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Bowl Names and Sponsors: Silliness Abounds

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE
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Already some of the big ones are behind us. The annual Blue-Gray Game in which the Confederacy tries to atone for the loss of the big game of 1865 was played in Montgomery, Alabama on Christmas Day. Once again the Gray was outmaned. Then came the Jeep Eagle Aloha Bowl in which Aloha meant goodbye in any number of ways, and the Weiser Lock Copper Bowl, which asks the question what is a weiser lock and why would you want to lock weisers anyway?

Almost all the bowls now have corporate sponsors. There are only two kinds that don't. There are those that are too insignificant to get enough TV rating points like the Peach Bowl and the Sun Bowl, and this year even the Cotton Bowl, which has fallen on hard times. The last few years it was the Mobil Cotton Bowl, but now it is simply the Cotton Bowl Classic. Then there is the other category, those bowls that have too much class and too much tradition to allow themselves to stoop to such cheap commercialization. Bowls of this type number only one. It is the Granddaddy of all the bowl games, the Rose Bowl, which has somehow resisted selling its name for commercial purposes. How much longer it can do this remains one of the great mysteries of intercollegiate athletics.

Other things have changed over the last few years. The number of bowls sponsored by automobile rental dealers has been reduced to none, even though the Builder's Square Alamo Bowl sounds like it might be one. The Alamo in this case is the Alamo Dome in San Antonio, Texas, named of course for the Alamo, the historic site, and not for the car rental dealer. Builder's Square is the sponsor and it is important to remember that this is a do-it-yourself home supply company and not a location. Under no circumstances should you try to Remember the Builder's Square Alamo.

Nor is the Carquest Bowl a car rental dealer, although it sounds like it might be. I think, but I would not stake my life on it, that this is a car parts or accessory dealer. It also sounds like something you might do in the parking lot after the game.

And speaking of cars the Holiday Bowl in San Diego is now the Plymouth Holiday Bowl, and my guess is that most of you, like me, did not know that Plymouth even had a holiday.

My favorite bowl name continues to be the Poulon Weed Eater Independence Bowl because of all the bizarre images that it conjurs up at the sound of the name. I for one have long sought

to be independent of my weed eater, and I welcome any memorial celebration to this important development in the lives of most Americans.

For those who like hopeless cases, the St. Jude Liberty Bowl is for you. Having actually attended the Liberty Bowl twice, I can tell you that viewed from certain perspectives it can be construed to be a hopeless case, which indeed was not the way in which I viewed the Liberty Bowl, but it was the way in which I viewed Memphis where this overblown patriotic exercise takes place. Few will remember this, but the Liberty Bowl has this theme, not because Memphis is the cradle of liberty, but because this bowl has its origins in Philadelphia.

Then there is the Outback Bowl in Tampa which was previously called the All-American Bowl, while the Outback Steakhouse was the sponsor of the Gator Bowl. It is no longer called the Outback Steakhouse Bowl I suspect because of all those jokes people made about the outhouse steakout bowl. As for the Gator Bowl it is now the Toyota Gator Bowl, which brings us back to the automotive theme once again.

Finally the other big New Year's Day Bowls are the CompUSA Citrus Bowl which is co-sponsored by the Florida Citrus Commission; the Fed Ex Orange Bowl which promises to get you out of Miami overnight, alive; the Nokia Sugar Bowl which challenges you to try to figure out what a Nokia is and if it is safe to have one in your sugar bowl; and finally the big one this year for all the marbles, this year's game of the century, is the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl purchased for a king's ransom by the Frito Lay Company.

Thus the beauty of amateur incollegiate athletics where students can be seen competing for the pure joy of sport and where institutions of higher learning can provide entertainment for millions of Americans, and in the case of the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl where each university can pocket as much as \$13M, while the Fed Ex Orange Bowl and the Nokia Sugar Bowl will bring each school \$8.3M. Is it any wonder that the coaches and presidents of these institutions think that the present bowl system is working quite well?

And finally one other note about a bowl name. When Pete Rozelle first decided to use Roman numerals to designate the Super Bowl, did he stop to think that the 30th Super Bowl would be Super Bowl XXX? I doubt it. So this year will be the Triple X rated Super Bowl. Remember you heard it here first.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau wishing you a Happy New Year and reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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