

## APPLIANCE DOCTOR

# Better consumer protection needed



JOE GAGNON

is not meant to hurt their reputation or good standing in your community.

It is the intention of the writer to help educate the reader that there are some appliance service companies which are very well known by the industry itself, and by the district courts and consumer advocates as Rip Offs. To make you more aware as a consumer who may someday need service on your appliance I present to you the following information. Several stories have appeared on national and local television in the past three years which have used the focal point of appliance rip off as the basis for their stories. We have read newspaper stories which have done the same thing. All in all, the education to consumers provided by these media which listed names etc. has not been sufficient to keep these companies from doing it again. They continue on and on and there appears to be no way to stop them.

The attorney general's office is well aware of who some of these companies are and so is Ms. Esther Shapiro's office along with the Better Business Bureau. The District Courts in the very community you live in have records which show repeatedly the same companies in small claim cases. With all these records and evidence, still nothing can stop them.

Some 10 years ago, I appeared before a legislative committee in Lansing urging that some type of regulation be applied to the appliance service industry and new consumer protection laws be applied to put a stop to the rip off of the consumer in the state of Michigan. Ladies and gentlemen, the bill which was written never even got out of committee. Tomorrow may be a different story, only time will tell.

Recently in the state of New Jersey, the attorney general's people rented a home and bugged all the products in

the house with problems. They video taped all the different companies who came in to do the repairs and discovered that, you guessed it, some of them are rip offs. In the state of New York, a new law which mandates that appliance repair technicians can only be paid by a salary instead of a commission passed the house. Imagine the support which must have gathered to pass such a measure. They must have some pretty good facts to support such a measure.

In other parts of the country, the service industry itself is forming organizations to create and ensure measures which will protect consumers against rip offs by the appliance service industry. How much clearer can the message be than when the industry itself takes steps to enhance its own image. Maybe I was 10 years ahead of myself when I alone tried to do it. I'm not alone anymore, I have you and I have the reputation of a consumer advocate given me by the airwaves of radio, television, magazines and newspapers.

Having gone through bankruptcy court, nobody can ever point fingers at my ethics in business. Stay tuned, the story's not over on how you can help and become a part of this new consumer movement.

Shortly after you read this article, I will be meeting with State Rep. Lyn Bankes of Livonia and Redford. Ms. Bankes has become a friend of mine who stands beside me in my fight for you. She and I can not do this alone as we know we will need your support. Here is what I need you to do, if you would like to lend your support to better consumer protection in the state of Michigan. I you're interested in becoming a part of this drive against appliance rip offs, send me a note telling me about your experiences and feelings on this subject. With the support of the readers of this column, I believe that the state of Michigan will pass new laws which will save many homeowners millions of dollars per year. Now I need You.

Joe Gagnon, the Appliance Doctor, will answer your questions about maintaining and repairing large appliances. Gagnon is president of Carmack Appliances in Garden City and does a weekly radio program on WJR-AM. He is author of "First Aid from the Appliance Doctor" available at area bookstores.

## Stamp club schedules show

The Allen Park Stamp Club will present its annual Stamp Show 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17, at the VFW Hall, 16736 Ecorse Road, Allen Park.

Admission and parking are free. For more information, call (313) 298-2902.

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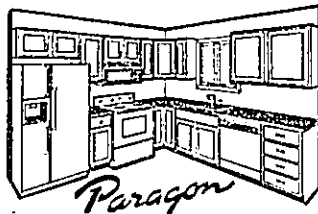
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