

soil through contour farming and strip cropping. "Women In The Service," a campaign to build prestige and popular acceptance for Women In The Service.

Of the many campaigns three stand out over the years. Savings Bond, Red Cross and Forest Fire Prevention. To discuss this last mentioned campaign we have Jay Grant, Assistant Director of the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Campaign.

## "THE SMOKEY BEAR STORY"

By JAY GRANT

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A cooperative project conducted by the Association of State Foresters, the U. S. Forest Service, the Advertising Council and the Canadian Forestry Association

This is a story about a bear—a very special bear—perhaps the most famous bear of our time. It's the story of "Smokey," the forest fire preventin' bear. At the same time, it is a success story unparalleled in the annals of public-service advertising . . . a classic example of what Federal and State governments, industry, and individuals can accomplish, working together toward a common goal.

This story had its beginning in the years immediately preceding World War II. This country was experiencing an average of over 200,000 forest fires per year, and the curve was going up. Fires were blackening an average of 30 million acres every year. That is an area about the size of New York State. In 1941, the timber loss alone, from forest fires, was estimated at 55 million dollars. Enough timber burned that year to build homes for a city of 500,000 people. Foresters were preaching fire prevention but weren't reaching the masses. Their shots were too few and too scattered.

The early day posters were wordy and lacked eye appeal. There was no central theme—no symbol. They just weren't effective. The 1939 poster showing Uncle Sam proved to be the best pre-war effort. It was a forerunner to 1942 and all-out war. The armed forces were taking the best of our forest fire fighting manpower. Equipment for fighting fires was hard to obtain, or not available, and incendiary bombs were being dropped on West Coast forests. State and Federal foresters feared that a bad combination of weather, coupled with an outbreak of enemy-caused fires in the face of manpower and equipment shortages, might create a situation they could not handle. We needed to alert the public to prevent fires from happening, and since 9 out of every 10 fires are man-caused, an appeal to the public to prevent forest fires was needed.

Early in 1942, foresters took their problem to the then newly organized War Advertising Council, now called The Advertising Council, a non-profit, non-political organization, using the forces of advertising to help solve important Government and private problems of nationwide scope. The Council was quick to recognize the merit of fire prevention and readily agreed to sponsor a National Campaign to prevent forest fires. Soon forest fire prevention messages began to appear in newspapers, magazines, and on the radio.

It was only natural that the first poster used nationwide in 1942 should carry a wartime theme and show a menacing Jap face. It made people stop to think and become conscious of the important association between carelessness, forest fires, and the war effort. A similar theme was used in 1943 when Tojo and Hitler threatened America. The war effort was in full swing and the message was timely and well accepted.

In 1944, more radio messages, more newspaper items, and two posters proved quite popular. One was the so-called "Shouting Ranger" poster. This illustration was also used as the basis for the first fire prevention stamp. The other poster marked the first use of an animal character in the program—Walt Disney's Bambi. Bambi was well received by children and adults alike and bore out what the advertising business had long realized; animal characters, used in advertising, have a strong appeal. This poster prompted the Volunteer Task

Force and the Executive Committee to consider continued use of an animal character.

It was decided to try a bear. A well-known animal artist, Albert Staehle, was commissioned to do the job. "Smokey"—and what he first looked like appeared on a special poster in 1945. Smokey has come a long way in appearance since then, but this first effort received wide acclaim and it was apparent from the start that Smokey had definite appeal.

The basic poster for 1946, however, again used a wartime theme, a burned service flag, since the posters and other material have to be planned nearly a year ahead. Many men were still in the armed forces, despite the end of the war, and this message was well received.

In 1947, a well-fed Smokey was joined by two cubs in an appeal to be extra careful. These two little bears have been used with good effect on posters and in other ways through the years.

In 1948, the "Praying Bear" poster marked the first time that the basic theme carried a religious touch. Its immense popularity pointed the way to a practice, still employed, of using a religious theme every third or fourth year in all of the program media. This approach has had a wide universal appeal, and is especially popular in the Southern States.

The 1949 theme stressed the magnitude of the forest fire loss each year, "Another 30 Million Acres Lost." Also the slogan, "Remember, Only *You* Can Prevent Forest Fires," was again used. Originally adopted in 1944, this catch phrase has been the keynote of the campaign ever since. This slogan avoids "scolding," which we all resent, but it is provocative and is proving just as effective today as ever.

The theme for 1950, "Our Most Shameful Waste," was the first in a series of three successive annual presentations designed to make people more conscious of the unnecessary and shameful waste caused by wild fires. In May 1950, there was a terrible forest fire on Capitan Mountain in the Lincoln National Forest of New Mexico. A fire fighter found a badly burned and frightened 5-months-old bear cub clinging to a burned stump. New Mexico Game Warden Ray Bell took the cub to a veterinary for treatment of his burned feet and then home with him where he and his 4-year-old daughter, Judy, nursed the little fellow back to health. After he was fully recovered, Little Smokey, as he was properly named, was flown to the Nation's Capital and presented to the National Zoological Park as the living symbol of forest fire prevention. Soon after his arrival in Washington, Smokey was visited by his good friend, Hopalong Cassidy. He gets millions of visitors every year.

