**Gavel Gamut**

By Jim Redwine

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**FORTY BOWL GAMES AND COUNTING**

Americans rushed to California in 1849 seeking gold. Most found what the little boy shot at. But now there is gold to be found by college football teams heading to California, and Florida, Texas, etc., etc., to play in one of the college bowl games. It is estimated that in excess of half a billion dollars will change hands between the first bowl game on December 16, 2017 (The Celebration Bowl played between Grambling and North Carolina A & T in Atlanta, Georgia) and the National Championship Bowl to be held January 08, 2018 in the same place.

My alma mater, Indiana University, will not be among the 80 colleges participating. We will, however, share in a portion of the bowl revenues that other Big 10 universities will rake in. Maybe we can use the money to help fund the one event I.U. students always get to play in, the Little 500 bike race. Okay, enough sour grapes. Let’s move along with the main topic which is the college football bowl season.

Less than forty years after the end of the Civil War (1902) the first college bowl game was held between the University of Michigan (representing the east) and Stanford University (representing the west). America’s Civil War wounds were still too raw to pit a northern team versus a southern one. The game was conceived as a fundraiser to help Pasadena, California defray the expenses of the Rose Parade that was always held to celebrate the New Year. Unfortunately, Michigan beat Stanford so badly that Stanford walked off the field and quit in the third quarter (49-0). This was so embarrassing the Rose Bowl game was not held again until 1916.

However, due to the financial success of games from 1916 up to the time of the Great Depression other communities jumped on the bowl bandwagon. Miami, Florida started the Orange Bowl in 1933, New Orleans added the Sugar Bowl in 1935 and Texas started the Sun Bowl in 1936 and the Cotton Bowl in 1937. A true gold rush was in full swing.

The 2018 Rose Bowl will be held New Year’s Day between The University of Oklahoma and the University of Georgia. Each school’s conference will be paid $40 million dollars and each of the two schools playing will get paid over $2 million as “compensation for expenses”. My guess is each university will use the money to snag five star recruits and build evermore state of the art practice facilities. I say we should not expect the money to be invested in each university’s academic needs. On the other hand, Peg and I have not seen fit to buy any tickets to watch the exciting lectures on physics at I.U. instead of the moribund football games!

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