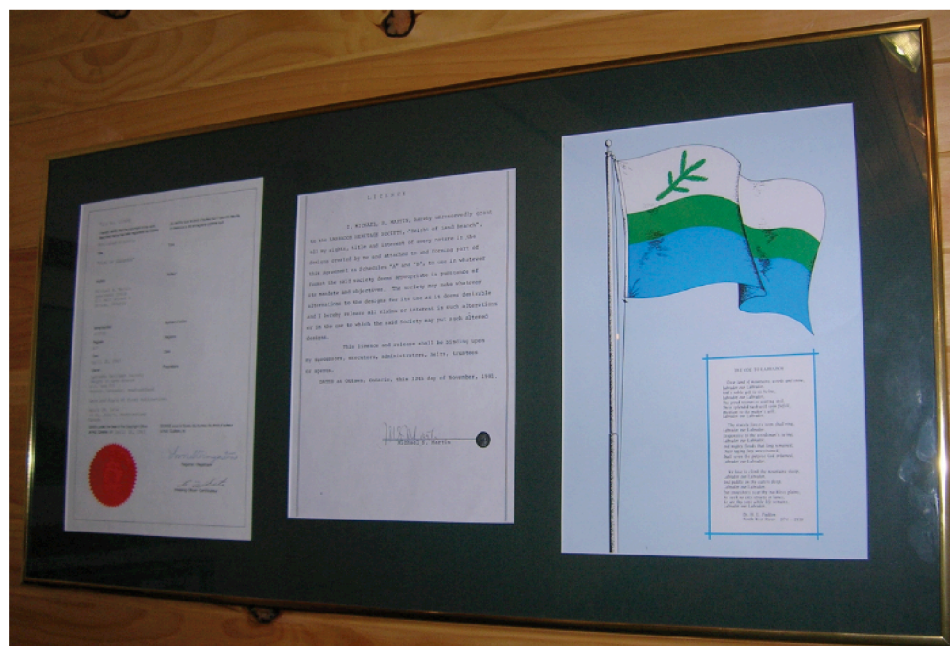
the then-colony of New Hampshire.

Daniel Fowle (1715—1787), its printer and editor, came to Portsmouth from Boston, where he was the first to put Samuel Adams in print. He left Boston after authorities there jailed him for publishing a seditious pamphlet, *The Monster of Monsters*. His rebuttal, *A Total Eclipse of Liberty*, is a stirring argument for press freedom.

The *Gazette* became the oldest newspaper in America in 1839, when the *Maryland Gazette* folded.

In 1960 the *Gazette* was being published on Saturdays, as a weekly supplement to the daily *Portsmouth Herald*, in an arrangement that dated back to the 1890's. The management chose to re-name the Saturday paper the *Herald Weekend Edition*. This would have been the end of the *Gazette*, had they not also specified, on the *Herald's* masthead, that it was "Continuing the *New Hampshire Gazette*." The papers were combined, and stayed that way for thirty years.

The *Gazette* would probably have faded into complete obscurity if not for an unlikely turn of events. A collateral descendant of Daniel Fowle, the founder, discovered in 1989 that the *Herald's* owners had at some point failed to renew the registration of the trade name *New Hampshire Gazette*—the ownership of the oldest newspaper in the country was up for grabs, and available to the first person to write a check for \$40 to the Secretary of State. On May 1, 1989, the paper officially regained its independence. Over the next ten years it was published episodically, in a very small format, with a press run of only a few hundred copies. In 1999, on the first of May, the *Gazette* assumed its current format and frequency. It has been gaining strength and support ever since.



Labrador Flag Copyright, Labrador City

# MINUTES OF THE NEVA MEETING HELD APRIL 30, 2006 AT THE FARNSWORTH ART MUSEUM IN ROCKLAND, MAINE

## ATTENDING

President Carl Gurtman, Secretary/Treasurer Dave Martucci, Robert Lloyd Wheelock, Janet Martucci, James Kearney, Gary Escorsio, Debbie Escorsio.

