

END OF FUNDING PERIOD REPORT
LAUC Statewide Grants, Research & Professional Development Committee

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TITLE OF PROJECT:

Time Period of Grant: FY 2013/2014
Amount of Award Received: \$293.58
Original Abstract as Submitted:

One of my areas of scholarly interest is the field of vexillology, the study of flags. I have presented a number of conference papers in this field, and have published scholarly articles including two that were monograph-length. I am submitting this presentation grant application to request funding to attend the Netherlands Flag Congress (ICV 25), which will be held on August 5-9, 2013 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. At the meeting I will be reporting on the International Vexillological Index project, and also presenting a research paper.

URLs for more information:

- Netherlands Flag Congress website - <http://www.nfc2013.com/>
- FIAV website - <http://www.fiav.org/FIAV.html>

International Vexillological Index (IVI)

Abstract: The International Vexillological Index (IVI) (formerly called “VexIndex”) will be a collaborative indexing project to create an open access index to the world’s vexillological literature. Phase one is in progress and involves converting an existing HTML index of the publications of the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA) into database format. At the conference I will be consulting with project partners and contributors, and hopefully demonstrating a beta version of the database.

Background: I recently completed my service on NAVA’s Executive Board, having served 4 terms as 2nd Vice President. In this capacity I oversaw NAVA’s publications including a peer-reviewed scholarly journal (*Raven: A Journal of Vexillology*) and a newsletter (*NAVA News*). The biggest project that I undertook in this position was the planning and implementation of the NAVA Digital Library. NAVA is a small bi-national organization about 400 members. To my knowledge, I am one of only three practicing librarians who are members of the organization, so I have committed my professional expertise to help the organization with its publications.

Since my retirement from the board, NAVA’s president has asked me to serve as Director of the NAVA Digital Library. I initiated the creation of the NAVA Digital Library and my involvement has included writing a digitization plan; inventorying materials to determine which would need to be scanned and which could be converted from digital formats; establishing parameters for

scanning; naming all the PDF files according to an established file-naming convention; converting various “born digital” files to PDF format; adding metadata to all the files; and preparing a web interface to allow users to locate and access the files. The bulk of our publications (*NAVA News* and *Raven: A Journal of Vexillology*) are now online, with all but the two most recent years designated as “open access”. I am still working out some details with some of the more complicated born-digital files.

The creation of the NAVA Digital Library prompted me to start work on updating an old static HTML index to NAVA publications that I had created with another librarian. I am currently working to convert that data into a database format. The new database will be fully-searchable and will have links to the full text of the articles in the NAVA Digital Library. This database will serve as the beta for my larger project – the International Vexillological Index (IVI).

Because vexillology is a very specialized field and is interdisciplinary in nature, very few of our publications are well indexed. For this reason, I am working to create this specialized index for the world’s vexillological literature. Obviously this is a bigger project than one person could complete, so I have enlisted partner organizations and individual contributors who are willing to help me. I envision this index as a collaborative effort where vexillological organizations and individual vexillologists will work together to index our publications. My role is to organize and manage the project, ensure standardization for the indexing, and train contributors to enter indexing information into the database. Partner organizations have given permission to index their publications and will provide indexing information and linking to full text when available. Individual contributors will index runs of specific vexillological publications and input data into the database.

At the last international vexillological congress in Washington, DC in 2011, I obtained partnership agreements from the following vexillological organizations and entities: Burgee Data Archives (Canada), Česká vexilologická společnost (Czech Republic), Flag Data Centre (Czech Republic), Flag Research Center (USA), Flag Society of Australia Inc., Flags of the World (an international collaborative website on flags), Great Waters Association of Vexillology (includes 5 US states), Soci t  Suisse de Vexillologie (Switzerland), Southern African Vexillological Association (includes 11 African nations), and Vexillological Association of the State of Texas.. I also recruited 6 volunteers to be individual contributors. At this meeting I hope to demonstrate the validity of the project, secure partnership agreements with additional vexillological organizations, organize the work of my initial group of contributors, and recruit additional volunteers to work on the project.

URLs for more information:

- NAVA Digital Library: <http://www.nava.org/documents/library/index.php>
- Digitization Plan: <http://www.nava.org/documents/library/plan.pdf>
- NAVA News & Raven Combined Index (1971-2009): current static HTML version - <http://www.nava.org/nava-publications/nava-news-raven>
- NOTE: NAVA’s website is currently being migrated to Drupal, so these URLs might change. Please let me know if you need updated URLs.

Research Paper Description

Abstract: The Space Shuttle Program was NASA's longest-running human spaceflight program. Spanning three decades from 1981-2011, the program consisted of 135 flights conducted using five orbiter spacecraft. Throughout the history of the program, flags were used in many different contexts. The most traditional use, in terms of human spaceflight, was using a flag as a national identifier on spacecraft, payloads, and spacesuits. In addition, flags and flag symbolism were used on the mission emblems designed by shuttle crews to represent their flights. On the emblems, flags indicate the nationalities of individual crew members, the use of hardware contributed by various nations, and the increasingly international nature of the program as it evolved from an American space program to a collaborative program where many nations cooperated to conduct individual missions and to construct the International Space Station. The Space Shuttle Program also spawned new flags designed to represent each orbiter, specific payloads, or selected missions. Finally, the Space Shuttle was the largest spacecraft designed to ferry both astronauts and equipment into orbit. This provided a unique opportunity to carry large numbers of flags into orbit. This paper will discuss these varied uses of flags during the Space Shuttle Program, documenting specific flags and demonstrating the dynamic role of flags in human spaceflight.

