

Smokey Bear

The Smokey Bear Statue stands in Smokey Bear Park appropriately in the same area where the Koochiching County Historical Museum and Bronko Nagurski Museum are located.

Smokey the Bear, is a popular emblem of fire prevention and sometimes rated as America's #1 Forest Conservationist. The symbol became a living reality when a New Mexico forester found in the wake of a 'forest fire a scared and badly burned cub. The ranger put the cub aboard a plane and he was flown to a veterinarian where the burns were successfully treated and he was officially christened "Smokey Bear". With his earnest, honest, conscientious face, he signifies the determination of American people to protect the Nation's Forest Heritage from fire." The International Falls statue was first proposed by a Minnesota Forest Ranger stationed in Koochiching County and was included in the Keep Minnesota Green organization's program of activities for 1954. Thanks to a hard working group of individuals it became a reality. Smokey is the copyrighted image of a bear adopted as National symbol of fire prevention and forest conservation in general. Permission was obtained from the National Forest Service to reproduce his likeness.

The Monument is an exact likeness, color and all, of the national copyrighted symbol of forest fire prevention. An unusual structural plan was developed. A steel meshwork molded to the exact form of Smokey and the two cubs was welded to a trussed steel frame. The exterior is coated with the coloring material and finished in enamel. It was designated and fabricated by Gordon Displays of Minneapolis.

The stature stands on a six foot concrete base (tree stump) and the 25' statue stand 31' high. The cost was \$3,800 financed by hundreds of Koochiching County Individuals. It was dedicated on October 13, 1954. It has become a very popular tourist attraction and is photographed by many visitors each year. To withstand our cold winter, Smokey and the Cubs do their winter attire each fall – scarf and mittens which were knitted by Gladys Wolfe (deceased) some years ago.

He now has a summer attire of fishing gear, fall colors of orange vest and hat for fall and winter attire.

