

Media Action Committee alert and call to action!

Compatriots, please read the following article from the Columbia, South Carolina, *Free Times*.

We need as many men and their family and friends to react to this slander.

Use your God given Southern manners, but let's be firm and resolute.

Topics and talking points that you should use:

- The article is all about the all mighty dollar. Whether their facts are correct or not, Southerners traditionally do not sell their heritage or values for any price, 50 million dollars or 50 dollars. **Culture can not be bought or sold.**
- The Southern people that fought under the Confederate Flag fought a war of self defense against an invading country. America was invaded on September 11, 2001. Does this writer feel that the memorial for the people who died in the Twin Towers also has a price?
- Southerners, black and white have been remembering the plight and struggle of the Southern people long before the NAACP decided to create a boycott for doing so publicly. The article could have been about stopping the boycott instead of asking a native people to dismiss their culture for the glory of a profit and the fleeting television exposure he is so excited about.

The writer allows, "It is patently absurd that so few individuals can hold hostage the economic fortunes of so many and for reasons so plainly injurious to reason and good government." I must agree with his statement here and attribute the hostage holding to the proper party: the NAACP.

He continues, "I say that if Senate president pro tem Glenn McConnell and House Speaker Bobby Harrell—the two people most able to effect the flag's removal and the two people most unwilling to do so — personally will donate \$50 million out of their own pockets to compensate South Carolina citizens who have suffered economically on behalf of their confederate pride, then let the flag fly forever." Again, the same may be said of the NAACP.

Gentlemen, back when the Confederate Flag was removed from the Statehouse dome, we whom respect our ancestors' gallant defense of our State were distressed by the compromise. But instead of wallowing in sorrow, we moved on, never flinching in our love and honour of our ancestors and their cause. During the debate, we warned the media and our friends at the Statehouse that the NAACP had no designs on a true compromise as witnessed here. Their stated purpose is to destroy "all things Confederate."

So the assault continues.

Gentlemen, write to the paper and write to your legislator. Let the paper know that you are insulted by their apparent disregard of traditional Southern values. Tell your representatives in Columbia that you want pressure brought to bare upon the NAACP for causing this financial shortfall and this continued unease between the people of South Carolina. But let them all know that our culture is not for sale!

Thank you for your fine work. Please let me know of your successes. I am,

Respectfully yours,

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Article can be found at http://www.free-times.com/index.php?cat=1992912064035856&ShowArticle_ID=11012603083629022

Further info about the Media Action Committee (MAC) can be found at <http://anv.scv.org/documents.php>

Our \$50 Million Flag

Legislature's Folly Costing Citizens

BY RON AIKEN



Every year about this time, major athletic facilities across South Carolina such as the Colonial Center in Columbia, the North Charleston Coliseum and the Bi-Lo Center in Greenville sit vacant, as empty as the ideology that shuts their doors.

Erected to attract economic development to the universities and communities they support, the state's premiere arenas that could and should be housing men's and women's NCAA Basketball Tournament games are rendered useless year after agonizing year, victims of a state legislature whose stubborn pride has cost its citizenry approximately \$50 million (more on that figure to come) in NCAA sports-related revenue alone since the NAACP and NCAA partnered to boycott the state over its placement of the Confederate Battle Flag on the State House grounds in 2001.

I don't know how much the cotton/silk blend for the flag costs, but by any calculation, given the tens of millions it keeps away from this state each year, there is no denying that the Confederate Battle Flag is the most expensive piece of fabric on the planet.

First, let's look at some numbers to get a feel for precisely how much money the flag keeps away from South Carolina's economy. Marc Bush, president of the Greensboro Sports Commission, says the recently completed

first and second rounds of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament there brought in an estimated \$5.1 million to the local economy.

"We've had the men's tournament here before as well, and the numbers for that were about double that of the women," Bush says. "But besides the money, you also can't beat the positive national publicity you get. It's a huge benefit for the community, and I have to say that we don't mind South Carolina doing what they're doing. In a competitive environment for bids, that's a whole state full of arenas that can't get into the mix."

In Raleigh, where first and second rounds of the men's tournament just have concluded, Scott Dupree, president of the Raleigh Convention and Visitor's Bureau, says the city just took in \$4 million in new spending alone.

"Our figures are always lower because we don't use multipliers; we focus on new spending alone, and in that regard \$4 million is huge," Dupree says. Raleigh aggressively campaigns for tournament sites, which are bid out by the NCAA four years or so in advance. With a strong package to offer the NCAA, Dupree says that typically, Raleigh will be hosting either a men's or women's NCAA Tournament events every three out of five years, if not more. Like Bush, Dupree is happy to see the Confederate Flag fly.

