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## *Forget the Titanic: Everyone Really Wants A Piece of the Hunley*

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Confederate Sub Sank in 1864;  
Now, Raised and on Display,  
It's a Charleston 'Cash Cow'

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Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

CHARLESTON, S.C.—In 1864, the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley made naval history: It became the first underwater vessel ever to blow up an enemy ship. But there probably wasn't much time to celebrate. The Hunley sank with its crew of nine before it returned to port.

For the next 131 years, few people other than Civil War buffs gave the Hunley much thought. Those who did assumed it was lost forever. Then, thanks in part to the efforts of "Raise the Titanic!" author Clive Cussler, the 40-foot sub was found, raised last summer, and packed off to a former Navy yard in North Charleston for study.

### 'Heroes in Gray'

Now it could be a while before the unfortunate crew rests in peace again. Hunleymania has seized this part of the South, and everyone wants a piece of the action. The mayors of Charleston and a neighboring town are competing for the right to build the Hunley a new home. Painters are vying to be the official Hunley artist, and a local songwriter has penned a ballad called "Heroes in Gray," which he hopes will be the sub's official song. (Sample lyric: "The cannons are gonna sound and the band's gonna play/Remember the Hunley and her heroes in gray.... That was a cold night in 1864/ Now the feelings run as deep as they did before.")

Corporate sponsors—ranging from Thompson Dental Co. of Columbia, S.C., to the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co.—are lining up, and a traveling exhibition with a life-size model of the Hunley is making its way to Bi-Lo grocery store openings all across the Southeast. The National Geographic Society provided a grant, gaining film rights and a leg up on rivals such as the History Channel. (The History Channel, meanwhile, has screened its own show using stock footage and interviews, and TNT made a 1999 TV movie called "The Hunley" starring Armand Assante as the sub's commander, Lt. George E. Dixon.)

### Three Ribs

Part of the mystique: Scientists expect to find the bodily remains of Lt. Dixon and his crew of eight volunteers. Just this week, sifting through the silt that fills the 40-foot-long sub, they discovered three human ribs. "People want to see bones," says Warren Lasch, a local businessman who heads fundraising efforts for Friends of the Hunley, a nonprofit group.

At the new Warren Lasch Conservation Center here, visitors can pay a fee of \$5 to watch the ongoing excavation on closed-circuit TV screens. (The cameras were turned off when the bones were handled.) A gift shop does a brisk business selling \$11 mugs, \$30 windbreakers, and \$35 golf shirts. Friends of the Hunley even considered packaging and selling the silt from inside the sub, but the idea was nixed. "We're developing our merchandising component," Mr. Lasch says.

So far, Friends of the Hunley has raised \$10 million from individuals, corporate donors, the U.S. government and the state of South Carolina. Mr. Lasch says \$7