DJ 2/24/95
picture
from 1954

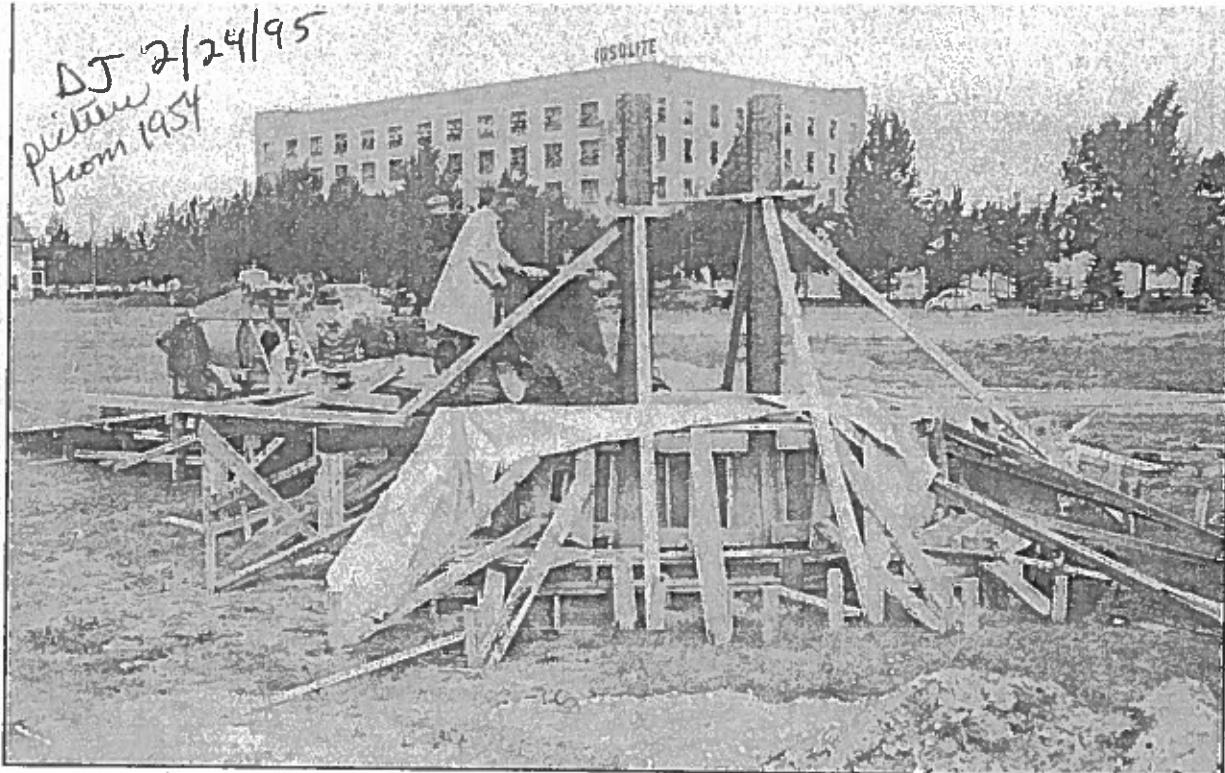


Photo courtesy of Koochiching Historical Museum

A work crew begins building the base for the 26-foot fiberglass Smokey Bear statue. Final cost of the monument was \$3,800.

Bear necessities

Smokey continues fire prevention message in Borderland for 40 years

By KEVIN OLSON
Staff Writer

Only you can prevent forest fires.

Americans have heard the phrase uttered countless times by the No. 1 exponent of forest fire prevention, Smokey Bear. And nowhere else in the country is there such a large and constant reminder of the legendary figure than right here in International Falls.

The 26-foot shrine to the guardian of the forests has loomed on Borderland's skyline in Smokey Bear Park for 40 years. A celebration to mark Smokey's 50th birthday was held in the park last summer. The statue was the brainchild of the Koochiching County Keep Minnesota Green

"We knew we wanted to build a statue, but we didn't know how big. Someone threw out five feet, and then six, and it kept getting bigger and bigger. We kept talking about it, but then someone said, 'Let's just do it.'"

With the forests providing jobs, recreation, raw material for paper products and the backbone of the economy, committee members felt it extremely important to erect a monument that symbolizes the preservation of northern Minnesota's forests.

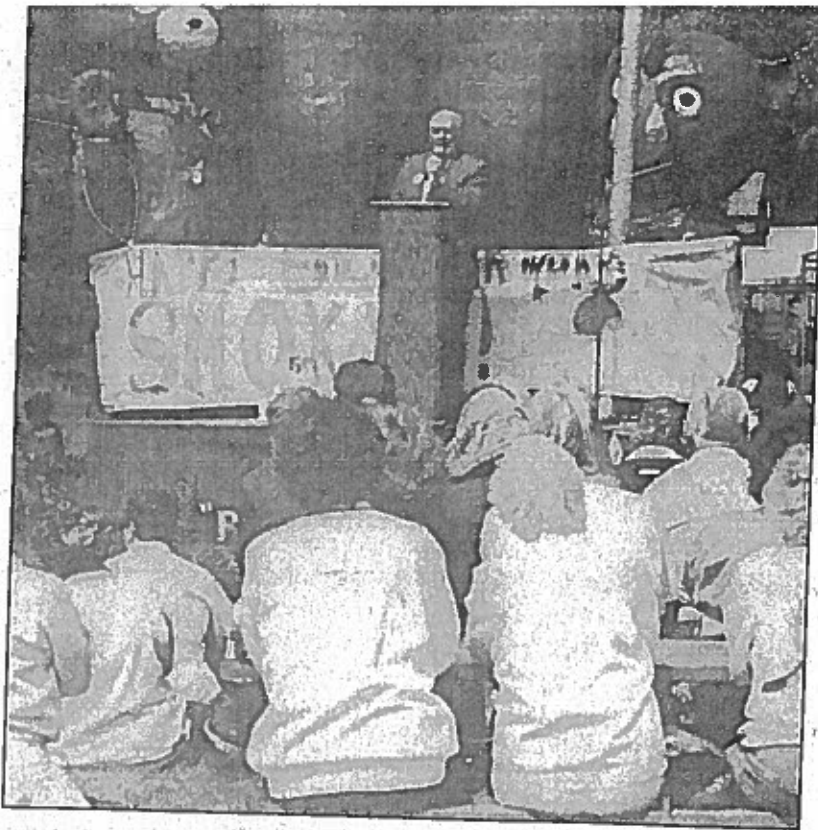
Schwankl said there was an air of urgency about preventing forest fires at that time.

"The fires kept getting worse and worse, so the committee was created. Wood was badly needed for the paper mills. KMG

likeness of the copyrighted national symbol of forest fire prevention having been designed with the help of Rudolph Wendelin, art director for the U.S. Forest Service.

The Smokey Bear statue was fabricated by Gordon Displays of Minneapolis using steel, wood, plastic and fiberglass. A steel meshwork was molded to the exact form of Smokey and the cubs were welded to a truss steel frame. The exterior was then coated with fiberglass impregnated with the coloring material and finally finished in enamel.

