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Governor Haley,

One question I need to ask can South Carolina build and make a successful Bowl Game state? I actually thought about this back in the 1980's or early 90's ~~back~~ when I was employed at Greenwood Mills Adams plant. I once asked a coworker do you think South Carolina will ever start a football Bowl game in our state?

He replied I don't think so because you need a good Sponsor and what will they do about entertaining the players when they are not practicing for the games? At that time I did not have an answer for him and I sort of agreed with him. But as we know time changes everything.

We've got companies like Boeing and Michelin Tire Company you should have no problem finding a good sponsor. As for the entertainment you put these players on a bus and take them to Charleston and let them see what South Carolina has to offer in the way of History. I'm sure Mr Ron Morris would have a problem with my suggestions because of his dislike of the CSA and anything dealing with Southern History. But if I stop thinking of ideas to improve our states economy just because people like Rom Morris does not agree with me I would never be able to help accomplish anything constructively.

But does Rom Morris concern himself with how I feel about his attitude? I don't think so. He made Coach Steve Spurrier so Mad once he did not want to be in the same room with him during a media session at the University. We just have to ignore people like Ron Morris because they are not going anywhere. They are here to make our life miserable We know there's always got to be a obstical in everything we try to accomplish in our life.

I think the time is right for South Carolina to start a Bowl game of our own. I can see it now The Boeing Palmetto Bowl of South Carolina, or the Michelin Tire Co. Palmetto Bowl. It would be great for our state economy. I'm sure the players, coaches, cheerleaders, and fans would love to come to South Carolina and perform in the Palmetto Bowl. They would enjoy taking a trip down to Charleston to Patriots Point to see

the World War II ships, Submarines and Museums and yes take them to see attractions like Fort Sumter it is part of our Nations History and part of South Carolina's history. I'm sick and tired of people acting so negative about history hey get over it OK! If they want to go down to one of the beaches take them to one of the Beaches! Its South Carolina not Florida please remind them its not going to be warm and the water will be cold! But let them go down and walk on the beach. Take them out to some of the nice restaurants and shops. After the game give them gifts from other companys if these companies are willing to participate. Fuji Film, BMW, Continental tire, just to name a few could go in together and buy the players a few gifts to take home with them.

I'm sure the attractions and the friendly <sup>5</sup>hospitality of our people would have them thinking, "I really enjoyed myself I think I'll come back some day to stay a few weeks." Give it some thought and lets see what we can put together with the help of the University of South Carolina. Thank you for your time and consideration. May God Bless you Always.

