

Sunday Solutions to Persistent Problems

We had a tire that wouldn't hold air and a washer that wouldn't hold water. On Sunday we fixed both problems.

Liz came with the wheel barrow. It pre dates me by a long shot. It's got to be 25 or 30 years old. The damn tire has NEVER held air. At first it'd hold air for the hour or so you needed it. So every time we got out the wheelbarrow we'd have to pump up the tire. A pain, but since we live of a postage stamp sized lot, we don't have much call to use the wheelbarrow. Once a year was a lot of usage.



Over time the air problem got worse and worse. One time, when John was up, we sprayed in some "leak stop" shit. Like everything else it held up for about an hour then went flat.

Several years ago it stopped holding air all together and was permanently flat. Coincidentally we stopped using it. ☺

But this fall I intend to dig up a fair area in the front for a new patio. This requires some actual earth moving. I need a wheel barrow without a flat tire.

I had removed the axle and tire several years ago in vain attempts to repair it and had never put it back on. The problem was "What was wrong?" Was it the wheel, the tire or the valve stem? I had no idea which should be replaced?

But with the patio job it was clear I had to find out.

So first I removed the old tire from the wheel. What a frigging struggle that was. It took all my patience I could muster and 3 screw drivers. I'd get one wall almost off and zing! There went a screw driver in the bushes and I'd be back to square one. It required a person with 5 hands to pry this stupid thing off. I eventually lost a screw driver. I spent a good 15 minutes all over the property and bushes looking for the blessed thing. Guess where it was? Right, IN the tire itself! I did get the tire off finally.

So I went over to Lowes and found a small, but sufficient for us, wheelbarrow, brand new, with a fully inflated tire for \$60. So, no repair solutions to the old one should exceed \$30 I figured. A replacement tire was \$25 alone. I figured it really needed a new valve stem and we needed that

goop they slather on the inside of the wheel to make a good seal for these stupid tubeless tires. That would nearly cost the same a brand new wheel barrow. Shit!

I came home in defeat, with nothing.

Later, with Liz, we returned to Lowes, I was primed to buy a new wheel barrow, but sharp eyed Liz spotted a tube! They had tubes, just the right size and so I bought one.

Back at home I had to put the tire back on. This time I was prepared with 5 screw drivers. I did it! I cut of the old valve stem and inserted the tube value. Everything worked a treat. The tire is still holding air after 24 hours!

This was a \$7 dollar fix to a 25 year problem!



Oh, I forgot. Remember I said I had taken off the tire several years ago? Well you can image my great joy in getting the tire inflated after all this time and work. But then I found that I had lost some of the pieces that held the axle to the wheel barrow!!!!!! AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Some good old fashioned nails are currently holding the axle to the stupid wheel barrow. I'm not sure I'd have been better off dragging the damn thing around behind me!!

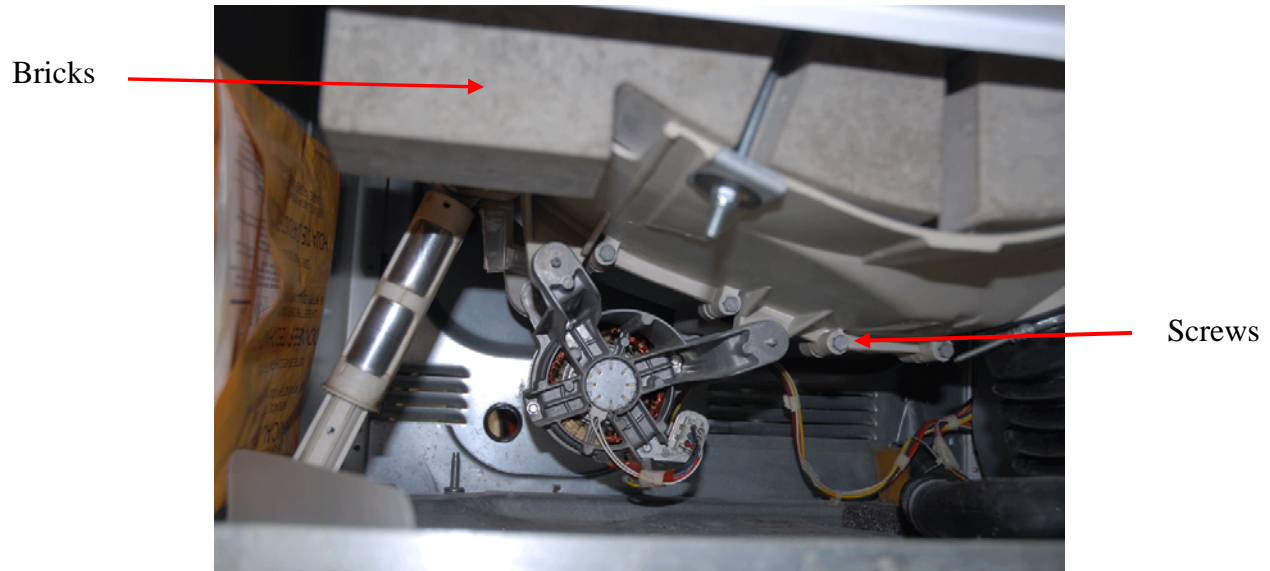
The washer is a simpler story to tell.