Norman Anderson and Roy Wilhite, Gordon Display sculptors, said they worked on the monument day and night for nine weeks, according to an



File photo

Over 500 attended a 50th birthday party for Smokey Bear at Smokey Bear Park in August.

Smokey

Continued from Page 9
hoist with a 40-foot boom to prop up the two-ton monument.

Final cost of the monument was \$3,800, a bargain in the eyes of KMG Committee members.

"We couldn't believe how cheap we got it," Schwankl said. "It really surprised us."

The committee's countless hours of hard work and fund raising came to fruition on Oct. 13, 1954, when the monument was officially dedicated.

The dedication ceremony attracted many national and regional dignitaries including Clinton Davis, chief of fire prevention for the U.S. Forest Service in Washington D.C., J.B. Faegre, president of the Minnesota and Ontario Paper Co., Falls Mayor Joe Bartkowski and Fort Frances Mayor Joe Livingstone.

Even President Dwight D.

Eisenhower sent his personal congratulations and his regrets for not being able to personally attend.

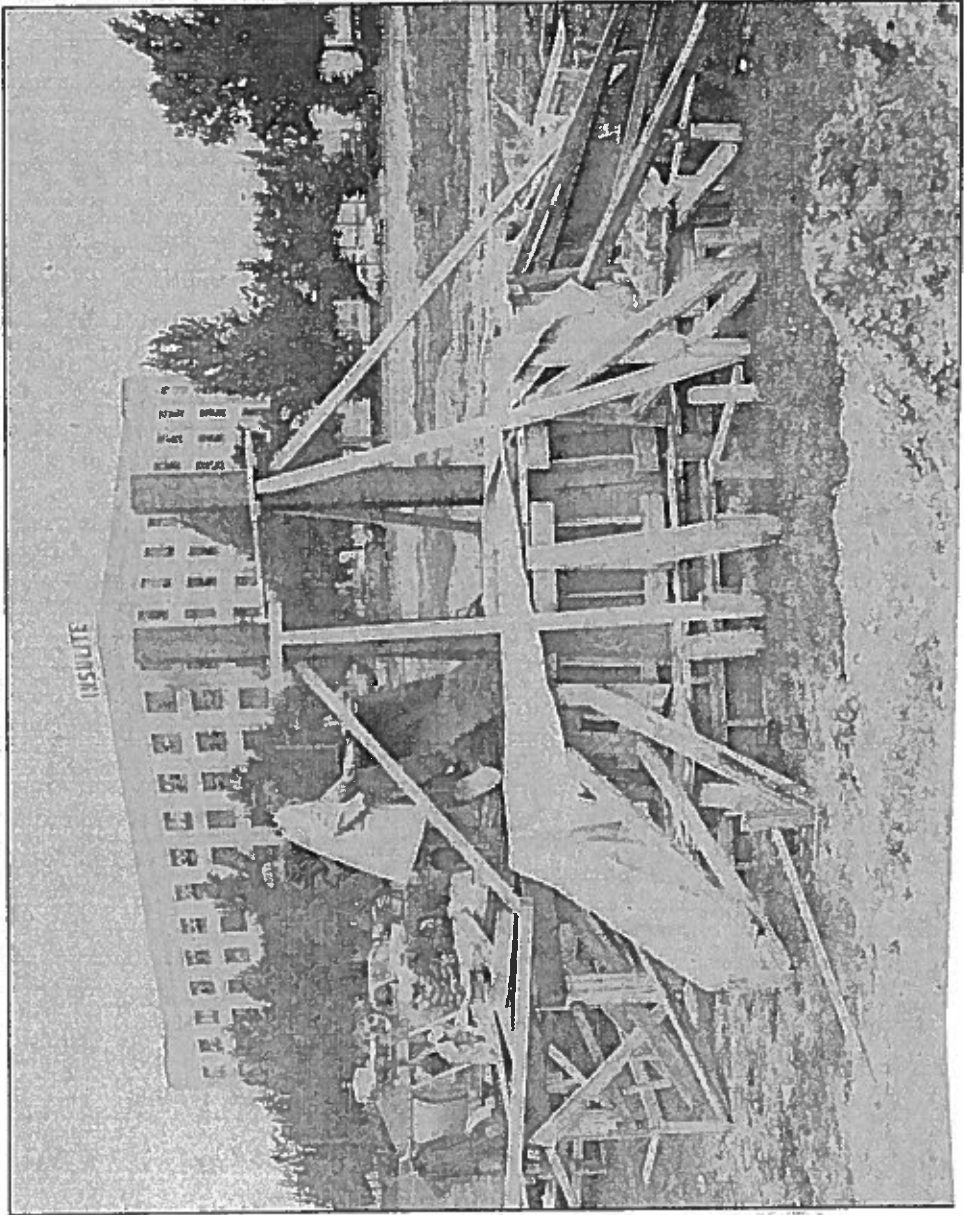
The dedication address was delivered to a crowd of 2,500 by Leonard B. Carpenter, a prominent Minneapolis lumberman who was president of the American Forest Products Industries.