Background: As a former NASA contract employee I have experience researching and writing about the history of the U.S. manned space program. I have published several works on NASA history including a history of the lunar flag assembly, a history of NASA symbols and the use of flags in the U.S. manned space program, and also a history of NASA's early manned Mars mission planning efforts. A presentation on flags of the Space Shuttle program is an ideal topic for a presentation to an international vexillological audience. The program evolved from an American space program to an international one involving many partner nations. Participants from many of those countries will be in attendance at the Netherlands Flag Congress.

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS and EVALUATION

This was a very exciting and eventful conference. It was my second international vexillological meeting, so I met many new people and also saw many that I had met at my first meeting. My paper was very well received. I also enjoyed the other papers presented during the conference. They covered a wide range of topics related to flags and reminded me that this field of study is truly interdisciplinary. One paper by a chemist/vexillologists demonstrated how chemical analysis could be used to determine what pigments had been used to dye the fabric used in a historical flag and trace the pigment back to its source. To me this interdisciplinary aspect of the field further demonstrates the need for a subject-specific index to bring all of our publication information together into one research tool.

I also prepared a poster display and gave a brief presentation on the International Vexillological Index (IVI) Project. With this project, I am combining my professional expertise in librarianship with my scholarly interest in vexillology. I initiated the project and intend for it to be a multi-language index of the world's literature related to flags. The database will be open-access for the dataset, and will link to full text when available. It will index books, articles, websites, and other sources of information. Throughout the conference, I discussed the IVI project with representatives

of vexillological associations from around the world and secured agreements with some new partner organizations. As a result, I now have partnership agreements from the following vexillological organizations and entities: Breton Society of Vexillology (France), Burgee Data Archives (Canada), Česká vexilologická společnost (Czech Republic), Flag Data Centre (Czech Republic), The Flag Institute (United Kingdom), Flag Research Center (USA), Flag Society of Australia Inc., Flags of the World (an international collaborative website on flags), Great Waters Association of Vexillology (includes 5 US states), The North American Vexillological Association (US/Canada), Société Suisse de Vexillologie (Switzerland), Southern African Vexillological Association (includes 11 African nations), Vexillological Association of the State of Texas, and Vexillology Ireland. Partner institutions have agreed to allow full indexing of their publications in the database. I also recruited additional volunteers so that I now have 17 contributors who have expressed interest in helping with the project. Currently, my volunteers and I are working to complete spreadsheets of indexed material that will be imported into the initial database. One change from what I had proposed in my grant application was that I did not demonstrate the prototype of the IVI database. In discussions with my programmer, we decided that we were not ready to demonstrate the prototype yet.

During the banquet, I was named a fellow of Fédération Internationale des Associations Vexillologiques (FIAV) – the first woman to be so honored. I was nominated for this award by the Executive Board of the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA) in recognition of my service to NAVA and my contributions to the field of vexillology. They cited my work with NAVA’s publications and the quality of my research and publications. The nomination letter included this summary:

“Annie’s organization efforts, intellectual creativity, and sheer productivity continue to amaze me and the greater vexillological community. Her research on the lunar landing flags has been tremendously helpful in explaining vexillology to non-vexillologists and showing its real value as a field of inquiry and study. Her significant record of service, her publication record, and her creation, collection, preservation, organization, and dissemination of vexillological information is a contribution to the field worthy of recognition as a Fellow.”

The award consisted of a certificate and a medal. At the top of the follow page is a photo of me receiving the award from the Executive Board of FIAV – left to right: Charles Spain (USA), Annie Platoff, Michel Lupant (Belgium), and Graham Bartram (United Kingdom).



II. IS YOUR PROJECT COMPLETED? Yes X No

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

I received a \$293.58 presentation grant from LAUC to attend this conference. It was combined with \$1,500 from my professional development funding to cover part of the expense of my trip.

My expenses for attending the Rotterdam Flag Congress were:

- Early Conference Registration: €250 / ~ \$327.48 (paid by Jan. 15)
- Hotel (Sun. Aug. 4 - Sat. August 10):
 - Total for 7 nights: \$1,287.67
- Flight: \$2,261.08
- Meals: \$0 (didn't track since I was not being reimbursed)
- Total: \$3,876.23

My actual expenses were about \$467.23 more than my estimate of \$3,409, and this did not include the cost of meals during the conference.

IV. SHARING YOUR PRODUCT/RESULTS

My conference paper will be published in the conference proceedings. Below is the current citation:

Platoff, Anne M. "A Shuttle Full of Flags: Use of Flags in the Space Shuttle Program." In *Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Vexillology* (publication pending).

I am forwarding to LAUC a draft PDF version of the my paper (as presented) with this report and I plan to upload it to eScholarship once it is formally published. I am also sending a copy of my handout that I distributed regarding the International Vexillological Index Project.

V. NOTE

Information included in this report may be reprinted or posted on the web for dissemination to UCOP, other UC Libraries, and future potential LAUC grant applicants.

Submitted 27 March 2014