

# Washing

*by* Tim Young

Scraping the baked on Bar B Q sauce from the grabbing ends of the stainless steel tongs has my total attention. I will not allow one crumb of the nasty stuff to remain on the silver tongs where it is so easily recognizable. Steel wool in my hands does the hard work as my right arm pushes and shoves the steely wool teeth over and over its intended destinations for the removal of such stains on humanity. Of course there are always more than one pair of dirty tongs which are in need of my cleaning attention. Fortunately they are not able to speak back to me or make any type of comment but if they did I have to wonder if I would ever listen or simply throw them back into the murky dishwasher and drown out their anguished cries.

Tongs be damned. It is because of all the washing of dishes I must reveal that I have had to make the switch from naked hand washing to the more "professional" washing with the addition of rubber gloves. The gloves are essential to protect my sensitive skin. Of course anyone's skin introduced constantly to hot water, detergents, and sanitizers may be in for the uncomfortable results that chemicals create on the flesh. Those monsters of the dish water, rinse, and sanitize, are able to turn quite ordinary healthy, clear skin into red blotched atrocities. So now the rubber gloves, usually a sickly orange color themselves have become the absolute necessary wardrobe for the cleaning, scrubbing, and scraping of the never ending parade of pots and pans.

In the background of all these cleaning procedures, are the sounds of the piped in store "radio" station and the endless chatting and questioning of the "valued" customers, as the store insists on calling them. All the while, myself, having created a well used list of alternate names I could summon at any given moment should the need arise. But of late it is the playlist on the store radio that has been cluttering my mind with melodies and lyrics of songs I would

never choose to listen to on my own. But in the store the same old "Hit Parade" keeps flowing like the water from the spigot when I must change the tepid dirty dish water for fresh. It's never pretty.