Schoolchildren were excused at noon to attend the ceremony. The grade school chorus sang "Smokey the Bear" accompanied by the high school band.

Several metropolitan area newspapers, television and radio stations covered the event.

A dedication dinner followed the ceremony in the community auditorium where Davis addressed an audience of 200.

"It was quite a day," Schwankl remembered. "A big day for International Falls."



Smokey and cubs dress up

By PAUL V. BOSWELL
City Editor

Smokey the Bear and his twin cubs were given early Christmas gifts this morning.

To prepare for frigid winter weather, the Smokey the Bear statue in Smokey Bear Park has donned earmuffs, a scarf and mittens while the two young bears are wearing scarves and mittens.

"The little ones are going to be like most kids — they never wear anything on their heads anyway," joked Evelyn Henrickson, executive director of the Greater International Falls Chamber of Commerce.

The bears were dressed this morning by the Falls city street crew, supervised by Mike Holden, with assistance from a Minnesota Power crew. To ward off attempts by would-be vandals, all the apparel has been wired to the statue, making it difficult to remove. Plans are to leave the garments on at least through Christmas.

"I think you have to have things that are fun," said Henrickson, who was instrumental in getting the project rolling. She hopes the novelty will lure curious people — i.e. shoppers — to town during the weeks before Christmas.

Henrickson said she wasn't surprised that the people she asked to make the oversize garments immediately agreed. "It's been my personal experience in working with the chamber that people are willing to volunteer their time," she said.

"All you have to do is ask and you have all kinds of help. People are very willing to work and help when they know it's going to benefit International Falls and the area."

Longtime Falls resident Nancy Kalstad came up with the notion of putting winter attire on the three bears.

"It's an idea I've had for the last two to three years," said Kalstad, who works at the Book Worm bookstore. "Like everyone else who lives here, I go by Smokey three or four times a week and I've always

thought that during the winter, he looks naked.

"Since we live in the 'Icebox of the Nation' and we're trying to make a name weather-wise, he should reflect the area," said Kalstad. "He's our symbol so he should look different in the winter than he does in the summer. We

survive because we dress for the winter so I think he should dress for the winter, too."

Besides, Kalstad added, "I think he'll look cute with a scarf, mittens and earmuffs."

Smokey's mammoth earmuffs were made by lifelong Falls resident Joyce Bolstad, who

manages the Sewing International Mall. Evelyn Henrickson had stop asked if she had any how to make earmuff famous fiberglass be "We began to throw and forth," said Evelyn said, "Those e



Above, 80-year-old Gladys Wolfe, Falls, crocheted a 25-foot-long scarf for the Smokey the Bear tourist attraction. Wolfe said she used 12 skeins of yarn to make the giant garment. At right, Mike Holden, elec-

trician for the Falls city crew, Bill Sears from Minnesota Power gear on Smokey. Directing the from the ground is Bill Glad of Power.

ress up for the holidays



trician for the Falls city crew, at left, and Bill Sears from Minnesota Power put winter gear on Smokey. Directing their activities from the ground is Bill Glad of Minnesota Power.

Staff photo



dress for the
should dress
added, "I think
a scarf, mittens
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ad, who

manages the Sewing Nook in the International Mall. Bolstad said Henrickson had stopped in and asked if she had any ideas as to how to make earmuffs for the famous fiberglass bear.

"We began to throw ideas back and forth," said Bolstad, "and Evelyn said, 'Those are all good

ideas. Would you mind trying to make them?' I couldn't think of an excuse fast enough and that's how the earmuffs got their start."

It took Bolstad three days at work between customers to make them. "Customers would ask me what I was making and I'd say, 'Earmuffs for the bear.'"

The inside form is made of heavy duck cloth with an 18-inch cardboard circle and an 18-inch hoop fitted inside. The interior is stuffed with polyfill. The finished earmuffs resemble large, round pillows.