"[South Carolina] is missing out on a lot," Dupree says. "I mean, if you were in Raleigh this past week, the whole town was buzzing with eight teams here. There's an electricity that makes people happy, makes people go out and spend over and above the visitors you have. "And the national exposure is priceless. For 12 hours on Saturday, Raleigh had prime time coverage on CBS, and every time they went to a commercial, they used beautiful cutaways of downtown Raleigh that made the city look great. You can't buy that kind of exposure."

Other estimates across the country vary for the NCAA tournament's economic impact. Officials for Providence University, which just won a first and second round NCAA men's tournament site for 2010, estimate an impact from \$7 to \$10 million since that's the amount the state took in the last time it held the event in 1996. And in Oakland, officials there put the impact of Sweet Sixteen and Elite Eight games at \$25 million in 2006. And NCAA Tournament events aren't the only ones South Carolina is missing out on. The popular SEC Tournament, which rotates throughout the Southeast, brought an estimated \$25.7 million to Atlanta when it hosted the event back in 2002, and officials in Tampa, which is hosting the event in 2009, have said they anticipate similar returns.

Therefore, if we imagine no boycott and aggressive campaigning on the part of the state's largest arenas, it is not irrational to assume that the state could have secured bids for five out of the past seven years — a balance Dupree says is about right to expect when you can offer 18,000-seat arenas and supporting infrastructure. So, taking a woman's event at \$5 million and a men's tournament at \$10 million, with two men's and one woman's NCAA events in town over a seven-year period, that's \$40 million or so all by itself, not counting the even larger numbers a conference tournament or Final Four bring (Indianapolis, for example, claimed an economic impact of \$25 million for the 2006 Final Four). That's why, for the sake of argument, \$50 million seems a good place to begin to formulate just how expensive our legislators' pride has been. When one looks at that figure, regardless of whether you want to quibble over a few millions here or there, the picture that emerges can only be considered one of colossal folly.

It is patently absurd that so few individuals can hold hostage the economic fortunes of so many and for reasons so plainly injurious to reason and good government.

I say that if Senate president pro tem Glenn McConnell and House Speaker Bobby Harrell— the two people most able to effect the flag's removal and the two people most unwilling to do so — personally will donate \$50 million out of their own pockets to compensate South Carolina citizens who have suffered economically on behalf of their confederate pride, then let the flag fly forever. If not, however, then I suggest both are guilty of gross dereliction of duty and of perpetuating a state-sponsored morality so corrupt it should demand immediate redress from a defrauded, outraged population. Honestly, if one removes oneself from siding with one's race and ignores the "heritage or hate" debate entirely, what kind of argument possibly can be made that would convince anyone anywhere that flying a 140-year-old flag is worth losing \$50 million and counting for? No sane populus would agree to such a measure were it proposed in those plain, and very real, terms.

And let's not forget, after all, that the flag is where it is because McConnell — a man who traffics in Confederate relics and who spends his spare time dressing in Confederate costume and pretending to shoot Yankees — made sure the flag would remain in a prominent location after its hard-fought removal from the dome despite protests from nearly every quarter outside the closeted State House corridors.

I can't speak for the wishes of the Civil War dead any more than can McConnell, but I would venture to guess that, if they could, they would oppose any effort in their memory that prevented their descendants from enjoying millions and millions of dollars from athletic events held at the same universities and towns many of them called home.

Is it not, then, the epitome of arrogance, scorn and the most sinful manner of pride for a handful of individual legislators to purposefully withhold financial windfalls that would benefit the entire state, from the mountains to the coast? And if so, how is it that year after year no one seems to care that millions of dollars are being funneled to Georgia and North Carolina to support an ideology most rational people find repulsive?

Don't think for one second that the boycott will fizzle out with time, either. Just two weeks ago, Lonnie Randolph, president of the South Carolina state conference of the NAACP, was in Indianapolis meeting with NCAA officials to ensure the ban remains in perpetuity so long as the flag continues to fly.

"They told me in no uncertain terms that nothing would change until South Carolina decides to change," Randolph says. "We're protecting a flag that is a universal symbol of hate, bigotry and white supremacy at the cost of showing ourselves as progressive to the world and allowing millions of dollars to enter our economy and benefit South Carolinians. And that's not counting the number of athletic recruits who don't come to South Carolina schools for the same reason. It's a shame that blankets all of us."

And apparently, it's a shame we will be forced to endure until those in power are held accountable for their actions.

Until then, as now, South Carolina remains closed to the NCAA postseason, closed to the millions of dollars such events bring and closed to progress, all to fly a flag that only benefits the egos of a precious few in power who, being wealthy themselves, can afford to thumb their noses at world opinion from their Charleston beach homes while at the same time denying millions in revenue to a state and people in dire need of it.

Let us know what you think. Email thesideline@free-times.com.