

## Technology in the living area

### Friday is laundry day



Actually, this hateful procedure already started on Thursday evenings. The coal oven in the washhouse was heated, and in the washing tub the hot wash was prepared for the actual washing. Because of the lack of a washhouse this happened in a great tin washing pot on the big oven. At the same time, the colored laundry was soaked in the tin tub. Then my mother smilingly handed me the washing mallet, a bell-shaped metal bulk with a long handle. I now had the pleasure of using it on the soaked laundry in the tub. A lot of force was needed to press the mallet against the elastic force so that when letting go suction power occurred that parted the dirt from the laundry. But the main work was done by the mother who often had to rub the laundry on the wash board for hours to get it clean. The use of the washing mallet and the washing wind and other manual work in

the house were re-occurring duties for the children. For me, this seems to be the reason why there was no need for fitness centers in my youth, whereas today people try to gain or maintain physical fitness by working out excessively with complicated equipment.

In the mid-60ties in Schwarzenberg/ Erzgebirge the first actual household washing machines have been manufactured. The WM66 was an electronic washing tub with heating. The washing program could be adjusted by deciding for a washing temperature and washing time. I still see my mother's happy face from when she got such a machine at home and her looking at the clean laundry in wonder after the first using it for the first time, following the manual. It could not be denied that it got cleaner than it had ever with the use of the wash board! It saved a great amount of labor and resulted in the end of a ritual of a regular day of soaking and hot wash. In the future, the laundry was done by the machine when needed. The suds were used for a number of washings by starting with the white laundry and with darker clothes or working clothes as the final washing. Already, for practical reasons, resources were saved and the environment spared. Supplementing or equipment with a table spin dryer the washing wind got out dated and the laundry was always well pre- dried. But the



procedure still was stressing for the laundry. Thus, in the 70ties it was already replaced by the modern washing machine.

Rapid development, especially of the regulation and refinement of the washing procedure of the machines as well as integration of additional processes like spin-drying and drying, followed.

Laundromats came up for self-serviced public use. Especially in the cities, washing machines were shared in greater apartment complexes. They were available for the tenants in accordance with a washing schedule. From the 80ties on a semi- and later on full- automatic washing machine belong to the standard household equipment and no one can imagine living without one.