For Judy Olson, making winter
Continued on Page 6

...d about him? Still, nob-
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 6 — THE DAILY JOURNAL, International Falls, Minn., Wednesday, November 25, 1987

SMOKEY

THE DAILY JOURNAL, International Falls, Minn., Wednesday, November 25, 1987



JOYCE BOLSTAD
 ...makes earmuffs



JUDY OLSON
 ...family helped

Continued from Page 1
 apparel for Smokey and his cubs was a family affair.

Olson, who owns and operates Jud's Mini House on Highway 53, her husband Leonard, a Boise Cascade employee, and their 17-year-old daughter Dawn, a senior at Falls High School, helped make mittens for Smokey and scarves and mittens for both cubs. Using a machine knitter, Olson estimated that the three of them put in a total of about 100 hours of work.

Smokey's mittens weigh 7 1/2 pounds while the combined weight of the cubs' scarves and mittens is about 9 pounds. One of Smokey's mittens measures 3 1/2 feet wide and 7 feet long while the other, which will be draped over the hand that holds the shovel, is about half that size.

The cubs have one mitten apiece — one that measures 40 inches long and the other that measures 30 inches long. Their scarves are both 2 feet wide and 14 feet long.

The colors used will add to the overall scheme. Smokey's mittens are bright red to match his earmuffs and scarf. One cub has royal blue and grey mitten and

scarf while the other has a medium and dark teal mitten and scarf.

Gladys Wolfe, an 80-year-old Falls woman, hand-crocheted Smokey's giant scarf, which measures 25 feet long and 18 inches wide. She figures that the scarf, which is made of durable yarn, will last many years.

Henrickson originally approached Wolfe with the idea of crocheting a 12-foot-long scarf. But after Henrickson learned of the exact dimensions of the huge statue, she realized the garment would have to be twice that size.

But Wolfe readily accepted the challenge. She figured she spent 86 hours crocheting the gargantuan scarf. A member of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program for the past six years, Wolfe was given credit for her time.

During the three weeks of crocheting, completing the task became an obsession, said Wolfe. "I'd wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning and start crocheting. I couldn't leave it alone. I was possessed."

It's not surprising that Smokey's scarf is the largest garment she's ever made. It took 12 skeins of yarn to make the scarf and she estimated that the scarf is twice the size of an average afghan.

The bright colors used are patty green and flame red. The juxtaposition of the two within a checked pattern plays tricks on the eyes, giving the illusion of depth. Wolfe's feat may be worthy of mention in the Guinness Book of World Records or Ripley's Believe It or Not. When asked what she planned to make next year, Wolfe laughed and said she might make a pair of pants for Smokey.

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 doing fine.
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 Red, Pet,
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WEATHER TABLE
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mittens is about 9 pounds. One of Smokey's mittens measures 31 1/2 feet wide and 7 feet long while the other, which is draped over the hand that holds the shovel, is about half that size.

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Gladys Wolfe, an 82-year-old Falls woman, hand-crocheted Smokey's giant scarf, which measures 25 feet long and 18 inches wide. She figures the scarf, which is made of durable yarn, will last many years.

depth.

The public response was worth the many hours of work, said Wolfe.

"I have received a lot of favorable remarks," she said. "I've been real happy with the response I've gotten from people. I even got a letter from a lady in Fort Frances. She said, 'I know it brings a lot of happiness to many people.' Now wasn't that nice of her?"

"I've heard good comments," said Bolstad. "People say, 'They look nice and warm standing there.' I think it's pretty neat."

"People love it," said chamber executive director Shawn Mason, who succeeded Henrickson last year.

Mason said the chamber would like the dressing of the bears to remain a local tradition, with the bears donning their winter gear before Thanksgiving and wearing it



JUDY OLSON
... family helped until February.

As for the future, Mason did not rule out the possibility of Smokey and the cubs donning other types of clothing. She said contestants in the Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run in January asked if Smokey could wear a Hawaiian shirt for next year's Ice Box Days celebration.

