

APPLIANCE DOCTOR

A clothes washer tells about a life of abuse



JOE GAGNON

I was born around 1900 in an area surrounded by creeks and scrub boards that people sometimes used as a musical instrument. I was made of aluminum or tin and usually round in construction with a handle on both sides. Homeowners used to boil water and dump it into me along with shavings from a big bar of soap.

Clothes would soak for a while and then the scrub board placed inside. A lot of energy was exerted by the person in charge and by those who took the clothes down to the creek for rinsing. That was the beginning of my life as a washing machine, and now, 95 years later, I am still being abused by the homeowner. Oh no, they don't kick me around anymore, or use me to bathe the kids. They just take all of the energy they used to consume and deposit it on my shoulders and expect me to do the job for the next 20 years without dying of total exhaustion. The extent of a consumer's fatigue today when doing the laundry is carrying the laundry basket. I remember in the mid '20s when they

put a lid on me and an agitator in the center of my tub and added these two rollers which would turn with the use of a crank. They put a small gasoline engine underneath me which would turn the agitator. The appliance sales person would drive out to local farms with me on the back of a Ford model A pickup truck. While the farmer's wife was doing her laundry just outside the rear door on the lawn, the sales person would kick start the gasoline engine and begin to do her laundry for her. I remember in most cases that I would be unloaded right then and there and placed on a solid floor in the back shed.

I would lead a life of tender love and care for many years to come. Those were good years because that woman sometimes loved me more than she did her own children. That was evidenced by the fact that once in while some little one got their arm stuck in my rollers. It would only happen once to a child and some of them still bear the scars today. Just to show you how much a woman really appreciated me and the new method of washing clothes, they sometimes fell in love with the appliance salesman who demonstrated the machine. I wonder if that still happens today?

With the passing of time, everyone had a wringer washer and people were just starting to get spoiled when they turned me into an automatic machine. Then people really went off the deep end and I've been suffering ever since. They buy a car and put 80,000 on it and drive it nice and easy so it will last longer. Not me though, they put 40 pounds of clothes in me when I should only have 18 and they expect me to do the job. Half the people who use me walk around with itches, sneezing and allergies created by improper rinsing of their clothes. If they only knew that the less clothes and the more water you have in me, the better job I can do. The end result of their abuse is that some guy with dirty fingernails begins to take my insides apart. They pay in the end though, especially if they don't do any research on which doctor they call.

Some of the bad ones out there have been known to really gouge them.

To sum up my point here let me say that I want to live to be 20 years old and I just can't because of the way people are treating me these days. There are millions of five-year-old washing machines thrown into the scrap yards eve-

See GAGNON, 7D



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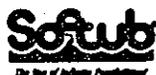
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