

# Eight Stars of Gold

## The Story of Alaska's Flag

**Benny Benson**, an Alaska Native seventh grader from the Jesse Lee Mission Home in Seward, won the Alaska Flag Contest in 1927. His simple but elegant design was selected from 142 entries. Benny's life changed forever, as he became a famous Alaskan within the state and across the country.



Photo, Alaska State Library PCA 01-1921  
Flag, Alaska State Museum III-O-3081

# THE KIDS' GAZETTE

FREE to KIDS

No. 7

2002

*"The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future state of Alaska, the most northerly in the union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear – symbolizing strength."*

Benny Benson's flag motto

*Eight Stars of Gold*  
The Story of Alaska's Flag  
on the museum's website:  
[www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)

## Big Dipper

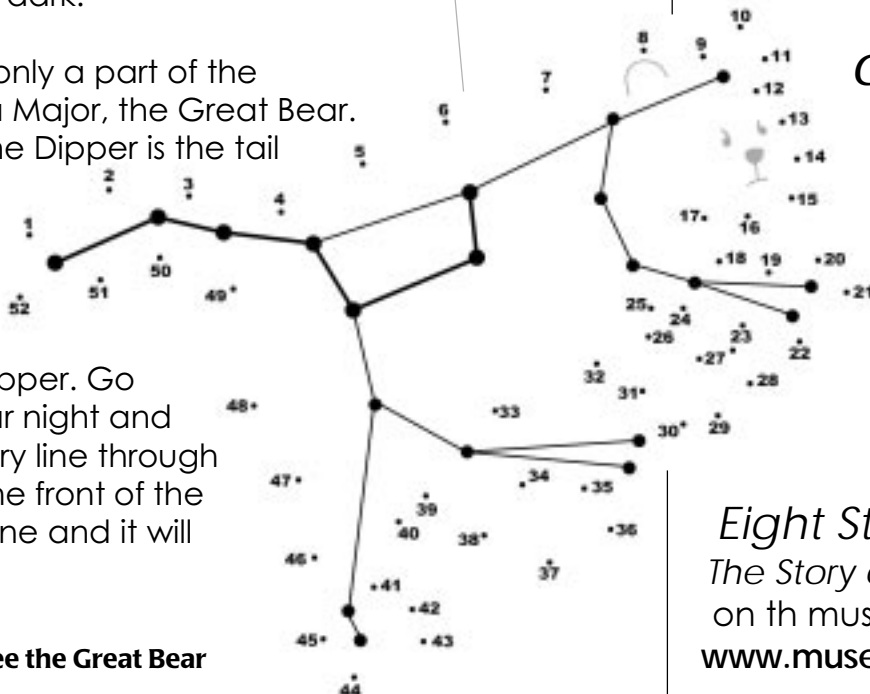
It was this group of stars that inspired Benny Benson for his flag design entry.

**T**he Big Dipper is one of the easiest group of stars to find in the sky. It is visible all year round, and its stars are bright enough to see even when the sky is not completely dark.

The Big Dipper is only a part of the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear. The "handle" of the Dipper is the tail of the bear.

You can find the North Star, Polaris, with the help of the Big Dipper. Go outside on a clear night and draw an imaginary line through the two stars at the front of the cup. Extend this line and it will point to Polaris.

**Connect the dots to see the Great Bear**



## Meet the Author



### India Spartz

Researcher, India Spartz, who grew up in Juneau and now works in Fairbanks, became very interested in telling the story of how Alaska got its distinctive flag. She wanted to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flag and celebrate the creativity and the patriotic commitment of Alaska's people over the years. The result of her work is the Alaska State Museum exhibit and catalog, *Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag*. You can see an interview with India Spartz at the museum's website: [www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)

## Bubble Puzzle

What flies more around Alaska's capital than the Alaska Flag?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Figure out the questions below to find the answer. The letters in the bubbles spell out the answer.

- The Latin name of the constellation also known as the "Great Bear" \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Alaska was a \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ before it became a **state**.
- Benny Benson designed the \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ flag.
- "The blue field is for the Alaska sky," ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **S** Benny Benson's flag motto.
- The colors of the Alaska Flag are \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The part of the constellation on the Alaska Flag is called the \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The number of stars on the Alaska Flag: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Another name for the north star \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The great bear symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Marie Drake wrote the state ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Alaska Flag Arithmetic Trivia

All the numbers and statements below have a relationship to the Alaska State Flag. Can you figure out the statement using the numbers as clues? Each capital letter stands for a word that begins with that letter.

**BEGINNER:** Use the key words at the bottom to figure out the puzzle  
**ADVANCED:** Don't use the key words. Read the history of the Alaska flag and figure out the answers on your own.

**CLUE:** **1927** = *The AFCY*. **ANSWER:** **1927** = *The Alaska Flag Contest Year*.

**'59** = Y of A S. \_\_\_\_\_

**7** = S that F the B D. \_\_\_\_\_

**8** = S on the A F. \_\_\_\_\_

**49** = A is this S on the U S F. \_\_\_\_\_

**13** = A of the A F D, B B. \_\_\_\_\_

**KEYWORDS:** Age, Big, Stars, United, Flag, Designer, Benny, Dipper, Statehood, Benson, Alaska, States, Form, Year

# Alaska's Flag

Do you know the words to the song, Alaska's Flag?