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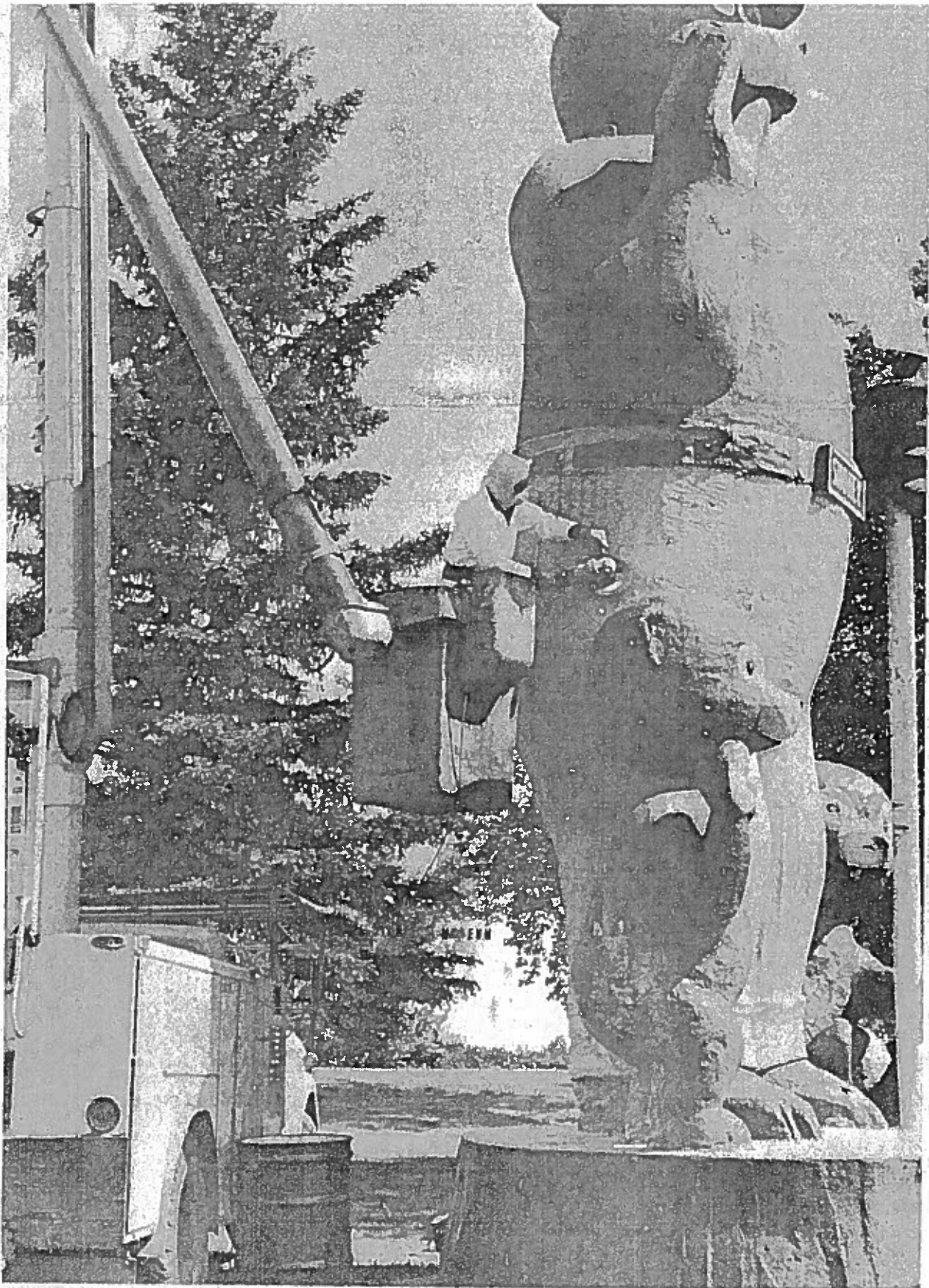
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Mike Holden prepares to place a giant earmuff on Smokey's giant ear. The colorful winter garments for Smokey and the cubs are among Borderland's most admired Christmas decorations.

File photo



Face-lift for Smokey

Restoration work began Monday on the Smokey Bear statue in the city park. Workers from Arason's Body Shop in the Falls prepared to refurbish the fiberglass material on the statue and it will be repainted later by another firm. City

officials hope to complete the project sometime in July, weather permitting. Steps will be taken so there will be a minimal amount of distractions for tourists.

