

STANDARD DEVIATIONS: Signs of the Times

Greetings,

It's all about awareness.

Summer temperatures are climbing, and the threat of wildfire is a major concern in our neck of the woods.

2007 saw the largest Utah wildfire. The **Milford Flats Fire** burned 350,000 acres.

In 2018, the **Mendocino Complex Fire** broke out on July 27 in Northern California and grew to be that state's largest with 459,123 acres burned.

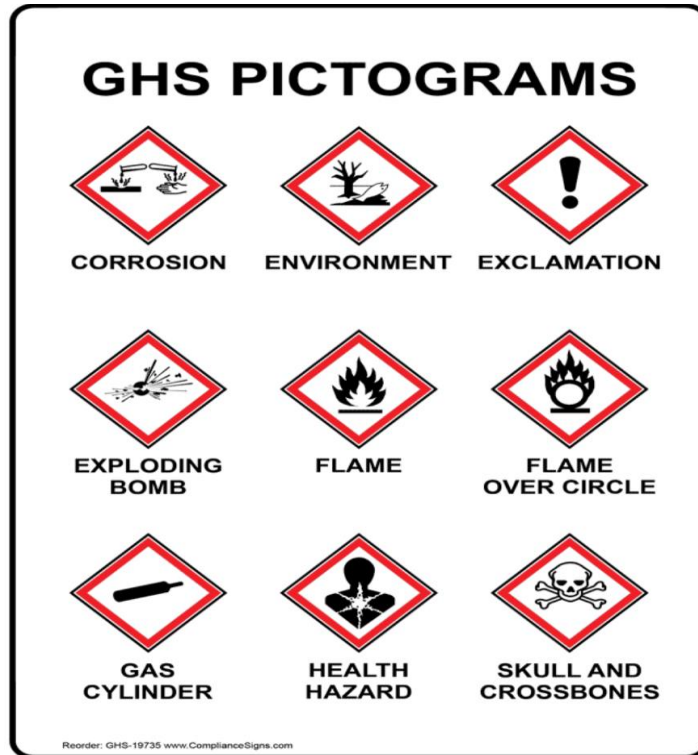
The **Camp Fire** broke out in Butte County, Northern California on November 8, 2018 and became the deadliest and most destructive fire on record in the state. At least 88 people died.

Remember Smokey Bear? A real character, the orphaned cub was found by firefighters in 1950, at the New Mexico **Captain Mountains** wildfire. The publicity surrounding the burned cub's rescue led to an awareness campaign still recognizable seventy years later.



Icons, like Smokey, trigger behaviors, get our attention, and stimulate awareness. Sometimes they work, sometimes...not so much.

Do you get the same jolt of recognition from icons we use for hazards in lab safety?



I'm not sure these have the same charisma, and that's a shame.

Promoting safety awareness in the laboratory should be simple. We understand that risks abound; so, how do we influence our noggins to work safely?

Smokey Bear has influenced our behavior and safety standards in the outdoors. We know instantly and definitely the message of risk and action Smokey defines. As laboratorians, we need to develop, promote, and embrace the concepts that trigger safe practices and prevent fires before they start. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Have a great week and be safe,

Bryan

p.s. Take a look at some other icons that have been used to promote awareness. How many do you identify with? Do they always work?

BERT
1952
During the Cold War, the Federal Civil Defense Administration created Bert the Turtle to show children how to respond if they witnessed an atomic flash.

WELLBEE
1962
The CDC's cheerful bee (drawn by a former Felix the Cat animator) promoted vaccinations. His slogan—"Be wise. Immunize"—seems just as relevant today.



MR. ZIP
1964

Introduced by the post office to explain the ZIP code system, Mr. ZIP popped up everywhere from Dick Tracy cartoons to Ethel Merman-voiced TV ads.



WOODSY OWL
1971

Woodsy still spreads the Forest Service's message—now via social media and rap lyrics about composting ("It's the rubbish rot!").



ENERGY ANT
1975

The Federal Energy Administration chose a tiny, "industrious creature" that "uses energy wisely" to lead a big conservation push during the oil crisis.



MCGRUFF

1980

Inspired by the rumpled TV detective Columbo, the crime dog still helps the National Crime Prevention Council teach people how to keep their neighborhoods safe.

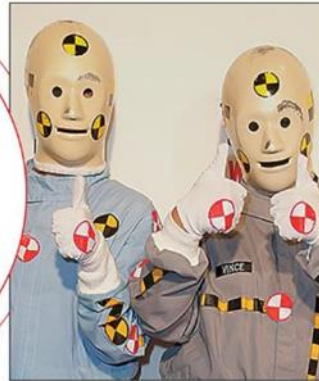


TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME

VINCE AND LARRY

1985

The Department of Transportation credits the crash test dummies with saving 85,000 lives. Seatbelt use rocketed up to 67 percent before they retired in 1999.



THERMY

2000

The USDA's mercurial Thermy keeps cooks out of the "danger zone" (temperatures at which bacteria multiply quickly) by reminding them of proper cooking temps.



FRANKLIN
2007

The Department of Housing and Urban Development wants children to help outfox unscrupulous landlords. Franklin's first task: explaining the Fair Housing Act.