The emphasis in 1951 was "You Can Stop This Shameful Waste"; and in 1952, "This Waste Weakens America." The year 1952 marked another significant milestone. Smokey had become so famous that commercial interests were anxious to help promote his popularity. Smokey's name and character needed some reasonable protection. A bill, introduced into Congress, passed both houses unanimously as Public Law 359, commonly known as the Smokey Bear Act. The act fully protects Smokey from unauthorized use. Since 1952, over 50 firms have been licensed to produce Smokey commercial educational items. Royalties from the sale of these items are used to further forest fire prevention.

In 1953, the religious theme was again used, and again widely acclaimed. It appealed, "Please Help People Be More Careful." The year 1953 also marked the beginning of Smokey's Junior Forest Rangers. An official, free Junior Forest Ranger Kit has been developed for youngsters. Local Smokey Bear Clubs are becoming more and more popular across the country as children mobilize to help Smokey. There are now over 2 million Junior Forest Rangers. Letters and cards requesting the kits pour into Smokey's Headquarters at the rate of about 800 a day.

The 1954 theme was in the form of a pledge, "I Will Be Careful," to which everyone could subscribe. This year also saw the erection of a Smokey Bear statue, 26 feet tall, at International Falls, Minnesota, under the sponsorship of the Keep Minnesota Green Committee.

In 1955, the program again was given a reverent touch, "God Gave Us This—Don't You Give Us This"—a burned forest! With the interest of Mr. and Mrs. America centered on a presidential campaign in 1956, it seemed appropriate to remind people of *Smokey's Campaign*.

By 1957, the reduction in number of fires and acreage burned annually was so gratifying that it seemed appropriate to thank people for their help, so the Smokey posters said "Thanks Folks For Being Careful." The Little Boy poster for 1957 also carried an appealing message, tying young people and trees together.

In 1958, the Rules Poster drew very favorable comments by illustrating Smokey's Commandments. In May of 1958, President Eisenhower gave special recognition to the fine record set in 1957, when both number of fires and acreage burned hit all-time lows. For the first time in history, the number of fires was below 100,000 (83,000 to be exact) and acreage burned in the United States dropped to 3½ million acres. In a beautiful ceremony on the White House lawn, the President awarded the first four Golden Smokey statuettes. These coveted statuettes went to persons representing three national organizations who had been especially helpful in making this achievement possible and to Judy Bell, representing Capitan, New Mexico, and the children of America. It was Judy, you remember, who helped nurse Little Smokey back to health following his rescue.

In 1959, the yearly theme was tied into America's interest in rockets and missiles and said, "A Match Can Be A Deadly Missile." One highlight of early 1959 was the Smokey Bear float in the tournament of Roses parade on New Years Day. This single fire prevention presentation reached 100 million people, the estimated radio, television, and on-the-ground audience. The floral Smokey stood 11 feet high. Incidentally, the float won the Governor's Trophy.

Through the years, many special audio and visual materials have been prepared dealing with a variety of subjects: range fires, debris burning, Girl Scout and Boy Scout conservation programs, and the like. Keep in mind that each year some 20 *different* pieces of literature, based around the central theme for the year, are also developed. These include, to mention just a few, posters, stamps, calendars, easels, bookmarks, song sheets, tent cards, booklets, comic books, and bumper strips. In addition to this, each year there are radio spots, television shorts, special motion pictures, newspaper ads, and exhibits . . . a "shotgun barrage" of fire prevention materials designed and distributed to reach every man, woman, and child, not once, but with repeated reminders of the urgency of preventing forest fires.

Who is responsible for all this effort, beginning in 1942 and continuing right up to now? The program is conducted by the Association of State Foresters and the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Forty-seven states are currently participating. The program is sponsored by The Advertising Council as a public service.

Now, what has this program accomplished? The number of fires was reduced from 210,000 in 1942 to 97,910 fires in 1958. In acreage burned, the comparison is even more startling: from 30,000,000 acres in 1942 to an all-time low of 3,280,000 acres in 1958. Those figures prove the worth of the program but are even more significant when you realize that this was accomplished while the use of our forests more than tripled.

It is estimated that this nationwide forest fire prevention program has saved the American people 10 billion dollars in vital forest resources that did not burn: Timber and wood fiber, water, forage, precious soil, wildlife, recreation areas, and even human lives. And what has the Smokey Bear Program cost? Less than 1/5 of one cent per year for each American.

Yes, a good job has been done, but there is still a great deal to do. Forest fire scenes are all too common. Our population is steadily increasing and use of the forests is keeping pace. If we are to hold the line against forest fires, our prevention efforts must also keep pace. Smokey Bear appeals to every American, to join the fight . . . and do all *you* can to help.

Remember, only *you* can prevent forest, woods, and range fires.

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