

Awash

by John Olson

Nobody has been able to use the washer and dryer for over a month now. Our neighbors have gone laundry crazy. They've become suds-a-holics. They wash everything. If it isn't nailed down, they wash it. Outboard engines, peculiar feelings, dominatrix boots, metaphors, simulacrams, stepladders, old maritime proverbs, fuller's teasels, lunar craters, fipple flutes, fourth century Roman mosaics, NASA pressure suits, Vatican statuary, maidenhair and crisp salutes. I once pulled a women's high school basketball team out of the washer. They thanked me and stumbled off dizzily, unsteadily, but very, very clean. I don't know if there is a name for this behavior. It falls in the ballpark somewhere between anal and hopelessly obnoxious. Is there a solution? Would our neighbors be receptive to a discussion about balanced communalism? We could point out the fact that the washer and dryer are intended to serve the laundry needs of four apartments, not the entire western coast, or the detritus of western civilization, or antique parasols and parallel bars. Particularly not parallel bars when in use by Russian gymnasts. Russian gymnasts get very testy about being stuffed into condo washing machines when they're sprinting onto a springboard for a vaulting event. They really weren't that dirty in the first place. And secondly, they're from a different country, a different culture, with different detergents and softeners. In a way, you can't help but admire this level of zeal, this enthusiasm for washing things. But when you hear the jangle and tumult of someone trying to squeeze the spacetime continuum into a washer, you've got to wonder if your neighbors haven't gone a little too far, a little overboard with their laundry mania. This is an inappropriate use of classical mechanics in a Euclidean space. It's just a laundry room, after all, with four walls and a linoleum floor. How can you even time the cycles of your wash when time itself is tumbling around in a horizontally-oriented drum? I don't want the spacetime continuum washed. I like it the way it is. Supergalactic, subatomic, and ready-to-wear.