Staff photo by Patrick Minelli

6/3/86



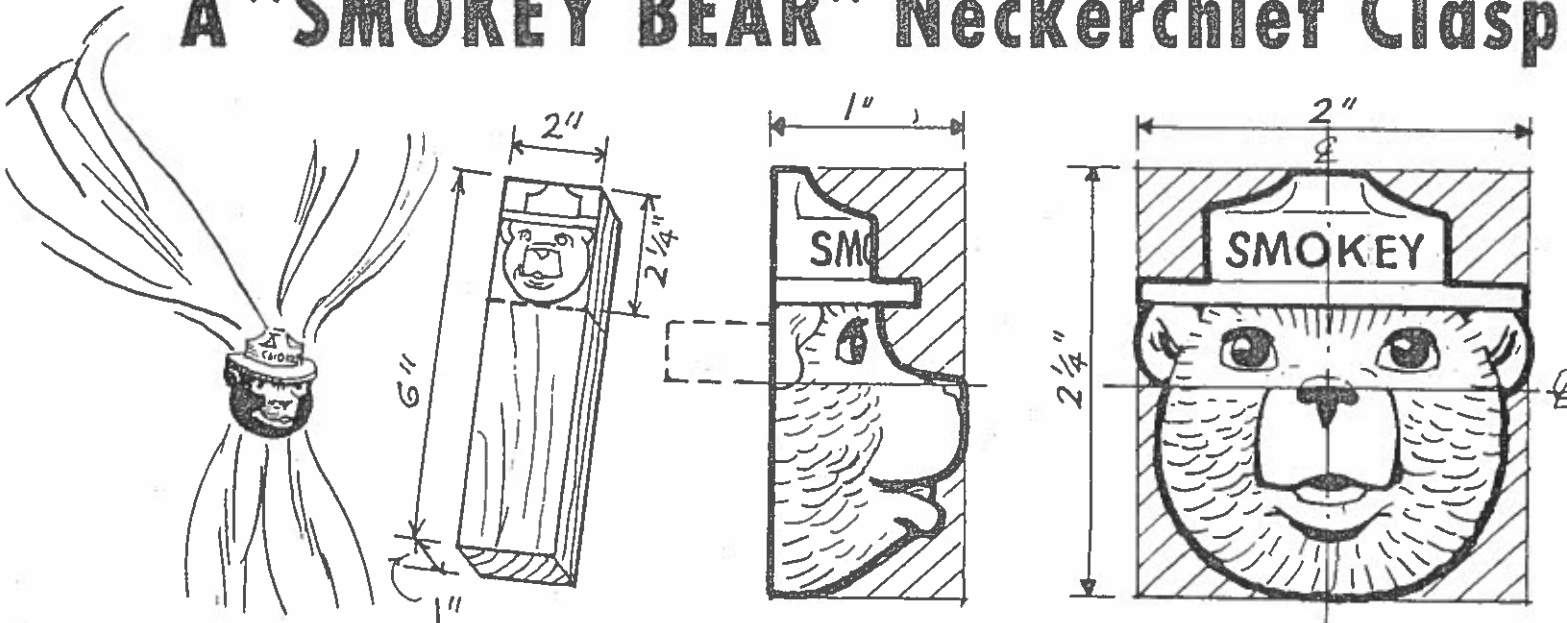
New look

Workers put the finishing touches on a re-painted Smokey the Bear Saturday in Smokey Bear Park. Jerry Swenson and Wes Cummings of Core Craft, Bemidji, painted the statue with colors truer to the statue's original appearance when first erected. 6/30/86

Staff photo by Tom Klein

HOW TO MAKE

A "SMOKEY BEAR" Neckerchief Clasp



Trace the outline of "Smokey" on the end of a 6" piece of clear grained wood, 1" thick and 2" wide. Using the extra length of wood for holding in your hand, cut out roughly the shaded part with carving tools or pocket-knife. After details of eyes, nose and hair have been added, cut off carving 2-1/4" from end.

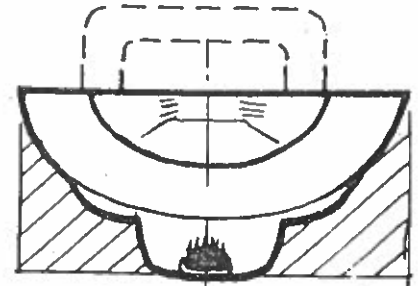
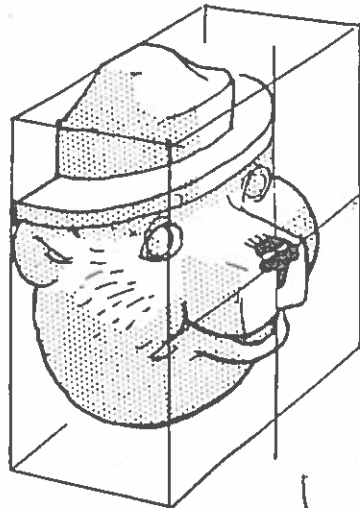
A loop to hold the neckerchief corners may be carved from another piece of wood and glued to back or made from heavy wire bent into a U-shape and inserted by drilling two holes in back.

