

## Word Tool Box

*By Hap Hansen*

We live in a use-it-up throw-it-away society. Few things we own are worth repairing anymore, because it's less expensive to go purchase a new machine-made item than to pay for expensive parts and labor with which to repair the old, broken item.

Many years ago, we had an old wall-mounted telephone that reluctantly gave up the ghost. Purchased for about fifty bucks, that phone valiantly continued to give us a dial tone, but refused to allow either an incoming or an outgoing call. With my usual fix-it-yourself flair, I took the phone apart to prove there must be a simple repair solution. There wasn't! After about a half hour of rooting around in its electronic innards, I proclaimed it unrepairable and tossed it into the trash bin. It had been a useful tool in its time.

Do you remember some tools from the 'old days'? Such as 'curb feelers' and 'steering knobs'? Most kids today would have to have us explain what they were. When did we quit calling them 'emergency brakes'? Now, it's 'parking brake'. But I miss the hint of drama that went with 'emergency brakes'. I'm a little sad too, that all the old folks are mostly gone who called the accelerator the 'foot feed'. Apparently, a necessary tool, 'brassiere' is a word no longer in use. I said it the other day and my daughter cracked up! I guess it's just 'bra' now.

Here's a tool word I miss. Percolator. It was a fun word to say. Then it was replaced with 'coffee maker'. How dull!

I do own a few tools that have endured over the years. In my tool kit are a hammer, saw, screwdriver and pliers that were owned and used by my father more than 70 years ago. I know they don't work as well as they used to, but sentimental memories forbid me from discarding them. Besides, they probably don't work as well now because my father used them until they were nearly worn out. Dad also knew how to use tools properly and he knew how to take care of them as well. I remember those old days when plowing the field was finished, Dad would always fix whatever was broken, then he would always apply a liberal layer of axle grease to the plow face. This prevented rust from forming on the plow's surface, so when used again, the earth would turn over smoothly and uniformly as the plow moved effortlessly through the thick, black dirt. I remember the plow would slice into the ground dirty looking and covered with grease and would emerge looking as silvery as a brand new dime.

Our community is sort of like that old plow. Some of it has fallen into disrepair from old age, with capable workers constantly using tools to fix whatever is broken. Much of our community is emerging as shiny as that new dime with activities growing and prospering and sharing.

Where then, is our community heading? If Windsor Gardens grows and prospers for ten or twenty or fifty years or more, it will be because we used the tools of progressive physical changes with lasting human values. People like us and our employees who refuse to see our suburb rust and decay, people who grease their plows.