

Be safe when spring cleaning

By Robert Hoffman
Fire Inspector

It's spring, the winter blues are starting to disappear and many are cleaning and enjoying their yards. However, you should check your equipment over before you start.

Did you put gas saver in the lawn mower/weed-eater and gas can before you put them away for the winter? If you didn't, chances are the gasoline may have gone bad and the lawn mower will not start. Don't pour the bad gas onto the ground and light it. Charleston County has several disposal sites close-by for people to dispose of their old gas and oil. It is free to dispose of it safely at these locations and you comply with all fire regulations.

Use extreme caution when filling the mower with gas. Make sure you eliminate all sources of ignition and the mower/weed-eater is cool before you open the gas cap and pour it into the tank. Allow any spilled gas to dry before starting the mower/weed-eater.

Burning of yard debris is strictly prohibited on Charleston AFB. Most communities also prohibit burning.

When cleaning your house, remember to clean your smoke detector. Dust or vacuum the outside of your detector because dust can cause false activations. When the clocks "spring" ahead, replace the battery. A low

battery will cause the detector to chirp. If you fail to replace the battery, it will go dead and the detector won't work if a fire starts.

A working smoke detector can reduce the risk of death in a residential fire by 40 to 50 percent, according to safetyinfo.com. Remember to check/replace the battery after extended power outages too.

Check the operation of your windows as you clean them. Do they open easily to their full open position? Windows are a secondary means of escape from your house in a fire.

Get rid of all the junk you have put in the garage, attic, closets and storage rooms. Piled-up combustible materials will contribute to fire spread and may even cause a fire. It may take some time to do, but the benefits are countless.

Before cranking up the gas grill, do a complete check of the fittings, tank and hoses. Check the bottle for rust, dents, loose connections and cracked hoses. Replace all bad components before the first cookout. Many cookouts have turned dangerous because a leak caught fire. Never store the gas cylinder inside. Remember, when grilling, regardless of the type you use, the grill is to be no closer than 10 feet from the eave of your roof.

For more information on spring cleaning and safety, call the fire prevention section at 963-3121.

**Spring
Cleaning
MADE EASY**

IT'S SHOWTIME!

CAFB airman selected for Tops in Blue

Senior Airman Marlon Pharr of the 437th Equipment Maintenance Squadron was recently selected for the Air Force 2000 Tops in Blue team. Pharr competed in the male vocalist category in the 2000 Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest held at Andrews AFB recently. He performed the song "Could" by Brian McKnight.

Pharr will join other selectees in San Antonio next week, where the group will rehearse their variety show for six weeks before hitting the road for the 2000 season.

"I'm very excited about it," Pharr said. "I can't wait."

More than 60 contestants competed in four major categories at the Air Force Worldwide talent Contest: male vocal, female vocal, instrumental and musical variety.

In addition to their performance on stage, each contestant was judged on personal interviews and specialized auditions for their competing category.

While competing for the Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest, the con-

testants are also evaluated to determine their versatility and adaptability for the 2000 Tops in Blue tour. Between dance, vocal, instrumental and comedic auditions, each individual has the opportunity to show they have what it takes to tour with Tops in Blue.

Contestants submit an application and videotape to the Air Force Entertainment Office in San Antonio. A group of judges reviews each video and invites the most talented individuals to travel here to compete.

While here, special music arrangements are charted specifically for each act, while rehearsal coaches work with the contestants to prepare them for the stage. After long hours of music rehearsals, sound checks and lighting cues, three nights of performances begin.

First place winners receive a "Roger" award and second place winners receive a "Wilco." The Roger is a very prestigious award, according to Carol Sudy, Air Force Entertainment Office.

"It's history goes back to 1953, when the first Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest was held. Receiving a Roger or Wilco is the highest recognition the Air Force bestows to competing talent." (AFPNN)

(Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe contributed to this article.)



Pharr