

HOME WORK

Consumers at home shows talk about appliance problems

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

I've done radio shows recently at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit and Novi Home Improvement Show. Soon I will be broadcasting at the Home and Garden Show at the Pontiac Silverdome Feb. 22-25, GMC Builders Home and Flower Show at the Cobo Center in Detroit March 22-25, and a home show in Jackson.

Now, this is not a complaint, in fact it is just the opposite. I love talking with consumers and taking my time answering questions, emphasizing what are right and wrong approaches to fixing appliances. I want to

■ If only I could make appliance maintenance as important as changing the oil in a car.

thank all of you for talking with me and explaining your particular problems.

Many of you teach me ideas that I broadcast onto the airwaves or write in this newspaper, and in so doing, can help others who wonder just what is wrong.

At the recent home show in Novi, a woman said she could use her oven only during the evening hours.

After several service calls, she discovered that when anyone used the cell phones or portable phone in the house, an electronic component was rendered useless inside the stove modular control. The service technician

explained that this technicality occurred with many ranges from the same company.

This doctor is in the case in finding out which brands don't function and why.

A fire and tragedy

Another woman stopped by to ask me if I could identify a microwave oven which had been in a house fire. I asked her to explain the circumstances which brought tears to my eyes. There was a house fire which may have been caused by the microwave. Her attorney kept the microwave, but he was unable to identify the product. I asked her to get the microwave from her attorney and I would try to help her. Then I asked her if anyone was hurt in the fire.

She told me her daughter died as a result of the fire. Let me tell you that after looking into that mother's eyes for just a few minutes, I will feel her grief for a long time.

At these shows when I meet thousands of homeowners, there are many compliments and I truly appreciate them. Every once in a while I receive constructive criticism which makes me a smarter person.

More service needed

A woman told me about all the services she made to fix her washing machine. Each time the service technician told her that there is nothing wrong with the washer. Each time he told her that she is using it incorrectly. The lady was just plain mad at me because she had purchased this brand solely on my recommendation. I just simply hung my head and bit my lip. Maybe sometimes I do sound like a know-it-all.

Refrigerator ice-makers are still the biggest subject of consumer complaints at these shows with dryer vent lines questions a close second. More and more homeowners are becoming aware of

hoses which supply water to their washing machines and checking and replacing them. I wish I could promote and encourage the maintenance of these products so consumers would pay attention before, rather than after, the damage occurs. If only I could make it as important as changing the oil in a car.

American-made appliances are becoming another big factor in why so many more products are sold with a very big price tag. Ranges built today that get so hot on the outside get national media attention because children burn themselves and spend a lengthy amount of time in a hospital.

No wonder why so much of our money goes overseas.

Readers write

Michael Slayter bought a house which included a refrigerator. The refrigerator emits an

odor, which is stronger when the motor is running. He writes: "I cleaned the drip pan and placed baking soda in the freezer and refrigerator, but it was no help."

A: Wash out the refrigerator; using tomato juice. When you're done, leave a dish full of tomato juice on the refrigerator shelf for three days.

Joe Gagnon can be heard on *Newstalk 760, WJR-AM, every Saturday and Sunday mornings. He is a past president of The Society of Consumer Professionals. His second book, "The World of Wisdom of The Appliance Doctor" is available in book stores. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.*

Do you have a question for the Appliance Doctor? Contact him care of Ken Abramczyk, At Home, Editor, Observer Newspaper, 38231 Schoorcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@aol.com, homecomm.net

Read the Taste section in Sunday's Farmington Observer

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INTERIOR DESIGN

'Treasure twins' to visit DIA, Somerset next week

A Cadwalader easy chair used in a country day school sold for a record-setting \$2.75 million. A table bought at a yard sale for \$25 sold for more than half a million dollars at auction.

These are just two of the extraordinary discoveries that twins Leigh and Leslie Kenos, stars of public television's popular *Antiques Roadshow*, have made throughout their acclaimed careers as furniture experts and antique dealers.

The Detroit Institute of Arts' Associates of the American Wing will welcome the "treasure twins" Wednesday, Feb. 21, for a special lecture and book signing honoring their new book, *Hidden Treasures: Searching for Masterpieces of American Furniture*.

At the event, the Kenos will trace numerous finds throughout their careers as antique dealers, and share tips and anecdotes from their experiences with Detroit antique enthusiasts.

The lecture will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the DIA, 5200 Woodward in the University Cultural Center. Tickets for the event are \$10 and are available by calling (313) 833-4005. Valet parking will be available for a minimal charge at the Woodward entrance.

The Kenos brothers will also appear for a book signing only noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at the DIA Museum Shop at Somerset Collection South, Big Beaver and Coolidge roads in Troy.

Years of experience and success in the antique market have translated into many amazing stories and discoveries. With their special appearance at DIA, the Kenos will offer an intimate look at the fascinating experience of uncovering hidden treasures.

The program is presented through the generosity of Scott Shuprine Studios of Interior Design.

Clinics offered

■ The Home Depot presents free "how-to" clinics for do-it-yourselfers. Scheduled in February are "How to Buy Carpet," 10 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "How to Install Pergo Flooring," 11 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "How to Install Ceramic Tile," 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; "Faux Painting Techniques," 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; and "How to Measure for Blinds," 7 p.m. Tuesdays.

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