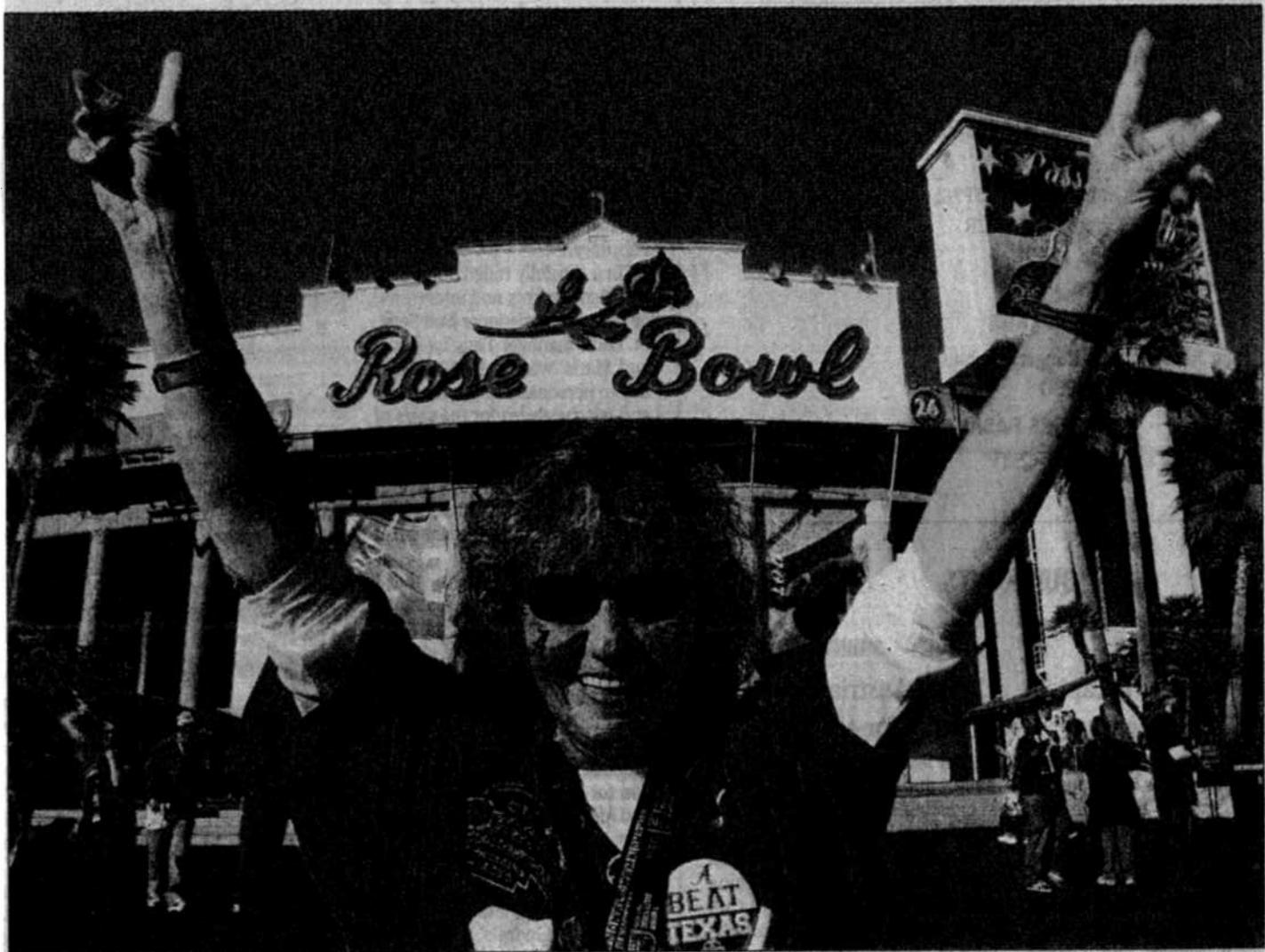
Sincerely Yours,



Richard M. Witt

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# Bowling for Columbia



FILE PHOTOGRAPH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angela Tompkins from Mobile, Ala., is all smiles before the Alabama-Texas national championship game Thursday in Pasadena, Calif. But will the lure of Columbia be enough to make football fans happy enough to attend a bowl?

## Time is right for state's first college bowl game

**C**OLUMBIA AND THE state of South Carolina need to jump on the college football bowl game bandwagon. Following the lead of the New Mexico Bowl, South Carolina could inject income into the state's economy and gain unprecedented — and badly needed — positive national exposure.

Call it the Palmetto Bowl. Play it one or two days after New Year's Day. At a time when the



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nation knows the state only for Joe Wilson and Mark Sanford, what better way to promote its mountains, beaches and many

things in between.

The trick to securing the Palmetto Bowl is to align with ESPN, garner the support of USC and hitch on with a national sponsor. The subject was broached several years ago, but ESPN was not in the business of owning bowl games then, and USC wanted no part of a postseason game at Williams-Brice Stadium.

Times have changed.

"Columbia could definitely

have a bowl, there is no question about it," says Eric Hyman, USC's director of athletics. "I'm amenable to anything that makes economic sense."

It helps that Hyman was the athletics director at TCU in 2003 when the Armed Forces Bowl got off the ground in Fort Worth, Texas. Hyman gave the bowl the backing of TCU and allowed the

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game to be played at the school's Carter Stadium.

The Armed Forces Bowl was one of the first to hook up with ESPN, and it secured a corporate sponsor in Bell Helicopter. The bowl has grown each year, and continues to be a moneymaker for ESPN and the two participating conferences, the Mountain West and Conference USA.

Hyman has seen it work and believes the same could happen in Columbia.

A corporate sponsor could be difficult to secure in these difficult economic times. Yet of the six bowl games owned by ESPN, five have corporate sponsors, ranging from the Papajohns.com Bowl to the MAACO Bowl Las Vegas.

The New Mexico Bowl has a dual sponsorship with the state department of Tourism and the Albuquerque Convention and Business Bureau. If you watched this year's game, you saw what amounted to a three-hour infomercial on the city of Albuquerque and the state of New Mexico.

South Carolina could fall back on the same sponsorships and let the country know there is more to this state than bad politics, poor education and the Confederate flag.

The bowl game's success hinges on ESPN ownership. ESPN owns and operates the St. Petersburg Bowl in Florida, the Papajohns.com Bowl in Birmingham, the New Mexico Bowl in Albuquerque, the Las Vegas Bowl in Nevada, the Armed Forces Bowl in Fort Worth and the Hawaii Bowl in Honolulu.

By owning the bowls, ESPN ensures the two elements that make a successful game: financial stability and a national television audience. This is lucrative programming for ESPN, and the financial well-being of the game has little to do with attendance.

Here is how it works:

Using the Papajohns.com Bowl as an example, you can see how the game netted \$800,000 before a single ticket was sold to the public. USC and Connecticut were required to purchase 10,000 tickets each with a face value per ticket of \$40. If a school comes up short in selling those tickets, its conference purchases the remainder.

The bowl game announced a crowd of 45,254. Let's say 40,000 tickets were sold. That's a profit of \$1.6 million, which would cover the guaranteed payout to both teams. USC was paid \$900,000 as the representative from the SEC and Connecticut was paid \$600,000 as the representative from the Big East.

On top of that, Papa John's Pizza pays in the neighborhood of \$1 million to ESPN for the game's naming rights. ESPN also sells advertising for its televised games. Advertisers like the idea of seeing their product displayed in all six bowl games.

ESPN probably is not that concerned that there were only 2.5 million viewers for the Papajohns.com Bowl because more than 15 million watched all six of its games. That's the number ESPN sells to its advertisers. The bowl games have become lucrative programming for ESPN.

"They have voids in their television programming," Hyman says of ESPN. "That's why you see some of their games after New Year's, and they get good ratings because the American population has such an insatiable appetite for football.

"It's about supply and demand, and the demand is out there."

That thirst could extend to Columbia. There is one major hitch to bringing the Palmetto Bowl to town. The Confederate flag. Nevertheless, a bowl game could provide a grand opportunity. It would be the perfect chance for South Carolina to show the nation it is ready to move away from its sordid past and push forward in progressive ways.

At halftime of the first Palmetto Bowl, state officials could officially remove the flag from the Statehouse grounds, ceremoniously place it in a glass-enclosed case at midfield at Williams-Brice Stadium and permanently retire it to a state museum.

Everyone would come away a winner.