

GRIZZLY CAMPAIGN TAKE TWO: WWW.NOMOREGRIZZLIES.COM

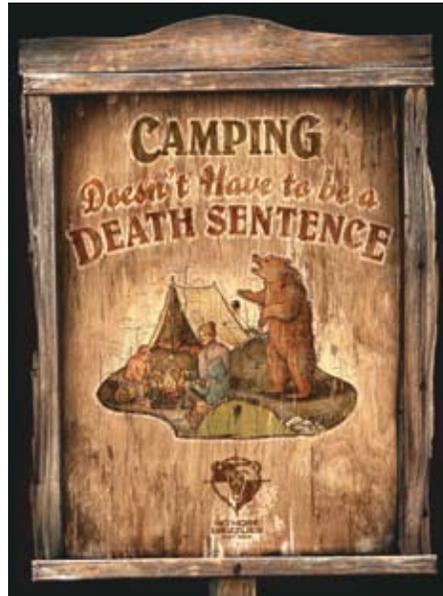
By Meatball

Life invites us to make choices about the risks we face. Should we accept or avoid them? Will Rogers, one of America's most well-loved social commentators, linked progress to accepting risks when he wrote: "You've got to go out on a limb sometimes because that's where the fruit is."

Some of you may think AWA is going out on a limb when you see or hear about the creative, provocative and satirical media campaign the Association will launch this month. Visit the www.nomoregrizzlies.com website and read the mission statement of the organization No More Grizzlies. It is "dedicated to protection of the human species by eradicating grizzlies through non-violent methods." What?

Enter the site and choose your weapon – chainsaw, oil barrel, bulldozer, cement bag, or ATV – and kill a few bears in an arcade game to save mankind. Sadly, my arcade skills need more practice; I could only kill six bears in 30 seconds with a bulldozer. Six bears in 30 seconds – unless I improved my "bear kills to time on the range" ratio I was told "we'll never get our pic-a-nic baskets back." That motivated me. Switching to Alberta's ever-popular oil barrel I managed to whack 13 menacing bruins in my next 30 seconds. "Not bad," the virtual trainer told me, "for a hippie."

After I quenched my thirst for killing I was beginning to think that the 1976 movie "Grizzly: The Most Dangerous Jaws in the Land" was probably a documentary, not fiction. Then I clicked on "The Real Truth" link. An unpleasant shock came next. There I learned that *No More Grizzlies* is fictitious; the organization does not really exist (and I had my chequebook out ready to buck up to save humanity). There was some nonsense there about habitat destruction being the real threat and, not to mankind, but to grizzlies! And,



Will satire prompt the Alberta government to make a serious effort to help the province's grizzly bears?

then there was the dizzying suggestion that the inspirational idea behind *No More Grizzlies* was extremist and my head started to spin even faster when I read that this extremism was what our provincial government actually was doing through its land-use policies. It asked me instead to email the Premier, make a donation or visit some website created by a goofy organization called the Alberta Wilderness Association. Yeah, right...

The *No More Grizzlies* Campaign follows in the footsteps of many campaigns that employed satire – ridiculing prevailing vices or follies – in order to promote positive social change. The 1970s belonged to Archie Bunker, Norman Lear's white bigot, who was used to critique conservative extremists, (an oxymoron even to a bulldog). A century ago Bob Edwards published the *Calgary Eye Opener*, described as "a national newspaper of wit, satire, and political comment." Edwards mercilessly satirized powerful corporate and political interests

there. In South Africa, political satire in the guise of Pieter-Dirk Uys's character Evita Bezuidenhout ridiculed apartheid.

AWA is a serious, earnest organization so why resort to ridicule in our efforts to save viable grizzly populations? Why not oppose bad provincial policy with facts and figures? AWA is not abandoning the second path and will continue to build and push the rational case for the measures we have advocated for so long. But, those efforts aside, we have not accomplished as much as we need to. Satire offers us a complementary path towards that same goal. Hopefully a remnant of a "funny bone" still may be found among those politicians some may regard as lacking any bone at all in their backs. Hopefully satire will help them see the inevitable tragedy brewed by past decisions and realize just how unnecessary that outcome is if we want to live good lives here.

This satirical campaign also is aimed at our youth, Alberta's future. AWA wants more support from this demographic. The style and creativity of the campaign reminds me very much of what Ian and I see on Jon Stewart's late-night phenomenon *The Daily Show* or what I saw when *Saturday Night Live* devastated Sarah Palin in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election. Previews of our message at the University of Calgary struck a chord in this demographic; making the message easily incorporated into new social media such as Facebook and Twitter should help us to spread the word.

So, borrowing from Will Rogers, we are going out on the limb with this campaign. We hope that the fruit he talks about is there – both in terms of your support and in terms of reversing the destructive path our government has placed us on. 🐾

Meatball is the youngest member of the Urquhart clan. Her first book of feline satire, "Nine Lives: Who Needs 'Em?" is forthcoming this spring.

Keep Our
FORESTS
SAFE



NO MORE
GRIZZLIES
DOT COM

Safe for Whom You Ask? For Grizzlies Of Course.