## 1st Verse of Alaska's Flag

*Written by Marie Drake, Composed by Elinor Dusenbury*

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue -  
Alaska's flag. May it mean to you  
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,  
The mountain lakes, and the flow'rs nearby;  
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,  
The precious gold of the hills and streams;  
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,  
The "Bear"—the "Dipper"—and, shining high,  
The great North Star with its steady light,  
O'er land and sea a beacon bright.  
Alaska's flag – to Alaskans dear,  
The simple flag of a last frontier.

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Did you know that a second verse was written?

## 2nd Verse of Alaska's Flag

*Words by Carol Beery Davis*

A Native lad chose the Dipper's stars  
For Alaska's flag that there be no bars  
Among our culture. Let it be known  
Through years the Native's past has grown  
To share life's treasures, hand in hand,  
To keep Alaska our Great-Land;  
We love the northern midnight sky,  
The mountains, lakes and streams nearby.  
The great North Star with its steady light  
Will guide all cultures, clear and bright,  
With nature's flag to Alaskans dear,  
The simple flag of the last frontier.

You can hear Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer sing the flag song at exhibit website:  
[www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)



Students at Kwethluk School in Lower Kuskokwim School District

# Flag Etiquette

Are there correct ways to handle a flag respectfully?

See if you can find out if citizens from another country have the same flag etiquette that we do.

In the activity "Flag Etiquette" on the museum website at [www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us) you will find the answers to many frequently asked questions about handling a flag.

## What is the state motto?



+ 2 + the +



the

## Alaska—the 49th State



Design by Nancy Lee Andrews



Design by Ronald Becker

When Alaska went from being a territory to a state in 1959, people all over the United States had ideas for how to redesign the American Flag.

How was the flag redesigned?

The redesigned flag had seven rows of seven stars each.

*The galaxy is said to be the track made by Raven's snowshoes when he walked across the sky during one of his journeys while creating the inhabitants of the earth.*

From *The Eskimo About Bering Strait* by Edward William Nelson. Originally published in 1899 by the Government Printing Office.

## WORD FIND

C T E R R I T O R Y G O L D  
 Q O V S P D O O H E T A T S  
 A N N I V E R S A R Y C W K  
 B R E S E A R C H E R V I B  
 I L H D T L A N O I T A N Q  
 G E Z W D E S I G N J P K F  
 D G N O S F L A G D T G L R  
 I E S T A R S L C M X E E O  
 P N T B R P O L A R I S S N  
 P D A E T I Q U E T T E V T  
 E S R E V W E D F M I Z Q I  
 R A L A S K A S Y M B O L E  
 V R B E N N Y B E N S O N R

TERRITORY	POLARIS	NATIONAL
FRONTIER	STARS	FLAG
STATEHOOD	SYMBOL	CONTEST
GOLD	CONSTELLATION	DESIGN
ENTRIES	TWINKLE	LEGENDS
RESEARCHER	ANNIVERSARY	SONG
ETIQUETTE	VERSE	ALASKA
BENNY BENSON	BIG DIPPER	

## Recommended Books

Spartz, India. *Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag*. Juneau: Alaska State Museum, 2001. The exhibit catalog was produced to accompany the 75th anniversary of the creation of Alaska's flag.

Crampton, William. *Flag*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989. ISBN 0-394-82225-2. In this book students will discover the story of flags and banners closeup.

Inglefield, Eric. *Flags*. New York: Kingfisher Books, 1984. ISBN 0-668-06262-2 This is a handy reference book, especially for secondary students doing research projects about flags.

Karasilovski, Phyllis. *Benny's Flag*, 2001. ISBN: 1570983208. A beautiful book about Benny Benson, illustrated by Juneau artist Jim Fowler.

## Recommended Websites

The Alaska Democracy Project: Citizens for a New Millennium [www.gov.state.ak.us/ltgov/adv](http://www.gov.state.ak.us/ltgov/adv) The project circulates Ground Zero flags among school districts.

Color Flags of the World [www.fotw.net/flags/cbk-us.html](http://www.fotw.net/flags/cbk-us.html)  
 Printable coloring pages of flags for primary students.

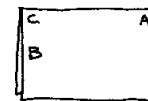
Flag Report Tips [www.fotw.net/flags/index.html](http://www.fotw.net/flags/index.html)  
 Simple guidelines by the Vexillological Association to help students write a flag report.

Flag Trivia on-line Quiz  
[www.usask.ca/history/fraser/na\\_flags](http://www.usask.ca/history/fraser/na_flags) Good site for developing games and questions for students about flags.

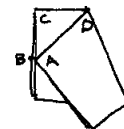
## Five-Pointed Star

Make a five-pointed star by folding a piece of paper a few times and then making one cut.

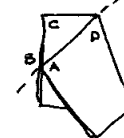
Fold a piece of paper in half. Write the letters **A**, **B**, and **C** on it as shown in the Picture. **B** is at the mid-point of the folded paper.



Fold corner **A** to point **B**. Mark this newly-formed corner **D**.



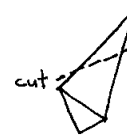
Fold corner **C** over the paper edge running from **B** to **D** (along the dotted line).



Make another fold along the dotted line **D - C**.



Turn over and cut the paper along a line from a point near one edge to a point about two-thirds of the way to the point **D** (the dotted line illustrated on the left).



Unfold the paper.

## Stargazer Scope

**A**s you are learning about the stars that inspired Benny's design for a flag for Alaska, make a Stargazer Scope."

Decorate a rolled piece of heavy paper, or use a paper towel tube.

Hold it out at arm's length as you look at the stars. Can you find the Big Dipper with your Stargazer Scope?

### Alaska State Museum

395 Whittier St., Juneau, AK 99801 • (907) 465-2901

Visit our website: [www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)

Alaska Department of Education; Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums