



Tony Phillips, owner and operator of Soot 'N Ashes, the only Eugene chimney sweep company, learned the technique from his own research and from other sweeps.



Photos by Dennis Hickok

Sweep

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Wood stoves used for heating should be checked at least once a year for a build up of the soot, Phillips contends and a quarter of an inch necessitates removal. Phillips comments that many people who install wood stoves do not realize the potential for a combustible fire if the soot is allowed to build up.

To clean a chimney, Phillips mounts the roof with his various brushes and scrapers. After inspecting the chimney, he chooses the proper size brush and inserts it in the chimney, raising a cloud of reddish dust. Using his whole body, Phillips thrusts the brush up and down in the chimney,

producing more billowing clouds of dust. Phillips wears a face mask to protect his lungs and coveralls, but before he finishes, every inch of his body turns a sooty black.

Much to the dismay of his employers, Phillips must enter the house in this condition. But he does so in style. He rolls out a long green plastic carpet to protect the floor and walks on it to reach the fireplace. By using a power vacuum, he sucks up the soot particles that were loosened from the chimney bricks. This process usually takes up to an hour and a half, he says and costs from \$20, depending on the difficulty of the job.

In his off hours, Phillips

studies for his interdisciplinary masters degree in gerontology and public affairs and counseling.

Chimney sweeping, even after obtaining his degree, will continue to be his source of enjoyment, he assures. He says he experiences a great deal of satisfaction because of the people he meets and the unique service he provides for them.

Phillips, an enthusiastic man, takes his work seriously, but also takes time to enjoy the special feeling he experiences from being in fresh air, all alone, way up on a rooftop with his chimney.

Chim chimney, chim chimney, chim chim cheree.

DAN KAMIN



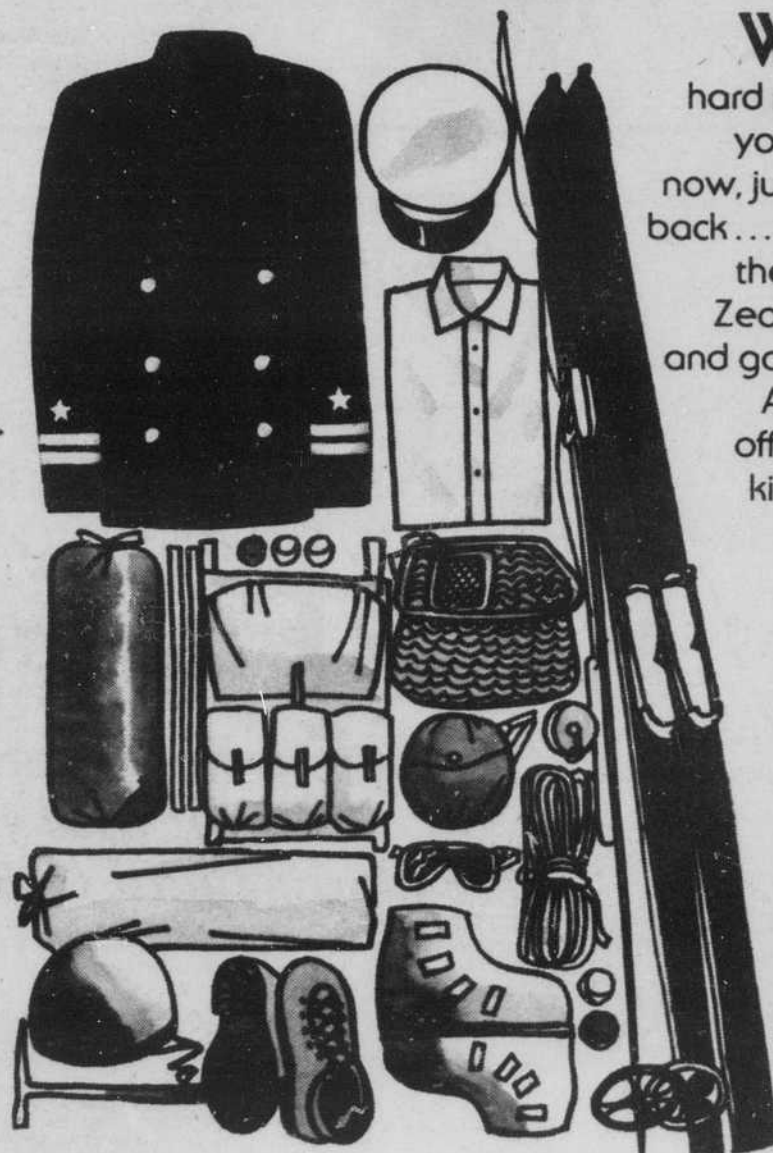
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