Originally Liz had a big old top loader. It worked a treat for years with only minor issues. After about 25 years, in 2000 a bearing wore out and that was that.

We bought a front loading Kenmore form Sears. The best thing about this new washer was the spin cycle. It spun at a gazillion rpm. Clothes came out almost dry. We could put 4 pair of jeans in the dryer and they'd be dry in 30 minutes. (The old washer bearily removed any water and jeans took forever to dry in comparison.)



So we loved the front loading washer for 4 years. Then it began to leak. The sideways tub is made water tight by two plastic clam shells screwed together by about 20 screws. Only about 10 of these screws are accessible. A repair man wanted about half the price of the washer to replace the entire tub. We told him he was nuts and simply tightened those screws we could get at.



It still leaked. We put a towel down in the base of the washer. After a laundry day of 6 to 8 loads the towel was wet, but no water made it to the floor. Over the next week before the next laundry day the towel dried and the process repeated. Every ½ year or so I got down on my back and tightened screws. What a pain.

Last Sunday was a wash day. We only had 5 loads. On the first load there was some awful banging coming from the laundry room. Liz and I raced in to see what was what. The washer was trying to get into its final super fast spin. If the load is not balanced it stops and reorganizes itself and tries again. But this time it was bound to do the spin regardless and it was killing itself. So we stood and watched the self destruction.

Eventually it stopped and the clothes came out just fine, almost dry as normal.

So we started the second load and left☺. We told Scott that if it made awful noises again to unplug it.

And that is EXACTLY what happened. It tried to do the final spin again and the bearings totally ground up. Scott said there was a big bang and then a bit of smoke so he unplugged it!

Fortunately the clothes were all rinsed and not so wet that the dryer couldn't handle them. 2 loads down and 3 more to go.

So there it was a front loader from Sears that had lasted only 9 years. The drum was seized up. It would turn, but just barely, with a lot of scrapping sounds.

Scott, Liz and I wasted no time in dragging it up the stairs and out into the garage. Ask me how heavy that was? It was fringing heavy I can tell you. The damn thing is filled with bricks. I'm not joking. The bricks are there to add weight and dampen the vibrations in that super fast spin.

The decision to buy a new washer was a struggle as we found two main competitors. There was a nice Maytag front loader. (I love Maytag. We have a Maytag dryer and fridge: both of which we've had for some time and they are built like a tank. Awesome quality.) But Liz had spied a Whirlpool top loader with a clear, see thru lid.

Both machines were listed at about a grand. Both were the new "high efficiency" (HE) type. You can only use HE detergent. Liz figured that that meant the new concentrated detergent we've begun to buy over the past few months. I was not so sure....

The front loader held about 4.0 cubic feet, but the top loader held 5 cubic feet. The front loader was more efficient, but so what.... (I'm IN FAVOUR of climate change: the warmer Canada gets the better I figure. Seriously, won't it be great when we can plant potatoes in the Arctic and have palm trees on the South Shore?)

So we stood in Lowes and debated and debated.... Lowes was the only place that we could get the dryer TODAY. All other stores wanted to deliver the thing in several days. Heck, we had laundry to do! Liz was leaning to the top loader, and I to the Maytag front loader.

I wandered over to the really expensive Bosch front loader washers. There I spied one advertising that it had a special "no leak" feature.

Well that was it. If even the expensive front loaders can't hold water, none of the silly things can. We opted for the top loader with a solid tub, no screws holding it together, no way for it to leak save thru the motor and then you truly are f..ked.





They had one in stock and in the hour we had it home, down the stairs and washing the 3rd load! It was neat to watch. Really. It has no real agitator, no centre post at all, just a small disk in the bottom with a couple of small bumps. The way it washes is to gently turn and the clothes move UP in the middle and down on the edges. It worked a treat and the clothes seemed to be clean.



Oh, and the HE detergent? As with everything else that day, our concentrated detergent was NOT HE. We had to go get the special stuff. For all my life with Liz she has NEVER bought Tide detergent. It has a smell she hates. Guess what we got? Yup, Tide HE, no perfume no fragrance. It was the only brand of HE with absolutely no smell. (HE means almost no suds, which means less water/electricity needed to rinse them and so “High Efficiency”).



Problem solved.

Don't you just love problems that can be solved simply by throwing money at them?

Sept 2009.