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BOX 1, FILE 33

STATE OF GEORGIA FLAG,
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**Looking for alternatives to Georgia’s flag, Buckhead resident designs new flag**

By Christian Harris  
Northside Neighbor Staff Writer

Northside resident Cecil Alexander not only wants to change the controversial Georgia state flag’s appearance but has designed a prototype for a new Peach State banner.

The state of Georgia, along with Mississippi, is one of only two states in the U.S. that features the Confederate battle symbol of the St. Andrews cross on its flag. The symbol has been a topic of debate in Georgia for years and while some Georgians see this symbol as a representation of the history and heritage of the South, others see the symbol on the flag as a divisive representation of racism.

Among the voices calling for a change to the Georgia flag is Alexander, who said he decided to redesign the Georgia state flag in 1993. “Around that time that Gov. (Zell) Miller got burned on the flag issue,” he said, referring to Miller’s public loss in his re-election bid which may contribute to his support for changing the flag.

Alexander’s design does not have the Confederate battle flag on it.

The Alexander flag has the state Seal of Wisdom, Justice and Moderation on a dark blue field. Along the bottom of the flag is a ribbon made up of the flags flown over Georgia’s Capitol building. In the center of the present state flag is the Stars and Bars. The Stars and Bars, he believes, acknowledges and honors the Confederacy as a part of the history of Georgia without the modern racial connotations of the Confederate battle flag symbol, which white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan have championed.

“The Stars and Bars recognizes the valor of the men who served in the Confederacy,” said Alexander.

The Stars and Bars was the original and official battle flag of the 11-state Confederacy from 1861 to 1863 with three stripes and a navy blue field in the left hand corner with seven stars in a circle.

He believes the cause of the Civil War may be disagreeable to some, but the men who fought in the war should be honored. In Alexander’s opinion the St. Andrews Cross that presently adorns the Georgia flag has been “taken over as a very contemporary symbol of extremism.”

Presently the issue of changing the flag is one that some politicians feel strongly about, but aren’t willing to make a formal political issue.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Atlanta, a former civil rights leader, has taken the Georgia flag down from the stand in front of his office but will not publicly lobby to have the flag changed.

According to news sources, Lewis believes that right now is not the time to fight publicly for a flag change.

On a personal level he feels that a change is in order but he’s not sure whether he will ask to be more involved in the flag issue.

For now, though, he sees it as an issue that is out of his hands.

The controversy over the current Georgia flag and what it stands for has been around since it was instituted in 1956.

Many saw the Confederate symbol of the St. Andrews Cross as a message of recalcitrance from Georgia to Washington for being forced into school desegregation.