



Today's fireworks restrictions take excitement out of having facial hair

Ned Hickson

First, the good news. According to the National Council on Fireworks Safety, fireworks-related injuries have dropped by 75 percent in the last decade. The bad news, as anyone over the age of 30 can tell you, is that today's fireworks are about as exciting to watch as a pile of smoldering pencil shavings. For example: It used to be that "sparklers" actually sparkled. They showered the air with tiny crackling embers so bright you could see them through your eyelids. The

bravest kids would spin them like propellers, knowing full well their eyebrows would grow back by mid summer. My kids don't believe me when I tell them this. That's because, each July Fourth, they are handed "sparklers" that are basically sticks of incense that smell like sulfur. No crackle. No shower of sparks. Just a momentary flame as the paper wick ignites then — upon reaching its climactic flash point — fizzles into a puff of flatulent-smelling smoke. **Note:** In the event you happen to purchase a defective sparkler, and find yourself the unwitting victim of actual spark-spitting action, DO

NOT PANIC. Call the NCFS hotline immediately so your rogue sparkler can be safely deposited in a special, undisclosed location three miles beneath the Mojave Desert. If there's no time to drive to the desert because, say, you live in Michigan, you will be instructed on how to disarm the sparkler yourself. This will mean transporting it to an unpopulated area and, utilizing protective gear and the most extreme caution, dipping it into a glass of water. Several times if necessary. Those of you who live in Alabama or Tennessee have no idea what I'm talking about. That's because you have real fireworks. The kind that childhood memories (and

a good portion of our nation's first-strike capabilities) are made of. In addition, the only real restrictions you have are as follows:
1) If a skyrocket is longer than your boat trailer, it must be flagged during transport.
2) You must, by law, inform neighbors when using any fireworks that require a dynamite plunger.
3) Though there is no limit to the number of M-80s you can join together with a single fuse, the Department of Homeland Security warns it can't be held responsible should your area, as a precautionary measure, be swept with heat-seeking missiles.
4) If you have studded tires, you must remove them.

This has nothing to do with fireworks; it's just a friendly reminder from the folks at the Highway Department. And lastly,
5) Any and all skyrockets capable of leaving southern air space must be pointed north. The fact is, even though I whine about having wimpy fireworks here in Oregon, at least we have them. In Georgia, they are illegal. This means watching public fireworks displays or, as many Georgians do, going outside and facing Alabama. Even though these displays

are beautiful, it's still not the same as being knocked unconscious by a runaway ground flower. Being as I lived in Atlanta for six years, I can tell you illegal fireworks do make their way across the Alabama border. This, of course, is a huge problem. Especially if your boat trailer isn't big enough.

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CAT holds auditions for 'Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike' July 1,2

Class Act Theatre (CAT) announces open auditions for the hilarious Christopher Durang comedy "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike." The auditions will take place at CAT, 509 Kingwood Street, on Saturday and Sunday, July 1 and 2, at 2 p.m. There are parts for two men and four women. One of the male roles is for Spike, a young "boy toy" movie star wannabe, and the other is for Vanya, a middle-aged or slightly beyond middle aged curmudgeon. The female roles include Nina, a star-struck sweet young neighbor girl, stage age 18 to 22; Sonia, a bitter middle-aged spinster; Masha, a middle-aged and slightly past her prime movie star; and Cassandra, a clairvoyant housekeeper that can be any age from young adult to senior. All are excellent, fun roles. "Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike" won a Tony Award

for Best Play and is one of the most lauded and beloved Broadway plays in recent years. In the play, Vanya and his adopted sister Sonia live a quiet life in the farmhouse where they grew up, but their peace is disturbed when their movie star sister Masha returns unannounced with her 20-something boy-toy Spike. Housekeeper Cassandra inserts bits of psychic absurdity and sweet young thing Nina catches Spike's eye and disrupts Masha's plans. All of this results in a weekend of rivalry and raucous hilarity. The production dates for the show are Sept. 8, 9 and 10 and 15, 16 and 17. The play will be directed by David Lauria. Those auditioning are encouraged to borrow a script from CAT by calling 541-991-3773 or stopping in at the theater on Mondays or Wednesdays from noon until 5:30 p.m.

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