

HOME WORK

Malfunctioning hair curlers can overheat

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Up on inspection hair curlers look like a pretty simple appliance.

The rod part of it gets hot. Once the hair wrapped around it is heated, it becomes a curl.

For women everywhere, using one is a part of an every day routine. (All I know is that I am very glad I don't have to go through this routine every morning before I leave the house.)

A few weeks ago I heard the

most frightening scream from the upstairs bathroom. That sound was my darling Valorie. I raced up the stairs, three at a time.

I came around the corner and saw smoke coming off the top of her head and a hair curler in her hand. There was a hair wrapped around it and still smoking when I pulled the plug out of the wall.

Thermostat fails

It was apparent that the thermostat inside the curler failed, which caused the unit to overheat. It also injured Valorie by burning a spot on top of her head. It's not enough to take it to court, but enough to create concern and write this column.

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Based on the amount of hair curlers that Val has purchased in the past 10 years, I imagine that a few million are sold every year.

Writing about hair makes me think about all the drains in America which get plugged because of it. A plumber once explained it to me by describing how durable human hair is. We discover a body, thousands of years old, and the hair is still as strong as rope. We can expect the same thing when the plumber cleans out the sink or bathtub drains.

A plumber once told me that his services would never be needed if consumers would turn up the hot water tank to the tank's maximum temperature and let hot water run into drains for 10 minutes each month. He also gave me a proven remedy for unplugging a blocked-up drain. Put a cup full of baking soda into a drain and then slowly pour in a pint of vinegar. Make sure that there isn't a drop of water going into that drain for at least an hour after you have put in the remedy. Then let hot

water flow in there for at least 10 minutes.

Condenser cleanup

I think back to the many refrigerators I have cleaned in my lifetime, especially at homes with cats and dogs. Often I pulled out enough animal hair from the condenser to fill a brown grocery bag. Cats and dogs often are to blame for over-heated compressors or the need for replacement.

Once animal hair covers the condenser tubing, every little piece of lint will stick to it. Keep in mind that during the winter months, animals like to lay in front of the refrigerator.

A cousin of the hair curler mentioned earlier is the hair dryer. You can save years by following simple advice here and use an eyebrow plucker.

The hair dryer needs air flowing through it and when the air inlet area is plugged with hair, the elements inside overheat and burn out. Every few months I take the plucker or tweezers and pull out the hair and lint which builds up on the air inlet side.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

Plan remodeling with future in mind

"Accessibility" is the new keyword for home buyers and owners who are approaching retirement and intend to continue living in their new or existing residences as long as possible.

Indeed, special additions can go a long way toward preserving a person's ability to live independently in the golden

years, whether physical impairments are great or small.

Replacing regular doorknobs with latches and regular locks with keyless entry systems can help those with arthritic hands. Creating a master bedroom on the first floor can avoid dangerous situations for people who have difficulty climbing stairs.

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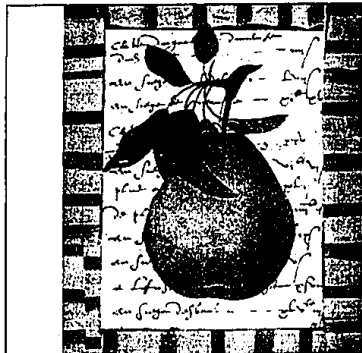
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