## PRESENTATION

Dave Martucci presented a paper illustrated in PowerPoint entitled "The History of Flags in Maine".

## TOUR

Following the presentation the attendees toured the museum's flag exhibit "Liberty Banners" in the Jamien Morehouse wing.

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. by President Gurtman.

## MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

MOTION by Wheelock, SECONDED by Martucci to accept the minutes of the 12/3/05 meeting as written and ACCEPTED by vote.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer reported there we had \$395.90 in the checking account as of 4/30/06. On a MOTION by Wheelock, SECONDED by Gurtman, the Treasurer's report was ACCEPTED by vote.

The *New England Journal of Vexillology* is published irregularly by the New England Vexillological Association, Dave Martucci, Editor. Annual membership dues in NEVA is \$10 for a single class of membership and this fee includes a subscription to the *Journal*. In addition to the print version, there is an online edition of the *Journal* found at URL <http://www.midcoast.com/~martucci/neva/nejv.html>. The editor can be contacted by writing to:

**David Martucci**  
**240 Calderwood Rd**  
**Washington ME 04574-3440**  
or by phone: **(207) 845-2857**  
or by email to:  
**vex@vexman.net.**

The views of individual authors are their own and do not reflect the views of NEVA.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary handed out an updated membership list. Current membership stands at 35 members. It was noted that member Brian Roche had passed away.

Photos sent in by Bob Koeller were passed around.

## ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Nomination of Carl Gurtman for the two-year term was made by Martucci, seconded by Wheelock. Gurtman was elected unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

A general discussion on meetings and associated problems ensued. The President again noted he needs help organizing meetings.

## ROUND TABLE

Carl Gurtman noted that there are three flag poles in the center



of the Kittery, Maine, Traffic Circle. Usually they fly the US, Maine and Kittery flags. Presently they are displaying the Japanese flag in place of the Kittery flag, but Carl didn't know why. He has been tracking the migration of the grave decoration flag for fire-fighters to a full flag. Now the EMT flag has been added, replacing the US Flag in some places (blue with white star-of-life emblem). He also noted the change in the Red Cross flag. Local emblems can now be placed in the center of the "red crystal".

Robert Lloyd Wheelock showed a book he bought on eBay, *The Illustrated Flag Handbook* and the Vex Decks he has been collecting. He mentioned the World of Flags web site.

Dave Martucci showed some flags and books recently acquired.

## NEXT MEETING

Exact date and location to be determined by President Carl Gurtman.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Dave Martucci  
Secretary/Treasurer

## NEXT MEETING AT THE PEARY-MACMILLAN ARCTIC MUSEUM

The next meeting of NEVA will be held at **1:00 p.m.** on **SATURDAY, November 11th, 2006** at **Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. The meeting will take place at the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum located in Hubbard Hall (right); we will meet in the West Conference Room on the second floor.**

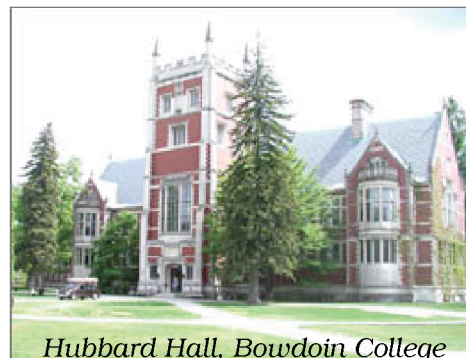
If you are driving, follow I-95 and then I-295. Exit at Brunswick, Maine — US 1. At the end of Pleasant Street where US 1 goes left, you go straight. Turn right a few blocks later at Maine Street. Bowdoin College is a few blocks down on the left.

Our host will be the Museum Director, Dr. Susan Kaplan. Carl Gurtman and Dave Martucci will make

short presentations.

Dave Martucci will have his traveling Flag Book Sale.

Call Dave at 845-2857 (or email [vex@vexman.net](mailto:vex@vexman.net)) if you need to arrange a ride. Continental Trailways offers bus service to Brunswick. Call Dave to arrange pick up at the bus terminal.



*Hubbard Hall, Bowdoin College*