COLOR: After the figure has been carved and sanded smooth, enamel paints may be used to add color. Hat is yellow; nose, lower lip and area around eyes, cream; fur, brown; tongue, red; teeth, white; eyeballs, white with black pupils.

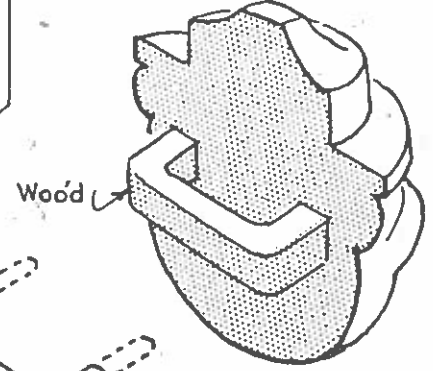
SIDE

FRONT

Perspective



TOP



BACK



SMOKEY BEAR is the national symbol of the Forest Fire Prevention Program which is conducted by the State Forestry Departments and the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under sponsorship of The Advertising Council, Inc.

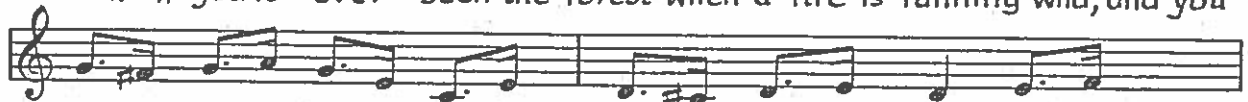


SMOKEY THE BEAR

By STEVE NELSON and JACK ROLLINS



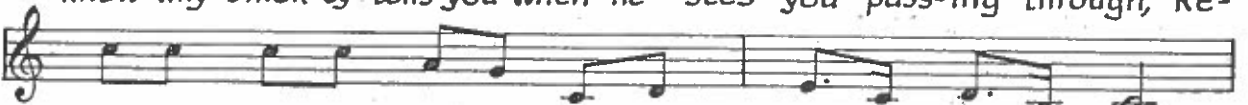
1. With a Ranger's hat and shovel and a pair of dungar-ees you will
 2. You can take a tip from Smokey that there's nothin' like a tree, cause they're
 3. You can camp upon his doorstep and he'll make you feel at home, you can
 4. If you've ever seen the forest when a fire is running wild, and you



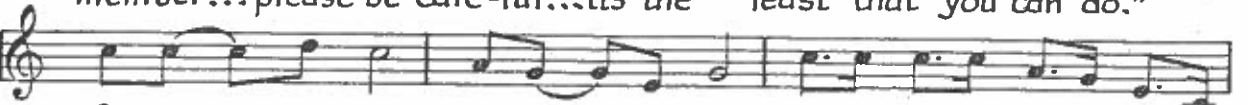
find him in the forest always sniffin' at the breeze. People
 good for kids to climb in and they're beaut-i-ful to see, you just
 run and hunt and ramble any - where you care to roam. He will
 love the things within it like a moth-er loves her child, then you



stop and pay at-ten-tion when he tells 'em to be-ware, 'cause
 have to look a-round you and you'll find it's not a joke, to
 let you take his hon-ey and pre-tend he's not so smart, but
 know why Smok-ey tells you when he sees you pass-ing through, "Re-



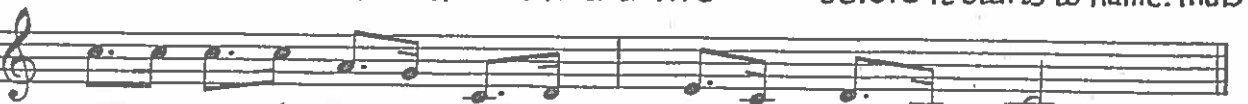
ev'-ry - bo-dy knows that he's the Fire Pre-ventin' Bear.
 see what you'd be mis-sin' if they all went up in smoke.
 don't you harm his trees for he's a Ran-ger in his heart.
 member... please be care-ful... its the least that you can do."



Smokey - the Bear, Smokey - the Bear. Prowlin' and a growlin' and a



sniffin' - the air. He can find a fire - before it starts to flame. That's



why they call him Smokey, that was how he got his name.

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