

# Smokey and The Zip Code

by Richard L. Cohen

I never connected Smokey Bear to our hobby of stamp collecting other than the 20-cent issue of 1984 (Scott # 2096) [Figure B1] but was I wrong! My wife, Es and I took a trip to Washington, DC this past December to visit our youngest son and his wife. Our first full day was spent at the National Zoo.



Figure B1

Of course, we saw the panda exhibit and the usual collections of mammals, sea life, snakes, etc. Walking along the main path, we came upon a display commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> year of America's favorite firefighter [Figure B2]. Here is a historical timeline that details important events concerning our hero!

**1944** – Following the Pearl Harbor attack, Japanese subs fired shells into California, which ignited the Los Padres National Forest. Panicked because most firefighters were overseas, the US government figured citizens were the best defense against forest fires. A bear in a ranger's hat debuted this year and became an instant hit as the symbol for this important cause.

**1950** – The first real-life Smokey was found in New Mexico. After 30 firefighters survive a massive blaze by lying face down in a rockslide, they spot a black bear cub in a charred tree and rescue it. The bear, dubbed Smokey, lived at the National Zoo until his death in 1976. He was buried at his namesake park in Capitan, NM.

**1964** – While living at the National Zoo, real-life Smokey got so many letters that the Postal Service gave him his very own Zip Code: 20252 [Figure B3]!

**1994** – Smokey celebrates his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with endorsements from Snoopy, Bing Crosby, Roy Rogers and the Grateful Dead.

**2019** – Year-long celebration at the National Zoo marked Smokey's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday along with noting the longest running public service campaign in U.S. history. Counting the days, the total approximates 27,500 and the estimate value of the advertising time and space donated for this campaign exceeds \$1.6 billion!



Figure B2



Figure B3

# St. Patrick's Day, Finding the Green!!

## The Lime Stamps

By Stephen L. Strobel

Florida citrus inspection revenue stamps were issued as early as 1925. However, in 1935 the Florida Citrus Commission was established by the state legislature. Three advertising funds were established, one for oranges, one for grapefruits and one for tangerines. The funds were used to promote the sale of Florida citrus. In 1941 an additional fund was established for limes. The stamps that were issued for that purpose are quite elusive. First of all, there were only four denominations issued: 4 cent, 20 cent, \$1 and \$4. The three top denominations are recorded but are quite rare. This may have been due to the smaller number of limes grown and shipped in Florida. There were large quantities of oranges, grapefruits and tangerines grown in Florida. There were also many more denominations due to the various standard sizes that were shipped so there were also many more stamps available to use.

Then in 1943 the four separate advertising funds were consolidated into a single citrus advertising fund and a single set of stamps replaced the three separate sets of stamps that had been in use since 1935. This could have been a second reason. The lime advertising funds stamps had only been in use for two growing seasons, 1941-1943. This was a third reason that there are fewer lime stamps as well. The new replacement set of stamps, labeled simply "CITRUS" consisted of 13 denominations from 1 cent to \$100. In 1945 the advertising fund could be paid directly to the state. Stamps were no longer needed, and they quickly disappeared. This might be the fourth reason.

When I saw an article about citrus stamps, in general, in my local newspaper February 14, 2013, I thought that I might like to try to collect them. Coincidentally I became aware of the State Revenue Society at that time. The SRS also printed a new catalog in 2013 that remains as the benchmark catalog to this day. The catalog listed

the value for the 4 cent / \$200, the 20 cent / \$300, the \$1 / \$300 and the \$4 / \$500. However, this is such a narrow area, there were no preprinted album pages available. I decided to print my own pages. I never thought I would acquire the lime stamps due to the scarcity and the price, but it only took one extra page to print for the four lime stamps.

WOW, WOW, WOW, now what?



I think I have a good working relationship with one of the premiere revenue stamp dealers in the United States. I had told him of my wacky fondness for these citrus stamps seven years ago. I had also told him that if any of the limes were to come around, I would be interested. I really didn't think it very probable; I was safe. Well he sent me an email recently, the improbable happened. What to do? What to do? What to do? I had just won an auction of his for a couple of things and a third item in different collecting areas. He told me he had a 4-cent lime stamp! It was the third lime in the last twenty years that he had seen; one other 4 cent and a 20 cent. I didn't want to tell him "no" and renege on my word. He might not send me anymore emails. That didn't seem good. I thought I might have to contact my banker for a small home improvement loan. That didn't seem good either. I knew if I didn't get it now that it was available, I might not even have another chance to acquire one! He would have plenty of buyers. After all, three in twenty years! US #1 & #2 are much more common. That didn't seem good either. I think the lime looks really nice on the page, even if it is there all by itself. I will wait some more time for the others to give it company. Happy St. Patrick's!!