



The Dymaxion-World-Flag makes its statement for global peace on the corner of Hudson and Newark streets in Hoboken.

With liberty and justice for all

Local artist designs international flag

By Ilene Stern

These days if there is discussion of a flag, it is usually in flames. Oddly enough, to Paul Carroll, a Hoboken artist dedicated to producing a giant flag as symbol of global unity, flag-burning is as meaningful as flag-saluting.

In the prosperous 1980's, Carroll earned money working in real estate renovation and interior design. He thought only briefly about world peace then, knocking around an idea to create the modern world-wide symbol of peace. In 1988, Carroll was hit by a cargo van while riding his bicycle and nearly died.

During the months he spent bedridden after the accident, the vision of that global symbol he had only played with before, developed into a concrete goal. His philosophy of life turned from self-fulfillment toward a "oneness," of all peoples on earth, and that "symbols and images are catalysts for change."

As Carroll's vision began to come together, he acquired 159 flags of all the member nations of the United Nations and began arranging them on his living room floor. He wrestled with issues of design, international politics and symbolism. He decided that all the flags should surround Buckminster Fuller's Sky-Ocean map -- a map of the world that represents the land areas of the world without distortion -- a One World Island in a One World Ocean. Upon adding the flag of the United Nations and increasing the size of Fuller's map, Carroll had created a rectangle, and one giant international flag.

Every flag was placed with the most careful consideration of its color scheme, design and context within world political structure. Carroll chose to place the torch of Zaire directly above the map of the world and lighting a flame beneath South Africa. Some flags formed arrows when juxtaposed, all aiming toward the center of the flag and in effect, "focusing people's eyes toward the world." Nepal's flag, the oldest of the flags, lies in the upper right hand corner, and is the only one shaped like a pennant. Countries in conflict or turmoil with each other were placed side by side "in order to break down boundaries." The United States and Soviet Union flags appear on either side of the world map, and importantly, on the same level.

In December of 1989, Carroll's Dymaxion-World-Flag participated in the United Nations Ceremony for Peace and the Environment. In April 1990, the flag hung outside the World Trade Center -- until the wind ripped it down. On Earth Day, millions of people viewed the flag at the concert in Central Park. The flag has even been on display at Tower Records on Broadway. Carroll says the flag acts as "a magnet" bringing together different communities in an environmental effort. Yet, although the flag has sent a clear message to many people so far, and has earned much recognition, Carroll is far from finished.

Like the AIDS quilt that travels across the country, educating people along the way, Carroll hopes his flag will travel across the globe inspiring thoughts of "oneness." Currently it is on display in the Oculus window, Hoboken's eye to the world, at 54 Newark Street. That's what the flag is all about.

For more information, please write to: Dymaxion-World-Flag, P.O. Box 5113, Hoboken, New Jersey 07030, or call Oculus at 656-1000.