

APPLIANCE DOCTOR

Group hears complaints



JOE GAGNON

The Major Appliance Consumer Action Panel is located in Chicago and its purpose is to help consumers who have a complaint with a major home appliance.

In 1970, complaints filed by consumer on premature product failures were running rampant across this country. Following the '60s, which was a great lesson on the subject of protest, homeowners wouldn't stand still for an appliance which kept breaking down. The manufacturers expanded their customer relations effort by forming this association along with the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association and the National Retail Merchants Association. MACAP will work on complaints filed about refrigerators, dishwashers, gas and electric ranges, garbage disposals, trash compactors, water heaters, washers and dryers, room air conditioners and dehumidifiers. They claim that 90 percent of their complaints are eventually resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.

Let me give you a few facts on why I think this association may be as busy today as it was back in 1970. Today, even more so than back in '70, the independent service company is really isolated from the manufacturer who makes a product. We like the consumer are not given information on a particular problem which may result after production unless there is a national recall. You may ask how this could lead to a MACAP organization being formed. Let me give you an example.

Within this past year, a leading manufacturer of dishwashers announced through the national media a recall

and a potential fire hazard on a wiring problem in their product. This concerns several million which are already in the consumers' homes. They announced that repairs would be at no charge for homeowners who called their toll free number, but what about the many people who had a service company come out and repair this problem and had to pay for it. What about the millions spent by many who had no knowledge that this was a product failure which was a direct fault of the manufacturer. If the bulletins which describe these problems to the service force which is directly tied in with the manufacturer would have been given to the independent, many consumers would have saved money.

My company did not know about this problem and to be put in that position is not good for both myself and the consumer. I do have some information which is filtered to me by some friends in the industry who are tied in with the manufacturer, but that amount if small compared to the service bulletins which are sent out every month. The companies which produce appliances in this country need to wake up and realize that their customers won't be buying their products again after they have paid for a free repair.

If you have a problem with a major home appliance and you have a reasonable complaint, I would suggest that you write to MACAP, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606, or telephone, 1-800-621-0477.

If you couldn't resolve the problem through contact with the dealer, the service company or the manufacturer, this will be your last resort outside of going to small claims court. Be truthful and to the point in your complaint and keep your fingers crossed that MACAP will be able to help you.

Furniture talk scheduled

Baker Knapp & Tubbs will host a special presentation about Baker Furniture's Archetype Collection 2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26.

Archetype: A Progression of Modern

Sign up for bonsai workshop

A bonsai workshop and critique will take place Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Detroit Garden Center, 1460 E. Jefferson.

The workshop will run 9 a.m. to noon, and the critique and discussion 12:30-2:30 p.m. Register by Tuesday, Oct. 1. Call (313) 258-6363 for information.

Train an indoor tree in the Japanese art of bonsai. Jerome and David Quenneville of Kyodai Bonsai will be the instructors. The \$45 class fee includes plant, soil, container and use of tools.

Fee is \$5 for the afternoon session only, at which instructors will critique bonsai specimens brought from home.

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